

Governor's Council on Women and Girls  
Leadership Subcommittee

**Meeting Minutes**

**August 12, 2020 – 10:00 a.m. – 10:40 a.m.**

Microsoft Teams Teleconference Meeting

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***1. Call to Order***

Secretary McCaw, OPM called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

McCaw invited Tri-Chairs to offer opening remarks. Christine Shaw, Assistant Treasurer, OTT welcomed the group and shared her excitement for the work group progress and progression over the coming months. Lee Sawyer, designee on behalf of Commissioner Dykes, DEEP, announced his telephonic presence and will report back to the Commissioner with a verbal summary of the meeting.

***2. Update from Work Group #1: Diversify Representation on Boards and Commissions by Shannon Wegele, Chief of Staff, SOTS***

McCaw called upon Shannon Wegele, Chief of Staff, SOTS. Ms. Wegele had not joined the call yet, therefore she suggested circling back to this update at the end of the meeting.

Due to Ms. Wegele's technical difficulties, the following update was given: Racial Diversity on Boards and Commissions is in the process of scheduling a meeting with work group members. They are aiming to get together in the next week and Ms. Wegele has asked members of the work group to review the most recent diversity report the Secretary of State's office generated.

### ***3. Update from Workgroup #2: Women in Leadership by Secretary Melissa McCaw, OPM***

McCaw informed the group of the upcoming Women in Leadership Monthly Panel Series. The series will consist of monthly spotlights on various women leaders around the state, particularly focusing on women in traditional and non-traditional roles. The Lieutenant Governor is expected to moderate the panel.

September 15<sup>th</sup> through October 15<sup>th</sup> is National Hispanic Heritage month. Panelists being considered are:

- Dr. Zulma Toro
  - Ms. Toro is the first female president of Connecticut State University and the first Hispanic chief executive. Dr. Toro has a strong passion for higher education and thrives on helping under-represented students, particularly young women. Dr. Toro holds a Ph.D. in Industrial and Systems Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology.
- Dr. Leslie Torres-Rodriguez
  - Dr. Torres-Rodriguez is the Superintendent of Hartford Public Schools, one of the largest urban school districts in Connecticut. Raised in Hartford and a product of Hartford Public High School, she has served as an education leader in Greater Hartford for over two decades.
- Commissioner Seila Mosquera-Bruno
  - Ms. Mosquera-Bruno is the Department of Housing Commissioner. The Commissioner brings a wealth of knowledge to state government and is well versed in housing policy. Commissioner Mosquera-Bruno has vast and extensive experience in advocating for affordable housing on a state and national level and has participated in many organizations to help strengthen communities throughout the state.
- President Lena Rodriguez
  - Ms. Rodríguez has committed her professional life to assisting people who are trying to forge better lives for themselves. She spent a decade at the New York City Board of Education, most recently as Director of Finance for the Division of Special

Education, serving a population of more than 20,000 students and managing a \$450 million annual budget. Seeking an organization with an even broader impact on families, Ms. Rodríguez moved to the Community Renewal Team in Connecticut. At CRT she works closely with funders and builds region-wide relationships in order to increase the resources and services available to residents of Central Connecticut.

- Evelyn Trinidad, RN
  - Ms. Trinidad is the Medical Surgical Intensive Care Unit (MSICU) Nurse Manager at St. Francis Hospital. Ms. Trinidad has been in the industry for nineteen years and a leader on the front line of the COVID19 pandemic. Ms. Trinidad developed, designed, managed, and facilitated two additional COVID-19 dedicated ICU's in order to strategically isolate and contain viral spread, control capacity, improve 'risk-management', and provide essential care to the most 'at-risk' patients.

McCaw suggested that the November spotlight of women leaders could include recognizing those who provide care in nursing homes, CNA's, The National Guard, and Red Cross leaders. The group recommends a theme of Public Service Leadership for December and can potentially include former Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman as well as other municipal leaders.

It was requested that if there were other ideas of potential women leaders as monthly panelists, please let Alexis Aronne know.

***4. Update from Workgroup #3: Employee Development and Training – Cultural Competency by Deputy Commissioner Nick Hermes, DAS and Deputy Commissioner Jodi Hill-Lilly, DCF***

Deputy Commissioner Nick Hermes, DAS, gave multiple updates regarding the status of his workgroup. He characterized the update as largely system and foundational to prepare for the workgroup projects. Below are the updates:

- DAS has worked with OPM, specifically the Budget Division, to enhance the learning and development structure as well as the HR Centralization model.
- DAS and OPM have a framework for restructuring operations that will improve productivity and efficiency while reducing the overall position count and add bandwidth in learning and development.
- DAS and OPM recommended to round out team to help lead initiatives. They will work at planned attrition to help resource these positions going forward in the next few months.
- System update:
  - Worked with John Vittner of OPM and are on the cusp of having disbursement for HR centralization capital improvement funds.
  - Worked many months on a partnership with LinkedIn and after research, DAS has discovered they have a great learning content system. LinkedIn can make an incredible positive difference to our workforce and there are substantial offerings in leadership development including a multi-hour learning path for women in leadership as well as several trainings that well surpass the baseline diversity onboarding training.
    - Will finalize partnership with LinkedIn and work on a landing site for which we can advertise and market. DAS can organize different trainings that would be available to entire workforce. The messaging will need to be drafted to share to stakeholders. LinkedIn learning has the ability to post content that we develop, and we can customize the direction of trainings as needed.
- Ellen Boynton, Director of the Office of Multicultural Health Equity at DHMAS, introduced herself on behalf of DHMAS Commissioner Delphin-Rittman who was unable to participate. Ms. Boynton works with training and cultural diversity and is thrilled to be part of this work group.
- McCaw discussed the power point presentation Ms. Boynton used at the previous Leadership meeting, suggesting using the power point throughout state agencies, in addition to providing an online learning environment. Deputy Commissioner Hermes responded that there is

an interest and benefit in using the power point and work from Ms. Boynton. He has had a few conversations with Commissioner Delphin-Rittmon in which she provided content and resources for the work group.

- Deputy Commissioner of DCF, Jodi Hill-Lilly introduced herself. She shared her experience in leadership and development in child welfare and looks forward to contributing to conversations. She shared DCF has also been doing work around cultural competency and how it comports with work around racial justice. Her team is zeroing in on the mission and vision of this work and would welcome any feedback.
- Monika Nugent, MAC Representative from the Office of Government Accountability, mentioned that her graduating class said they would like a program on cultural competency, which would tie into the training on women in leadership. McCaw shared that she would make sure Cheryl Cepelak received her input and that we will be having more robust conversations around cultural competency and work towards something that can be applied across all state agencies. The goal is to create an environment where all women can thrive in professional roles in state government and that there is the opportunity for them to grow and promote.

Under leadership training for aspiring leaders, Ms. Nugent stated that men can have issues with women in leadership and might not understand the micro-aggressions that are being projected towards women in leadership. Ms. Nugent suggested that it would be beneficial to identify that issue and offer education and training.

- McCaw shared that tomorrow, August 13<sup>th</sup> is the first Finance Advisory Committee (FAC) meeting of the year. The focus is on the Retirement Cliff of 2022, the Continuity of State Government leading up to 2022, and securing the contract with the consultant agency. The anticipated work is for the consultant to assess agencies and begin to evaluate the maximum retirements that could occur and where areas of restructure and use of technology can assist the current composition of the agency. The next three months are critical to assess and deploy our resources to prepare culture and the environment for what change

might look like as the anticipated retirements present an opportunity to achieve diversity and affirmative action goals.

***5. Update from Work Group # 4: Affirmative Action Review & Effective Recruitment Strategies by Christine Shaw, Assistant Treasurer and Attorney Claire Coleman, OPM Undersecretary of Legal Affairs***

Christine Shaw, Assistant Treasurer, OTT, shared that the group met for the first time on August 10<sup>th</sup>. She was impressed with the diverse participation of the work group and after their meeting, the group came to the agreement for the general framework of how they will accomplish the work. The primary goal is to review and offer recommendations concerning methodology utilized to create affirmative action plans and to identify examples of success through the help of the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO). This is an example of a type of change the group can make without taking legislative action.

The second goal is to look for process improvements to make affirmative action plans both more manageable/less burdensome for agencies and better aligned with the goal of diversifying our workforce. With looming retirements, the state will lose some experienced professionals in this area of work. Ms. Shaw mentioned Attorney Claire Coleman, OPM, also agreed to invite CHRO to further understand how they approach their mandate and where there is opportunity for improvement. Ms. Shaw mentioned the Department of Labor has expertise on data and would like to pull them in for discussion. The work group will meet twice per month.

Attorney Claire Coleman, Undersecretary for Legal Affairs at OPM added that the group will be evaluating the current statutory and regulatory framework and identifying potential changes. She proposed the idea of identifying what other states are doing to recognize if there are more effective ways to decrease the burden on agency representatives that create affirmative action plans while meeting affirmative action goals. Attorney Coleman summarized the working group's mutual agreement that using 2000 census data is not an accurate reflection of the state's demographics. They are hopeful that the state will be able to quickly utilize the upcoming 2020 census results which may be more reliable for metrics of an affirmative action plan.

## ***6. Legislative Proposals Update***

McCaw reminded the subcommittee that any new legislative proposals will be due for the October 7<sup>th</sup> leadership meeting to ensure the group is prepared to introduce legislation for the 2021 session. They will also be reintroducing proposals that were submitted last year but not addressed due to the legislature shut down from the COVID19 pandemic.

## ***7. Closing Remarks***

Raina Giddings, from the Metro Hartford Alliance, was introduced to the Leadership subcommittee. Ms. Giddings expressed interest in the subcommittees and will have the opportunity to observe various work groups to determine which group she would like to be a part of.

Sarah Lubarsky, Executive Director of Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame introduced herself and mentioned she has a few ideas of women leaders and will reach out with her suggestions.

McCaw expressed interest in adding a September Leadership meeting prior to the September 15<sup>th</sup> Full COWAG meeting. Alexis Aronne will reach out with a date and time.

## ***8. Public Comment***

No comment made.

## ***9. Adjourn Meeting***

Meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.