



Governor Terry E. Branstad  
Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds  
San Wong, Director

**MINUTES**  
**Iowa Commission on the Status of Women**  
**August 23, 2014**  
**Renaissance Savery**  
**401 Locust Street, Des Moines, IA 50309**

**Commissioners present**

Phyllis Peters, chair  
Tom Carnahan  
Rachelle Hunt Russian  
Aaron Sewell  
Sherill Whisenand

**Commissioners who participated by phone**

David Gudenkauf  
Elizabeth Coonan

**DHR/ICSW staff**

San Wong, Director, Iowa Department of Human Rights  
Heidi Smith, Deputy Director, Iowa Department of Human Rights  
Sanjita Pradhan, Executive Officer, Office on the Status of Women  
Kristen Corey, Program Planner, Office on the Status of Women

**Members of the public - present for all or part of the meeting**

Charlotte Nelson  
Mary Wiberg  
Karla Fultz McHenry

**Call to order**

Call to order by Chair Phyllis Peters at 2:06 p.m.

**Introductions of commission, staff and guests**

Tabled to later in the meeting due to of guests filtering in late from the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame luncheon.

### **Approval of minutes June 11 meeting**

Chair Peters requested a motion to approve the minutes from June 11. Commissioner Gudenkauf made the motion to approve the minutes. Coonan seconded the motion.

**Motion:** Ayes: 7, Nays: 0, motion carried

### **Revision of agenda**

Peters requested a change in the agenda to allow Coonan to be moved up to debrief on the 2014 Iowa Women's Hall of Fame.

All Commissioners agreed to this change.

### **2014 Iowa Women's Hall of Fame induction ceremony review**

Commissioner Coonan chaired the 2014 Hall of Fame Selection Committee. She thanked everyone involved in the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame event and said she received positive feedback from event attendees. She thought the attendance was good and was thrilled that everything went smoothly.

Coonan asked other Commissioners if they had received feedback from attendees.

Whisenand added that she heard many positive comments as well. The reception immediately after the ceremony in the same location was very good for networking.

Carnahan added that the 10:00 a.m. start time for the ceremony worked well.

Peters commented that from the stage it was easy to count empty seats. There were about 24-28 empty seats, indicative of a high attendance. She suggested that ushers for subsequent ceremonies continue to lead people to fill in seats in the front rows.

Gudenkauf asked if we covered the problems Commissioners identified last year about recognizing members of public and honorees. Coonan mentioned that Peters did a wonderful job of mentioning them.

Peters added that combining lists from both Friends and the office helped. It also helped to have spotters to identify various members of the public and honorees.

Gudenkauf asked how the handicap seating was taken care of. Peters mentioned that there were several rows reserved in the front for those with disabilities.

Peters asked if Coonan could share about the nomination process. Coonan mentioned the nomination process overall went smoothly. The timeline went well. She added there was an issue with a nomination that did not make it to the packet, but the issue was resolved well and gracefully which will make it easier next year. Coonan added that the nominations were more diverse, both geographically and in job-related fields, compared to earlier years.

Peters stated that the Commission reached out to NE Iowa to encourage people to apply. She added that Sally Pederson and a few others in attendance at the luncheon mentioned they were motivated to spread the word and begin thinking about nominations for next year.

Hunt Russian thought that it would be a good idea to find key representatives in different parts of the state to help us spread the word and generate nominations from throughout the state. Whisenand asked when the solicitation for nomination starts.

Corey explained that the process starts right now with the call for nomination cards distributed at today's (Aug. 23) event today and website updates. She added that the office will plan on sending reminders via email listserv occasionally, and will continue to remind people about this at different meetings. Corey added that the office staff is open to suggestions for improvement.

Gudenkauf expressed that getting someone to write up and nominate someone is tough, so we need to encourage the nominators to write up and nominate the right people. He added that it is not so much only marketing of the event, but also reaching out and encouraging people to nominate.

Coonan mentioned as long as we have a good timeline to collect nominations and review packets, the process works well. Coonan added that if the process isn't broken, we shouldn't necessarily fix it.

Peters pointed out that each year four inductees are selected but that the language in the code does not require the committee to choose four inductees. The language in the code reads as 'no more than four individuals each year.' Peters also reminded the Commissioners that nominations remain active for three years.

Coonan left the meeting (by phone).

## **Introductions of Commissioners, staff and guests**

Chair Peters introduced guests Charlotte Nelson, former Division Administrator for the Division of the Status of Women, and Mary Wiberg, former Director of the California Commission on the Status of Women and Cristine Wilson Medal for Equality and Justice recipient (1994).

Peters also introduced new Commissioner Aaron Sewell, Director Wong, and Karla Fultz McHenry.

## **Information on the Belle Babb Mansfield Inaugural Symposium**

Former Division Administrator Charlotte Nelson introduced herself.

Mary Wiberg introduced herself and pointed out that she previously chaired the Hall of Fame Selection Committee for fourteen years and has nominated three people so far. She now lives in California and added that it was a lovely occasion and she was very delighted to be back.

Charlotte Nelson distributed handouts related to the Belle Babb Mansfield Inaugural Symposium she attended on April 3 at Iowa Wesleyan College in Mount Pleasant, Iowa. She also gave a short history about Belle Babb Mansfield, citing her as the first female lawyer in the United States and a notable Iowan inducted, posthumously, into the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame in 1980.

Nelson added that Christie Vilsack was instrumental in getting the statue of Belle Babb Mansfield erected at Iowa Wesleyan College. Nelson also passed around the symposium information and schedule. The symposium's objective is to celebrate contemporary women who have answered the call to share their leadership gifts to the broader community.

Peters added that she thought it was appropriate that Charlotte Nelson presented this information about Belle Babb Mansfield today because of the importance of remembering women who have opened doors for other women. Gudenkauf added that this was a wonderful story and motivational for the Commission.

## **DHR update**

Director Wong mentioned that Heidi Smith will provide an update on the Community Advocacy Services (CAS) division.

Wong informed the Commission about a new grant that Criminal Juvenile Justice Planning (CJJP) has been working on to reform the Juvenile Justice system in Iowa. Juvenile Justice System in Iowa is by eight districts that work independently. CJJP has a grant that will allow the eight districts to work together. One of the hopes with this grant is to identify the issues that the juvenile home had and to look at the optimal types of confinement to prevent recidivism. The study conducted as a result of the grant will provide hard data to help the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the judicial branch in developing a matrix and making decisions on how to move forward.

Wong added that the Division of Community Action Agencies is gearing up for the winter to be proactive and deal with the propane shortage created last year. She added that if anyone is interested in more information, or to offer solutions, she would be willing to connect them with the right people.

Smith informed the Commission that the Office of Latino Affairs is conducting outreach in many counties across Iowa. Outreach consists of questions on gaps on governance and gathering constituency input on needs within the Latino community.

Smith also informed the Commission that she is working on hiring a part-time staff person for Deaf Services since the current staff member changed to a part-time position after returning from maternity leave.

Smith mentioned that Pradhan is partnering with the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (WHIAAPI) to organize a community roundtable.

Gudenkauf asked how the issue with the propane shortage was resolved last year.

He asked if the state (DHR) is working on the energy boards and utility boards to resolve and prevent similar issues in future.

Director Wong answered in the affirmative that Community Action and Agencies (CAA) is working with both entities and the propane association. Gudenkauf mentioned he will follow up on some other issues related to this personally.

### **DHR board meeting update**

Peters informed Commissioners that Coonan serves on the DHR board and there is no update at this time because there had not been a recent DHR board meeting.

## **National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW) conference highlights**

Hunt Russian and Corey gave a summary of the NACW conference that took place from July 23<sup>rd</sup> through July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2014 in Sarasota, Florida.

Hunt Russian thanked the Friends of the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women for sending her to the conference on behalf of the Commission and the Friends Board. Hunt Russian gave a summary of the mission of NACW, the membership overview of NACW, and its strategic plan for the future, and spoke about the Commissioner's exchange she attended. Hunt Russian gave a summary of some of the things other states are doing, such as:

- California:
  - Holds a Women and Girls Summit,
  - Hosts a Women in Technology Summit,
  - Has a Dress for Success partnership, and
  - Hosts a STEM and law enforcement seminar
- Florida:
  - Holds constituent meetings with other organizations
  - Hosts a Pay Equity luncheon
- Hawaii:
  - Hosts a Women's Day at the Capitol
  - Does advocacy for women's sexual assault victims on college campuses
- Maryland:
  - Hosts a STEM and New GED Program Forum
  - Hosted a 100 Year Commemoration of Women's Suffrage event
- Pennsylvania:
  - Has a CEO Mentor Program
  - Gives a "Rising Star" award
- Several states:
  - Host a Women's Hall of Fame
  - Host a Women's Day at the Capitol

Corey also thanked the Friends of the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women for sending her to the NACW conference on behalf of the office. Corey commented that as a new staff member, this was incredibly beneficial to hear what other commissions are doing and to bounce ideas off of other staff, directors and commissioners who may be dealing with the same issues that women and the commission are dealing with in Iowa, including reduced budgets and staff. Corey gave a summary of the director's/staff exchange she attended. She listed some of the things other states are doing, such as:

- West Virginia:
  - Hosts a Women's Day at the Legislature

- Conducts a day-long retreat each year to build a legislative agenda
- Hosts a Solutions Initiative Summit every year
- New York:
  - Hosted an "Unhappy Hour" for Equal Pay Day (women received drinks at a price 77% less than men) and they hosted a speaker on the topic
- Several states:
  - Hosted a Women's Day at the Capitol/Women's Summit
  - Give Young Women of Achievement awards to women under 25-30
  - Hold community hearings

Corey also mentioned that several states were interested in hearing more about our Capitol Girls event and also about how our Friends group started and is so successful. Corey added that some of the take-away ideas from her trip to Sarasota included several things that we could consider doing in Iowa, such as: 1) hosting a Women's Day at the Capitol, 2) holding community/public hearings to get feedback for what women in our communities need, 3) holding an annual retreat or meeting to build a legislative agenda, and 4) hosting some sort of "solutions summit."

Corey also added that one of the breakout sessions she attended (titled "The nuts and bolts of planning issues forums in your community") was of interest to her because the presenters mentioned four main things to keep in mind when planning issues forums:

- 1) the importance of creating higher education connections,
- 2) developing a plan of action before moving forward and identifying your audience,
- 3) seeing the commission as a "champion" of the issues rather than owning the issue, and
- 4) focusing on bi-partisan issues.

Corey said that one of the goals of attending the NACW conference was for Hunt Russian and Corey to research the possibility of Iowa hosting a future NACW conference. NACW sends out a call for bids every year and that if she gets bid information, she will forward it to Commissioners. One California commissioner who Corey spoke with also mentioned the importance of developing a conference planning committee and preparing a fundraising strategy. Corey added that available conference dates are 2017 and 2018.

Carnahan asked what the typical attendance is for the annual NACW conference. Corey stated that it varies each year with budget, where the conference is located, etc. Carnahan added that it is important for Iowa to know the numbers to sell to the chambers of commerce and find the right city and venue to host a conference.

Gudenkauf stated he would be interested in adding a slide covering what our state is doing. Where do we fall in this layout, he asked?

Hunt Russian stated that the Commission works on the Capitol Girls program, the Hall of Fame and the Write Women Back into History essay contest that are Commission-supported activities. She added that she and Corey spoke to others at the conference about what Iowa is doing; they just didn't put that on the slides for IA Commissioners.

Peters added that Hunt Russian and Corey's task was to find what other states were doing and present that to the Commission. Hunt Russian and Corey mentioned there is a lot of information they brought back from the conference that can be shared later.

### **Friends of ICSW report**

Fultz McHenry introduced herself to the Commission as the Friends Board Vice President. She explained that Friends of ICSW is a support system for ICSW and the projects the Friends Board takes on complement the work of ICSW. Fultz McHenry mentioned that recently the Friends sponsored a stipend for the ICSW intern, and sent Corey and Hunt Russian to the National Association on Commission for Women (NACW) conference. The total expense for this trip was \$3,400.00. The Friends board paid for the annual NACW dues, airfare, conference registration, and hotel rooms for Corey and Hunt Russian. The Friends board is committed to sending people to the conference for learning and developing opportunities for the Commission.

Fultz McHenry announced that the fall Women You Know, Women You Want to Meet event will be in Des Moines on October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014 and will be hosted by Susan Judkins Josten and her daughter Whitney Josten. Women You Know, Women You Want to Meet is a casual event, which involves networking and getting to know the people in the community. It is a fundraising event.

Fultz McHenry informed the Commission that the Friends board has a representative in the IWLP meetings and has been working with the Office on the Status of Women staff members on the Gender Balance Project. The Friends board has paid the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics at Iowa State University \$6,000.00 so far to collect data on boards and commissions at the county and municipal levels. Fultz McHenry also highlighted the talent bank database that is available on the Friends website as a tool. She added that the Friends board is committed to bringing more women to leadership positions.

Peters added that the Friends board and the Commission are working on blueprint for achieving gender balance on local boards and commissions. She stated that the Friends board is coordinating efforts with outreach being done by Pradhan and Corey.

Peters added that Florene Swanson attended the Hall of Fame luncheon. Swanson previously spoke to our Commission about her efforts related to gender balance. Since the last ICSW Commission meeting she has met with 13 more counties. She is having the discussion about having more women serve on boards with those counties and is giving accolades to counties that are doing a good job.

Peters added that the talent bank database is on the Friends website and explained how the talent bank works. Carnahan asked for clarification on how the talent bank worked.

Peters explained the website has a link to the talent bank database that gives the public names of women who have added their names as being interested in serving on different boards in their communities.

Gudenkauf commented that he was looking at it on his computer and it is a terrific tool. Gudenkauf likes the fact that it is linked to a LinkedIn account to describe more about the candidate.

Peters reiterated that the LinkedIn page for each woman is key for today's world where people are very connected through digital and social media.

Gudenkauf commented that he would like to congratulate the Friends board members for creating this wonderful resource tool.

### **Discussion of ICSW's area of focus in new fiscal year**

Peters brought up the possibility of holding elections for the Commission in the future and asked Commissioners if, now that new appointees are on board, they should discuss the possibility of appointing a new chair. Peters mentioned the fact that she does not want to seem dictating as a chair. She referenced Iowa Code 216A.53(3) which says,

“Members of the commission shall appoint a chairperson and vice chairperson and any other officers as the commission deems necessary.”

Peters mentioned that the Iowa Code does not tell the Commission when a chair or vice chair should be chosen. She added that maybe it is a good time to discuss this because the Commission has new commissioners. Peters stated that according to the Iowa Code, the Commission can decide when and how its

members want to select a chair and vice chair, and also decide the focus of the Commission's work.

Gudenkauf mentioned that it would be wise to not choose leadership right after a change when there are new commissioners, but maybe revisit this after a few meetings. Peters shared that it would be nice to have a defined process to clarify the questions of what happens, when and how.

Gudenkauf shared that it is nice for new commissioners to participate in a few meetings to understand the lay of the land and feel comfortable before changing leadership. Gudenkauf also suggested that the Commission wait until after January 2015.

Peters highlighted other attachments Commissioners received along with the last meeting notes and strategy paper. For homework, Peters asked Commissioners if they wanted to devote a substantial block of time to discuss this in our next meeting.

Gudenkauf asked the new commissioners to share their feelings about the Commission so far and what they want to see as the work of the commission.

Sewell stated that his initial impression of the Commission's mission is to find issues facing women, agencies and figure out how to make things better.

Whisenand stated that one of the things she got out of today's event is that we can make an impact on women, but being a state government agency, we have limited resources.

Whisenand also mentioned the importance of getting out to different places around the state and not being Des Moines centric. She added that it is important to reach the rural areas of the state. Whisenand suggested hosting our quarterly meetings in different places around the state, adding that as a Commission, we owe it to the citizens of the state to do that.

Carnahan mentioned that the Commission used to do that before. He added that the Commission would have one meeting a year somewhere other than in Des Moines, but it became more difficult with a decrease in resources.

Whisenand added that she was intrigued by the Catt Center data that showed how many women we have in counties who are serving on boards and commissions and she feels like this is very important.

Pradhan added that other offices within the Community Advocacy Services Division within the Iowa Department of Human Rights do outreach to their communities.

Peters clarified that when the gender balance law was passed and had not really taken off, she started the conversation with the Friends board and the Friends decided to support the Catt Center financially to conduct the data-collection research.

Peters asked the new commissioners why they wanted to be on the board and what they want to accomplish.

Hunt Russian agreed with other commissioners that the Commission needs to get out and be visible around the state. She added that data is very important and now we have the data. Hunt Russian pointed out how much time Peters spends on Commission work beyond her work as Commission chair; with much of the work taking place behind the scenes. She added that Peters may need help with some of the Commission work. Hunt Russian said that if the Commission decides to appoint a new chair, it should be a seamless process for transition so give some time for new person to learn.

Whisenand agreed that a co-chair would be helpful.

Peters asked if it would be helpful to have a task group to work on an the Commission's agenda and then recommend areas of focus for the future, such as working on a legislative agenda, doing outreach, coming up with action items, etc.

Peters mentioned that we can tap into the work other allies are doing and partner where beneficial. She suggested that a task group could be a strategic planning committee or blueprint committee.

Peters mentioned that the next Commission meeting is November 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014, which will take place before the legislative session. She added that it would be helpful to have a plan of action to share with legislators on gender balance or new Commission plans.

Whisenand, Hunt Russian, Peters and Corey volunteered to be involved with the strategic planning or blue print planning subcommittee.

Peters suggested that the committee could come up with an action plan for outreach and programing for the Commission, with the deadline for the committee to draft a plan prior to the Nov 12 Commission meeting. The planning committee will meet in September. Corey offered to coordinate this meeting.

Peters suggested that Aaron and Beth might look into the governance of how the Commission is structured.

Peters asked Commissioners to give her information on any ideas or topics they would like to have in the agenda for the next meeting, but she hoped that the planning committee could come up with some good plans of action for the next Commission meeting.

**Public comment:**

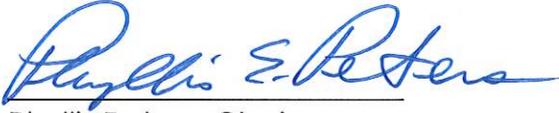
No public comments beyond those offered by guests earlier in the meeting.

**Motion to adjourn:** Motion to adjourn was made by Whisenand, seconded by Carnahan. Vote was unanimous, 6 ayes, 0 nays.

Meeting adjourned at 4:42 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Sanjita Pradhan and Kristen Corey, staff.

Respectfully submitted:



Phyllis Peters, Chair



Kristen Corey, Program Planner