

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN
111 N.W. 1st Street, Suite 1034, Miami, FL 33128
Minutes of Meeting of May 28, 2014

Present: Marie Eloi, Monica Interian, Sharon Kendrick-Johnson, Beverly Nixon, Eveline Pierre, Kit Rafferty, Linda Robinson, Marie Woodson, Mara Zapata, and Dona Zemo

Excused: Nordis Alvarez, Leah Blumenfeld, Viviana Jordan, Michelle Dunaj Lucking, Noreen Lagault Mendoza, and Rhonda P. Wimberly

Absent: Francesca Menes and Phyllis Sloan-Simpkins

Staff: Laura Morilla

Guests: State Representative Cynthia Stafford and Marty Cowart, legislative aide to Rep. Stafford

Chair Mara Zapata commenced the meeting at 5:45 p.m. and welcomed everyone. Everyone introduced themselves.

First there was a **presentation** by State Representative Cynthia Stafford about the Florida legislative session that just concluded. State Rep. Stafford is a former Legal Aid lawyer who worked with domestic violence victims. She thanked and congratulated the CFW for its work on behalf of women. Rep. Stafford first discussed what happened with the bills that were legislative priorities for the CFW. The pregnancy discrimination bill came through the committee on which Rep. Stafford is the ranking Democrat. It did not pass the Legislature. A lot of abortion restriction bills passed. Rep. Stafford was the House sponsor of the bill to raise the minimum wage to \$10.10, but it did not get a hearing. The bill to provide workers' compensation for domestic violence victims did not get a hearing. Neither did the ERA ratification bill, the Florida Kidcare bill, nor the bill on exemptions from jury duty. The in-state tuition bill for undocumented high school students did pass. Rep. Stafford said that during this session 1,108 bills were filed and 264 passed. Rep. Stafford was one of 16 legislators who voted against the budget because there was a big surplus that could have been used for many needs- waitlists for senior care services, waitlists for daycare, raised for teachers, etc.

Rep. Stafford noted that it seems that when tax breaks are passed for the benefit of corporations, they are permanent, but when the tax breaks are passed for people, they are only temporary. She also noted that the Florida Legislature refused to accept federal money to expand Medicaid, so that Floridians' tax money is being used by other states to fund their healthcare. It is the working poor that gets left out without the Medicaid expansion.

Rep. Stafford explained that the comprehensive human trafficking bill that passed eliminated the statute of limitations for certain circumstances and enhanced punishments. The average human trafficking victim in Florida is a 13 year-old female. Regarding the unintended consequences of the safe houses, Rep. Stafford said that they are using the Kristi House incident as a valuable lesson in how to deal with the treatment of victims. She also mentioned a 2011 grand jury report on human trafficking by the Miami-Dade State Attorney.

Rep. Stafford then took questions from the CFW members.

At this point there was a quorum. Kit moved to approve the Agenda and Monica seconded the motion. The motion passed and the **Agenda was approved.**

Eveline moved to approve the minutes of the CFW meeting of 04/23/14 and Monica seconded the motion. The motion passed and the **minutes were approved.**

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

For the report of the Legislative Committee, Mara pointed out Francesca's comprehensive summary of the legislative session that just concluded and the status of the bills of interest to the CFW.

Sharon reviewed the written report of the Events and Fundraising Committee. The CFW will be having the event for the students at the Young Women's Preparatory Academy (YWPA) on October 1. A preliminary list of possible speakers has been prepared and the Committee is meeting with the YWPA principal on June 11 to get her approval for the program.

For the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Issue Committee report, Monica talked about the CFW's visit to the Miami-Dade Police Crime Lab. The CFW visited the Crime Lab to address the issue of untested rape kits mentioned in recent newspaper articles. According to Crime Lab biologist Cosette Alvarez, the backlog is no more than 30 days. Unknown perpetrators are a high priority because they are on the streets and can rape again, as opposed to an accused that is already in custody. The Miami-Dade County Police Crime Lab is the only crime lab in the County and all the police departments send their evidence there. The Committee will also be visiting the Coordinated Victims Assistance Center on June 4. Marie Eloi raised the issue of following up with Grace O'Donnell on a meeting with the Chiefs of Police about educating the police on the human trafficking issue and how to recognize human trafficking.

Under Old Business, Mara reported that the May 2nd Women's Health and Wealth Conference was a great success. Dona commented that the issue of financial literacy is very important for girls in high school and college. Eveline stated that she recently attended an event organized by the Diversity Council where the issue of financial literacy for girls was a part of the program. Marie Eloi said that at her daughter's school they are teaching financial literacy and Marie Woodson said that at her daughter's school they start in the fifth grade. Laura explained that at the last Events and Fundraising Committee meeting, the Committee recommended that the CFW organize financial literacy programs for the students at Miami-Dade College with financial advisor Vielka Burey.

Laura reviewed the summary of the proposed event on July 2 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Mara reported that she listened in on a recent planning conference call with Malcolm Medley, the Director of the EEOC's Miami District Office. Mara suggested that the CFW donate \$500 for sponsorship from Friends and pay for the cost of printing the program from the Trust Fund. Dona moved that the CFW donate \$500 from the Friends account and cover the cost of printing the program in the amount of \$310 as the CFW's sponsorship. Linda seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

Mara reminded everyone to attend the NACW conference in July in Sarasota.

Under New Business, Mara explained that there will be an event for Roxcy Bolton next Tuesday at the Women's Park celebrating her national award and her birthday. Mara announced that the new CFW officers will be sworn in at the County Commission meeting of June 17. Mara reported that an event for Women's Equality Day is tentatively planned for August 16 at the Women's Park; more details soon.

Under Attendance at Community Events, Eveline reported that she is going to a women in technology conference in Silicon Valley on Saturday and that she has been attending many of these tech conferences recently to get fact finding tips. Eveline has created the Women's Technology Alliance because there is a tech boom in Miami and she wants to get more women and girl involved. Beverly suggested that Eveline be included as a speaker for the October 1 event at the YWPA.

Mara reported that she attended the human trafficking symposium at the University of Miami this morning.

Marie Eloi reported that there have been many events for Haitian Heritage Month in May and Eveline has done a bunch of events at the museum too.

Dona mentioned that Leah had been on the Jeopardy TV show last Monday.

Mara reported that she attended the PACE grand opening event last night and that Sherry Thompson Giordano would like to come back to address the CFW

Mara reminded everyone to file their financial disclosure forms by July 1.

Linda attended the recent Kristi House luncheon.

Beverly stated that another important aspect of the human trafficking problem is people bringing in children to be work slaves; to do housework, laundry, etc. One of the groups that Beverly is involved with works to address this type of human trafficking.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Laura Morilla

Recorder