

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
111 N.W. 1st Street, Suite #1034, Miami, FL 33128
Minutes of Meeting of February 27, 2013

Present: Leah Blumenfeld, Marie Eloi, Viviana Jordan, Michelle Dunaj Lucking, Francesca Menes, Beverly Nixon, Eveline Pierre, Kit Rafferty, Linda Robinson, Grace Signorelli, Marie Woodson, Mara Zapata, and Dona Zemo

Excused: Sharon Kendrick-Johnson, Samia Taoulost Malik, Grace O'Donnell, Rhonda Pinkney-Wimberly, Barbara Schwartz,

Absent: Lis-Marie Alvarado

Guests: Max Rothman, President and CEO of the Alliance for Aging

Staff: Laura Morilla

Chairwoman Michelle Dunaj Lucking commenced the meeting at 5:40 p.m. Michelle welcomed everyone and everyone introduced themselves.

Linda moved to approve the agenda and Francesca seconded the motion. The motion passed and the **agenda was approved.**

Francesca moved to approve the minutes of 01/23/13 and Mara seconded the motion. The motion passed and the **minutes were approved.**

Next there was a presentation by Max Rothman, the president and CEO of the Alliance for Aging, about the Alliance and issues pertaining to women and aging. Aging is an important women's issue because of the demographics. The Alliance for Aging provides information and services to the elderly. The Alliance was established pursuant to the Older Americans Act and is one of several such Alliances around the country. The Alliance has four areas of responsibility: 1. Programs and Accountability-funds dozens of agencies through grants; 2. Oversight-certain oversight authority over Medicaid funding in the community; 3. Administer the Aging and Disability Resource Center; and 4. "SHINE"- serving the health insurance needs of the elderly with volunteers who provide phone assistance to persons who have issues with Medicare/Medicaid/health insurance.

Most of the program that the Alliance funds are to help the elderly stay at home, such as meals at home and at senior centers; homecare/daycare; incontinence products, etc. The Alliance has also developed some strategic initiatives that are not funded by the state of Florida: 1. Office of Healthy Aging Programs; 2. Community Care Transition Program; 3. Elder Abuse Prevention Program with staff that does community education and outreach; 4. Veterans'assistance for older veterans; and 5. Creating a financial exploitation consortium to educate the elderly about financial exploitation. The Alliance is also looking at issues of transportation and mobility and expanding the use of computers by the elderly. The Alliance's annual Positive Living Awards dinner is on November 14, 2013 at Jungle Island.

Mr. Rothman also provided some demographic information about the population served by the Alliance: 70% female; 83% Hispanic; 10% African-American; 40% widowed; 50% with dementia; average age of 82; majority are low income with \$969 per month; and 60% are living alone with no caregiver.

Mr. Rothman stated that older women live longer than men by about 5 years, so economic issues are key. Women have more health expenses as they get older and most cannot afford long term care insurance. By age 75, 7 in 10 women are widowed, divorced or never married so there is a great risk of financial insecurity and financial exploitation. Per Mr. Rothman, 1/3 of Florida's older people on Medicaid are in Miami-Dade County and the Alliance is going to be providing information to the elderly on the privatization of the Medicaid program in Florida. In response to a question, Mr. Rothman explained that the Florida Dept. of Children and Families investigates allegations of elder abuse. The main problem now is what has been happening in assisted living facilities.

Then the **Committee Reports** were presented.

The Nominating Committee was created to present a slate of officers at the March meeting. The CFW elections will be held at the April meeting. The members of the Nominating Committee are: Grace O'Donnell, Viviana Jordan, Mara Zapata, Kit Rafferty and Linda Robinson.

Marie reviewed the written report of the Events Committee pertaining to the lobby display for Women's History Month. The lobby display is going up on March 4th and Penny Lambeth will be at the display dressed up as Julia Tuttle on March 5th, trying to draw attention to the display. The CFW members also collected some money to give to Penny for her time. Penny will give the money to the City Cemetery restoration fund. The CFW's lobby display is listed in the Dade Heritage Trust's new guide to Dade Heritage Days. Michelle reminded everyone to attend the Women's History Month kickoff event on March 1 at the Julia Tuttle gravesite at the Miami City Cemetery.

For the Legislative Committee, Leah reported on the recent meeting with staff to State Rep. Eddie Gonzalez. The meeting was attended by Leah, Michelle, and Laura and focused on the three issues: the ERA ratification bill; protection of Miami-Dade's Living Wage Ordinance; and the bill making domestic violence victims eligible for unemployment compensation. Michelle asked the Legislative Committee to meet soon to address all the hot issues that are pending.

Mara then reviewed the draft goals and action plan recommended by the Goals Committee. Because of the CFW's limited funds, there was an extensive discussion on the issue of updating the Connections Directory later this year and whether to print the directory or just have it available online. The concern is whether or not printing the directory, which the last time cost approximately \$5000, is a priority for the CFW. Some members stated that they thought that the money would be better spent on other projects in the community. Others thought that printing the directory is valuable because there are women who don't have access to computers and because the directory serves as a valuable marketing tool when we are able to physically hand them out.

During the discussion, it was suggested that the Communications Committee meet to discuss the Connections Directory and bring back a recommendation. Viviana, Mara, Eveline and Grace Signorelli want to serve on the Communications Committee. At the end of the discussion, Grace Signorelli moved that the CFW print the Connections directory in a quantity yet to be determined. Mara seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

Kit moved to approve the Goals and Action for 2013-2014. Mara seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

Under **Old Business**, Michelle encouraged everyone to attend the upcoming Women in Politics Conference, the Women of Impact awards luncheon and the In the Company of Women awards reception.

Michelle also reported on the homeless veterans workshop of February 13th that the CFW co-hosted with the Women's Bureau of the U.S. Labor Department.

Under **New Business**, Michelle explained that the CFW has been invited to have its March 27th meeting at the Women's Park for an "on the road" meeting. Marie Woodson moved that the CFW have the March 27th meeting at the Women's Park. Dona seconded the motion, and the motion passed. The March 27th meeting will begin at 6 p.m. and there will be no Executive Committee meeting.

The CFW discussed the annual renewal dues to the National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW). The amount of the dues is \$275. There was discussion as to whether or not to renew the dues and whether or not the CFW gets something of value in return for its membership in NACW. Linda moved that the CFW renew its membership and pay the dues. Kit seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

The CFW discussed the new vacancy on the Financial Recovery Board (FRB) of the Public Health Trust. Michelle gave an update of the situation, including the withdrawal of the candidacy of Larry Hawkins, conversations with Katy Sorenson and Martha Baker, etc. This vacancy creates the opportunity to appoint another woman to the FRB, since right now there is only one woman on the FRB. The vacancy will be filled by SEIU, the labor union at the Public Health Trust. Marie Eloi asked the CFW to recommend one of two women whom she was suggesting for the vacancy- Beatrice Cazeau or Magalie Desroches Austin. The CFW reviewed the resumes and had a discussion. Marie Eloi then moved that the CFW recommend Beatrice Cazeau to the vacancy. Marie Woodson seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

The CFW next discussed Marie Woodson's suggestion that the CFW establish a scholarship for students. Marie would like to see the CFW award the scholarship to help qualified students, perhaps not for the entire four years but to help pay for some of the expenses. The CFW discussed various aspects of this idea- how to raise the money for the scholarship; limiting the applicants to women/girls and whether that could be done; and how labor intensive this project would be. Marie said that she would take charge of this project. This will be discussed further and Laura will get feedback from the County Attorney.

Laura briefly reported on her recent meeting with Sherry Thompson Giordano, the new Executive Director of the PACE Center for girls in Miami.

Under **Announcements**, Michelle reported that Mary Young recently resigned from the CFW because she is running for the Coral Gables City Commission. Grace Signorelli announced that the State Attorney's Office of Child Support Enforcement is doing an outreach event in South Dade aimed at non-custodial parents. She also announced that she will be starting Harvard Law School in the fall. Leah mentioned that she participated in the One Billion Rising event at FIU on February 14th.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Laura Morilla
Recorder