

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
111 N.W. 1st Street, Suite 1034, Miami, FL 33128
Minutes of Meeting of April 23, 2014

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

Excused: Marie Eloi, Francesca Menes, Linda Robinson, and Rhonda Wimberly

Staff: Laura Morilla

Guests: Jorge Diaz and Don Price Johnston

Chair Michelle Dunaj Lucking commenced the meeting at 5:35 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

First there was a **presentation** by Jorge Diaz and Don Price Johnston. They are the plaintiffs in the lawsuit filed in January 2014 in Miami-Dade Circuit Court challenging Florida's ban on same-sex marriage. Jorge talked a bit about his background, about how he and Don became engaged, and about some of the benefits that married couples have that they do not. Don gave a summary of the law and court cases and stated that the basis of the lawsuit is the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Don stated that he and Jorge are reaching out to all the communities to educate the public so that the different communities are not scared at the prospect of redefining marriage. Don said that they too have faced the deeply ingrained definitions of gender roles and that they just want to have choices. He stated that in 2009 the Florida constitutional amendment that banned same-sex marriage passed by 62%, but that current polling shows that 57% now support same-sex marriage. Judge Sarah Zabel is the judge on the case and the plaintiffs will be filing a motion for summary judgment soon. Jorge said that for him this was a civil rights issue because the law restricts the rights of certain groups.

Kit moved to approve the Agenda and Dona seconded the motion. The motion passed and the **Agenda was approved.**

Sharon moved to approve the minutes of the CFW meeting of 03/26/14. Phyllis seconded the motion but wanted the minutes amended to reflect that she was excused, not absent. The motion passed and the **minutes were approved as amended.**

Next, the **Committee Reports** were presented.

First was the Nominating Committee Report/Election of Officers. Michelle reviewed the slate of officers recommended by the Nominating Committee and then, per the Bylaws, Michelle opened the floor for nominations for the office of Chair. Eveline and Monica nominated Marie Woodson. Michelle gave Mara, the Nominating Committee's recommended nominee for Chair, and Marie Woodson the opportunity to say a few words and Mara and Marie made their presentations. Written ballots were distributed to the CFW members. Fourteen ballots were turned in and there was a 7-7 tie for the position of Chair. Written ballots were distributed again for another round of voting.

While the CFW members were filling out their ballots, more committee reports were presented. Monica reviewed the written report of the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Issues Committee. Viviana reviewed the written report of the Events and Fundraising Committee and reported on the Committee's visit to the Young Women's Preparatory Academy (YWPA). Nordis also talked about the visit to the YWPA. The event being planned is for the students at the YWPA. The YWPA principal also said that she would like for there to be an

ongoing, supportive relationship between the CFW and the YWPA. The next meeting of the Events and Fundraising Committee is tomorrow.

Back to the results of the election for CFW Chair, the second round of ballots were counted and Mara Zapata was elected Chair of the CFW.

Continuing with the rest of the elections, Michelle opened the floor for nominations for the position of First Vice Chair. There were no nominations from the floor. Michelle asked Sharon, the nominee recommended by the Nominating Committee, to say a few words. Kit moved to elect Sharon as First Vice Chair and Viviana seconded the motion. The motion passed and Sharon Kendrick-Johnson was elected First Vice Chair.

Michelle opened the floor for nominations for the position of Second Vice Chair. There were no nominations from the floor. Michelle asked Viviana, the nominee recommended by the Nominating Committee, to say a few words. Nordis moved to elect Viviana as Second Vice Chair and Beverly seconded the motion. The motion passed and Viviana Jordan was elected Second Vice Chair.

Michelle opened the floor for nominations for the position of Member at Large. There were no nominations from the floor. Michelle asked Leah, the nominee recommended by the Nominating Committee, to say a few words. Dona moved to elect Leah as Member at Large and Marie seconded the motion. The motion passed and Leah Blumenfeld was elected Member at Large.

Michelle opened the floor for nominations for the position of Member at Large. There were no nominations from the floor. Michelle asked Nordis, the nominee recommended by the Nominating Committee, to say a few words. Viviana moved to elect Nordis as Member at Large and Marie seconded the motion. The motion passed and Nordis Alvarez was elected Member at Large.

Under the Legislative Committee Report, Kit talked about a recent survey of low wage women who are also low engaged in the political process. The top two concerns for these women were economic issues and health issues. They believe that the minimum wage should be raised and they believe in equal pay and paid leave. Affordable child care is a big concern too. Kit also reported that there is a big campaign to expand Medicaid in Florida and that the wage theft bill may be dead in the Florida Legislature.

Leah gave an update on the status of the bills on which the CFW had taken a position- the ERA, unemployment compensation for domestic violence victims, jury duty exemptions, and minimum wage bills have gone nowhere; the pregnancy discrimination bill is making some progress; the guardians bill is in committee; the crimes against unborn children bill passed; the Senate will vote tomorrow on the termination of pregnancy bill and it is likely to pass; the expansion of the Florida Kidcare bill is stuck in committee; and the wage theft bill is in committee in the House but has been withdrawn from the Senate. The Legislative Committee will debrief after the legislative session ends.

Under Old Business, Laura reminded everyone to attend the May 2nd Women's Health and Wealth Conference. The CFW is a co-sponsor. Michelle reminded everyone to register for the NACW conference in Sarasota July 23-26.

Marie Woodson gave an update on the planning of the event to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Civil Right act of 1964 that is planned for July 2. All the Advocacy Boards are involved and we are still looking for a venue. The afternoon program will include an educational component from 1 to 3 p.m. and then a town-hall style forum from 3:15 to 5 p.m. Following that there will be a cocktail reception from about 5:30 to 8 p.m. Various federal partners are invited to participate.

Under **New Business**, Michelle reported that she had a conversation with Josefina Carbonell and staff from the Easter Seals about elder women's issues. The Easter Seals staff offered to give the CFW a tour or host a CFW meeting. Michelle also reported that she met Thom Collins, the Director of the new PAMM art museum, at an event recently. PAMM does community events so it is a potential partner for the CFW and also may offer a potential venue for an event. Michelle also met Summer Knowles, a CBS4 news anchor, and suggested that Summer could be a potential emcee for a future event.

Michelle and Laura reported that they participated in the "Color of Justice" program on March 31st organized by the National Association of Women Judges.

Dona commented on what a wonderful speaker Phyllis was at the Miami Beach Women's Conference in March and Phyllis briefly recapped some of her remarks from the conference.

Under **Announcements**, Noreen mentioned that her Geeki Girls coding camp for older women is coming up on May 17th.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Laura Morilla, Recorder