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Mayor

# CITY OF HARTFORD

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## **PERMANENT COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF HARTFORD WOMEN (PCSHW) MINUTES**

Monday, January 24, 2022

|               |                                    |
|---------------|------------------------------------|
| 5:30pm-7:00pm | General Meeting                    |
| 7:00pm-7:30pm | Policy Committee                   |
| 7:00pm-7:30pm | Recruitment & Engagement Committee |

### **1. Call to Order**

### **2. Roll Call**

1. Attending Commissioners: Shannon Kula, Melinda Johnson, Erica Crowley, Haben Abraham, Sharon Pope, Susan Sarmiento, City Staff Kimberly Taylor, Research Associate Jillian Davey Public: Timeca, Angela Harris **Not attending:**  
**Commissioner Janee Folston and Commissioner Mary-Jane Foster.**

### **3. Approve Meeting Minutes**

1. Meeting started at 5:37 pm and motion to approve minutes before the committee by Melinda Johnson.
2. Motion seconded by Sharon Pope.
3. Minutes were unanimously approved.

#### **4. Approve 2022 Meeting Schedule**

1. Per our bylaws, our meetings will continue to take place on the third Monday of each month. Given the federal holidays in January and February, there will be two exceptions requiring those meetings to take place the following Monday instead. Commission meetings will occur on Monday, 1/24/22 and Monday, 2/28/22.

#### **5. Officer Reports**

##### **1. Chairwoman Kula**

1. There is one new commissioner, Susan Sarmiento to report and today, 1.24.22 is her first meeting.

##### **2. 2021 Year End Review**

1. Introduced plan for 2022 and first order of business by Kula ran through the categories to discuss timing, individual responsibilities and how these are determined by interest.

##### **2. Managing Secretary Abraham**

1. 2022 plan for taking minutes – one person/quarter will be designated

1. Jan-March (Managing Secretary Haben Abraham)

2. April – June (Commissioner Melinda Johnson)

3. July – September (Commissioner Erica Crowley)

4. October – December (Commissioner Mary-Jane Foster)

## **6. Committee and Special Reports –**

The Commission discussed several themes across 2022 planning, potential collaboration ideas and resource sharing.

### **A. Events and Outreach for the Year**

- i. Commission discussed potential partnerships on Women's History Month. To potentially partner on city wide events like 5 days of Action (i.e. similar initiative as Commissioner Johnson at YWCA)
- ii. The Summit on Women and Girls' Equity (tentative for June 2022)
- iii. Second and Third Forums in (projected for Sept and October 2022 tentatively)

### **B. Equity Issues** (HPD HFD, Women's health and mental health, justice impacted women) i.e. Felicia Graves (Operations Division) next month to present to PCSHW.

- i. Women's Mental Health/ re-entry initiatives — Her Time (mentioned by Jillian Davey) is a mentoring organization run by justice involved women for women in Hartford. Meetings are public and could provide potential partnership.
- ii. Women's Mental Health as a theme/event driven (Commissioners Crowley and Abraham would support this initiative).

### **C. Increasing advocacy work:**

Some examples discussed were to attend at Common Council, present to the NRZs, letter advocacy, etc.

City is working on their budget. Hearings are being held and drafts due before end of calendar year. Last year we sent a letter in April 2021 for the American Recovery funds. Where can we lend our experiences listening to different organizations through our forums and use that to participate in those budget hearings with goal to support and focus on particular areas/needs.

Court of Common Council meets every two weeks (On Mondays) Commissioner Kula suggested Commissioners rotating attendance to be present virtually and weigh in on issues pertinent to our work.

The NRZs were included in our last forums; Commission could present/partner with NRZs especially virtually. We could divide the 17 and reach out to explain our role/work. Contacts can be found at <http://www.hartfordnext.org/find-your-nrz/>

## **D. Targeted Collaborations**

We will focus on both past and future partnerships as related to the work and vision for the year. This includes the Village, Recidivism, YWCA, Wheeler, United Way. There is interest in

connecting with Journey Home, CRT and Jillian Davey suggested outreaching Hartford Next for access to coalition of all NRZs.

Potentially having Common Council meet us to let us know their plans and goals. Standard template or message will be developed by Commissioner Kula to be used by Commissioners for engaging other council meetings and groups.

A suggestion of Women's History month items (i.e. essay contest for the city, 5 days of action template and where we could lend consult to Mayor/his reporting. Angela Harris suggested that the essay could include focus on the new mural on CRT building in which five famous women could be written about by students.

Park Street Library has murals in Parkville that could also be incorporated. Newly appointed Commissioner Susan Sarmiento may lead on this initiative of outreaching or highlighting Latinx women in Hartford. Commissioner Erica Crowley shared <https://action-lab.org/frog-hollow-oral-history/collections/show/3> for projects happening in Hartford.

Jillian Davey shared that GHREC runs a meeting on the first Thursday per month. One of the goals is to address recidivism and address homelessness. We can bring the commission there for recruitment. Potential invite to various organizations that serve Hartford women such as Journey Home, Community Partners in Action, Greater Hartford Re-entry, Capitol Workforce Partners, etc. Davey also suggested Terry Good from Family Re-entry as a resource.

Commissioner Crowley suggested Healthy Hartford Hub as an organization that is working to secure more grocery access/sites in the city. The group is working with a class at Trinity College this Spring and suggested sending a letter of advocacy as an easy first step as Commission.

Jillian Davey offered Hartford Decides budgeting initiative where members can submit proposals and its voted on winners get budgeted money to create the plan they proposed.

## **Next Steps**

Jillian is considering how leading a project on this data collection could be a possibility to highlight unheard voices, as well as promote the Commission as an entity and resource etc.

Jillian suggested mental health focus for women (Regional Behavioral Health by DMHAS) which is her field placement. Focuses on providers assessing and evaluating the gaps in services and there's a Hartford catchment council.

<https://www.hartforddecides.org/hd>

Resources also shared:

[https://www.urbanalliance.com/Customer-Content/www/CMS/files/BTBResourceGuide\\_Final\\_Jul2017.pdf](https://www.urbanalliance.com/Customer-Content/www/CMS/files/BTBResourceGuide_Final_Jul2017.pdf)

[https://www.hartfordct.gov/Government/Departments/DFCYR/DFCYR\\_YouthDiv/DFCYR\\_HFRD Special Orders](https://www.hartfordct.gov/Government/Departments/DFCYR/DFCYR_YouthDiv/DFCYR_HFRD_Special_Orders)

## **7. Unfinished / Old Business**

## **8. New Business**

Commissioners Kula and Johnson will speak on priority legislation to be shared next month February 2022.

## **9. Public Comments**

Angela Harris addressed the ecosystem of food in Hartford. The quality of food, processed foods etc. and the food insecurity as a main issue for Hartford women and how lack of basic access impacts life expectancy, health issues etc. She shared that 62% don't have own transportation to go to a full-service grocery store outside of their immediate area. Seniors are bussed to Bloomfield to grocery shop. Making life easier for women raising kids in Hartford should be priority especially given the fact that "your zip code determines a 15 to 20-year difference in life expectancy". Food desert and a food swamp (no grocery of quality and over processed foods) was highlighted in relation to Hartford.

Angela Harris shared Food Share merger but explained schedules don't always align with parents' time/work schedule/childcare etc. (i.e. waiting on a food box in line in Winter). This is an issue on equity and access in how distribution happens.

Angela Harris suggested Operations Management, Budget and Government Accountability Meetings (next meeting is February 21, 2022). Angela also added Hartford Next has been having Community-wide training sessions on how City Government works. PCSHW could share at these sessions as well.

Harris offered that the New Portal for City Government Meetings and official postings <https://hartford.civicweb.net/>.

Angela Harris suggested getting a pulse from community to see what Hartford women want as their main issues. Angela suggested reaching beyond our forum participants for data collection. UCONN Health Disparities with Director Wizdom Powell was recommended. Schools of Social Work could be engaged on this work and pull data. Students can also use this work to get credit (i.e. creating surveys etc.)

### **Announcements**

Hartford Fire Department presents at next month's Commission meeting instead of today, January 24, 2022

**10. Adjournment.** Meeting adjourned by 7:05 pm and there were no committee meetings to follow.