

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN**  
**111 N.W. 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Suite 1034, Miami, FL 33128**  
**Minutes of Meeting of January 20, 2016**

**Present:** Leah Blumenfeld, Monica Interian, Viviana Jordan, Sharon Kendrick-Johnson, Belinda Leon, Tara Leighton, Noreen Lagault Mendoza, Beverly Nixon, Linda Robinson, Maria Santamaria, Raisa Sequeira, and Dona Zemo

**Excused:** Clora Adkins, Darna Aybar-Guardia, Odayls Dipp, Marie Eloi, Francesca Menes, Phyllis Sloan-Simpkins, Marie Woodson, and Mara Zapata

**Guests:** Beth Herman

**Staff:** Laura Morilla

Second Vice Chair Viviana Jordan commenced the meeting at 5:45 p.m. and welcomed everyone. Viviana welcomed everyone. Viviana first mentioned the passing of a wonderful CFW member, Kit Rafferty. Kit passed away unexpectedly in December, and Viviana reviewed the details about the upcoming life celebration for Kit. Then Viviana welcomed new CFW member, Belinda Leon, and everyone else introduced themselves too.

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

Linda moved to approve the minutes of the CFW meetings of 10/28/15 and 11/18/15 and Sharon seconded the motion. The motion passed and the **minutes were approved.**

**Election of Officers.** The CFW held its election of officers for 2015-2016. Viviana called everyone's attention to the slate of officers and explained the rules in the Bylaws about elections. The slate of officers recommended by the Nominating Committee is as follows: Mara Zapata for Chair; Sharon Kendrick-Johnson for First Vice Chair; Viviana Jordan for Second Vice Chair; Leah Blumenfeld for Member at Large; and Monica Interian for Member at Large.

Viviana opened the floor for nominations for the office of Chairperson. There were no nominations from the floor and nominations were closed. **Mara Zapata was elected Chairperson.** Viviana opened the floor for nominations for the office of First Vice Chair. There were no nominations from the floor and nominations were closed. **Sharon Kendrick-Johnson was elected First Vice Chair.** Viviana opened the floor for nominations for the office of Second Vice Chair. There were no nominations from the floor and nominations were closed. **Viviana Jordan was elected Second Vice Chair.** Viviana opened the floor for nominations for the office of Member at Large. There were no nominations from the floor and nominations were closed. **Leah Blumenfeld was elected Member at Large.** Viviana opened the floor for nominations for the other office of Member at Large. There were no nominations from the floor and nominations were closed. **Monica Interian was elected Member at Large.**

The **Committee Reports** were then presented.

**Human Trafficking Committee.** Linda reported that she made a Citizen's Presentation this morning to the County Commissioners about human trafficking. A proclamation was also presented in observance of national human trafficking awareness month. Representatives from the U.S. Attorney's Office and the State Attorney's office were also there to make remarks. Linda showed a power point during her remarks and Laura will send the power point to everyone, including the County Commissioners. Linda explained that the CFW is making an

effort to educate the public and create awareness of the problem of human trafficking and this morning's presentation will help.

Linda, Monica, and Maria Santamaria talked more about the issue of human trafficking; the types of victims, not just sex trafficking but also domestic servitude, the role of backpage.com, social media, etc. Maria mentioned that she has helped 22 victims from 13 different countries, three of whom were men. Maria talked about how the recruiting works, and also that there is a concern about what happens to the victims after they are rescued. Confidentiality is key in her ministry to the victims.

**Legislative Committee.** Leah reported that the Committee met last night. There are lots of bills that the Committee will continue to track but the CFW needs to decide which bills to include in the letter to the Miami-Dade Legislative Delegation. The Committee recommends including the following six key issues/bills: 1. The ERA; 2. Replacing Florida's statue in National Statuary Hall; 3. Unemployment compensation for domestic violence victims; 4. Increasing the penalty for a third violation of an injunction for protection; 5. Evidence collected in sexual assault cases; and 6. Eliminating the reference to prostitution in reference to minors engaging in sex acts. Tara moved to accept the Committee's recommendation and make these six bills the focus of the CFW's letter. Dona seconded the motion, **and the motion passed.**

**Old Business.** Viviana reminded everyone about the Florida COSW's Women's Day at the Capitol in Tallahassee next week.

Viviana reported that the Black Affairs Advisory Board's photographic exhibit "Women of a New Tribe" is coming up next month for Black History Month. Viviana reminded everyone that Retha Boone, the Program Officer for the Black Affairs Advisory Board, made a presentation to the CFW about this project a few months ago and the CFW voted to support the exhibit. CFW member Beverly Nixon is one of the women photographed for the exhibit and Beverly talked about what a wonderful experience it was. CFW member Marie Woodson is also featured in the exhibit.

The photos will be on display in the lobby of the SPCC from February 12 to March 31. The kickoff event and reception is on February 12<sup>th</sup> and the Black Affairs Advisory Board is requesting that the CFW contribute \$500 to help with the cost of the reception. Tara moved that the CFW donate \$500 for the reception. Sharon seconded the motion, **and the motion passed.**

**New Business.** Viviana explained that the theme for Women's History Month in 2016 is, per the National Women's History Project, "Working to Form a More Perfect Union: Honoring Women in Public Service and Government." Laura is suggesting that the CFW feature photos of all the women County Commissioners and women County Directors in the lobby display in March in order to be consistent with the theme. Dona moved to approve of the suggestion and use these photos for the display. Leah seconded the motion, **and the motion passed.** The display will be going up in the lobby on March 1<sup>st</sup> in the morning. Dona said that she would be there on March 1<sup>st</sup> to help.

The CFW then discussed the scholarships that the CFW awarded last year to two graduating seniors from the Young Women's Preparatory Academy. The CFW will award the two \$1000 scholarships again this year and needs to raise money to fund the scholarships. Viviana explained that there is a process whereby County Commissioners donate funds from the District Office Budget Funds to various organizations and worthy causes in the community. Commissioner Zapata donated \$2000 to the CFW last year and other Commissioners have given to the CFW in the past too. Each CFW member should ask her appointing Commissioner for a donation since 2016 is the CFW's 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the CFW would like to do several things to commemorate. Laura will send bullet points to the CFW members to help in their requests to the Commissioners.

There was also a more general discussion about the need to fundraise and the CFW's criteria for supporting smaller organizations. Monica stated that the No More Tears organization would be worthy of the CFW's support. Maria Santamaria suggested giving directly to a victim, for example. Laura mentioned that generally when the CFW donates money to an organization, usually it's to co-sponsor an event so that the CFW gets some publicity and exposure.

Viviana directed everyone's attention to the YWCA's email and explained the request to partner on a series of women's events in 2016. There was discussion of what would be the financial contribution expected of the CFW. Leah recommended and then moved that the CFW look at one of the events later in 2016 to coincide with the CFW's 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary event to give the CFW time to raise some money. Dona seconded the motion, and the **motion passed**. This item will be back on the February agenda for further discussion when everyone has had the chance to really read the YWCA's proposal.

The CFW then discussed the next "on the road" meeting. Dona suggested having it at the renovated Miami Beach Women's Club building. Dona has contacted the event manager and set up a meeting to see the venue. It was suggested that the meeting of March 23 be the on the road meeting because it's Women's History Month and give the CFW time to plan. Leah moved that the March 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting be in Miami Beach and that Laura provide a list of past on the road meetings. Linda seconded the motion, **and the motion passed**.

The Commission for Women will be celebrating its 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2016 and Viviana asked everyone to give some thought to having an event later in the year to celebrate. It could be a simple reception where the CFW distributes the Connections Directory, or the CFW could piggy back on another event that is already taking place, etc. Dona suggested a women's empowerment walk. Sharon said that she will call a meeting of the Events Committee soon. Dona asked to be added to the Events Committee and Monica asked to be removed.

**Attendance at Community Events.** Monica attended a UM symposium on domestic violence and a DVSAC workshop on domestic violence in December and also a presentation by NCJW at the PTA about human trafficking. Leah attended a tour of the new shelter for human trafficking victims at Camillus House on December 9<sup>th</sup>. Raisa attended the UM symposium on domestic violence and an Empower Her luncheon at the YWCA. Linda announced the January 29<sup>th</sup> human trafficking awareness walk by Florida National University. Linda also attended the NCJW presentation at the PTA at Southwood. Jean and Linda will speaking about human trafficking to the Sunshine Cancer group.

The CFW will invite the new Economic Empowerment Program Director at the YWCA to attend the February 24 meeting and make a presentation.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Laura Morilla  
Recorder