

## **N.C Council for Women Quarterly Meeting Minutes**

May 19, 2023, 10:00 am until 2:00 pm

---

**Members Present:** Annette Taylor, Chair, Lyric Thompson, Vice-Chair, Liz Doherty, Candance Gingles, Alison Kiser, Dr. Michelle Meggs, Dana O'Donovan, Dr. Patricia Parker, Tara Romano, Adrienne Spinner, and Carrie Stewart were present at the Department of Administration in Raleigh. joined remotely.

**Members Absent:** Beth Posner, Chavi Koneru, Elizabeth Outten, Dr. Tracey Ray, Judge Robin Robinson, Judge Mary Ann Tally, Karen Wallace Meigs, Kate Woodbury, and Pamela Young-Jacobs were unable to attend.

**Council for Women & Youth Involvement Staff Present:** Danielle Carman, Charnessa Ridley, Sandra Ross, Barbara Smith, and Deborah Torres were present.

**Guests Present:** OSBM Facilitators Ben Agsten, Jackie Arnette, and Jessica Robinson were present. DOA Secretary Pamela Cashwell, DOA Deputy Secretary David Elliott, Governor's Policy Director Jessica Englert, and DOA Legislative Liaison Wes Kyatt were present for part of the meeting.

---

**The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Thompson at 10:00 a.m.**

### **Updates from Chair and Vice Chair**

Thompson said she wanted to provide updates about three primary matters: 1) A meeting Taylor and she had with Cashwell and Elliott to discuss the Council's work; 2) potential participation by Englert and Kyatt on policy and legislation moving forward; and 3) lessons learned from the Council's process of preparing public communications about SB20. She invited Cashwell to share her thoughts about the first matter.

Cashwell said she is very supportive of the Council's role and work, and DOA will be more intentional moving forward about a stronger exchange of information and including staff from the Governor's team when priorities align. Thompson thanked Cashwell for the meeting and for her commitment to finding a process to provide support to the Council.

Englert said she has partnered with Council members in the past on issues like paid leave, pregnancy protections, and the ban on using salary history in the hiring process, and she is also supportive of their work. Englert said she would try to make a regular appearance at Council meetings and will send Andrea DeSantis from her team when she is unable to attend. Englert thanked the Council members for their statement and powerful OpEds and letters to the editor about SB20, as well as their help with the Governor's roundtables. Englert invited the Council members to help amplify the messaging campaign that the Governor would be launching the following week in support of public education. See [Public Education Crisis | NC Gov. Cooper](#).

Thompson said, in addition to the Council's efforts to react to negative policy developments, she would also like to see the Council be proactive in anticipating key dates, such as Women's Equality Day in August, the Council's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in October, and Women's History Month in March.

Thompson invited the Council members to reflect on the process that was used for the SB20 responses. She thanked individual Council members for the work they did drafting public statements and letters to the editor and for taking the time to attend their local roundtables. Doherty said she believes a prime lane for the Council moving forward should be as an external validator for Governor Cooper's initiatives and priorities. She said she does not think the Council's role is to be a proactive communications hub; instead, she suggested that the Council choose its moments wisely and maintain active communication with the Governor's team. Kiser said she thought the Council's SB20 response was effective because everyone was working from the same messaging points. Spinner said the letter to the editor template and talking points were very helpful. She added that the roundtable in Greensboro was amazing, and the doctors who attended confirmed that the bill was not grounded in medical expertise.

Meggs said some Council members may be unable to be out front on some messages but can find other ways to help behind the scenes. Taylor agreed, and said there is more than one way to be an advocate. Thompson expressed her appreciation for the group effort, and said the Council can continue to improve the process and find the right cadence. Doherty said this effort was successful in part because Thompson and Spinner were willing to be vulnerable and share their personal stories.

### **Mission/Vision/Values Review**

Agsten reviewed the mission, vision, and values statements that the Council finalized after the first strategic planning session.

*Mission:* To advocate for and empower women, to amplify the voices of women, and to drive policies that promote education, safety, health, and social and economic justice for the women of North Carolina.

*Vision:* North Carolina is a state where women thrive economically and socially, racial and gender justice prevail, and women's quality of life ranks at the highest levels.

*Values:*

- Accountability - We take responsibility for the measurable impact of our collective actions, and we hold policy makers and power holders accountable to the people.
- Equity - We are committed to developing and sustaining a culture that removes barriers that limit opportunities for women.
- Collaboration - We are at our best when we work together to leverage the creativity, expertise, and integrity of the entire Council to fulfill our mission.
- Strategic - We make clear choices, anticipate changing conditions, and plan for the future.
- Justice - We advocate for true and lasting equality for women, respecting and showing compassion for those who are not treated fairly.

### **Strategic Opportunities and Goals**

Council members split into small groups and identified three to five strategic opportunities that the Council should focus on moving forward. The groups subsequently engaged in an activity where they imagined talking to three generations of North Carolina women at a future dinner party and what they would tell them about the Council's accomplishments over the coming 18 months. Of the identified goals

(i.e., an end result or something to be desired over a period of time), the following received the most votes of support from Council members:

**1. Annual convening of local councils**

- a. Connection, collaboration
- b. Campaign Work

**2. Launch issue-based campaigns**

- a. Communications/messaging that is inclusive of all NC women
- b. Media/social media strategy
- c. Events at state/local levels to advocate
- d. Collaborate with strategic partners
- e. Participate in events that highlight any executive/legislative action or win
- f. Educate on issue and action steps for local communities/advocates to participate
  - i. Media templates
  - ii. Petitions, letter writing, talking points, and education around legislative accountability
- g. Metric: # of reports/downloads/shares/uptake

**3. Offer quarterly policy recommendations to executive branch/governor/state agencies**

- a. Produce annual, original research (not necessarily long data-driven reports) regarding the status of women in North Carolina in collaboration with leading NC institutions
- b. Metric: # of collaborative executive actions

**Objectives**

The Council members then opted to participate in one of three groups to generate two to five draft objectives (i.e., measure of the progress that is needed achieve a set goal within a specific timeframe) for each goal. Objectives should be SMARTIE (**S**pecific and succinct; **M**easurable; **A**ssignable; **R**ealistic, results-based, and relevant; **T**imebound; **I**nclusive; and **E**quitable).

**1. To Convene . . . in March 2024**

- a. Multiple women's groups/initiatives (not just councils since there are not that many)
- b. One statewide event to:
  - i. Serve as a kickoff to regional/local events after connections are made and excitement created
  - ii. Lay groundwork as annual conference with Save the Date for March 2025 conference date and location
- c. Access (Winer Family Foundation, YWCA, Women to Women, etc.)
  - i. Talk to DOT for help with transportation?
  - ii. Childcare?
  - iii. Fees: how to subsidize them, keep them low, etc.
  - iv. Rural and urban
- d. Speakers
  - i. Keynote, breakouts
  - ii. Organizations to exhibit?
- e. Topics:
  - o From Educate and Advocate, below

- Public education
  - General women’s health (maternal, mental, aging)
  - Economic mobility
  - Civic participation
  - Base off four existing status of women reports
2. **To Educate** . . . stakeholders/decision-makers, impacted communities/partners, allies, press, etc. about the status of NC women, supporting them with information, resources, and tools for action
    - a. Research/messaging around the status of NC women particularly around the Governor’s priority issue(s) such as public education, childcare, and reproductive justice
    - b. Campaign
      - i. Messaging, resource, and tool development
      - ii. Disseminate at local level
      - iii. Targeted stakeholders (revisit roll-out strategy for Status of Women reports)
    - c. Empower stakeholders to act
  3. **To Advocate** . . . with decisionmakers for policy changes:
    - a. Provide 3-5 policy recommendations 2-4 times per year (depending on legislative calendar) to Governor/Executive Branch
    - b. Contribute creative + data-based input to crafting of executive actions over the next 18 months (# depends on the Governor’s agenda)
    - c. Accountability for legislators for the remainder of the term

**Suggested Next Steps**

1. Finalize goal statements, identify goal champions, develop performance metrics (optional), and operationalize the strategic plan (develop committees, identify goal champions, determine capacity, and assign tasks). OSBM Strategic Planning Guidance can be found here: <https://www.osbm.nc.gov/documents/files/strategic-planning-guidance/download?attachment>
2. Revisit Committee structure and consider whether it should more closely track the top goals.
3. Monitor Strategic Plan

**Monitoring your Strategic & Performance Plans**

*Institute Pause & Reflect exercises*

Plan   Reflect   Decide   Act

- Annually:** “Are we doing the right things?”
  - Ensure plan remains relevant
  - Revise measures, strategies, objectives as needed
  - Example: Annual Retreat with external facilitator
- Quarterly:** “Are we doing what we said we would do?”
  - Assess progress toward strategic goals, objectives
  - Realign resources, refine strategies
  - Example: Quarterly Meetings
- Monthly:** “Are we getting things done?”
  - Adjust initiatives, tasks, tactics
  - Reflection Fridays

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.