

COSW Meeting Minutes - July 14, 2021

Call to Order, Welcome, and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m.

Present:

Commissioners Orly Amey, Chair; Martha Kreeger, Vice-Chair; Linda Tangren, Treasurer; Yasi-Safinya Davies, Member at Large; RocQuel Johnson, Member at Large; Olga Borjon; Aliza Kazmi; Meredith Walker; Marie Gilmore; Amy Levine; Erin Scott; Nina Senn

SSA Staff: Kim Fogel

Not present:

Commissioners Courtney Welch; Ge'Nell Gary

Approval of Minutes

Approval of minutes from the 6/9/21 meeting is tabled to the 8/11/21 meeting to allow for additional review time.

Commissioner Announcements

Chair Amey reminded commissioners that the secretary position is still vacant and until appointed we would do a rotating schedule of folks volunteering to take minutes.

Commissioner Borjon proposed inviting someone to speak about the effects of homelessness on women and girls. The commission is interested and will look at an invitation for the September meeting, Commissioner Borjon will coordinate. The commission is interested in potentially inviting speakers monthly so we can learn about various issues affecting women and girls.

Chair Amey confirmed that the Alameda County Department of Public Health will present at the Commission's August meeting about black maternal healthcare issues within the county.

Chair Amey shared that she and Commissioner Senn met with the state CCSWG to talk about the CCSWG's recent allotment of \$7.9M to support local commissions with pandemic recovery efforts targeting women and girls. CCSWG asked how they could support local commissions (potentially training, forums, networking/collaboration etc.)

and help groups with collective impact and lend credibility to the joint causes that local CSW are working toward. *Please email commissioners Amey and Senn with any ideas on how the CCSWG could support our group.* **This write-up summary of the meeting with the CCSWG was shared :** https://docs.google.com/document/d/1u70-OPxY_sRND2EYdI1x1iLw58nj0H-v9v2z-6pGrMU/edit?usp=sharing

Pre-retreat

Chair Amey reported on the retreat planning committee's July 13th meeting. The group decided to bring retreat planning back to the full commission and acknowledged the need for buy-in from the entire group and the group's overall concerns about proceeding without a strategic vision. The committee prepared [this document](#) to guide the conversation.

The group reviewed the following: commissioners by district; the realm of duties and powers of the commission; commission activities from years' past re: outreach, events, promoting awareness, and subcommittee work; Vision 2026 and the three 10x goals the commission has chosen to focus on (eliminate homelessness; healthcare for all; employment for all); alignment with district supervisors to inform the commission's strategic planning; best practices; and potential agenda setting for the retreat.

Commissioner Johnson reminded the commission that we must not forget the deeply entrenched intersectionality of the 10x goals. Commissioner Kazmi suggested we look into establishing sub-areas of focus within the 10x goals.

Questions arose about how the commission has dealt with constituent complaints in the past, with issues typically being referred to the board of Supervisors for handling. Commissioner Scott advised that we gain clarity on how "complaints" are defined in the administrative code.

Commissioners Borjon and Kreeger advised the group on previous complaints re: the Hall of Fame nomination process that resulted in a nominee being rescinded due to LGBT/genderqueer bias. The group identified that there's a resolution that needs to happen between the commission and the Hall of Fame. Commissioner Gilmore advised that we discuss the Hall of Fame yearly event at the retreat and clarify with the County the commission's roles and expectations.

Commissioner Gilmore recommended we discuss the future of the Junior Commission at the retreat since it's in the bylaws, and how it will operate given high schoolers' busy extracurricular schedules, pandemic notwithstanding.

Vice Chair Kreeger said she would send out the Policy subcommittee's charter. The charter calls on the commission to work with the SSA to identify 4-6 types of legislation the commission recommends the BOS supports. The commission missed the

opportunity for this year, but it will be useful for next fall/winter to prepare for January legislative discussions.

The group decided it's worth the time to be intentional and thorough with strategic planning and the retreat. Commissioner Safinya-Davies suggested we carve out pieces of our monthly commission meeting to move forward with strategic planning.

As an area of focus, commissioners overwhelmingly recommended that COSW focus its efforts on pandemic recovery, narrowing down tangible goals and aligning with other community based organizations to have maximum impact. The group agreed to use upcoming COSW meetings to begin work through the pieces we're identifying as important goals for retreat, then work with a facilitator when a budget request is approved. The group agreed spending funds on a facilitator is important to provide needed structure and so all commissioners can fully participate in the retreat. The commission would need to get a quote from facilitators within Alameda County and then get it approved. The old budget process was that the commission was allocated a budget by the BOS and the commission could spend within certain guidelines. Now, there is no pre-allocated budget and the commission must submit a request to spend funds and the process could take up to 2-3 months.

Commissioner Walker asked if the group could meet in person for the retreat, Kim said she would look into it but advised that the current rules and regulations re: physical meetings are still in effect.

In narrowing down areas of focus, Commissioner Senn encourages us to remain data-driven and use data to inform COVID-19 impact efforts. We can't fix problems if we don't have data - Vice Chair Kreeger.

Commissioner Gilmore acknowledged Zoom fatigue and asked about potential structure of the retreat. Chair Amey relayed the thoughts of the retreat planning committee, sharing that the original idea was for two sessions of around 1.5 hours each.

Chair Amey said she would do some initial research re: facilitator pricing.

The commission highlighted the importance of being in alignment with supervisors on how to best impact women and girls in the county. Commissioner Scott had sent along feedback that we should update the draft questions to the supervisor because it is the commission that should be educating them on issues affecting women and girls, not primarily the other way around. Commissioner Scott advised that we gently petition the supervisors for data concerning women and girls so we can establish whether the data actually exists or not, and if not, use the resulting discussion as a push to the supervisors to gather the data to support our efforts. Commissioner Safinya-Davies suggested a scripted email with a uniform agenda so that when we share out with the

commission, we can see distinctions and divergence in how supervisors are showing up for women and girls. Commissioner Kazmi agreed to draft a supervisor meeting request for the group to use and Chair Amey will finalize and send it to all commissioners after a proofreading session at the July 20th retreat planning meeting.

We will wait to hold the retreat sessions, but will use monthly meetings to further discussions around the commission's strategic goals. Chair Amey suggested that after we have initial pricing for facilitators, we put together a retreat budget in advance of next year.

Treasurer's Report and Budget Update

There was no report or update as Treasurer Tangren was absent. Kim Fogel reported nothing new to report since there have been no expenditures.

Chair Amey debriefed her conversation with Vice-Chair Kreeger and past chairs in their [leadership debriefing](#).

Committee Reports

Most committees did not meet.

Chair Amey sent out minutes for the retreat planning ad hoc committee meeting, and the group is meeting again July 20 to finalize the draft meeting template request to the supervisors..

The communications subcommittee met on July 12 and discussed communications goals for going forward, including pushing information about our partnerships and piggybacking on events, creation of a content calendar, sharing meeting announcements and outcomes, commission accomplishments and impact, highlighting proclamations by the County, acknowledging current and previous members' accomplishments + those of allies and partners. Chair Amey suggested a list of our partners so we can add them on social media and find ways to be connected to the work they are doing.

Re: communications - Commissioner Senn asked about the possibility of Zoom transcriptions since the commission is currently without a secretary - Kim Fogel said she would look into free and paid options.

Open Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

Agenda Building

Slated for the September meeting are the presentation re: Black womens' maternal health in the county and retreat planning based on the items discussed at this meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Overview: Commission Mission, Duties, and Historical Activities

Commissioners by district:

D1: Orly A., Martha K, Yasi S.

D2: Olga B., Aliza K., Meredith W.

D3: Marie G.

D4: Amy L.

D5: Courtney W., Ge'Nell G., Erin S.

Members-at-large/Mayors' Conference: Yasi S., RocQuel J., Nina S.

Mission: Maximize parity of women and girls by supporting the elimination of gender discriminatory services and practices.

What are the duties and powers of the Commission?

The realm of what we can do:

- Advise and assist the board of supervisors in matters relating to the problems of women in the county
- Review complaints relating to prejudice and discrimination based on sex (when the complaints are within BOS jurisdiction)
- Work to resolve complaints via persuasion/conference and arrive at voluntary solutions when possible
- Refer complaints to the board of supervisors for appropriate action, when voluntary solutions aren't an option
- Initiate and enlist the cooperation of various women's organizations, community groups, business organizations and other groups in programs and campaigns devoted to eliminating prejudice and discrimination based on sex
- [May] study the employment practices of county departments and report its findings and recommendations to the BOS or to the county affirmative action advisory council
- Cooperate with federal, state, municipal and other governmental
- Agencies to address women's rights concerns
- Conduct educational programs
- Recommend women's rights legislation to the BOS and various city councils in the county
- May when appropriate, request the BOS issue a subpoena to allow production of oral and/or documentary evidence needed to conduct any commission hearings
- May request the BOS direct county departments to cooperate with the commission to aid it in performing its duties
- Must submit an annual activity report to the BOS

Budget requests for commission programming need to include a justification for how the activity will support Vision 2026 and the 10X goals.

Commission activities in the past have been focused around **outreach, events, promoting awareness, and subcommittee work:**

- Women's Hall of Fame (annual, ongoing partnership with County and local organizations to recognize women making an impact in Alameda County)
- Communications (ongoing): Promote programs supported by the Commission and promote knowledge sharing via social media
- Junior Commission service projects (5k run, art competition, teen summit) (FY17)
- Collaboration with Speaker's Bureau to serve as resources on women's issues in Alameda County (FY17)
- Documentary screening on domestic violence and human trafficking in partnership with Washington Hospital (FY17)
- STEM education events: college expo and career awareness days (FY17)
- Women's Health Awareness Conference: Raise awareness of health issues / trends affecting women, in alignment with Healthcare for All 10x Goal (FY20) and focusing on suicide prevention, women's heart health and reproductive health, human trafficking, personal safety, and mindfulness meditation
- Women in Leadership Networking Event: Opportunity to celebrate civic leadership and expand and strengthen partnerships addressing 10x Goals (FY17-20)
- Oakland Pride Parade: Opportunity for Commission to demonstrate diversity and commitment to
- creating an inclusive environment (FY20)
- Health and Wellness - #DonatePeriod: Donation drive of menstrual products for women and young girls in need. (FY19-21)
- Women's March, Oakland (FY 20)
- COVID-10 pandemic impact and recovery efforts for women and girls (FY21 and beyond)

Memberships typically maintained: National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW) and the Association of California Commissions for Women

Policy development: Legislative days

Vision 2026 and 10X Goals

Vision 2026: Supervisors' four visions for what we want Alameda County to look like in 2026.

1. Healthy Environment: Comprehensive utilization of environmentally sustainable practices that conserve natural resources while reducing pollution and harm to the environment.

2. Thriving & Resilient Population: Individuals and communities are empowered to overcome adversities and supported so they can grow, flourish and be self-sufficient.

3. Safe & Livable Communities: Safe and secure communities with accessible infrastructure including open space and recreational facilities and facilitate the availability of diverse and affordable housing.

4. Prosperous and Vibrant Economy: Emergence, robust growth and profitability of all businesses across a diversity of sectors, that also create employment opportunities for all residents.

Vision 2026 to be achieved via [10X Goals](#):

1. Eliminate Homelessness

2. Healthcare for All

3. Employment for All

4. Eliminate Poverty and Hunger

5. Crime-free County

6. Accessible Infrastructure

The Commission affirmed that via its Policy and Advocacy Subcommittee and all Commission-wide initiatives it will focus on goals 1, 2, and 3.

Alignment with District Supervisors

One of our roles is to advise and assist the board of supervisors in matters relating to the problems of women in the county.

Questions from draft conversation guide:

1. What do you think are the pressing issues affecting women in your district?
(This is to gauge their opinion but Commissioners can also bring data from state reports to inform the Supervisor about needs that may need to be addressed locally, in support of [Vision 2026](#) and [10x goals](#))
2. What strategies and programs is your office implementing to address the issues?
3. How can the COSW partner with you to address these issues?

[Link to finalized template](#)

Noted by Commissioner Scott: The above q's sent out after the retreat subcommittee planning meeting largely focused on us finding out what our supervisors want to prioritize, but what Commissioner Scott saw in her exploration of successful practices of other COSWs is that those

commissions helped educate their supervisors about information the community told them was important.

How can we support the initiatives supervisors already have going on as relates to women and girls?

How can the supervisor help us elevate matters important to the Commission?

In advising supervisors of issues affecting women and girls, how do we get our hands on data that parses out these stats for Alameda County?

Best Practices

What will be our strategies to stay informed of the issues affecting the women and girls in our county?: Commissioner Scott did some work analyzing the operations of other COSWs and found that they regularly invite knowledgeable community partners to their standing meetings to discuss issues impacting women (e.g., someone working on women's reproductive rights one week and someone working on pay equity at the next meeting). The other COSWs are also regularly inviting supervisors to their meetings so they can learn more in these areas.

Best Practices: Reporting

Commissioner Scott did research to collect reports on the status of women for various commissions statewide, and is open to reaching out even more to gain more insight on how COSWs successfully produced the reports. In many cases the reports were commissioned by the COSW with research conducted via partnership with a local university.

Agenda-setting for Retreat, check with group in September

Session 1

- Reporting back from supervisor meetings and breaking into small groups? (Start this work during monthly Commission meetings, September)
- Identify (or further develop) some short and long-term goals
- Identify strategies to stay informed of issues affecting women and girls in the county

Session 2

- Formalize the activities the Commission will pursue this upcoming year
- Identify potential partnerships with community groups and other entities as part of our strategy