

Commission on the Status of Men

Minutes of Meeting

Date of Meeting: November 18, 2003

Location: Legislative Office Building, Room 206
Concord, New Hampshire

Commission Members attending: Gerard Boyle, Joseph Mastromarino, Ron Blankenstein, Larry Colby, Michael Geanoulis, Anthony Raymond

Commission Member unable to attend: Christopher Emond, Stephen Gorin

Other attendees who signed attendance roster: Jeffrey Oigny, Rep. David Bickford, Scott Garman, Paul Clements, Joes Mixon, Christopher Ada, Nicole Perry, Lee Newman, Ron Vallieux, Patricia Smith, John Pryor, and Albert Emory

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairman Gerard Boyle.

Chairman Boyle introduced Anthony Raymond as a new member of the Commission and each commissioner introduced themselves.

Chairman Boyle stressed the importance of commission communications and noted that Scott Garman has volunteered to create a website for the commission.

The agenda and structure for future meetings was discussed. This structure will include the following components: introductory remarks, correspondence, committee reports, special guest speakers, issue brainstorming among commissioners, public comments and, commissioners' comments.

A question was raised about the investigative rights of the commission. Representative Bickford referred to 19 – 1:5 of HB 587-FN-A for clarification.

Representative Bickford noted that some funds, in the form of private donations, exist for use by the commission. Treasurer Boyle will follow up on these funds and the accounting for same.

Chairman Boyle proposed focus issues for the commission to address within the next 3 month period and asked commissioners for comments, suggestions and additions. In addition to priority focus issues of men's health and men's and teen male's suicide rates in NH, men's support groups, education for boys and men, and fatherlessness were noted for consideration.

Chairman Boyle suggested that the commission establish sub groups to address the priority focus issues.

Commissioner Geanoulis asked Rep. Bickford if it were possible to obtain a copy of the prostate cancer screening bill that was introduced in a past legislative session. Rep. Bickford agreed to provide the commission with a copy of the proposed legislation.

Chairman Boyle asked for comments on guest speakers and public comment. Guest Speaker suggestions include a speaker from the Monadnock Men's Resource Center, Chuck Rhodes (author of "Asking for Directions", a study of men health and their health in NH) and, a speaker from State Division for Vital Statistics.

Commissioner Blankenstein suggested that public comments could be e-mailed, mailed or handed to the Secretary at commission meetings if persons wished for comments to be filed as part of the record. It was suggested that it would be best if public comments were submitted in outline form and in advance of commission meetings.

Commissioner Geanoulis provided an update on the Family Law Task Force. The charge of this task force is to issue recommendations that would make divorce less adversarial. One public hearing has occurred during the past year and dialog is proceeding in the areas of co-parenting coordinators, fairness, the widespread use of un-truths in the family court, unilateral divorce, domestic violence issues, and neutral case evaluators. The next meeting of the task force will take place on 12-11-03 at 2pm in room 208 of the LOB. Dr. Peggy Ward will be the guest speaker.

The remainder of the meeting was open to public comment and discussion. The Commission heard from the following individuals and one anonymous speaker who spoke on the following issues:

- the need for public education on men's issues
- education and training for law enforcement officials, GAL's and, for family court judges/marital masters
- sensitivity training: common perception of men as predator and woman as victim
- false reports of domestic violence to enhance success in court
- education of our daughters in the areas of truthfulness, dignity and respect
- neutral case evaluators
- restraining order issues
- the Commission as agents for the promotion of fatherhood
- homelessness among men
- institutionalized bias

Commissioner's Geanoulis and Colby announced the 5th Annual New England Fathering Conference to be held on March 3-4, 2004 in Marlboro, MA.

The next meeting of the Commission on the Status of Men will be held on December 17th, from 1-4 p.m. in room 208 of the LOB in Concord, NH.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ronald G. Blankenstein
Secretary