



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

MINUTES

Iowa Commission on the Status of Women
February 6, 2014
Room 208 Lucas Building, Second Floor
321 E 12th Street, Des Moines, IA 50319

Commissioners present for all of the meeting

David Gudenkauf (by phone)	Tom Carnahan
Joni Axel (by phone)	Phyllis Peters
Dr. Jill Olsen (by phone)	Elizabeth Coonan

DHR/ICSW staff

San Wong
Heidi Smith
Sanjita Pradhan
Kristen Corey

Members of the Public - Present for all or part of the meeting

Rachelle Hunt-Russian, Friends of the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women
Florine Swanson, (by phone), resident of Wright County and Iowa delegate to Vision 2020
Miyoko Hikiji, Veteran of the active U.S. Army and Iowa Army National Guard
Bruce Beeston, Veterans National Recovery Center MST Lobbyist
Madeline Allen, Veterans National Recovery Center MST Board Member
Denise Bubeck, Concerned Women of America - Iowa
Bert Dalmer, Assistant Iowa Ombudsman

Call to order

Call to order by Chairwoman Phyllis Peters at 9:32 a.m.

Introductions of guests/public observers

Public members were introduced by commission chairwoman Peters. Peters mentioned that more guests were coming later to speak.

Discussion of November 6, 2013 minutes

Commissioner Olsen asked if office staff would make sure the DHR board strategic plan would be sent all Community Advocacy Services commissioners again. It was implied in the November 6, 2013 minutes that the plan would be sent to all commissioners. Pradhan and Corey stated they would check on this and make sure the plan is sent again. Olsen also asked that staff would send the information on strangulation rate convictions by county which Paul Stageberg mentioned at the last commission meeting.

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Pradhan and Corey stated they would check on this and make sure this would be sent to commissioners.

Peters suggested a few revisions to meeting minutes from November 6, 2013.

Motion by Joni Axel to approve meeting minutes for November 6, 2013 as amended by Phyllis Peters.

Seconded by Tom Carnahan.

Aye: all Nay: none Abstaining: none

Motion carried.

Introduction of new Program Planner, Kristen Corey

Chairwoman Peters introduced Kristen Corey to the commission. She was hired to fill the program planner position that is split between the Office on the Status of Women and the Office of Asian and Pacific Islanders. Corey received her M.S. from Iowa State University in 2007. After graduation, she worked for Iowa State University Extension in the Community and Economic Development Department. Most recently, she worked as a program planner in the Child Support Recovery Unit's (CSRU's) central office (policy unit) writing administrative rules, providing answers and policy-related help for CSRU field offices, conducting systems testing, and writing manuals and other technical documents for CSRU field offices and the public.

DHR and Office on the Status of Women reports

Department of Human Rights (DHR) Director, San Wong reported on current matters related to the department. She invited all commissioners to the DHR open house on Tuesday morning, February 18. Director Wong reported that the Governor and Lieutenant Governor were scheduled to attend the open house. She added that a DHR board meeting is scheduled directly after the open house.

Director Wong's report emphasized that the department is especially involved in and concerned about the shortage and high cost of propane which is a major issue affecting low-income Iowans, especially due to the unusually cold winter. She discussed the department's role in the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program.

Chairwoman Peters stated that some commissioners had questions about future appointments. Director Wong said she had recently met with the Governor's assistant who coordinates the appointment process. She had no specific information on the Governor's appointment decisions and stated that most of the individuals who applied to serve on commissions/boards have been recommended for re-appointment.

Corey gave a brief update on several events that the Office on the Status of Women has been working on. Corey stated that the annual Capitol Girls event took place on Wednesday, February 5. Fifteen high school girls attended (26 had registered, but 11 were unable to attend due to poor weather). Corey added that she is currently busy planning for the Write Women Back into History Essay Contest event. Essays were submitted by 90 students. Corey also will now be responsible for updating the ICSW web site. She stated that she considers it a priority to

keep the site updated and more relevant; and she encouraged input from commissioners. Corey also told commissioners she will be on maternity leave beginning in April.

Commissioner Olsen asked how much staff time is devoted to the two main initiatives described in the staff report (Capitol Girls and Write Women Back into History Essay Contest). Olsen said that at prior commission meetings, she had expressed the view that the Office on the Status of Women and the commission could have a more positive impact by allocating more staff time to research and policy areas. It may be preferable, she said, to outsource routine public relations activities so that time and attention could be directed elsewhere.

Pradhan stated that she has asked Corey to log all time spent on each project (similar to a grant tracker). This will provide data to show where staff time is allocated. Pradhan also stated that the office is in the process of hiring an intern – possibly two interns.

Olsen clarified that she was not advocating that those two activities be dropped, but she asked the staff to consider if there is a better way for the events to be executed without consuming so much of the time of professional staff. She suggested the staff explore other ways to manage/organize the events with the help of partners. Olsen added her support for documenting project time; and then have the commission take a look and make recommendations, but documentation is the key first step toward such a discussion. Peters added that it is a rule of physics that all things cannot be done by one employee position, noting that as commission staff has been reduced in recent years, the 'window-dressing' projects have received attention, diminishing staff resources and focus on projects with potentially greater impact.

Commissioner Coonan asked if this was a strategic planning issue. Peters then asked if it was okay to ask staff for a report for the next meeting. Pradhan and Corey agreed to provide a preliminary report for the commission meeting in April to show the time spent on each project.

Follow-up: The April 16 commission meeting agenda will include review of the staff projects report, along with discussion.

DHR board report

Commissioner Olsen leads the DHR Board as its chairwoman and has served on a subcommittee that developed recommendations and priorities for the board. Olsen added that by the next DHR board meeting on February 18th, the DHR board will consider the list of priorities as an action item to approve. She has asked for feedback from members of all CAS commissions, but has not received feedback.

The proposed DHR Board priorities are these three:

1. Increased funding and personnel to empower DHR website development to increase our efficacy in advocating and serving our constituency.
2. Economic independence of underrepresented populations in Iowa.
3. Alleviation of disproportionate incarceration of African American, Hispanic and Native American populations across the state.

Commissioner Gudenkauf expressed his view that a ball being dropped somewhere in the communication chain; he said the DHR board did not reach commissioners and he was not asked to provide input.

Director Wong stated that the department will send the DHR Board items out again to all commissioners. Wong stated that Jenni Klise sent this out in December, but the items would be sent again.

Olsen added that there will be a presentation on human trafficking at the next DHR board meeting, as well as an update from Paul Stageberg regarding the Iowa Juvenile Home. Olsen stated that the DHR board has had problems with quorum, a recurring struggle for the past three years. Olsen mentioned that Director Wong has worked hard to bring the DHR board forward, but there have been communication problems; staff turnover also has been a problem.

Friends of the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women report

Friends of ICSW board member Rachele Hunt-Russian thanked Corey for the bi-monthly reports the office has been sending to the Friends of ICSW and to commissioners. She added that on January 15, 2014, the Friends of ICSW received an MLK Drum Major of Service Lifetime Achievement Award. Hunt-Russian added that the Friends of ICSW gave the originals of the letter, award certificate and pin to the staff to be housed within the Office on the Status of Women. She also mentioned that planning has started for the Women You Know event in Eastern Iowa (spring event); as well as the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame luncheon that the Friends of ICSW will host.

Heidi Smith came into the room at 10:20 a.m.

Presentation by Miyoko Hikiji on Military Sexual Trauma (MST) legislation

Miyoko Hikiji, a veteran of the active Army and the Army National Guard gave a presentation on proposed MST legislation that is aimed at making commanders more accountable, bringing more perpetrators to justice and providing greater protection and support to MST victims.

Hikiji was deployed to Iraq in 2003 and 2004 and recently wrote a memoir on her deployment, titled, "All I Could Be: My Story as a Woman Warrior in Iraq." Hikiji stated that she has since traveled across Iowa giving presentations on her experiences as a female soldier and veteran. At some of those events, has had multiple women come forward to share their stories related to MST. Hikiji stated that she was also a victim and when she spoke up about the events, her job was threatened and other repercussions followed. She shared her opinion that therapy for female veterans needs to be more female-focused, with attention not only on PTSD, but also on problems related to MST.

Hikiji presented several statistics on female veterans, rape, MST, perpetrators of rape and/or MST, and females in the active military and National Guard including the following:

- MST symptoms are similar to those experienced by victims of RTS (Rape Trauma Syndrome).
- 1 in 3 men and women when asked after a deployment will answer positively for sexual assaults.
- Most women who are raped in the military also report multiple assaults.
- Rape reporting rates nationally: 37% of rapes that happen to civilians are reported compared to only 12% reported in military personnel.
- Iowa's ranking on rape: #26 nationwide.
- Convicted sex offenders can get a waiver to join the military.

Hikiji stated that the proposed bill would take reporting of rape/MST out of the Iowa National Guard system by relieving the commander of the sole responsibility for reporting. She said the Iowa National Guard does not currently have someone who can respond to the report of a rape and do a rape kit within the required time frame of 72 hours. This bill would take reporting from the Guard and hand it over to the local police jurisdiction because those departments have the ability to respond to rape more effectively.

Q & A with Miyoko Hikiji and discussion

During the question and answer section of the presentation, Commissioner Axel asked how many soldiers were currently in Iowa. Hikiji cited Veteran's Administration (VA) statistics from 2013 showing 17,835 women veterans in Iowa; about 9,400 of those soldiers are in the Iowa National Guard.

Commissioner Gudenkauf stated that he is retired military, and stated that if MST happens in the Iowa National Guard (such as on a drill weekend), then Iowa laws would apply to the MST, but when the Iowa National Guard member is on active federal duty, the federal laws would apply. He went on to add that there are two angles or two separate laws that would be required to fix this – both state and federal.

Hikiji answered that yes, this bill would only apply to soldiers on state-issued orders, drill weekends, etc. and added that several MST advocate states are also attempting similar state legislation (i.e., California).

Commissioner Carnahan voiced the concern that in the rush to get to an outside agency other than the military, the effect would be to take the commander off the hook for doing any reporting since this would no longer have the provision to keep the commander accountable. Carnahan asked what was wrong with the Iowa National Guard having its own special task force that would work in concert with the local police department.

Hikiji answered that this bill would not completely take the commander off of the hook, and explained that if a rape is reported to the Johnston police during a drill weekend at Camp Dodge, it would then be reported to General Orr by the Johnston police department. Hikiji added that General Orr has asked to be notified of all military sexual assaults reported during the times soldiers are on orders. She also added that the special task force is a good idea, but until we have the actual numbers of reports (which are very hard to find), we don't have a good place to start. Hikiji thinks the reporting of sexual assaults in the military is less because in the military, there is a focus on the mission and the woman is worried about taking her battle buddy down.

Peters stated that as we find out more, she or the office staff will share the bill number with commissioners.

Hikiji stated that she would send the PowerPoint presentation that she presented at the commission meeting to office staff today. Corey stated that she would then forward this to the commissioners. Pradhan then gave Hikiji a paper with the commissioner contact information in case she would like to contact any of the commissioners in the future.

Gudenkauf added that there is a woman named Michelle Johnson from Spencer, Iowa who has been travelling around the country to do outreach to new commanders to get them to start addressing military sexual assault, in case Hikiji is interested.

San Wong left the room at 11:00 a.m.

Status update on the Iowa Juvenile Home

Pradhan gave a short update on the Iowa Juvenile Home, stating that a lawsuit recently was filed by legislators regarding closure of the Iowa Juvenile Home. There is a concern that in Iowa, we now no longer have a state training school for girls. Pradhan provided a copy of the bill currently proposed and asked if the commissioners felt there was a role for the commission.

Gudenkauf stated that he thinks everyone is getting lost in the word "Toledo" instead of focusing on the fact that girls are no longer being served. He added that the responsibility of commissioners is to advocate for the young women of Iowa and not for the facility in Toledo.

Axel stated she didn't feel very qualified to give an admonition or a recommendation on the situation.

Gudenkauf stated that the girls should have been given information to understand that the Ombudsman is a potential contact. He stressed the importance of education to relay information on how to contact the Ombudsman's Office, not just in the case of Toledo, but at any placement facility, sharing his view that individuals within a placement facility should receive resource information to clearly know how to access help.

To conclude the discussion on the Iowa Juvenile Home, commissioners agreed by consensus to state a position they favored, agreeing as a policy statement to "advocate for systems that safeguard and protect young women and girls, and provide clear accountability to ensure for those safeguards and protections."

Gender balance on local boards and commissions – a view of how the law is being applied

Bert Dalmer, the state's assistant ombudsman, presented a view from the Ombudsman office on how the gender balance law is being applied. He stated that the Ombudsman's office recently investigated the local gender balance law in Sanborn, Iowa.

He first explained that his office is part of Iowa's legislative branch, and it investigates complaints against state and local government. The office is objective, independent and impartial; it receives over 4,000 complaints per year and conducts a full-blown investigation of a subset of those complaints. He added that the Ombudsman's office has received some complaints and questions regarding local boards, and it makes him wonder if the gender balance law is widely known.

Dalmer gave a synopsis of the situation in Sanborn. He stated that the mayor followed the gender balance law by advertising to attract as many people as possible to the city utility board. Three people, including two women, applied. The mayor recommended the appointment of one of the women and the city council ignored the mayor's recommendation. Instead, the council chose to renew the appointment of a man who has held a board position for 30 years. The

council stated that the term “qualified” is the key issue in the law and this term itself justified the reappointment of the man with long-term experience on the board instead of the woman.

The Ombudsman’s office wrote three letters to the Sanborn city council but was unable to get compliance. Dalmer stated that in his view, it seemed like the city attorney ran interference and the Ombudsman’s office believes the state law was violated with respect to gender balance. Dalmer added that there a similar case occurred in 2012 with a county board. There also was another case reported involving a library board, in which the complaint came from a man.

Dalmer said he believes there is ignorance or disrespect for the gender balance law which took effect in January of 2012. He stated he was interested to know what role the Commission might take on this issue. Dalmer clarified that while the Ombudsman’s office can conduct a detailed investigation, it does not have an enforcement arm. Therefore, this case concluded with a letter from the Ombudsman’s office telling the city of Sanborn that the council’s appointment decision was in violation of Iowa’s gender balance law.

Carnahan asked when the law was originally written, if there was an enforcement arm written into the law. Dalmer stated that no, there is no enforcement section in the law.

Axel stated that the law is not being ignored all over the state; there is data to back this up.

Gudenkauf asked if the Ombudsman’s office has done a review of this law around the state.

Dalmer answered that no, the office has mainly done a review of the how the law is applied now and historically.

Peters provided some background information on the involvement of the Friends Board with the Gender Balance Project. She explained that the Friends of ICSW has allocated \$6,000 to the Carrie Chapman Catt Center at ISU for data collection on the gender balance law, but that the city of Sanborn and utility boards are not included in the data collected and measured. She mentioned that the Office on the Status of Women staff have been helping the Friends of ICSW to put an action plan in place and do outreach by hiring an intern for the office. Peters added that there also has been research done by a UNI professor regarding the benefits of having women on boards and/or commissions.

Dalmer added that in the case of Sanborn, he does not think the woman was rejected from the board because she is a woman, but it is more about the fact that the man has been on the board for 30 years. Dalmer reiterated that he thinks the purpose of the law is undermined because of the word “qualified”.

Peters also made the observation that the city attorney in the Sanborn case directed the council to reappoint the man who had been serving on the board for 30 years.

Axel stated that when a person is considered indispensable on a board, it indicates a form of imbalance or that something is wrong with that board.

Peters stated that she can bring a report to the commissioners on an outreach plan regarding how the Friends and allied groups can work to improve gender balance on local boards and commissions. The commission and perhaps the Ombudsman’s office could be involved in the outreach plan.

Axel added that the commission should aim to tell the good stories that worked related to gender balance on boards and/or commissions.

Pradhan added that the office is supportive of the gender balance law and will be working with the Friends board to work more on gender balance issues.

Discussion of other public policy issues coming before the General Assembly

Peters sent information to Commissioners prior to the meeting related to the issue of shackling of pregnant inmates.

Carnahan asked if the previous commission was for the original law related to the shackling of pregnant inmates.

Olsen said that this bill may not even make it out of the committee during this legislative session.

Peters added that this bill is before the legislature right now, and asked if the commission should go on record with a position on this legislation.

Axel stated that the gender balance law has more urgency than this issue and that the commission should pick its battles.

Commission members all agreed that the senate bill on MST will be monitored and will continue to give support to the gender balance law by telling the good cases and gender balance success stories.

Public comment

Florine Swanson from Galt, Iowa (Wright County) attended the meeting by phone. She stated she is one of three Iowa delegates participating in Vision 2020 (an initiative based out of Drexler University in Philadelphia). Swanson stated that she has pursued an interest in the gender balance law; has been advocating for it; set up a local county/city committee to identify and recruit women to positions on local boards and commissions; and has been monitoring success stories in several areas of Iowa (uses the Catt Center data commissioned by the Friends).

Swanson identified Johnson and Van Buren counties as meeting the gender balance law at an early point after the law took effect in 2012 or by early 2013. More recently, Wright and Scott counties achieved gender balance at the county level. Swanson added that in each of these counties there has been a "champion" to actively ensure balanced boards.

Peters asked Swanson who the other two delegates from Vision 2020 are in Iowa. Swanson identified Maxine Lampe (current President of AAUW in Iowa) and Diane Ramsey of IWLC. Swanson added that the state of Oregon has used some of the same legislation as Iowa to enact gender balance on boards and commissions.

Discussion on future commission meeting topics and content

Discussion was held regarding next meeting dates. It was agreed that the existing commissioners would participate in a commission meeting on April 16. New appointments take effect May 1.

To re-cap items from the current meeting's discussion that will be placed on the April 16 agenda, Peters and Olsen listed the following:

- 1/ allocation of staff time to specific projects;
- 2/ a report on the outreach plan for the Gender Balance Project;
- 3/ legislative disposition (or progress) in areas of the commissions' interest, particularly issues discussed at recent commission meetings.

Olsen mentioned the DHR board strategic plan and asked that each commissioner make a commitment on a segment of the three DHR board priorities. She is seeking active engagement from commissioners and added that she would like a report on legislative issues that can be then generated into an action plan.

To assess the challenges of getting the commission engaged in the policy arena, two questions were raised:

- 1/ what things can we (the Commission) do? and
- 2/ what are the changes or things that could help or influence expanded opportunities and equality for Iowa women and girls?

Pradhan asked commissioners if they are seeking to develop a strategic plan.

Commissioners agreed that it would be valuable to work from a revised and relevant plan – whether it is called a strategic plan or an action plan, a structure is needed to frame the commission's work into the future. The commission agreed to add time to the April 16 meeting, to include a planning session directly following the business meeting. It was recommended to make it a "working lunch" and to hold both the business meeting and planning session in a location with available parking.

Pradhan, Corey, and Smith will find a location for the Commission to meet.

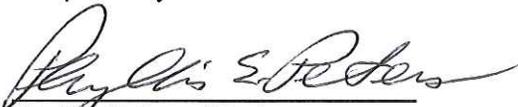
Motion to Adjourn by Tom Carnahan.

Vote: Aye: all No: none

Meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Kristen Corey, staff.

Respectfully submitted:


Phyllis Peters, Chair


Sanjita Pradhan, Executive Officer