



Women's Council
· Wisconsin ·

Minutes of the Meeting of the Wisconsin Women's Council
Friday, September 22, 2023; 1:00 – 3:00 PM
In-person at the College of the Menominee Nation Cultural Learning Center
N172 State Highway 47/55
Keshena, WI 54135

Council Members Present:

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

Guests: Crystal Chevalier, CEO - Wolf River Development Company; Pamela Boivin, Executive Director - Woodland Financial Partners; Marni King, Assistant Vice President - HUB International, Tribal Benefits Specialist; Jennifer Gauthier, Director - Sustainable Development Institute at College of Menominee Nation; President Shannon Holsey – Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Nation

Staff Present: Jenifer Cole, WWC Executive Director; Marissa Feller, Lt. Gov.'s Office;

Public Present: one attendee present

- 1) Call to Order & Opening Remarks:** Chair Gaumer Hutchison called the meeting of the Wisconsin Women's Council to order at 1:07 p.m. She thanked guest panelists for joining the meeting, thanked R. Fernandez for coordinating the meeting and leading the panel discussion, and thanked the College of the Menominee Nation for hosting the Council. and lead introductions around the table.
- 2) Introductions** – Council Members present introduced themselves to the panelists. All attendees went around the table and shared one thing they'd like to see happen for women's advancement the next six months. Thoughts included more push for women's equity and equality; role-modeling strength; healing and holding space for future generations; embracing mistakes and learning lessons; care for elders and youth; improving work life balance; moving the Tribe forwards; overcoming violence and trauma; finding balance of strength and nurturing; encourage next generation to be cycle breakers; lift up young folks and give them more a sense of belonging than past generations.
- 3) Project Updates** – J. Cole shared that the Hmong Women's Story Cloth Exhibit would be available for viewing at the Neville Public Museum in Green Bay from September 25 through the end of the year. Council members and guest panelists were encouraged to visit the museum and view the exhibit. J. Cole also shared that the Status of Women research project steering committee was holding regular meetings and would wrap up developing the scope for possible project partner, the Institute for Women's Policy Research, at its October meeting. Panel members were

invited to connect with the steering committee if they were interested in helping with the project and participating in the developing local elements of the research and report.

4) Panel Introductions & Roundtable – R. Fernandez led the guest panelist in a robust discussion that covered the following questions:

- a) Describe yourself, your role(s), and what you want to see women accomplish.
- b) How do you see Native women in your work and communities?
- c) What do you see as challenges Native women have to overcome to thrive?
- d) What can the Women's Council do to support your work and support Native women more?

Responses touched on topics of strength; leadership; determination; learning from elders and one another; running for and holding elected office; overcoming intergenerational and historic trauma; addressing substance abuse and domestic violence; dealing with work life balance and care giving; the shift in perspectives of Tribal men to make space for women in leadership; healing; societal pressures that lead to burnout; healthcare scarcity; lack of mental health resources; cultural competency of providers and outside groups that work with Tribes; working on issues of poverty, food insecurity, access to clean water, housing, education, and healthcare; making sure that underrepresented groups and people are at the table; and creating similar space for girls and younger women.

5) Q&A/Dialogue - Panelists and Council members engaged in a few minutes of Q&A following the discussion around the topics that were discussed.

5) Closing Remarks and Adjournment – Chair Gaumer Hutchison again thanked R. Fernandez and the panelists for including the Council in this discussion and for an incredibly powerful and important afternoon.

Meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

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