

**Hillsborough County Commission on the Status of Women  
Meeting Recap-March 31, 2016**

The meeting was called to order by Chair India Witte.

**Members present:** Chair India Witte, Vice Chair Jennifer Whelihan, Treasurer Kim DeBosier, Linda D'Aquila via phone, Susan Leisner, Ann Madsen, and Tee Solomon.

**Absent:** Ashley Carl, Denise Chavez, Stacy Frank, Connie Gage, Dotti Groover-Skipper, Mindy Murphy and Ann Porter.

**Additional attendees present:** Pat Rogers, Past President, Tampa Bay Network to End Hunger (TBNEH) and Caitlyn Peacock, Network Manager, TBNEH; Deborah Lekenta, Transportation Director, Neighborly Care Network; Mary Helen Farris, General Counsel, County Attorney's Office; Renee Warmack, COSW Staff Liaison, Operations and Legislative Affairs; and Sara Mickelson, Administrator, Friends of the COSW via phone.

**Approval of Meeting Recap:** The February meeting recap was not approved, as a quorum was not present.

**Hunger Update:** Ms. Peacock provided an update regarding the following topics addressed at the Fall Forum: Awareness, Transportation and Healthy Food Access. She shared that increased awareness regarding food insecurity among community partners was an outgrowth of the Forum. Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART), 211, Humana and Hillsborough Community College (HCC) are among the many organizations that the TBNEH is working with to develop solutions. Free bus passes will be provided through HART to increase student access to summer feeding sites. Feeding sites are now up to date in the 211 database. Free wifi will be part of a pilot project in Wimauma this summer to help reach underserved populations. Efforts are underway through Humana to establish reimbursements for physician prescribed healthy diets. A garden is being established in a student cafeteria at HCC. Ms. Peacock agreed to provide a summary of her work to the COSW. Ms. Fry applauded Ms. Peacock for her efforts and encouraged her to continue to reach out to the COSW to leverage contacts and resources. Chair Witte thanked Ms. Peacock and shared ideas regarding Ms. Peacock's continued involvement with the Advisory Council.

**Sunshine Law Training:** Ms. Farris provided an overview of the Sunshine Law. She explained that communication (to include electronic communication) by two or more members regarding a topic that could foreseeably come before the COSW for action, is prohibited. Key requirements of meetings in the Sunshine include: Publicly noticing meetings and subcommittee meetings within a reasonable timeframe; meeting in a publically accessible location; and creating written meeting summaries that are to be kept as a public record. Ms. Farris stated that it is no longer required that the purpose of the meeting be included in the notice. One way email communication about informational items, without responses from recipients are permissible, however, she advised members to copy the COSW Staff Liaison so that the information becomes a public record. She said that the preferred method would be to send items to the Staff Liaison and have her send the information to members. She cautioned members to avoid making too broad of an interpretation for what warrants a violation and that the perception of violations should be considered, as well. Ms. Farris explained that the consequences of Sunshine Law violations are that they void the action that was taken; and that in certain, limited circumstances can result in a misdemeanor charge. Chair Witte requested Ms. Farris's assistance in revising the COSW Bylaws. She shared that there is interest in reviewing the number of members required for a quorum. Ms. Farris explained that a member participating via phone cannot count towards the quorum requirement. Ms. Farris agreed to review the Bylaws and asked Ms. Warmack to send them to her. Ms. Farris shared that she is available should staff or members need her counsel in the future.

**Women's Hall of Fame (WHOF):** The WHOF Induction Ceremony and Luncheon will remain on May 6<sup>th</sup> after discussing that another community event will take place on that same date. Solicitation of sponsors was discussed. Members provided suggestions for refining the payment process for sponsored and reserved tables. It was decided that a single payment be made to the Friends of the COSW for these purchases, rather than multiple ones. Chair Witte stated that the payment process will be formalized into a policy. Ms. D'Aquila

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shared that the Friends of the COSW website and Paypal portal were not yet available. Ms. Leisner explained that checks can be accepted immediately. Ms. Warmack offered to have the WHOF online payment link added to the County's COSW website when it became available to help expedite access to the online payment option; and shared that the WHOF press release announcing ticket and sponsorship sales is ready for dissemination on April 1st. Ms. Mickelson will work directly with Treasurer DeBosier to quickly establish the Paypal option. Ms. D'Aquila shared that all WHOF tasks were completed, to date, except letters to elected officials needed to be sent. Ms. Warmack reviewed the County's sponsorship contribution reporting process. Chair Witte thanked Ms. D'Aquila for her leadership and hard work on the WHOF. Treasurer DeBosier agreed to develop a WHOF budget.

**YEA Awards:** Chair Witte asked Ms. Warmack to develop YEA Award review criteria and divide the COSW membership alphabetically and assign members to review either the High School or Middle School nominations. She encouraged COSW members to attend the May 4<sup>th</sup> BOCC meeting where the YEA Award recipients will be recognized.

**Chair Report:**

**Advisory Council:** Chair Witte shared that the existing Advisory Council members have agreed to remain on the Council. She asked Ms. Warmack to re-send the Mandate for Women's Wellness document and that the focus of the next Fall Forum be discussed at the April COSW meeting. Ms. Leisner shared that she will attend the Downtown Partnership meeting, as a representative of the COSW.

**2020 Women On Boards:** There was no update, as there has been no meeting since the last convening.

**Calendar:** Ms. Warmack was asked to include YEA and WHOF deadlines on the COSW calendar.

**Florida COSW:** Chair Witte shared that Ms. Fry either has or will rotate off as Chair of this body, but will remain a member.

Chair Witte expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to serve as COSW Chair and looks forward to collaborating with members to accomplish the work of the Commission.

**Communications Update:** Vice Chair Whelihan reviewed that there is no scheduled COSW newsletter, as per the discussion at the last meeting. She agreed to add Chair Witte as an author on the COSW's Facebook page. Chair Witte would like all members to have the ability to post items there, as well. Vice Chair Whelihan offered to train the next Communications Committee Chair. Chair Witte indicated that Committee Chair appointments will be addressed at the April meeting, but that some solicitation may be needed for certain positions.

**Staff Update:** Ms. Warmack asked members to let her know if they needed a new gold COSW name tag prior to the WHOF so that she can place an order; and to provide her with their preferred photos. She shared a thank you letter from the League of Women Voters; letters from the Florida Women's Hall of Fame; and a Kiwanis magazine provided by Ms. D'Aquila.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned by Chair Witte.

\*\* Staff directives underlined