

**Vermont Commission on Women
Criminal Legal System Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 21, 2022 | 9:00 – 10:30 am
Teleconference**

Commissioners present: Ashley Messier (co-chair), Lisa Ryan (co-chair), Sarah Mell, Lisa Senecal

Commissioners absent: Delaney Courcelle

Advisors present: Jessica Barquist of Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, Alison Lamagna of Vermont Works for Women, and Meredith Roberts of ANA Vermont

Staff present: Cary Brown, Ellie Lane, Lilly Talbert

Recording: Ellie Lane

Presiding: Ashley Messier, Lisa Ryan

Meeting called to order at 9:09 am

Welcome & Introductions

Sarah asked the group to each share about something that brought us joy this weekend.

Facilitated conversation re: committee space, expectations, harm/safety, engagement, anti-racism work

Sarah led the group in an exercise to determine how we are as individuals in the space and how we might as a group approach our work, resolve conflicts, and shape a group norms/agreements process.

She asked the group us to write individually a list of the identities we come to the committee with and then to circle an identity that feels most on display in this meeting, cross out the one we don't bring to this group, and cross out the one we don't want to show up in this space, or shouldn't, and put a checkmark next to the one we wish we could bring more

Sarah then asked the group to identify from where in their body they identify when engaging in this exercise.

Sarah offered group agreements they use, from founders of the Black Lives Matter movement, Patrisse Cullers, Alicia Garza, and Opal Tometi:

- **Lead with Love**
- **Low Ego High Impact – about us as a collective**
- **Move at the Speed of Trust**

Sarah asked folks to think between now and our next meeting about what we each need to feel safe in this space, which we will share at our next meeting, and those will get compiled and formed into group norms.

Updated plan for Community Conversations re: CRCF replacement process

Ashley briefly reviewed the groups' prior community conversation event plans, including the event locales, and the days and dates. The group discussed sticking with Wednesday evenings.

Ashely reported that currently there is \$227 million dollars of state funding set aside for the purpose of building a new facility, and a sealed RFP has been issued.

A committee member shared concerns about moving forward with this project with the Commission at large and also about whether the group is ready to invite the public to participate.

Ashely agreed but also shared that there are external deadlines coming and going, and that the current system is causing harm.

Lisa Ryan shared Jessica's concerns and said that it's not either-or, it's both, and.

The committee discussed the current timeline for the CRCF replacement. Ashley shared that based on conversations she's having, she believes that the state will try to break ground on construction in 2024 or 2025, and that a final plan will be finalized next spring.

The committee discussed the plan and the goals of VCW's work.

Sarah shared a proposed new date schedule:

- Orange, Windham, Windsor – April 20
- Orleans, Caledonia, Essex – April 27
- Addison, Rutland, Bennington – May 4
- Lamoille, Washington, Franklin – May 11
- Chittenden & Grand Isle – May 18

A committee member suggested VCW commission a public survey asking whether Vermonters want to invest this kind of money in a new prison system. There is a need for additional investment in reentry work.

Next steps, minutes approval, closing

The committee will continue these conversations at the next meeting on Monday, April 4th.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

MOTION made by Sarah, seconded by Lisa R.
To approve the February 27, 2022 minutes as submitted.
Hearing no nays, the motion unanimously passed.

Meeting Closure

Meeting adjourned at 10:34 am

The next committee meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 4, from 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.