

# Wyoming Council on Women's Issues

## Meeting Minutes

### June 4, 2005

#### Call to Order

Michelle called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

#### Roll Call

Michelle Aldrich, Jan Torres, Merna Rierson, Sherrill Helzer, Teresa de Groh, Nina Romero-Caron, Mary England, Jenny Ingram and Diane Moser were present. Cynthia Chavez Kelly arrived at 11:30 a.m. Four council seats are vacant.

#### Minutes of Last Meeting

Teresa said she had not received any changes or corrections to the minutes. Mary said she had one correction: on page 4, Express Printing made the \$850 bid and that she had obtained just the three bids.

Jan moved to approve the May 14, 2005 minutes as corrected. Sherrill seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Treasurer's Report

Diane summarized the financial report sent to council members prior to the meeting. She directed members' attention to the Girl Power line item and asked about some "walk-ins" at the conference for whom there was no indication of payment. Jan explained that several people were to be covered under one payment and the person who was paying had not yet arrived when these other people went through.

Merna asked how much each teleconference costs. Diane said on average \$300; they have been costing about \$200 recently since the Council has a few vacancies. The face-to-face meetings cost about \$2,000.

## Friend's Financial Report

Michelle noted the Friends' account balance of \$2,066.58, is unchanged and expected to remain so until corporate and 501(c)(3) status is settled.

## Committee Reports

### Education Opportunities

### Employment Practices

Nina noted the health committee has been dissolved and other committees will take up the projects. She had nothing to report on former health committee projects.

No chairs exist for the new committees yet, and the projects have not been redistributed either, so there were no committee reports for education or employment.

### Legislative Roles & Responsibilities

Teresa informed the council of her intent that the legislative committee look back on previous WCWI projects, such as the Wage Disparity report and the Issues Survey, to see if there are legislative efforts that should be pursued. She also said recent legislation and legislative proposals, such as the removal of sales tax on food, should be looked at for project support from WCWI.

### Home & Community

Merna had no new information for the council members on committee projects.

## Old Business

1. **Connect brochure.** Michelle noted that Teresa had already informed the Council that the Teton County Library would only take the bookmarks; that mouse pads would not be accepted. Michelle asked if other Council members had contacted libraries in their districts. Jenny said she spoke with someone from the Wyoming Library Association; they indicated libraries set their own policies regarding accepting materials from outside sources. Jan said her librarian thought mouse pads would only be used by about 20% of the libraries in the state. Nina reported similar results from a discussion with her librarian. The general consensus was to pursue bookmarks, but not mouse pads.

The draft of the bookmark was discussed. Although some members found one side of the bookmark too busy, it was noted that certain information was required to be included and that eliminating any of the text on that side was not an option. The Council discussed ways to make the bookmark more user friendly. Members suggested putting "Where to

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Find Help” above “The Source for Human Services Information in Wyoming” and reducing the latter text in size. Members also suggested reducing the font size of the Internet address and phone numbers in order to also fit the 800 number, which seemed to have been left out. Diane and Michelle will take the suggested changes back to the committee working on the bookmark.

2. **Women’s Legal Handbook rewrites.** Diane said she has not been able to get a hold of Dona Playton to inform her of the Council’s offer to hire a law student to update the handbook. Cynthia said she would be in contact with Dona and would let her know of the Council’s intention.
3. **Summit Award.** Mary noted that at the last meeting the deadline for submitting nominations for the Summit Award was extended and that the PR for the award had been recirculated. She urged Council members to distribute nomination forms in their districts.
4. **Friends reorganization.** Michelle noted that Jenny and Teresa had obtained and distributed information regarding the corporate status of the Friends—it has been incorporated, but the Secretary of State has given it “defunct” status. There was discussion regarding how to remedy the situation. The consensus was that Jenny should have information by the next meeting regarding how to get the Friends corporate status renewed and in shape. Initial board members for the Friends would be Lora Hittle, Marty Coe and Amy McClure.
5. **Wyoming Woman of Distinction.** There was some discussion regarding the record number of nominations received and that there a still several that are being carried over from previous years, according to the Council’s previous policy of keeping the nominations active for three years. Michelle noted that Cynthia needs to send an updated rubric for judging nominations. The Council discussed the previous rubric and decided to have Teresa send the rubric used last year with any notes regarding suggested changes. Members are to send their nomination results to Michelle by July 31. Council members agreed to shoot for presentation of the award in September or October in the winner’s hometown.
6. **Wyoming Women of Distinction booklet bids.** Mary clarified the bids she had received from printers in Casper. There had been previous discussion of getting estimates from printers in Cheyenne. Diane noted that the WBC staff might be able to provide some layout expertise, etc., that would help make the printer’s job easier and, therefore, bring the cost of the printing down. She will discuss this project with Sonya.
7. **Student’s Guide to Sexual Harassment Spanish Translation.** Teresa informed the Council that she had visited the Journeys School and spoke to the students that would be translating the brochure. She told them about WCWI and the purpose of the project. She also passed around some of the other WCWI publications, which they were allowed to

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keep. The teacher responsible for the project anticipated the translation to be finished shortly; each student was being given one small section of text.

8. **Wyoming Tech Prep Consortium follow-up.** Michelle made a list of all the high schools in Wyoming that do not already belong to the Consortium. She passed out a list of schools to contact to each Council member. Michelle encouraged members to contact either a school's industrial arts instructor or the school's counselor(s). Members were reminded to be clear that there is no cost to the school to join the Consortium. Michelle would like reports back by the next meeting.
9. **Nellie Tayloe Ross documentary.** Merna said she is still trying to get a budget put together for a proposal to the legislature. She noted that it is very timely that WCWI is pursuing this now—a book is coming out soon about N.T. Ross and, hopefully, the Hall of Fame nomination will come through.
10. **National Conference letter.** Michelle asked if there were any comments from members regarding the draft letter that had been circulated. There were no changes suggested. Michelle asked Diane to get the letter sent as soon as possible. The Council discussed the purpose and initiatives (and lack thereof) of the NACW and whether or not the Council should remain a member. Council members noted that WCWI did not need to be a member of NACW in order to attend the national convention. WCWI would not be able to participate in the business meeting unless membership in NACW was maintained. There was discussion regarding other conferences that would be equally beneficial to WCWI. (Cynthia arrived at the meeting.)

Members discussed what they thought WCWI should be getting from NACW:

- Federal legislation and initiatives
- National convention
- Networking opportunities/collaboration
- Newsletter/information dissemination
- Website—high quality & up-to-date, with membership information and interactive/chat
- National or regional recognition/clearing house
- Mission statement/focus/prioritized issues
- Follow through
- Credibility/visibility (w/other women's organizations and related organizations)

Members discussed the problems WCWI has been having with the NACW: the confusion at the business meetings, the confusion and lack of information for the convention, the difficulty in getting information from the NACW, the convention bid process, and the consistent observation of disorganization. Members found that currently, the NACW is providing very few of the services desired from the list created (above).

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Teresa moved that WCWI not renew its membership to NACW until NACW provides at least a majority of the desired services (as listed in the June 4, 2005 minutes). Cynthia seconded the motion.

Several members felt WCWI should continue to support NACW and work on improving the organization from within. Other members felt that WCWI has been trying for several years to get NACW to get its house in order and that continuing to support the organization when it provided so little to its members was unjustified. Teresa noted that since the membership seemed so divided that a possible compromise would be to pay dues for one more year and send a letter with WCWI's desired services. Cynthia suggested WCWI present its needs at the national convention during the business meeting.

After significant discussion, the question was called for and the motion carried with Merna, Teresa, Jan, Nina and Michelle voting for the motion and Cynthia, Mary, Sherrill and Jenny voting against.

11. **Support for National Board.** Members agreed that this item was now moot as members had voted to discontinue NACW membership. It was noted that Cynthia will need to resign her position on the national board.
12. **Chairperson vacancy for upcoming biennium.** Nina apologized to members for realizing late that she could not fulfill the Chair position and had to resign before even taking office. Jan nominated Teresa to fill the open Chair position. Jenny seconded the motion. Cynthia moved to close nominations. There were no objections.

Jan moved to suspend the by-laws in order to recognize the need to elect a Chair. Sherrill seconded the motion. Cynthia said she is opposed to the motion: she did not think the by-laws needed to be suspended. The motion carried.

Mary moved to have the secretary cast a unanimous ballot. Cynthia seconded. All were in favor of the motion.

13. **Vacancies.** Diane noted that the Governor's office has indicated there are enough applications for the vacancies on the Council and appointments are expected soon. Teresa asked about the process for obtaining the new members' names. She also asked Diane to send the new slate of officers to the Governor's office. Other members noted that news releases should be provided to the Casper paper and the papers in the hometowns of all the new officers.
14. **Any Other Old Business.** Michelle noted that Cynthia, Sherrill and Jenny will be attending the NACW convention and will be expected to provide summaries of all sessions attended and other pertinent information obtained at the convention.

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Cynthia requested that her attendance for the November 2004 meeting be corrected—she is shown as absent, but she attended by phone. Jan suggested this issue be tabled until Robert’s Rules of Order can be consulted regarding amendment of the minutes and so that phone records can be consulted. Mary seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Jan suggested that when WCWI takes on projects, such as Girl Power, that a 25 percent contingency cost be added to the project budget in order to ensure sufficient funds to complete the project. She also noted that a cancellation policy should be adopted and used for similar projects.

Jan also praised Tucker Fagan and Diane Moser from the WBC and Wyoming Community College for all the help they provided in making the Girl Power project a success. There was some discussion regarding whether or not WCWI could sell the extra curricula from the Girl Power seminars. Members agreed they could be sold, but only at cost.

## **New Business**

1. **Set dates for next year.** The following meeting dates were set for the next fiscal year:

August 4, 2005 teleconference @ 6:00 p.m.  
October 14, 2005 face-to-face  
January 7, 2006 face-to-face  
February 11, 2006 teleconference @ 8:00 a.m.  
April 15, 2006 teleconference @ 8:00 a.m.  
June 10, 2006 face-to-face

Members discussed face-to-face meeting locations. The October meeting will include presentation of the Woman of Distinction Award, so the location will be the hometown of the award winner. Members discussed the pros and cons of moving the face-to-face meeting locations around the state. Some members suggested Lander for the January meeting, although no conclusion was reached.

Michelle noted correspondence received regarding celebration of WCWI’s 40<sup>th</sup> year of existence. After some discussion, members agreed that they would rather focus on current projects and plan for a 50<sup>th</sup> celebration.

2. **Projects assigned to new committee names.** Michelle coordinated committee assignments:

Educational Opportunities: Jan and Cynthia

Employment Practices: Mary

Home & Community: Merna, Jenny and Nina

Legal Rights & Responsibilities: Teresa, Michelle, and Sherrill

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Teresa questioned the distribution, asking for consideration of at least two people on a committee. Michelle noted that three council seats were empty and that as soon as they were filled, these new members would be assigned to balance out committee assignments.

3. **Any Other New Business.** Jan noted that according to the grant received for the Girl Power seminars from the Wyoming Women's Foundation, a six month and one year report regarding how the knowledge has been implemented will be due.

Members recognized that WCWI should turn a spotlight upon itself regarding the list of expectations of NACW, recognizing that WCWI serves a similar role at the state level. Members noted that WCWI monitors and reports on state legislation, collaborates on the Women's Conference each year, participates in networking opportunities, produces a newsletter, recently launched a new website, collaborates with state and regional organizations on projects, and has a mission statement. Members commented that on some projects, there has been a lack of follow-through, such as with the wage disparity study and the issues survey. There was also a feeling that credibility and visibility should be improved. All in all, members recognized that WCWI is not perfect, but felt that WCWI has shown great progress in providing the services of state-wide organization, and that this progress should continue.

Diane informed the Council that the Women's Entertainment Network (WEN) found WCWI's website, contacted Diane regarding WCWI's projects, and is interested in possibly donating some money. They expected that if a donation were made, WCWI would issue a press release recognizing the gift. Diane asked the Council if there was any objection to accepting a donation. Council members appreciated the interest of the WEN and cheerfully agreed to accept any donation WEN was willing to give.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:30 p.m.