

**BROOKLINE COMMISSION FOR WOMEN  
MEETING TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 2023  
(ONLINE VIA ZOOM AND RECORDED)**

MEETING MINUTES

- I. Administrative details: **Meeting started at 7:43pm.**
  - a. Attendees – Ms. Felina Silver-Robinson, Ms. Elizabeth Stillman, Ms. Aileen Lee, Ms. Rebecca Stone, Ms. Carol Caro, Ms. Nicole McClelland. Absentees – Ms. Hadassah Margolis, Ms. Meenakshi Garodia, Ms. Neela Kaushik, Dr. Lucy Chie. Administrator – Ms. Caitlin Starr.
  - b. Vote to approve minutes from meeting of March 2023: Moved by Ms. Stone. Seconded by Ms. Stillman and Ms. Caro, unanimous vote yes to approve minutes.
  
- II. Public Comment
  - a. No Public attendees. No public comment.
  
- III. Reflection on the Women of the Year Celebration
  - a. Ms. Silver-Robinson shared feedback from many community members who attended the event; the event was amazing and uplifting for all. All agreed that this was another successful event.
  - b. Ms. Stone encouraged the commission to start thinking or start the conversation of moving this event to an in person next year, rather than Zoom. Maybe ask attendees and honorees from past years and this year's event what their opinion or preference on this issue. Maybe send out a digital survey, via email.
  
- IV. Do more women than men decide not to run for re-election in Brookline, and (if so) why? Discussion and possible vote on further study of the question.
  - a. Ms. Silver Robinson shared that the League of Women Voters will be considering partnering with the BCW to look into what deters women from choosing to not run for re-election in Town offices. Ms. Silver Robinson is proposing, and asking commissioners on their opinions, to have the BCW study this topic; and whether we should do a questionnaire with the League (maybe with interviews of incumbents) of those who had decided that they do not want to run again for an office they held.
  - b. This issue was first brought up by (former BCW commissioner) Jen Goldsmith to Ms. Stone, and then shared with Ms. Silver Robinson. Ms. Stone believes that the commission may not have the bandwidth to do a full study of the issue, but she did do some online research to look at Town records on incumbents who did and did not file paperwork to run for reelection. The data was only available for this year and last year's May elections, but in those two years, there were more women than men who did not go up for reelection for Town Meeting or town wide official positions; about 50 individuals on this list. Ms. Stone proposed that the BCW partner with the League to send out a short questionnaire for these individuals to answer. Questions could include: 1. Individual's name. 2. What elected position did you hold? 3. How long were you in this position? 4. Of the following (list of reasons) reasons, which contributed to you not returning for re-election? And have one open ended answer for

this question. 5. Are you willing to have a confidential conversation regarding your answer to question 3.?

c. Ms. Stone is suggesting, and Ms. Stillman agreed, that this survey would be a good basis for any further study: to evaluate whether there is something here for BCW to look further into, and League of Women Voters may also be interested to delve deeper into the question of civic engagement and democratic participation with this information. Another objective that can come out of this potential questionnaire: how to support people / women who are running for local office or in office. Ms. Stone asks BCW commissioners to sponsor this questionnaire, along with the League of Women Voters if they also vote to co-sponsor).

d. Ms. Stone is volunteering to send out the questionnaire, get the answers and present the data to BCW. The questionnaire would be done through Survey Monkey. Ms Silver Robinson will present this information to the League of Women Voters board. Ms. McClelland, who happened to be one of the incumbents not running for reelection validated and supported the value of this questionnaire. She commented that it is usually hard to get women to run for election, therefore it will be important to know how we can support women to run and also stay in office especially when their experience with being in office was difficult. If individuals filling out this questionnaire are willing to have a follow up interview, their information will be kept confidential.

e. Ms. Stone moved to have BCW as one of the co-sponsors to this questionnaire. Ms. Caro seconded. BCW commissioners unanimously voted yes to this.

V. Updates:

a. May Annual Town Meeting Warrant:

i. Warrant Article on Reproductive Health Access – BCW is a lead petitioner on this Warrant Article, represented by Ms. Stone who is also a Town Meeting Member. The article has received unanimous recommendations for favorable action by Advisory Committee for Public Health, and by the Advisory Committee’s Subcommittee on Human Services, which also amended the article in a few places to provide better clarity to the language in the WA. The School Committee also heard the article and we asked them not just to endorse it for favorable action, but actually take a vote to adopt the language for the Public Schools of Brookline, meaning it will be enforced as a policy of the PSB. This vote won’t happen till April 27th, 2023. Ms. Stone and other petitioners will be going before the Select Board on April 18th, 2023 and hope for their positive consideration. The Select Board will not be voting until April 27th, 2023.

ii. Recommendation from Warrant Article working group and vote to consider/hold a public hearing on other articles: The working group recommends the BCW hear and consider taking a position on Article 21, asking for hotels in Brookline to post information and have trainings for their staff to prevent human trafficking. This article was brought up last year but it was pulled because there were issues in the original drafting. Those issues have been addressed in this year’s petition. The working

group recommends that BCW invite the petitioners of this WA to come to our next meeting to discuss it. Ms. Stillman moved to invite the petitioners of WA21 to come speak with BCW at the next monthly meeting. Ms. Caro seconded the motion. All commissioners unanimous in voting yes. Ms. Stone will draft an email for Ms. Silver Robinson to send to the petitioners of this WA to invite them to the next meeting.

- b. Status of letter re: pay equity – No update on this at this time.
- VI. Discussion of and setting calendar for meeting day/time for 2023 meetings in light of extension of remote meeting allowances until April 2025
- a. All future BCW monthly meetings will be held every first Wednesday of the month, and at 7pm.
  - b. Next month's meeting will be on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, 7pm.

**Meeting ended at 8:38pm.**

*Please note that listed times are approximate*