

Hampden County Commission on the Status of Women and Girls

DRAFT Minutes

September 12, 2019

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

3rd Floor Community Room
1350 Main Street, Springfield, MA 01103

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I. Call to Order and Roll Call

- a. Distefano called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM
- b. Present: Goncalves (Ludlow), Hallberg (Wilbraham), DiStefano (West Springfield), Metsch (Longmeadow)
- c. Absent: Spalding (Springfield), Spruell (Springfield), Ogulewicz (Westfield)

II. Public Speak Out (15 Minutes)

No members of the public asked to speak

III. Presentation on the Invest in Girls Alliance

Speaker: Mary McRae

McRae explained the history of the alliance's founding, including a needs assessment conducted in Worcester that prompted the development of the initiative, a 2007 and 2012 needs assessment, and a recent public health survey that will help to direct its efforts to support girls in Worcester and its contiguous cities.

A report will be available by the October HCCSWG meeting.

The Alliance has worked on issues ranging from Mental Health, Sexual Health, Career/Work Readiness, etc. It is looking now to incorporate research

driven data into initiatives, with a goal of creating benchmarks and encouraging evaluation of activities. It will also be bringing together all the data points from all its collaborators so that they have a more holistic picture of girls in their region.

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The Alliance is an alliance, so it does not run programs and therefore does not compete against its programs for funding. This structure helps to elevate the conversations and bring important members to the table. The Worcester Commission on the Status of Women and Girls is an alliance member.

The Alliance wants to partner with the commissions, and it sees the commissions as a group that could be the advocacy arm for girls across MA. The commission could be a central convener and the Alliance could help cultivate funders -- something particularly important when women's issues receive only around 7% of funding.

There is confusion about the role of the regional commissions, and the Alliance wants to help think through the role the commissions could play in their work; it could serve as a model for what the commissions should be doing -- convening, listening, and advocating on behalf of its constituents.

HCCSWG will invite McRae to attend the October commission meeting to further the discussion on what next steps the commission should take if it wants to work toward a Hampden County alliance-type initiative.

IV. Review of the process for appointing regional commissioners

Speaker: Sasha Heggie-Jackson, Program Director, MCSW

- a. Heggie-Jackson was unable to attend.

V. Approval of minutes from July 11, 2019

- a. Hallberg moves to approve minutes; Metsch seconds; passes unanimously
- b. Metsch moves to approve executive session minutes; Hallberg seconds; passes unanimously

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VI. Chair Report

- a. Chair DiStefano and Vice Chair Hallberg participated in a MCSW Conference Call with VoteMama.org. The founder of the organization ran for political office and raised millions during a campaign, but she could not use any of the funds to help with childcare, which was limiting. The organization exists now to encourage states to make changes to allow use of campaign funds for childcare.
- b. Women's Fund Report is being released September 20, 2019
- c. Speaking Out for Women and Girls - Girls Inc event on October 10
- d. Chair DiStefano disseminated the legislative agenda from MCSW and encouraged commissioners to review legislation
- e. Aunt Bertha/413 Cares initiative has launched in Hampden County. The org is the collective effort of the Accountable Care Organizations (that accept MassHealth dollars) and serves as an online repository where citizens can identify needed services
- f. Chair DiStefano will participate on a grants conference call with MCSW in the coming week
- g. Metsch moves to accept chair report; Hallberg seconds; passes unanimously

VII. Vice Chair Report

- a. VC Hallberg discussed the Berkshire Commission's previous request to hold a public meeting at the women's jail and asked for verification that HCCSWG has responded as necessary.

- i. Chair DiStefano confirmed that HCCSWG responded to prior communication with the Berkshire Commission.
- b. Women's Fund Newsletter has transformed to include community events and it has promoted our work by putting our meeting in the calendar.
- c. October 11 is the International Day of the Girl.
- d. Metsch moves to accept Vice Chair report; Goncalves seconds; passes unanimously

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VIII. Old Business

- a. Commission meeting locations and publicity
 - i. Lack of consistent meeting locations may discourage community members from participating in our meetings and identifying new spaces can take time away from commissioners.
 - ii. Commissioners discussed the following locations and will review the capacity for each to book long term, offer free parking, and accommodate commission meetings: Palmer library, Springfield Library (16 Acres, Mason Square), Westfield Library, Holyoke Library.
 - 1. Chair DiStefano will report back at the October meeting.
- a. Research Report on the Status of Women and Girls in Western MA
 - i. The Women's Fund will attend the October meeting

IX. New Business

X. Any Other Items That May Come Before this Body

XI. Adjournment

- a. Metsch moves to adjourn; Hallberg seconds; passes unanimously.

b. Meeting adjourns at 7:56 PM

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