



Governor Terry E. Branstad  
Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds  
San Wong, Director

Iowa Commission on the Status of Women  
Virtual Quarterly Commission Meeting  
March 1, 2022 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.

**Call to order**

Meeting called to order at 9:03 a.m. by chairperson Elizabeth Coonan

**Present**

Elizabeth Coonan, William Fleming, Matthew Gilbert, Sherill Whisenand,

**Absent**

Tom Carnahan, Wendy Musgrave, Rachele Hunt-Russian, San Wong, ex-officio

**Staff**

Kim Cheeks, Monica Stone

**Approval of agenda**

Motion made to approve the agenda by Fleming, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Whisenand, approved unanimously.

**Approval of minutes of 12/20/21**

Motion made to approve the minutes by Whisenand, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Fleming, approved unanimously.

**Public comment**

None

Whisenand decided to report on the National Association of Commission of Women first.

**National Association of Commissions of Women**

Whisenand has been attending the meetings virtually for about two years, after Kristen Corey left. Leadership has changed, they held the annual meeting on gender equality, where there was not a lot of representation, they will not be meeting in person soon, and she is opening the invitation for other commission members to serve on the board. She has been reappointed to the commission for three more years, and thinks her term ends the end of this year on the National association.

Stone reported the Women's Bureau for the Dept. of Labor – another national organization, held their regional meeting in February. She offers the invitation to other commission members to serve on the board.

**2022 Iowa Women's Hall of Fame (HOF)**

Whisenand – an email circulated asking commission members to serve on the ad hoc subcommittee, along with two public members, Deb Chiodo and Betty Andrews. The public members had suggestions for the commission to convene to discuss ways to add to the

Women's Hall of Fame event; more categories, explore new ones, and to freshen up the event. She will put together an ad hoc nominating committee in late May. She will be a member of the ad hoc committee, but not the chair of the HOF event. Wants to open it up for discussion. Hunt-Russian suggested adding to the committee a past HOF member. Chair Coonan added the commission already voted at the prior meeting for Whisenand to go ahead and convene the ad hoc committee.

Coonan stated the selection committee needs to be selected as well, and for commission members to volunteer to serve and chair the committee. Fleming volunteered to serve on the committee. Gilbert cannot serve this year. Coonan will look to the ad hoc committee for recommendations to honor the recipients this year.

## **Old / New Business**

### **2022 Recommendation and Policy Statement Final draft**

Coonan, the commission narrowed the focus areas and asked if there should be anything removed, none submitted. She feels this is a solid working draft, covers what the commission is endeavoring to do, and her recommendation is to adopt it for two years, Whisenand agreed with making it two years which coincides with the legislature, and liked the categories. Fleming, questioned under Iowa's progress, why women are free from sexual harassment and violence in the workplace, why limited to the "workplace"? Coonan thought it was in reaction to the "Me Too" movement, which doesn't mean that it should stay that way and could be changed. He offered an amendment be made to all – strike in the workplace. Whisenand moved it be approved with the amendment to strike in the workplace, and change to two years. Gilbert suggested the need to strengthen leadership for women in economic rights. He questioned how to measure progress? Especially coming out of the pandemic, women have moved to heavy lifting roles, esp. black and brown women, and feels it should be considered and / or added. Coonan feels it is tied to - Ensuring women are supported in leadership positions and have access to training opportunities they need to succeed.

Stone – suggested a few major initiatives to highlight; poverty and employment, income disparity. The topics of discussion at the board meeting today: new dashboard, started as language, for others who speak other languages has been limited – geographically where languages are spoken throughout the state, poverty will be added later. Status of Women's policy statement – opens it up to attach to the dashboard, perspective add to economic empowerment for women of color, data will tie it in, gives Status of Women a broader role to play. She also mentioned the commission just releasing the Gender Equity Study, information ended pre-pandemic, doesn't consider pandemic or national disasters, gives commission opportunity to attach to initiatives.

Gilbert thinks it is not clear in the policy statement, suggests to table the discussion until we can adjust policy statement. Coonan moved to vote on the motion on the floor, motion approved.

### **Women Trail Marker update**

Coonan, stated the project was started by Kristen Corey, former staff, and the majority of markers have been approved and are slowly being installed; Council Bluffs Community School Board - Amelia James, school was originally named after her husband. The school board moved to change to Amelia and James Becker – the installation will be some time in the Spring. She will let everyone know when the date is made and share.

## **COVID 19 Issues**

Chairperson Coonan - What is the commission doing in the interim about COVID 19 issues, what are we hearing in our own communities, many issues facing women and girls. Expressed the commission needs to be aware so that we can dig deeper. She is a member of many groups, and can share, e.g.

- Gender wage equity
- How women are affected in the workplace
- Gender wage study – included in thesis

Monica can check in with the data team at Iowa Workforce Development and ask how the commission can help. Fleming can develop a summary of what Univ. of Northern Iowa is doing for research and share with the commission.

## **Small Business Dev. Center Legislative Day on the Hill**

Gilbert shared the Legislative breakfast for information Small Business Development Center. They will award entrepreneurship of the year to an African American female from Dubuque. There is an upcoming Many Shades of Colour Conference for young women and girls grade 6-12, hosted by Hip-Hope Inc. He is inviting commissioners to attend both events. Reach out to him for more details, no registration required, event is open to the public at the State Capitol.

Coonan – Women’s History Month starts today, will DHR be sharing any social media posts?

Stone created a video about Women in History, that will be showed on the website throughout the month. The last video will lead back to the HOF, to encourage submission of applications. A series of interviews – most people you should know - in the human rights arena, DHR in the next year will be introducing those individuals in the news bulletins. If you know someone, let us know who they are – can be recognized regularly. What we can do – share news, if anyone is interested in writing a blog, introducing Iowans to our commissioners would be great.

Next meeting May 3.

Announcements: DHR/CAS has a position open for an Administrative Assistant

Motion to adjourn made by Whisenand, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Fleming, approved unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:57 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Kim Cheeks, staff

