

NC Council for Women Quarterly Meeting Minutes
September 20, 2024, 10:00 am until 12:00 p.m.

Members Present: Annette Taylor, Chair, Maggie Barlow, Liz Doherty, Candance Gingles, Alison Kiser, Fontella McKyer (joined after roll call), Dr. Michelle Meggs, Elizabeth Outten, Dr. Patricia Parker, Beth Posner, the Honorable Robin Robinson, Tara Romano, Adrienne Spinner, Carrie Stewart, Kate Woodbury (joined after roll call), and Pamela Young-Jacobs (joined after roll call) attended virtually via ZoomGov.

Members Absent: Lyric Thompson, Vice-Chair, and members Erin Hill Hart, Chavi Koneru, Dawn Rookey were unable to attend.

Council for Women & Youth Involvement Staff Present: Chad Brendan, K. Lenore Brown, Danielle Carman, Jamie Davis, Lori Gerber, Shagufta Hakeem, Eugena Harrington, Jean McBride, Ikhlas Mohamed, Harriet Lunsford, Jean McBride, Charnessa Ridley, and Deborah Torres joined remotely.

Guests Present: DOA Deputy Secretary David Elliott, DOA Communications Director Julia Hegele, DOA Policy Director Evin Grant, DOA Policy Analyst Gianna Quilici, and DOA Program Analyst Sharrice Blackmon joined remotely. Judge Ashleigh Parker joined the first part of the meeting to administer member oaths.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Taylor at 10:07 a.m.

Welcome: Chair Taylor welcomed everyone who was present and gave opening remarks and the ethics advisement. Deputy Secretary Elliott also shared welcoming remarks.

Approval of Minutes: Outten moved to approve the minutes of the May 3, 2024 meeting, and Kiser seconded the motion. All Council members who were present at roll call approved the motion.

Council for Women Reappointments & Oaths of Office – The Honorable Ashleigh Parker
Judge Parker administered oaths of office for reappointed members Barlow, Gingles, Meggs, Outten, Parker, Robinson, Romano, Spinner, and Young-Jacobs. The oath of office for reappointed member Hill Hart was postponed until the next meeting.

Chair Report – Annette Taylor

Taylor thanked everyone for their hard work on the recent Conference for Women, which was a great success. Taylor noted that Romano had circulated information about a free event on September 27, 2024 to unveil the [All Ages, All Stages NC](#) Plan for aging and living well. Romano encouraged everyone to review the report and share it with their networks when it is released.

Taylor said the [Women + Girls Research Alliance](#) is hosting a Leadership Café event on October 30, 2024. Meggs said the event will be an intergenerational community conversation about support and belonging for women and girls. She added that registration is free, but the event is limited to 300 people.

Report from Governor’s Policy Team – Liz Doherty

Doherty congratulated Taylor on receiving a Black Tech Futurist Award for her digital equity work. Doherty said she has received a lot of positive feedback about the conference, and she congratulated the Council members on a job well done.

Doherty said the Governor’s team has been focused on counter messaging about the Republican voucher plan for “opportunity scholarships” in [House Bill 10](#). She said the bill would allocate more than \$600 million to the voucher program to enroll students on the wait list, which would be a funding increase of nearly \$250 million this school year alone. Doherty said the Governor is doing a lot of interviews across the state, particularly in rural areas that would be disproportionately impacted because of a lack of private schools.

Doherty said the last of the childcare stabilization grants (\$67.5 million) that the General Assembly approved have gone out. She said those grants currently support more than 4,000 early child education centers, and this is stopgap funding to keep the centers open.

Debrief of August 28, 2024 Conference for Women – Annette Taylor and Danielle Carman

Taylor said she was very pleased with the conference attendance and asked Carman to share an update. Carman said about 720 people registered to attend in person, but there were approximately 550 actual in-person attendees plus another 150 or so who attended virtually. Carman said it was an amazing event, and she thanked all of the CFWYI staff for their work executing the conference and keeping the sessions running on time. Carman also thanked the DOA Communications Division for its work creating a great [post-event webpage](#) to host all of the videos of the sessions. She added that the webpage contains event photos and biographies of the speakers and moderators.

Robinson congratulated the Council members and staff on the planning and execution, adding that there was a strong turnout from members of the New Hanover County Women’s Commission. She asked whether the webpage would be the best source to recap the event for local commissions, and Hegele said the website and [DOA’s news release](#) would be the best sources. Robinson added that the New Hanover County Women’s Commission is planning a local Women’s History Month event for March 2025, with a likely topic of health and wellness. She invited speaker suggestions and Outten said there may be local staff from Novant Health who could be speakers. Romano shared a link to a recent [DHHS report on health disparities in North Carolina](#).

Carman said 70 conference attendees completed the post-event evaluation and their feedback was largely positive, with some constructive criticisms expressed. Carman directed the Council members to the responses in their meeting materials, as well as a separate spreadsheet with the names and contact information for 26 attendees who specifically expressed interest in hearing more about the Council’s work, including future educational and/or partnership opportunities.

Outten suggested that the Council might want to explore publishing a periodic newsletter, and asked if CFWYI produces any newsletters. Carman said the only newsletter CFWYI publishes is “The Youth Newsletter,” which is focused on the Internship Program and State Youth Councils. Outten said the 26 attendees who want to know more about the Council’s work might be interested in receiving that newsletter. Carman said it is more geared toward youth, so she is not sure it would interest them. Gingles said she thinks it would be a good idea to offer it to them. She further suggested the possibility of one-on-

one conversations to follow up with those attendees, and Outten said a few Council members could take the time to call those individuals. Outten added that the key is to make contact with them soon.

Taylor suggested sending an email to all of them. Barlow agreed, adding that an email could include links to various options for getting more engaged, such as the [link to apply to state boards and commissions](#). Barlow said she would be happy to make some phone calls as well, but she is not yet sure what she would say to those individuals and she thinks an email might be more effective. Taylor agreed that, if Council members are going to make calls, they should first agree on the main points to make in those calls. Outten said an email could tell the attendees that the Council appreciates them coming to the conference and will share more information in the future but offer a few options in the meantime. She said personal contact would be very beneficial. Taylor said the Council could also invite them to come to a future Council meeting and give a presentation about their work.

Carman said the Office of Professional Development will provide a full accounting of sponsorship funds within 90 days of the event, and she expects there to be funds remaining. She added that DOA Secretary Pam Cashwell and she sent all of the sponsoring secretaries a thank you letter and told them that the Council would like to use the remaining funds for other future initiatives, such as one or more Status of Women reports, if they are willing to leave the funds with CFWYI. Carman said she will follow up with Secretary Cashwell about how to proceed at this point. Parker said it is great news that those funds might be available to the Council for future initiatives.

Next Steps – Annette Taylor

The Council members turned to a discussion of next steps. Carman reminded the group that the session leads had previously discussed creating a written summary of resources and calls to actions for each session as a follow-up document to provide to attendees. Carman said Candance also suggested a more high-level one-page summary of the calls to action. Taylor said she could see that type of document going out with a follow-up email although she is not sure of the timeline or if that is something the staff has the capacity to do. Carman said the session leads would need to create those documents for their sessions, but the staff would be happy to edit and consolidate what the session leads prepare. Spinner said she could compile a document of her session's calls to action and links to the organizations and resources mentioned. Taylor suggested holding a debrief meeting of the session leads to discuss that possibility. Gingles asked if a consolidated list of references and calls to action could be posted on the event webpage, and Carman said yes.

Barlow said it might be too much of a delay by the time the Council could prepare and distribute those summaries, noting that the conference itself was the Council's work product. Parker suggested revisiting the goals for the conference and thinking about what follow up might be appropriate in light of those goals. Parker said one of the goals was to do outreach to women on the front lines and she thinks the conference was a resounding success in terms of the energy it created. She wondered how the Council can build on that success. Doherty agreed and said, if the Council is able to keep the remaining sponsorship funds for another report, it could include a narrative in that report about the conference and how it informed the selection of a report topic. She said that might offer an opportunity to repackage some of the discussions and calls to action there.

Taylor said the Council members did discuss a variety of goals during the strategic planning process and, at that time, they agreed not to undertake another set of Status of Women reports until after the conference. Taylor added that Council members also discussed ways to encourage the creation of additional local women's commissions and that next steps could include identifying some areas that might be ripe for their creation. Kiser said the window for OpEds related to the conference has probably passed unless the Council

can identify more timely news hooks and then take the opportunity to refer back to the policy discussions that took place at the conference. Kiser said people value the Status of Women reports and a lot has changed at the policy level since they were released, adding that she would be excited to be part of the creation of new reports. Romano agreed that it might be too late to push OpEds around the conference but said she does have one well-written piece authored by one of her board members about the political participation session.

Taylor said, if the Council wants to pursue one or more reports, it would have to determine whether to contract with the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) again or to explore a partnership with a local university. Taylor added that more work would need to be done to push policy recommendations that reports might generate.

Taylor suggested that the Council's committee chairs return to convening meetings of the Outreach & Partnerships and Education & Advocacy Committees, and encouraged each committee to meet before the Council's next quarterly meeting in November. Carman noted that the two newest Council members (Barlow and Hill Hart) do not have committee assignments because the Council had moved to conference planning by the time they were appointed. Carman said she will recirculate committee assignments and documents from the strategic planning sessions. Taylor said the committee chairs will reach out about scheduling time in October.

Taylor said several groups have reached out since the conference about potential partnerships, including the Great Raleigh Chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) and AARP, and she will look at the organizations represented by the attendees who expressed interest in future partnerships. Carman said she would let the Council members know as soon as she has a definitive answer on utilizing the remaining sponsorship funds. Taylor suggested that the committees discuss collecting resources and maybe adding them to the event webpage later.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12: 18 pm.