

Governor's Council on Women and Girls
Leadership Subcommittee

Meeting Minutes

June 10, 2020 – 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Zoom Teleconference Meeting

1. Call to Order

Secretary McCaw called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

2. Corporate Governance Update

Christine Shaw, Assistant Treasurer, OTT, provided an update regarding the Northeast Investors' Diversity Initiative, a collaboration of investors working to improve gender and racial diversity on the boards of public companies in which the Connecticut pension funds are invested. The Connecticut Treasurer's office has been joined by the treasurers of Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Maine and Vermont, as well as other institutional investors from across the Northeast. The Initiative has, since October of 2019, engaged with twenty companies -- some with just one woman or person of color on their boards, most with none. Ms. Shaw reported that several companies within the first engagement group have agreed to add diverse candidates to their boards. Final numbers will be confirmed after companies' annual general meetings at which nominations are confirmed. In addition to this Initiative, Ms. Shaw reported on the successful partnership with the NYC Comptroller in filing resolutions requiring disclosure of gender pay equity. She indicated that as a result of direct negotiations with companies, two companies agreed to improve disclosure of gender pay and as a result of these agreements, resolutions were withdrawn.

3. Legislative Proposals Update

Erin Choquette, Policy and Senior Advisor, DAS, provided a status on the Leadership Subcommittee pending bill in the legislature. SB 85, An Act Deterring Age Discrimination In Employment Applications, made its way through the committee back in March during legislative session, prior to COVID19 putting session on hold. The bill was JF'ed (moved forward on March 3) then legislature stopped acting. There was no file copy or fiscal note. Ms. Choquette stated this is a good sign for next year that it made it out unanimously. Nora Duncan, AARP, spoke her thoughts on how this bill could impact the older population regarding COVID19. She mentioned Special Session will be limited this coming summer and AARP will still be pushing some of their items. With record unemployment and older workers being possibly classified as riskier due to COVID19, age discrimination is age 45 and up for Federal Law. Ms. Duncan stands concerned there is so much focus on older adults in general due to the current health pandemic that it is important to be conscious of not looping everyone into a basket because of their age.

4. Recognizing First Responders/Women in Leadership

Commissioner Cook, DOC, spoke proudly of his recognition to many women leaders and first responders in response to the COVID19 pandemic across the state. He would like the group and the public to be mindful of the many late nights a mother did not return home from work at the end of the day due to helping others in a health crisis. He would like to acknowledge the many women in various roles across the state that have stepped up and put others first in emergency situations. Although there are many people to thank that have supported the state through the COVID19 pandemic to date, we must not forget our female leaders who may not be recognized six weeks from now. They are heroes to many people.

Secretary McCaw, OPM, presented the idea of featuring an area of the Council on Women and Girls website to acknowledge women in leadership during the pandemic. Christine Shaw, Assistant Treasurer, OTT added it would be wonderful to put together a tribute for all women leaders across the state at the next Women and Girls Day event. Nearly all of the subcommittee participants spoke in agreement that the opportunity for formal recognition is very important

to our subcommittee mission. The reopening of the legislature was suggested as an appropriate time to address the leaders. Clare Kindall, Solicitor General, Office of Attorney General, would like to see an award or proclamation from the Lt. Governor or Governor's office recognizing all first responders who carried the state through the pandemic. Shannon Wegele, Chief of Staff, SOTS added that this health pandemic is a "long distance marathon". The first celebration should be something rather quickly, such as an online tribute. It may be possible to approach hospitals, EMT's or educational institutions to collect pictures some of their significant women leaders that helped navigate through COVID19. Lena Rodriguez, Community Renewal Team, would like to help organize a press and media event on the steps of the Capitol to document recognition in the public eye. Many subcommittee members agree that a virtual exhibit could be displayed in the corridor between the LOB and the Capitol as a memory of the state's first pandemic in decades. A working group for this missive will be formed with volunteers that are dedicated to address women leaders through the various platforms mentioned.

5. Aspiring Leaders Update

Cheryl Cepelak, Deputy Commissioner, DOC, provided an update on the spring cohort that was set to begin the second week of March. As the COVID19 pandemic began in March, she brought the instructor group together to discuss creating an online program instead. Due to the priorities COVID19 presented, the team has not had anyone step up to the plate and lead the program. Nora Duncan, AARP stated she is happy to assist in whichever way to get the program up and running on the web.

6. Update on Employee Development and Training

Ellen Boynton, Director of the Office of Multicultural Healthcare Equity within DHMAS, gave a presentation on the Equity and Inclusion trainings her team has provided to DHMAS staff over the last few years. The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) has been working with the Kaleidoscope Group (KG) since 2018 to provide diversity, equity and inclusion training and

education to DMHAS leadership and staff. The Office of Multicultural Healthcare Equity began the training with Kaleidoscope Group to continue to provide training and technical assistance to our state operated facilities. This training and ongoing technical assistance has focused on enhancing equity and justice and promoting diversity as a strategy for cultivating and sustaining an inclusive agency culture. Specific training goals have been for staff to:

- 1) understand the dynamics of difference and the impact of stereotyping and bias in the work setting and day to day interactions
- 2) learn ways to promote equity and justice and effectively communicate across difference to enhance day to day work and staff interactions
- 3) develop a team of staff trainers to increase DMHAS's internal capacity to conduct ongoing equity and inclusion training and technical assistance

The DMHAS Equity and Inclusion Training Initiative is one initiative that is part of our overall agency approach to enhancing cultural responsiveness and reducing disparities from DMHAS system, program and provider perspectives.

Tools and resources from doing these trainings have come about to address issues that have been raised. Secretary McCaw, OPM shared that adding a working group between several state agencies, specifically DCP, DCF, DEEP and DHMAS would help spread this work and initiative across state agencies. It was mentioned that the Department of Administrative Services may need to contract with a vendor that provides diversity and inclusion service trainings to all state agencies. Secretary McCaw, OPM, spoke about affirmative action goals and how they are set to mirror the population seen in EEO job classes. Christine Shaw, Assistant Treasurer, OTT, added she enjoys setting goals for diverse hires at her agency and across the state. During a 2017 project, she was mandated to use census data that was twenty years old. The classification of ethnicity was different in the CORECT system than the census report. Ms. Shaw is advocating the need for a standard representation of population to be sure reports are as accurate as society appears. Commissioner Dykes, DEEP, added that the new DAS position task could possibly dive into this matter so that we can apply our goals within agencies. Secretary McCaw, OPM, would

like to see a working group of lawyers on this matter. A follow up email will be sent to the leadership committee.

7. Women and Girls Day at the Capitol Closing Remarks

Mildred Melendez, Paralegal, OPM, provided a summary of the successful and first annual Women and Girls Day at the Capitol held on March 6, 2020. Ms. Melendez lead the planning team and received great feedback from many including the Lt. Governor, Governor Lamont and participants. The Lt. Governor's Office has already mentioned hosting another Women and Girls Day event next year. The morning session of the program catered to juniors and seniors in high school, and the afternoon session opened up programming to a wider age group. A total of 266 people registered for the event, but due to the popular and centralized location, many more were able to attend portions of the programming or receive resources from the various organizations at the fairs. The morning programming was a great success for the high school girls and included programming such as Girls with Impact and a Voting Simulation. The lunch panel was also very successful and if this event continues, the hope is to highlight women leaders at future lunch panels. The suggestion for next year would be to continue to focus the morning session on junior and seniors in high school and to eliminate the afternoon programming (the number of participants dwindled down to 10 individuals for the afternoon programming – we think this is due to scheduling and logistics related to the morning portion of the day.

Additionally, there were 60 participants in the Career and Health and Safety portions of the day. Scheduling allowed time slots for the women and girls to walk through the Health and Safety Fair, and the location of this event within the Capitol lobby allowed a greater audience to gather resources from many of these tables. Health and Safety Fair participants were able to provide resources on behavioral health, mental health, self-defense, sexual and domestic violence and trauma recover, and nutrition and general health and wellness. Additionally, there were many notable Career Fair participants, such as Berkshire Aviation, the George W. Crawford Black Bar Association, the Society of Engineers, and many women in the healthcare, science, and biology fields.

8. Open Discussion

Brittney Yancey, National Council of Black Women at UCONN opened a discussion regarding policy recommendations from the Leadership Committee. Professor Yancey supports discussions around recommendations from this as it relates to priorities the Governor mentioned pertaining to police accountability, the national movement that is underway and how this impacts women and girls across the state. To get the thoughts moving within the subcommittee, she asked the rhetorical question “What type of voice and what kind of proposals can we think of that need to be attached to our subcommittee in some aspect?” Ms. Yancy does not want the committee to miss the opportunity to align itself for racial justice as it relates to police brutality and how it impacts all women and girls. Secretary McCaw added she believes that Governor Lamont would also like to make this subject a priority for the state and start tapping into how to reconfigure the Police Accountability Board. There is a place for listening and a place for action. In the future, the hope is to see action come out of State Legislature. The opportunity was provided to members to make a recommendation they would like the Secretary and the Lt. Governor to consider, as it could be a way for the council to have a unified voice. Several steering committee members spoke out from a mother’s standpoint and how raising a child of color in today’s day and age is much different. It appears several mothers of color or mothers of biracial children are navigating the subject of how to address these matters with their children. Tri-Chair Shaw spoke of the role we can play in community engagement and community discussions directly with law enforcement to share the perspective of a mom to bridge any understand gap. Ms. Yancey suggested a “Voice of Moms” team to tackle this missive as the council agreed it could be a very powerful stance the State could benefit from.

9. Future Agenda Topics

Secretary McCaw, OPM, informed the committee that future discussions will need to be held on most topics discussed in this meeting. Folks with additional future agenda topics can email Alexis Aronne.

10. Upcoming Meetings

- i. Full Council

Tuesday, July 7, 2020 at 3 p.m.

Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 2 p.m.

ii. Leadership Subcommittee

Wednesday, August 12, 2020 at 10 a.m.

Wednesday, October 7, 2020 at 10 a.m.

11. Public Comment

No public comment was made.

12. Adjourn

Meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.