**Plenary Meeting Minutes | March 28, 2025**

**9:00am-12:30pm | Virtual**

**Attendees:**

* Commission Chair Lowe
* Commission Vice Chair Kobdish
* Commission Secretary Carrillo
* Commissioner Dalan
* Commissioner Mukhopadhyay
* Commissioner Razzaia
* Commissioner Ford
* Commissioner King-Lowe
* Kathleen Drew, Acting WSWC Executive Director
* Eliza Craig, WSWC Staff
* Tanzania Zenzali-Marshall, WSWC Staff
* Samantha Grono, WSWC Staff

External Presenters:

* Senator Lisa Wellman
* Representative Jamila Taylor
* Grace Huang, Senior Policy Advisor
* Mary Hall, Thurston County Auditor
* Jeri Moomaw, Executive Director of Innovations HTC

Not Present:

* Representative Mary Dye

Members of the Public:

* Ann Simons
* Jacquelyn Garcia
* Jodi Forsell
* Judith Perez
* Kamryn Yanchick
* Mark Metzger
* Lish Olson

**Opening:**

The regular public plenary meeting of the Washington State Women's Commission was called to order at 9:03am on Friday, March 28, 2025, over Zoom by Commission Chair Lowe.

**Approval of Minutes**

The agenda was unanimously approved as distributed.

* Commissioner Kobdish moves to approve agenda
* Commissioner Carrillo seconds the motion.

**Approval of Agenda**

The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved as distributed.

* Commissioner Ford moves to approve January meeting minutes
* Commissioner Franklin seconds the motion to approve.

**Introduction of Acting Director**

* Kathleen Drew introduces herself as acting director,
* Temporary Executive Assistant role that will be taken on by Tara Osuna
* Commissioner Lowe gives update on hiring for the permanent executive director positions and thanks the ADs we’ve had thus far.

**Activate 3.8 Event Recap – Samantha Grono, WSWC Staff**

* Sam summarizes the details of the Activate 3.8 Olympia Event, including the number of student attendees, elected officials, and the agency partners that participated in the STEM activities during the Girls on the Hill event. Three commissioners were present at this event.
* It was highlighted that ESD 113 and the STEM Alliance assisted in student selection and broad messaging out to the school district.
* **Question:** Commissioner Ford asks about the interest and background of the students that participated. Sam responds with details regarding the attending schools and summarized qualitative feedback from students, parents, teachers.

**Updates from Eliza on the Louder Together Panel Discussion (Virtual)**

* Eliza highlights historical effort from all five community-based peer Commissions to discuss intersectionality, coalition and community building.
* 60+ attendees watched the panel discussion.
* Commissioner Lowe shares her experience as a panelist and highlighted all the women who participated in the relaxed “conversation”. Described as a heartening to hear the strengths of the women and hard work they all do.
  + Highlights it was not recorded, streamed live on TVW

**Legislative Advisor Update - Senator Lisa Wellman**

* Sen. Wellman states she’s unaware of what specific bills the commission was tracking.
* Has felt there has not been a significant number of bills specifically related to women in particular, but highlights the states work around reproductive rights – which has been tightened year after year.
* She had a resolution this session on behalf of Women in CLOUD and Ignite worldwide.
  + Ignite Worldwide introduces young girls to STEM fields.
  + Women in Cloud now has over 100k members worldwide. Founder lives in WA State. In the resolution she discussed that only 11% in leadership roles in the STEM Fields are women.
  + Heard 1 nays for the first time ever on a resolution. She discovered the “nay” was due to DEI “stuff” that they are not interested in uplifting.
* Shares DEI and women’s roles in our society are being threatened, and we need voices for them.
* Corporate boards bill does not have much energy anymore, but she’s concerned there will be a decrease given the current environment.
* Would like to see the Women’s Commission as an active, strong advocate for women’s issue in our society, and how important it is for WSWC to take public stances.
* Sen. Wellman briefs on the state of immigration and individuals being detained by ICE, sometimes in plainclothes.
  + Sen. Highlights her previous Keep Washington Working Bill, and how important it is now more than ever.
* Sen. Wellman gives update on when they will be voting on bills and budgets.
* **Question:** 
  + Commissioner Lowe asks about where bills regarding the parents' rights initiative are at in the legislative session.
    - Senator believes the bills will be passed.
    - Discusses the misinformation about what the parents bill of rights does, like sending children to get medical care which she states does not happen.
* **Comments:** 
  + Commissioner Razzia responds to Sen. Wellman around the concern of the disinformation, that she is hearing in her communities in opposition of DEI.
  + Sen. Wellman responds with her own experience regarding misinformation while testifying on bills, mentioning the manipulation of images and how this kind of behavior alters the facts of a story, and critiques the current journalism practices of today and heeds a challenge to the WSWC on taking a strong stance in communication and messaging around these issues

**Updates from the Governor's Policy Team – Grace Huang**

* Introduces her portfolio: includes all commissions, advises on human services, civil rights – which includes the 5 person-centered commissions, immigration.
* Grace speaks to the shortfall of the budget and its impact across the commissions she supports. Examples are Medicaid, furlough possibilities, reproductive rights, DEI, information sharing challenges, funding for immigrant and refugee communities, and the overall response to the Federal Government.
* There will be a work session in the senate government committee to discuss state level resources more accessible to historically marginalized communities.
* **Questions:** 
  + Commissioner Carrillo asks about a lapse in communication with staff at DCYF
  + Garce encourages Commissioner Carrillo to follow up with her via email to get connected to the right person at DCYF
* **Comments:** 
  + Commissioner Carrillo speaks to the intensity of the immigration issues born from Federal EOs. She is highly concerned with the inconsistency of the public school system and OSPI, especially on the eastern side of the state
  + Grace agrees and responds with speaking to the ongoing issues with OSPI and what their actual role is regarding their decision-making authority since they are ran by a separate elected body. She validates her challenges and is willing to have an ongoing conversation about this subject. **Staff will ensure commissioners have contact information.**

**Legislative Session Update– Samantha Grono, WSWC Staff**

* Sam briefly updates commissioners on the budget proposals from the senate and house – specifically regarding WSWC’s budget, as the budgets were released earlier this week. Including extra cuts the house (56k per biennium).
* **Question:** Commissioner Lowe asks if staff received any information on where the extra house cuts came from.Sam responds no, but staff is trying to find out.Commissioner Lowe then reminds everyone that this is an opportunity for all commissioners to reach out any contacts they have in appropriations or budgets writers.
* **Question:** Commissioner Carrillo asks about what actions they can take in regards to some of the changing permissions coming from the Governor’s office. Kathleen responds that we are thinking about restructuring our legislative process so we can get approval early ahead of next session.
  + Sam reminds commissioners that all feedback/questions/needs gets back to Grace at the gov’s office.
* **Question:** Commissioner Ford asks how we are responding to Sen. Wellman’s concerns. Commissioner Lowe responds that we did have a follow-up meeting with her after the Winter Plenary.
* Commissioner Lowe voices that she would like the commission to prioritize reproductive rights for the next session and to the governor, and that the conversation should be focused on *all* reproductive rights, not just abortion.
* Commissioner Mukhopadhyay highlights that the legislative process has changed each session, and we have an opportunity to create a structure and that commissioners should get really involved.
* Commissioner Razzaia gives feedback that especially new commissioners, need guidance to know *how they can get more involved, how they can support, how their orgs can connect to the commission to help the advocacy work.* She highlights that she wants to do more and we need a process to give that opportunity.
  + Commissioner Lowe highlights commissioners shouldn’t forget that there are staff and a director so the commissioners should be connecting with them often. Also shares ideas for how to shift work as we move to virtual meetings due to budget cuts.
* **Question:** Commissioner Carrillo asks if this change in administration and how we operate is normal.
  + Commissioner Mukhopadhyay and Dalan shares perspective that building relationships with Governor and his office is important at this time.
  + Commissioner Franklin shares a gap we need to fill is proactive outreach to communities, with space and time to receive feedback. She also reminds all that establishing and strengthening relationships with legislators and aides is an important tool right now.
  + Commissioner Lowe shares what the committee structure has been in the past.

**Legislative Advisor Update – Representative Jamila Taylor**

* Rep. Taylor begins with several policy updates the WSWC bill, parenting plans (in partnership with Sen. Dinghra). She mentions that the parenting plan bill is supported by multiple State level agencies and Non-Profit organizations to include the WA State Bar Association. She speaks to some of the tactics that were being used to falter their progress of the bill.
* Rep. Taylor speaks to her work on bills relating to gender-affirming care, reproductive rights, and gender-based violence. She assures us she on the ground fighting for the women in Washington. She lists the bills she is actively working on in the Zoom chat for reference.
  + **Staff will send the list to commissioners in a follow-up.**

**BREAK,** 10:13-10:20 AM

**Federal Developments about Voting – Mary Hall, Thurston County Auditor**

* Mary begins saying she will address the Care ACT and related issues. She moves into clarifying several trending falsehoods about the process of voting to include deceased people voting. She speaks to voting verification system ERIC as a safeguard of our nation and its function to verify voter documents, addresses, and social security numbers.
* Mary speaks to the question of what will happen with the online voting system, which is not currently connecting to the safeguard of ERIC, which is used by 25 states.
* She summarizes the scrutiny of the Dept. Of Justice around the proposed bill and other changes at the federal level. She assures that her team and teams across the state and nation are watching this very closely
* She expresses concern around DOGE having full access to the voter databases, saying that there is much they could do to “wreak havoc” with that information.
* She goes on to say that the recent funding cut by the Federal Government from the Dept. Of Homeland Security has deeply impacted her county level efforts, effecting basic protections needed to be efficient like updates and security systems. Voter database infrastructure was once considered foundational and necessary, and now has been almost completely dissolved and has left them vulnerable.
* **Questions:** 
  + Commissioner Ford asks the Commission how we can support her work and spread this information to our communities and constitutes
  + Commissioner Razzia asks what tangible things the Commision could do to support the spread of this mission to the 3.8 million women in WA. Mary responds with how serious the impact is to women, which could potentially disenfranchise voting amongst women across the state and country. It is voter suppression that will hurt women’s ability to vote at all.
  + Commissioner King-Lowe asks for Mary’s contact information and wants to share this with her union colleagues, as she expresses her concern around the direct impact this will have on BIPOC communities.
  + **Staff will send a follow-up with Mary’s contact information to commissioners**

**Human Trafficking in WA State – Jeri Moomaw, ED of Innovations Human Trafficking Collaborative**

* Introduces Innovations HTC nonprofit. Only anti trafficking org in the south sound
* Jeri has lived experience being trafficked, and that she would have been considered a MMIWP (Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and People) and details these experiences which led her to opening her own nonprofit – Innovations HTC.
* Jeri gives a MMIWP briefing, including the grassroots effort to raise awareness on the disproportionate numbers that Native women and girls go missing or are murdered. On some reservations, the rates are 10 times as high as the national average. 78% of MMIWP cases are trafficking related – disproportionately high numbers of tribal youth. Many law and order codes don’t include trafficking.
* Jeri shares current data in WA of missing persons is from 2023.
  + WA is the 2nd highest state for MMIWP cases. Seattle is the number one city in the country. Lack of data is a major part of the problem. Regarding reporting and data measures – race and ethnic is based on a best guess, which impacts accuracy.
  + A total of 10,108 missing persons in WA right now, but less than 900 are put into the federal database.
  + Progress in some areas is being made, including 43 MMWIP that have been found, which has been a huge effort in WA state. Many signs and information around the state have been posted in the last 2 years to increase awareness.
* Jeri shares what the nonprofit does specifically, including tools and resources to support recovery for life after trafficking, a transitional home for individuals who need it, mental health services for their clients and staff, inform policy with the Washington Against Sexual Exploitation (WASE) Forward initiative, and more.
* Briefing on SSB 5114 passed in 2024 for a statewide coordinating body for Healing, Support and Transition Services.
  + Named Ignite WA, they meet every 3 months to discuss trends, and assess practices for serving survivors for barriers, gaps, and best practices. 6 Resiliency Council members provide an additional level of oversight to ensure that resources are survivor informed.
  + Funding in proposed budgets for the coordinating body has been cut by 50%. They really want to continue the work and mention how challenging and heartbreaking it will be not to be fully funded.
* Jeri shares details on the South Sound human trafficking taskforce in Olympia – invites people to join. Will send out information to get involved.
* **Questions:** 
  + Commissioner Lowe asks if Innovations is doing trainings at tribal casinos. Jeri responds with the many places and casinos where they have done trainings.
  + Commissioner Malia asks about the trainings, if they are just for MMIW or for other populations. Jeri shares they are custom to the ask she receives, and the nexus is typically on trafficking, how to identify, respond, etc.
  + **Staff will send a follow-up with Jeri's contact information and follow-ups to commissioners**

**Commissioners Round Robin – Federal Impacts on Women**

* Commissioner Mukhopadhyay shares she’s seen a lot of panic and concerns from orgs about how they’re impacted by serving transgender and non-binary individuals due to federal executive orders. Especially orgs who do not have access to AGs office or lawyers.
  + **Question**: She is wondering any ways the Commission can be supportive or using our position to have wide guidance for small or under-resourced orgs. Commissioner Franklin shares it would need to differ based on industry.
* Commissioner King-Lowe shares that the concern in the healthcare union space that DEI related programming and education is being attacked, and staff are not sure how to address this currently, especially as it is changing so often.
  + Commissioner Razzaia highlights we may begin to see a dilution of orgs who get private funding, which is highly concerning.
  + **Commissioners request Govs office or AG’s office regarding guidance/advisement on how people should be moving forward with contracts. Commissioner franklin raises that this would need to be based on industry. (healthcare, legal, education).**
  + Commissioner Lowe asks if this is something Kathleen can ask for.
  + Commissioner Lowe and Mukhopadhyay raise concerns about information from federal websites like the CDC going missing. **Request** that the state save and capture that information somewhere so it doesn’t disappear. Commissioner Lowe and Franklin also highlight there are other organizations who are trying to do this work already.
* Commissioner Carrillo – ESIT (early support for infants and toddlers) - very short staffed especially services for speech therapy. The proposed cuts (federal and state) will deeply impact
* Commissioner Dalan shares the immigration concerns from the federal level. Whatcom county has held protests. Hard for small and impoverished counties, especially from Central WA, to keep up all the changes coming from the federal level. Shares how exhausting this has been.
  + Commissioner Mukhopadhyay shares hearing about commercials on the Spanish radio regarding deportations, and the challenge to combatting misinformation, what’s true and not true. **Offers the commissioners should be highlighting, resharing, etc. messages.**
  + Commissioner Dalan highlights that WA State Supreme Courts have put out messages that they are safe places, but just saying the message does not make those spaces inherently safe. Shares story of students sharing they feel it’s unsafe to go to courthouses even if they are deemed safe.
* **Commissioner Mukhopadhyay asks for a way to convene with the peer commissions to focus on communities that are being impacted and targeted.** Would like to find space to organize and support each other, we need a coordinated effort to support organizing.
  + **Kathleen offers to reach out to other commissioners and office of equity. Tanzania will bring this up at the next Office of Equity commissions meeting.**
  + **Commissioner** **Mukhopadhyay asks about where the women’s commission should have a seat at the table**. Ex: City of Seattle immigrant and refugee. Other councils, taskforces, etc.
  + **Commissioner Lowe said it would be helpful for staff to have an updated list of all the coalition and seats commissioners are on**.
* Commissioner Carrillo asks for clarity in a follow-up on what we have to get approval for from the Gov’s office.
* Commissioner Razzaia asks for bullet points regarding what has been shared with Senator Wellman.
* Commissioner Mukhopadhyay asks where they can send information about relevant contacts.
* Commissioner Lowe shares that consistent messaging and language should be used.
  + Eliza shares that centering community voices and developing those relationships is a huge priority for the commission going forward. She **requests commissioners email herself and Tanzania with those contacts** as they are the staff leading efforts to meet with community organizations.

**Public Comment Period**

* 12:01pm- Ann Simons – Former commissioner, shares that women are more powerful when they’re together. Expresses that open public meetings in person are vital and requests this is not a cut the commission makes.
  + Expresses her view that the commission should have independent voices outside of our positionality under the Governor’s office.
  + Shares Women at the Capitol event from the Center for Women on Democracy on April 17th.

**Adjournment:**

Motion by Commissioner Dalan adjorun

Seconded by Commissioner franklin

Meeting was adjourned at 12:34pm by Commissioner

The next general meeting will be at 9:00am on Friday, June 13, 2025, over Zoom.

Minutes submitted by: