

**City of Norwalk
Commission on the Status of Women
Regular Meeting
January 9, 2023**

ATTENDANCE: Claudia Werman Conner, Anna Keegan, Sarah Rendon Garcia, Ivonne Zucco, Kristina Testa-Buzzee, Shannon O'Toole Giandurco, Jasmine Prezzie, Melody D'Alessandro

STAFF: Michelle Woods Matthews, Director of Communications

OTHER: Dominique Johnson, Steve Hernandez

I. Call to Order

Ms. Keegan called the meeting to order at 7:02.

II. Approval of the minutes from December 19, 2022

******Ms. Testa-Buzzee moved to approve the minutes from December 19, 2022.**

******Ms. O'Toole seconded the motion.**

******The motion passed with Ms. Keegan abstaining.**

III. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

IV. Old Business

a. Reports of committees.

• Nominations Committee

The nominating committee didn't meet this past month, so there is nothing to report.

• Research Committee

The Research Committee also did not meet since the last meeting and have nothing to report.

• Diversity Committee

Ms. Testa-Buzzee will be sharing the deck with Ms. Hernandez the Diversity Coordinator this Wednesday. It is a way to increase diversity among the boards. She will send a copy of it to Michelle to disperse to the committee.

V. New Business

******Ms. Zucco moved to take the meeting out of order to give the speakers a chance to join and skip to item d, nominating committee.**

******Ms. Conner seconded the motion.**

******The motion passed unanimously.**

d. Appointment of a Nominating Committee for election nominations for Chair and Vice Chair.

Ms. Matthews explained that they will appoint a nominating committee to elect a new chair and a new vice chair for the Commission. The slate of nominees will be presented at the next meeting.

Ms. O'Toole volunteered to be on the nominating committee. Ms. Garcia and Ms. Prezzie also agreed to be on the nominating committee.

a. Guest Speaker: State Representative Dominique Johnson of the 143rd House District, serving parts of Norwalk and Westport, to discuss the 2023 legislative session.

Ms. Matthews introduced Ms. Johnson and gave some information on her background with the City of Norwalk. She will give the committee information on how to get legislation passed in Hartford.

Ms. Johnson was just sworn in as a state representative. She gave an overview of the timing to get bills introduced and passed. She shared a slide on how a bill becomes a law. There is a bill tracker on the state Government website that allows you to watch the progress of bills becoming laws.

Ms. Keegan asked if Ms. Johnson knew of any bills being introduced that would be of interest to the commission. Ms. Johnson said a new DCF bill may be of interest. The second is proposed by a group of UCONN students regarding reproductive healthcare.

Ms. Conner asked how the large number of bills gets filtered down to the few that are considered. She also asked how to give feedback to proposed bills. Ms. Johnson gave an overview of the process.

Ms. Testa-Buzzee asked if the bill tracking system has notifications. Ms. Johnson assured her that you can set the frequency and means of notifications.

The committee thanked Ms. Johnson for her time and representation in Hartford.

b. Guest Speaker: Steven Hernández, Esq., Executive Director at Connecticut Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity (CWCS), gives an overview of the State Commission's mission and 2023 priorities and how the CWCS can partner with the Norwalk Commission on the Status of Women in the future.

Ms. Matthews introduced Mr. Hernandez and gave some background on his experience. Each of the committee members then introduced themselves.

Mr. Hernandez gave a quick background on the history of women's and children's rights. He also explained how his agency functions and the communities it serves.

He also discussed the 'pink tax' and the way in which women pay more in taxes and fees and earn less in wages. The biggest consequence is that this causes minoritized populations to fight amongst themselves.

Lastly, he discusses reproductive rights and the priority that access remains there for the women in Connecticut.

Mr. Hernandez made the point that his Commission is open to working with the committee.

Ms. Conner thanked Mr. Hernandez for his time and explaining the focus of his commission.

Ms. Testa-Buzzee asked if TwoGen has a newsletter. Mr. Hernandez explained how to acquire reports from TwoGen.

Ms. O'Toole asked how the commission prioritizes which issues get the most attention.

Ms. Matthews read an introduction written by Melody D'Alessandro. She gave some information on her experience and background.

c. Update from Michelle Woods Matthews about the February meeting speaker.

Ms. Matthews has asked Lieutenant Governor Bysiewicz to speak at the next meeting.

e. Fill out the Doodle by January 14 to plan a Special Meeting to set 2023 priorities.

Ms. Matthews asked that the doodle pool be completed by all members by January 14, after which she will distribute the results.

VII. Adjournment

****** Ms. Prezzie moved to adjourn the meeting**

****** Ms. Zucco seconded the motion.**

****** The motion passed unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:15.

Respectfully submitted.

Amy Chaple
Telesco Secretarial Services