

**State of Delaware –Delaware Women's Workforce Council  
Office of Women's Advancement and Advocacy  
Department of Human Resources**

Regular Meeting

Dover, Cannon Building, Conference Room A

Friday, December 8, 2017

11:00 am to 12:30 pm

**Attendees:**

Melanie Ross Levin, Director, Office of Women's Advancement and Advocacy

\*Louise Cummings-Lewis

Kimberly Reinagle-Nietubicz

Katey Evans

Dr. Linda Barnett

Yvonne Gordon

Rita Paige

Christine Rawak-Hill

Roxane E.A. Ferguson

Dr. Marie Laberge

Christopher Waters

\*Chairperson

**DRAFT MINUTES**

**Call to Order and Roll Call:**

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Louise Cummings-Lewis at 11:00am. The chairperson thanked everyone for coming.

**Comments by Chairperson Louise -Cummings Lewis:**

Chairperson Louise Cummings-Lewis talked about this being the first meeting for the Delaware Women's Workforce Council. She introduced Melanie Ross Levin who is the Director for the Office for Women's Advancement and Advocacy.

**Office of Women's Advancement and Advocacy:**

Melanie Ross Levin introduced the new Executive Secretary Stella Harrison to council members. Director Melanie Ross Levin sent regards from acting Secretary Johnson for she was not able to attend the council's first meeting, but she will be attending a council meeting in the future. Director Melanie Ross Levin explains Secretary Johnson's position in the Department of Human Resources and how she would be involved with the council.

Director Melanie Ross Levin explains that the Office of Women's Advancement and Advocacy is now a two person office, she is looking to hire a policy analyst and possibly a graphic designer. Council members can reach out to Director Melanie Ross Levin and Stella Harrison for help with the council. Director Melanie Ross Levin speaks about how a policy analyst person is needed for all the data that has to be put together within the Office of Women's Advancement and Advocacy.

### **Introductions of Members:**

All members of the council introduced themselves and gave background information on how they came to be on the Delaware Women's Workforce Council. The Delaware Women's Workforce Council members' biographies and photos will be sent out to the group soon.

### **Review of our Chapter:**

Director Melanie Ross Levin explains how House Bill 4 establishes the following groups under the Office of Women's Advancement and Advocacy. **Delaware Commission for Women.** This commission shall advise the Office of Women's Advancement and Advocacy on strategic planning, project development and programming. **Delaware Women's Hall of Fame Committee.** This committee shall be responsible for fostering an understanding of and an appreciation for the many contributions of the women of Delaware, to their home, community, state and nation and annually recognize and acknowledge the achievement of remarkable Delaware women through the Delaware Women's Hall of Fame.

**The Delaware Women's Workforce Council** will work to achieve gender equality in every workplace in the First State by eliminating the gender-based wage gap, removing the visible and invisible barriers to women's advancement and ensuring that every person regardless of gender, has an equal opportunity for advancement in the workplace. Director Melanie Ross Levin has everyone look at page 9 as to what the council's mission will be under the guidelines of House Bill 4.

Director Ross Levin also has everyone look at page 10 so that they can be familiar with what the council members are supposed to do as far as conducting a study, collecting data, recommending policies and making recommendations to agencies to remove gender-based inequities in the workplace. The State of Delaware is the largest employer within the state and a lot of data can come from state agencies.

To start research to get the data, the council members should look at issues for state employees. State of Delaware Department of Human Resources now has the data for the workforce in the state. Director Melanie Ross Levin has been looking at changing the sexual harassment policies and how they can better serve employees. A lot of the work that will be done with the council will be through legislators, but the council members need to think about working with businesses and individuals too.

Boston has a citywide model and Delaware will have the first statewide version. The Delaware Women's Workforce Council will dig deeper into pay equality issues and implement changes. Articles have been written in Boston for results of negotiating salaries training.

### **Salary Negotiations Training**

Christopher Waters suggests requesting an impact report and strategic report from the AAUW Work Smart (American Association University Women) in Boston. He thought the reports would help show how people are being impacted by the salary negotiations training. Director Melanie Ross Levin will request copies of impact study and strategic reports.

The Boston office suggest training for individuals, business and legislators and how it all works together. Boston has a bigger staff and the Delaware Women's Workforce Council is going to see how the model works in Delaware.

The question was asked, if there was a contingency plan to get policy from businesses and individuals in the Boston Model? Director Melanie Ross Levin will be talking to her contacts in Boston about questions that were asked by the Delaware Women's Workforce Council. Director Melanie Ross Levin has a contact in Boston. Her name is Megan Costello. Ms. Costello and Director Ross Levin have discussed equal pay issues.

### **What Success looks like**

Chairperson Louise Cummings-Lewis talks about the wage gap and how it affects women in the State of Delaware. It was noted that data was needed to get the information for wage gaps, how different employers pay different wages, and how small business plays a part in dealing with the wage gap. The council members need to know what the baseline is and work to find gaps. The council members discussed the different wages for the State, County and City Governments in Delaware.

### **Sustainable Success**

Use data to make substantive recommendations. Get a strategic plan along with goals and objectives. Find a road map on deciding how items will be implemented. Have a document that can be used to work on that and can show each accomplishment. Establishing a timeline in which to get things done. Provide education to the public on what council is doing. Decide what the council members will do first and use Boston's model to compare Delaware outcomes to theirs. Consider all pay and negotiations for salary and see if Delaware salaries are compressed. See how much the Delaware Women's Workforce Council can do with the Delaware General Assembly in the case of minimum wage. It was stated that the Director for the Office for Women's Advancement and Advocacy can work with the Delaware General Assembly on legislation.

When it comes to research, the council members would have to advocate to legislators. The Delaware Women's Workforce Council can testify about and lobby for bills. Director Melanie Ross Levin can speak on behalf of the Council when dealing with legislators, or the council can have a representative from the membership speak.

**Bylaws:**

The Delaware Women's Workforce Council is looking to have a subcommittee in order to have established bylaws. Christine Rawak-Hill volunteered to be subcommittee chairperson for the bylaws. Linda Barnett volunteered to help the subcommittee on bylaws. Linda Barnett wants legislative advocacy written in the bylaws so the committee can lobby for bills for consideration that come from the Delaware Women's Workforce Council to the legislators in Delaware.

**Election for Key Positions:**

The Delaware Women's Workforce Council chairperson is Louise Cummings-Lewis. The committee would also like to have a Vice Chairperson. Kimberly Reinagle-Nietubicz volunteered to be Vice Chair of the Delaware Women's Workforce Council. The council members have to decide on what duties the vice chairperson will have when the chair person is absent.

The subcommittee will look at Boston's Model. The subcommittee will be temporary and on-going to leave room to work together with other groups. The council members want to take a look at regional meetings. The subcommittee is to work on drafts for bylaws and then recommendations will be sent to the entire council.

The subcommittee and the vice chairperson have to be announced to the public. The subcommittee meetings have to be announced to the public also. The Delaware Women's Workforce Council members will work on drafts and decide what information will be presented to the public. The council members will have focus groups and town hall meetings with the public.

**Quorum:**

Yvonne Gordon asked if there is a rule for a quorum. Does videoconferencing into a meeting count for a quorum? The person called in to the meeting on the phone, then the person's vote does not count for a quorum. The chairperson Louise Cummings-Lewis prefers there is no videoconferencing or phone calls. Each person should be present for meetings. If someone misses four meetings they can be replaced by another person.

**Meeting Schedule:**

The Delaware Women's Workforce Council will meet every other month and the meetings will be held in Dover. The time discussed by the committee that worked for everyone was 11:00am. Council members will contact Director Melanie Ross Levin if they cannot make a meeting. The following dates were discussed with the committee for having meetings.

- January 22, 2018
- March 19, 2018
- May 14, 2018
- September 17, 2018
- November 19, 2018.

**Adjournment:**

Motion was made to adjourn by Louise Cummings-Lewis and seconded by Dr. Linda Barnett.

DRAFT