

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
111 N.W. 1st Street, Suite #1034, Miami, FL 33128
Minutes of Meeting of September 25, 2013

Present: Nordis Alvarez, Leah Blumenfeld, Marie Eloi, Monica Interian, Viviana Jordan, Sharon Kendrick-Johnson, Michelle Dunaj Lucking, Francesca Menes, Beverly Nixon, Eveline Pierre, Kit Rafferty, Linda Robinson, Phyllis Sloan-Simpkins, Marie Woodson, Mara Zapata and Dona Zemo

Excused: Noreen Lagault Mendoza and Rhonda Pinkney-Wimberly

Absent: Samia Taouloust Malik

Guests: Rene Diaz, Director of the Office of Community Advocacy, and Sherry Thompson Giordano, Executive Director of the PACE Center for Girls, Miami

Staff: Laura Morilla

Chairwoman Michelle Dunaj Lucking commenced the meeting at 5:35 p.m. She welcomed everyone and asked the CFW members to introduce themselves.

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

Linda moved to approve the minutes of 07/24/13 and Phyllis seconded the motion. The motion passed and the **minutes were approved.**

Rene Diaz, Director of the Office of Community Advocacy, made a **presentation** about the proposed amendments to the ordinances governing the six advisory boards- Asian American Advisory Board; Black Affairs Advisory Board; Commission for Women; Community Relations Board; Hispanic Affairs Advisory Board; and Military Affairs Advisory Board. These six boards fall under the purview of the Office of the Chair of the Board of County Commissioners, which is the legislative branch of Miami-Dade County, as opposed to being under the Administration like the other boards. The purpose of the proposed changes is to create some sort of uniform administrative process, and will not affect the mission of the boards. These are proposals that have to be reviewed and passed by the County Commissioners. Rene briefly explained some of the proposed changes and distributed the written proposed changes and answered some questions from the CFW members. Eveline stated that she would like to have the CFW meetings recorded. Rene said that this is included in the proposals and that by January 2014 the Clerk of the Board should be able to record the meetings.

Next there was a presentation by Sherry Thompson Giordano, the Executive Director of the PACE Center for Girls, Miami. PACE is a day treatment center for girls who are at risk of failing out of school or of getting involved in the juvenile justice system. It is not an overnight facility. The program is nine months and included classes, counseling, life skills sessions, and advocacy. PACE has a contract with Miami-Dade County Public Schools and is opening in January 2014 at 1400 NW 36th Street, second floor, Miami. It will enroll 50 girls the first year, 11 to 17 years olds. PACE is a volunteer program; it is not mandated. The girls are referred by juvenile judges, social workers, counselors, school principals, etc., and the girls can also self-refer. Miami will be the 18th center in Florida. There will be a launching celebration in mid-December and a PACE alumni association will also be created so that these women can be role models to the girls.

PACE will be in session 12 months a year. The goal is to eventually get the girls back to their regular schools, but they can stay and graduate from PACE. The program follows Miami-Dade Public Schools curriculum. Each girl will have a case management program that will be followed and a counselor will stay with each girl for three years after graduation. In the next couple of years, there will be a move to open a PACE Center in South Dade. Speakers from the community will also be brought in to address the girls. Statistics from other PACE Centers show that 40% of the girls have juvenile justice issues and that, one year out, 95% have no criminal activity.

Under **Old Business**, Michelle mentioned Hear Congo's "A Night to Unite and End Violence" event on December 6th. The CFW is a co-sponsor of the event. Michelle encouraged the CFW's committees to focus on and address the issue of domestic violence.

Michelle reminded everyone that the deadline for nominations for the In the Company of Women awards is October 11th, and that Vicky Mallette, from the Parks Department, will be at the CFW October meeting to give an update on the planning.

Michelle reported that she attended the Florida COSW's statewide conference for women's commission in Tampa last week. The annual convention of the National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW) will be held July 23-26, 2014, in Sarasota. Michelle also reported that she and Laura attended the Doral CFW's meeting last night.

Under **New Business**, the CFW discussed the date for the November CFW meeting. The November meeting date needs to be changed because the 4th Wednesday of the month is the night before Thanksgiving. After discussion of everyone's availability and a show of hands, the CFW decided to have the November meeting on Thursday, November 21st.

The CFW then discussed the Andrea Castillo Foundation's fundraising event on October 17th. Mara explained the event and the reason for the creation of the scholarship fund by Susie Castillo, a School Board member and the mother of Andrea Castillo. Mara encouraged everyone to attend. Viviana explained that the scholarship is for students who have financial need and who have a passion for education. Viviana stated that there is a service component as well, especially early childhood education, because Susie Castillo wants to leave a legacy in honor of her daughter. Student from Miami-Dade College and FIU have been selected to receive the scholarships. Mara suggested that perhaps the CFW can make a donation to the Foundation. Kit moved that the CFW donate \$250 to the Andrea Castillo Foundation. Phyllis seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

The **Committee Reports** were then presented.

Communications Committee. Laura is working on the update of the Directory and distributed the list of ads sold so far.

Events and Fundraising Committee. Sharon reviewed the written report. As far as the Sosa event for girls, the two things that the committee decided were: the event will be for middle school girls and the event date will be May 2014. Per Sharon, the actual school that the CFW is going to work with should be selected at the next committee meeting. The committee did discuss possible venues for the event and that transportation would be an issue but that Chairwoman Sosa might be able to provide transportation.

Viviana then said that she had a couple of thoughts. In October and February the School Board does a demographic count of all schools, especially how many students get free or reduced lunch. Viviana suggested that this could be the criteria for selecting the specific school and she said that she would get the October report.

Viviana also said that if you have it at a venue, instead of at a specific school, then you could bring in students from different schools and that the individual School Board members might be able to pay for the buses to transport the students. She said that she could get the cost information for transportation.

Eveline said that she would like some clarification as to how the CFW is going to choose the school- based on student diversity, based on a city with a woman mayor, etc.

Sharon and Laura next explained the proposed Women's Health and Wealth Conference by Rosen Financial/Brad Rosen. Copies of the written conference proposal were distributed. There was a lengthy discussion about whether the CFW should co-sponsor the conference. Eveline expressed concern about co-sponsoring an event that dealt with financial advice because of problems in recent years with the Madoff scandal. Michelle noted that Rosen Financial had been a co-sponsor of the CFW's Equal Pay Act 50th Anniversary Reception back in June. Nordis stated that there were other ways to accomplish the goal of educating women about financial matters and directly impacting and assisting a non-profit. Dona asked that if there was going to be a charge for the event, then could the CFW could get a portion of the proceeds. Viviana said that the cost to attend should be kept low.

A lot of the discussion back and forth was about careful should the CFW be about looking into the background or vetting the groups that want to associate/co-sponsor with the CFW and what advantage those groups would get for their association with the CFW. The point was made that just about everyone wants to get a benefit from associating/co-sponsoring with the CFW, whether it be buying an ad in the Connections Directory or anything else. Leah asked if now the CFW is supposed to vet or do a background check on everyone that wants to do something with the CFW. Linda stated that perhaps it would help if the CFW could have some input into the program and that the charge to attend not be exorbitant. Sharon moved that the CFW co-sponsor the Health and Wealth Conference, with the suggestion that the CFW have input into the program and that the charge to attend not be exorbitant. The vote was 8 in favor and 8 against, so because of the tie vote the motion failed.

Michelle then announced that Mara was the new Chair of the Human Trafficking Committee and Mara reported on the recent human trafficking conference that she organized at Miami-Dade College.

Legislative Committee. The Legislative Committee will be meeting soon. The ERA ratification bills have been filed for the 2014 Florida legislative session and the alimony reform bill is expected to be filed again.

Under **Announcements**, Kit reported on the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) press conference held in August to observe the 50th anniversary of the signing of the FMLA. Mention was also made at the press conference that Miami-Dade County passed the first local leave ordinance in the country.

Michelle mentioned that the Women's Equality Day event went well and she thanked Marie Woodson and Monica for attending.

Phyllis talked about the recent newspaper article in the *Cutler Bay News* about her youth dance program.

Francesca mentioned that the National Immigrant Integration Conference will be November 17-19 in Miami.

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Laura Morilla
Recorder