

**MINUTES
COUNTY OF SONOMA
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

Thursday, March 14, 2024

6:00 PM

Hybrid Meeting

Commissioners Present:

First District: Joanne M. Brown (OAL), Nancy Padian

Second District: Julie Shulman, Rebecca Kaykas-Wolff

Third District: Ofra Isler, Ana Diaz-Garcia, Melanie Jones-Carter (Vice-Chair)

Fourth District: Gina Fortino Dickson (Chair)

Fifth District: Jessica Wood, Zobida McCorquodale

Commissioners Absent:

Second District: Julie Shulman, Katie Gordon (Leave of absence)

Fifth District: Angie Dillon-Shore

Meeting held through publicly available link via Zoom Meeting, and in-person.

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL

Meeting called to order at approximately 6:02 p.m. Roll call was conducted by the Staff.

2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Commissioner Wood read the Land acknowledgement.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDIZED ITEMS

No Public Comment.

4. DR. KAREN MORANSKI PRESENTATION

Dr. Karen Moranski, the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs at Sonoma State University (SSU) presented on the future of SSU, and access for women to educational opportunities, which is the ultimate access to economic freedom. Her presentation covered issues that SSU is facing and the changes that they are creating for a better future. They currently have one of the lowest equity gaps for those students underrepresented and low-income students in the CSU; and they have among the highest 4 year and transfer graduation rates, however they have low enrollment due to the pandemic. They are making changes while cutting cost. They will continue to have a humanities program, but they will restructure with the limited budget and resources. Dr. Moranski is hopeful for the future of SSU. They are using some of the campus housing to develop affordable rental apartments for faculty and staff, where the rental prices include all utilities,

internet, and cable. They are exploring hybrid learning and they received nearly \$600,000 in grants to support black students.

5. DR. VENUS OPAL REESE PRESENTATION

Dr. Venus Opal Reese introduced herself as the highest paid “spirit-led affluence” expert in the industry. She empowers people to success by transforming survival driven tactics to affluence creating messaging, marketing, high network client attraction and online automation. Her expertise comes from her experience. She was a homeless youth on the streets of Detroit. She learned tactics to keep her alive, that she spent a lifetime applying to creating her success. She eventually earned two bachelor’s degrees, and a masters and doctorate from Stanford University. She touched on key points that can empower you change by being brave. Applying the bravery and perseverance we learn, especially as women, by surviving the traumatic experiences and touchy situations in our lives to new experiences that lead us on the path to affluence and success.

6. APPROVAL OF JANUARY 11, 2024 MEETING MINUTES

Motion to approve the January 11, 2024 meeting minutes.

No Public Comment.

Motion: Commissioner Diaz-Garcia	Ayes: 8	Noes: 0
Second: Commissioner Jones-Carter	Absent: 3	Abstained: 1

Commissioners Shulman and Dillon-Shore were absent. Commissioner Gordon is on leave of absence. Chair Fortino Dickson abstained as Chair. Motion passed.

7. OFFICER REPORTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

- a. Chair Fortino Dickson announced two event opportunities for commissioners to attend: San Francisco Women’s Policy Summit on Thursday, April 18, 2024 at 9am and the RISE 2024 Women’s Leadership Conference: Surviving to Thriving to Driving Change on Thursday, March 28. 2024 8am - 2pm PDT.
- b. Chair Fortino Dickson reported on behalf of Janice Blalock for the Human Trafficking Task Force. The Task Force continues to do some investigation on illicit parlors with Law Enforcement and Variety.
- c. Commissioners attended the BOS meeting on March 12th to accept the gold resolution in honor of Women’s History Month. During the meeting, Janice Blalock got recognized for her years of service during her time in the Commission.
- d. Staff reminded the Commission about the fiscal year deadlines and reminded them to use their funds before end of May.
- e. Commissioner Jones-Carter announced that she was present when Tina Rivera presented on declaring racism as a public health crisis in Sonoma County and the meeting got disrupted by three gentlemen with different perspectives.

- f. Chair Fortino Dickson thanked everyone for getting the proclamation to all municipalities in Sonoma County.
- g. Chair Fortino Dickson got invited to present at a panel for Women's History Month on March 23, 2024 in Geyserville along with Ariel Kelly and Laura Larque.

8. COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENT

- a. Commissioner Diaz-Garcia met Sonoma-Marin Cattle Women at an event County of Sonoma hosted and would love to invite them to present at a Commission's meeting. She also attending many of the Council meeting in Sonoma County to accept the Women's History Month Proclamations.
- b. Commissioner Kaykas-Wolff announced she has a potential speaker, Molly Dickens from Petaluma. She's working on this wide-ranging project called Maternal Stress Project.

9. OPENINGS AND APPOINTMENTS

- a. Chair Fortino Dickson announced that Commissioner Gordon is on leave of absence for up to 6 months. Her return date hasn't been confirmed.
- b. District 4 appointed Letitia Hanke to the Commission. She founded the LIME Foundation, and she was a Spirit Award Recipient.
- c. Chair Fortino Dickson announced one opening in the 1st district and one opening in the 4th district.
- d. Haunani Pakaki was a member of the public who applied to join the Commission to represent 1st district.

10. AD HOC AND PROJECT UPDATES

- a. Voices Report Ad Hoc announced that they are creating different posts highlighting different pieces of the report. The one pagers were put on hold.
- b. Reproductive Rights Ad Hoc shared some flyers with a QR code that people can access resources.
- c. Junior Commission Educational Project have a career panel in April. They asked for the Commission's help to find speakers who are Scientist, filmmaker, doctor, medical specialist for women entrepreneur lawyer, and real estate agent. They have interviews and are asking for volunteers. Commissioner Isler asked for another Commissioner to help her with the Junior Commission Educational Project. Graduation is on Saturday, May 18th in person at 2pm and everyone is welcome.
- d. Legislative Advisory Group announced that Women's Legislative Women's Committee will give them a list of Bills to review and the ad hoc will review the list and where the Commission can support.
- e. Community Engagement Working Group has 7 nominations for the 2024 Spirit Award. The ceremony will be held at the Museum of Sonoma County. They will be

doing the Pride event on June 1st Downtown Santa Rosa. They will be tabling and march. NAACP, League of Women’s Voters, and Young Democratic Party started the “Get Out to Vote” Campaign and the ad hoc will be partnering with them to get the word out.

- f. Bylaws Review Committee got postponed until further notice.

11. BUSINESS ITEMS

Commissioners reviewed the National Farmworker Awareness Week Gold Resolution. Commissioner Diaz-Garcia will be representing the Commission during the Board of Supervisors meeting on March 26, 2024. Commissioner Diaz-Garcia read her speech that she will be reading at the meeting. Motion to approve the gold resolution and to approve Commissioner Diaz-Garcia to speak on behalf of the Commission.

No Public Comment.

Motion: Commissioner Jones-Carter	Ayes: 8	Noes: 0
Second: Commissioner Brown	Absent: 3	Abstained: 1

Commissioners Shulman and Dillon-Shore were absent. Commissioner Gordon is on leave of absence. Chair Fortino Dickson abstained as Chair. Motion passed.

12. AGENDA ITEMS FOR APRIL 11, 2024 COMMISSION MEETING

No items were mentioned.

13. ADJOURNMENT

This meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.