

MINUTES
Iowa Commission on the Status of Women meeting
January 25, 2021
Location: Conference Call/Google Meet
Time: 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Commissioners present

Beth Coonan (Chair)
Rachelle Hunt Russian (Vice-Chair)
Matthew Gilbert
Michael Fleming
Tom Carnahan
Sherill Whisenand

Commissioners absent

Wendy Musgrave

DHR/ICSW staff

San Wong, Director
Monica Stone, Deputy Director, Administrator Community Advocacy and Services
Kim Cheeks, Office on the Status of Women and Status of African Americans Lead

Members of the public (present for all or part of meeting)

None

Call to order

Called to order by Chair Coonan at 11:04 a.m.

Approval of December 2, 2020 agenda

Motion to approve agenda made by Fleming; seconded by Whisenand.

Vote:

Aye: all

No: 0

Motion carried.

Approval of December 20, 2020 minutes

Motion of approve minutes made by Whisenand; seconded by Fleming.

Vote:

Aye: all

No: 0

Motion carried.

Public Comment

None.

Department/Office Update

Stone introduced Kim Cheeks, the new DHR lead for the Office on the Status of Women. Cheeks provided the Commission with her background and indicated that she would be working with Commissioners to learn more about them and how best to support the Commission in meeting its duties.

Director Wong provided a review of the work of the Department over the past year in responding to COVID-19 demands, disbursing CARES Act funding for anti-poverty programming and initiatives to enhance youth leadership and reduce youth involvement in the justice system. Director Wong highlighted the Youth Action Squad program and its leadership and subject matter training rubric.

Iowa Women's Hall of Fame Selection Committee report

Musgrave was unable to attend the meeting, but Chair Coonan spoke with Musgrave and indicated that she anticipated finalizing the video in the next few weeks for the Commission's review.

Old/New Business:

Kimberly Baxter, Director of Special Projects for the Judicial Branch, gave a presentation on the Iowa Accountability Program and the opportunities for impact in the system surrounding domestic violence.

The Iowa Accountability program provides direct assistance in county courthouses to lowans seeking civil protective orders. The Access to Justice Coordinators (AJCs) who work in the courthouses for the program also observe court proceedings and use information gathered to provide opportunities for improvement to the court system as a whole. AJCs also deliver community training events to help lowans understand issues of domestic violence.

Baxter and commissioners discussed the need for any domestic violence initiative to first and foremost have the goal of not further victimizing individuals, the need for de-escalation training for court and law-enforcement personnel, and the need for diversity and inclusion initiatives within the courts.

Chair Coonan invited Iowa's senators to participate in a forum to discuss the Equal Rights Amendment, and asked the Department to follow up regarding the senator's interest in participation in a forum.

Chair Coonan reviewed the outcomes of the survey of Commissioners regarding priorities for strategic planning and legislation.

Motion to adjourn:

Motion to adjourn Whisenand; seconded by Gilbert.

Vote:

Aye: all

No: 0

Motion carried.