

Governor's Council on Women and Girls
Leadership Subcommittee

Meeting Minutes

January 8, 2020 – 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Board of Regents
61 Woodland Street
Hartford, CT

1. Call to Order

Secretary McCaw called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

2. Introductions of Members

The following individuals were in attendance and introduced themselves: Secretary Melissa McCaw, Secretary of OPM, Christine Shaw, Assistant Treasurer from OTT, Lee Sawyer, Chief of Staff at DEEP, Shannon Wegele, Chief of Staff at SOTS, Rollin Cook, Commissioner of DOC, Andy Mais, Commissioner of Insurance, Cheryl Malerba, Chief of Staff, DOT, Erin Choquette, Legal and Policy Advisor at DAS, Carol Briggs from Dept. of Agriculture, Michelle Seagull, Commissioner of DCP.

The Steering Committee members in attendance were Nan Birdwhistell with Martha Cullina, LLP, Bonnie Edmondson from SCSU, Nora Duncan from AARP, Tricia Hyacinth from Fairfield County Community Foundation, Carol Williams from Community Foundation of Eastern CT, Mildred Melendez, Paralegal at OPM, Alexis Aronne, Executive Secretary at OPM.

3. Subcommittee Mission

Secretary McCaw reviewed the mission of the Leadership Subcommittee.

4. Update on Initiatives –

i. Women and Girls Day at the Capitol

Mildred Melendez, Paralegal, OPM, was introduced as lead for the planning committee for the Women and Girls Day at the Capitol scheduled for March 6th, 2020. A planning committee has been established for coordination of the event for all subcommittee and steering members to participate in if desired. The planning team meets bi-monthly. Ms. Melendez reported, at this point in time, the guest speakers have been identified and an agenda for the day has been established. Bagged lunches are a possibility as the planning team looks into funding sources. Invitations are being sent to high schools in CT for student participation. Colleges and Universities will be invited after receiving final numbers from the high schools.

ii. Corporate Governance

Christine Shaw, Assistant Treasurer for Policy and Senior Advisor, OTT, explained the Treasurer's role as an investor of the State's pension and trust funds, and the interest on the part of shareholders like Connecticut in the diversity of the boards of the companies in which it invests. Ms. Shaw described a new initiative launched by Treasurer Wooden in partnership with pension and institutional funds from across New England, known as the Northeast Investors' Diversity Initiative ("NIDI"). The objective of the Initiative is to encourage companies to improve the diversity of boards, based on studies which show that companies with diverse boards generally outperform their peers with less diversity in terms of profits and overall management of risk. NIDI has identified 20 companies across New England on this issue – some of which have no gender or racial diversity – and have commenced engagement discussions on board diversity.

Erin Choquette, Policy and Legislative Advisor, DAS, touched upon broadening the procurement statutes with objective criteria to get the best value and best quality at the lowest price while achieving overall goals. We have over 900 master contracts by state agencies. Currently the State of Connecticut requires companies to provide workforce EEO data which is informational. Ms. Choquette reported that our statutes do not allow us to use this data to make selection decisions

but it does allow the committees to ask other management or leadership questions. Discussions included exploring means to incorporate collecting data on board diversity in the competitive procurement process to signal to potential business partners that corporate board diversity is an important value for the State of Connecticut. Ms. Choquette was assigned to research further and report back to the subcommittee.

iii. Aspiring Leaders

Erin Choquette, Policy and Legislative Advisor, DAS, reported that the Aspiring Leaders program is being scaled up and we are leveraging the buy-in for this program. Other programmatic changes include an inclusion model and strategic succession planning. Efforts thus far have stabilized the program.

DAS and OPM have also started a process of centralizing HR and Labor Relations employees from each state agency. Within this initiative, they have established the Learning Management System and are exploring options such as contracting with LinkedIn for candidate sourcing. Nora Duncan from AARP is confident they can offer a cost free training database and will connect with Erin Choquette to further explore. Cheryl Malerba, Chief of Staff, DOT, discussed options available to launch the program such as strategic planning sessions ahead of Aspiring Leaders program. A kick off for the training academy is scheduled for March 12, 2020. Ms. Choquette shared other platforms DAS is exploring such as an access database system, online training courses and a talent solutions group to provide our state employees with training and employee development tools.

5. Boards and Commissions Racial and Gender Report

Shannon Wegele, Chief of Staff, Secretary of State reported all of the surveys have been received from the state's boards and commissions in order to conduct the report. One of the issues that has been a priority is to promote gender and racial diversity. Companies with better diversity and appreciation for racial and gender diversity tend to outperform their peers in profits and management of

risk. It is an important outgrowth of shareholder. Among Fortune 500, 22% of board seats held by women and 16% by people of color. People in the top quartile are 33% more likely to outperform than those in the bottom quartile. Connecticut's current boards and commission survey resulted in an 80% participation rate. The Secretary of State's office is now analyzing all of the data received from the reports and compiling into a draft report for review in the next few weeks. The last analysis was conducted in 2011 therefore an updated and accurate demographics report is very exciting. The Secretary of State's Office has identified 20 companies that have no women or no diversity. Connecticut stands in partnership with other Treasurers across the nation on this initiative. The goal is to present the opportunities for these companies to explicitly modify their charters and governing documents and ensure the pool of candidates at least have some women and people of color in that pool. The Secretary of State's Office is currently exploring tools to create more of an interest in boards and commissions in hopes that the entities can represent a more diverse profile of our state. Ms. Wegele also encouraged committee members to participate in women's suffrage activities by texting the word "VOTE100" to 474747. The Secretary of State's Office are hoping to build recruitment and tracking of these boards and commissions into the legislative process.

6. Legislative Proposal Update

Erin Choquette, Policy and Senior Advisor, DAS, reported the one legislative proposal that the Leadership Subcommittee received. The bill is number from the prior legislative session was sHB-6113 "An Act Prohibiting Employers From Inquiring About Date Of Birth Or Date Of Graduation On Employment Applications." The purpose for this bill is to eliminate age discrimination based on date of birth or when they graduated high school or college. The incentive is for employers to focus on skills, knowledge and abilities of the applicant for the initial applicant screening.

7. Upcoming Agenda Topics

Secretary McCaw, OPM encouraged the committee to email Alexis Aronne with future agenda topics to be discussed.

8. *Public Comment*

No public comment was made.

9. *Adjourn*

Meeting was adjourned at 11:23 a.m.