



Women's Council
· Wisconsin ·

Minutes of the Meeting of the Wisconsin Women's Council
Friday, October 27, 2023; 1:00-2:15 PM
Held virtually via MS Teams

Council Members Present:

Ex.	Gabby Aranda-Pino	x	Rachel Fernandez	Ex.	Carrie Richard
x	Dr. Jolene Bowman	x	Sen. Dianne Hesselbein	x	Lt. Gov. Sara Rodriguez
	Sen. Rachael Cabral-Guevara	x	Denise Gaumer-Hutchison, <i>Chair</i>		<i>Vacant</i>
x*	Rep. Jodi Emerson		Amanda Medina-Roddy		<i>Vacant</i>
x	Dep. Sec. Patti Epstein	x	Nerissa Nelson		<i>Vacant</i>

*Attended portion of the meeting.

Staff Present: Jenifer Cole, WWC Executive Director; Chandler Denhart, Lt. Governor's Office; Margie Berkowitz, Sen. Hesselbein's Office.

Public Present: None

- 1) **Call to Order:** Chair Gaumer Hutchison called the meeting of the Wisconsin Women's Council to order at 1:04 p.m.
 - a) **Meeting with Packers' CFO, Maureen Smith** – Chair Gaumer Hutchison shared that she and P. Epstein met with Maureen Smith, the new Chief Financial Officer for the Packers and the first woman to serve in executive leadership with the Packers. Noted that all NFC North teams have women as CFOs.
 - b) **WWBIC Invitation** – Chair Gaumer Hutchison shared that the Women's Council was invited to sponsor/attend the Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC) Annual Celebration on November 28 in Brookfield. WWC will not be a sponsor, but J. Cole will attend. P. Epstein will also be present at the Department of Financial Institutions' sponsor table.
 - c) **December Meeting Planning** – The Council discussed ideas for the final meeting of 2023. It is scheduled to be in-person in Madison. Consensus from Council members in attendance was that they would like the meeting to be held at the State Capitol and would like to hear from legislative members about legislation impacting the lives of women in Wisconsin. Rep. Emerson and Sen. Hesselbein agreed to serve on panel and have staff help coordinate the meeting. Council members wondered if the Council would be able to develop some kind of call to action. J. Cole recommended focus on development of new bylaws to provide structure and guidance on decision-making before the Council takes any bipartisan positions.
- 2) **Approval of Meeting Minutes:** Unable to approve minutes from the August 25, 2023, and September 22, 2023 meetings due to lack of quorum.
- 3) **September Meeting Recap** – R. Fernandez provided a recap of the in-person meeting she hosted at the College of the Menominee Nation in September.
 - Noted that the panelists (President Shannon Holsey, Marni King, Pamela Boivin, Crystal Chevalier, and Jennifer Gauthier) were selected to meet with the Council because they are tremendous leaders in their communities and women who have lifted her up and who she lifts up.
 - Thanked the Council for the opportunity and for holding space with everyone in attendance.

- Shared that because of the meeting, the group of panelists are working to start a Tribal women and girls empowerment circle to change the narrative about women's "seats at the table", to develop mentoring, and build leadership amongst Native girls.

4) Director's Report – J. Cole provided updates on:

- a) Operating Budget Update** – deferred due to meeting scheduling with DOA budget and accounting team responsible for assisting with the WWC operating budget. Budget analyst position currently vacant and J. Cole is assisting with the hiring process. Will provide more information at a future date.
- b) Recent & Upcoming Events** – J. Cole shared that she attended the national Women's Convention in Milwaukee October 20-22 and the Wisconsin Women's Business Conference, sponsored by the Council, in Eau Claire on October 25.
- c) National Association of Commissions for Women Update** – J. Cole shared that she had been recently elected to the NACW board as a member-at-large for a two-year term and will provide more updates as the new board leadership completes transition and monthly meetings are scheduled. Looking forward to engaging with other states' councils and commissions on the status of women and reigniting Wisconsin with the national group.
- d) Status of Women Research Project** – J. Cole shared that the Steering Committee has developed a proposed research scope to share with the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) and are working to schedule a meeting with the IWPR team to review and discuss so that IWPR can develop a project proposal and identify costs for committee consideration.

5) Discussion about 2024 Meeting Dates & Cadence – The Council members present shared their support of the meeting cadence and structure established in 2023 and would like to continue similarly in 2024. Chair Gaumer Hutchison and J. Cole will develop proposed dates for consideration by the Council at the December 2023 meeting. Council members were asked to start thinking about topics and presenters/panelists they would like to hear about and from during the 2024 in-person meetings. Further discussion is needed; however, topic ideas included hearing from state agencies about their work to advance the status of women (especially related to caregiving) and from researchers in the UW system and the Council's other academic institution partners.

6) Discussion about Council Bylaws – J. Cole reviewed the prepared memo regarding recommendations about the development of Council bylaws to replace the outdated policy manual. P. Epstein suggested establishing a small workgroup to review the recommendations and example bylaws to begin developing draft bylaws for Council and DOA legal counsel review and consideration. P. Epstein and N. Nelson volunteered to serve on the workgroup. Council members agreed with this direction and shared some thoughts for the workgroup to consider how the bylaws can provide:

- Guidance on how the Council can make decisions on ways to advance policy initiatives and take policy positions.
- Better directions on Council approval for speaking engagements.
- Clarity on decision-making structure regarding financial sponsorship of events and initiatives.

Council also discussed how the bylaws could help the Council define how the Council wants to be, to focus on, and how it shows up.

- Lt. Gov. Rodriguez would like to see the Council focus on data about women's issues and the greater development of an online resource list for organizations and initiatives around the state to empower women and promote women's equality.

- Sen. Hesselbein would like to see assistance to folks or organizations to provide positions on legislation or provide education on proposed policy.
- Chair Gaumer Hutchison would like the Council to speak out on positions that help women in Wisconsin.
- Other suggestions included: strengthening network to have Council members attend more events and encouraging members and partners to let Council know about upcoming events to attend or promote.

7) Closing Remarks and Adjournment – Chair Gaumer Hutchison encouraged the Council to never give up on working to advance the status of women and girls in Wisconsin. Council members asked to bring ideas for 2024 meetings and presentations to the December 1st meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 2:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jenifer Cole
Executive Director, Wisconsin Women's Council