

**Morris County Advisory Committee on Women
October 19, 2022, 5:30pm to 7:00pm
Via Microsoft Teams**

Present: Karen O’Keeffe, Joann Bjornson, Kasey Errico, Pam Bennett-Santoro, Donna Boyce, and Julia Gibson

Welcome and Introductions: Ms. O’Keeffe called the meeting to order at 5:37pm and welcomed members. To keep the meeting on schedule, Ms. Bjornson will speak with Ms. Gibson after the meeting to introduce herself and review her role as Vice Chair.

Review of September 21, 2022 meeting minutes: A motion to approve the minutes were made by Ms. Bennett-Santoro, seconded by Ms. Boyce.

Subcommittee Reports:

- a. Membership – Ms. O’Keeffe reminded members to continue to seek out potential candidates for vacancies on the Committee. New member Ms. Gibson may have some fresh ideas for new candidates. As a reminder, we are looking for diversity in candidates. Ms. Bjornson added that diversity in every area because it could also be gender, we can have a male on the Woman’s Advisory Committee. Think about other genders, how people identify diversity in the skill, education and socioeconomic status. The candidate must be someone who lives or works in Morris County. Ms. Gibson suggested exploring LinkedIn as a resource.
- b. 2023 Seeds of Change – Ms. O’Keeffe asked Ms. Bennett-Santoro if there was an update on the Seeds of Change. She also stated that Ms. Ugalde created a Google Doc for the application and if members had a chance to review the document. Ms. Ugalde did a good job in simplifying the application. Ms. Bennett-Santoro agreed and think it looks great. It was discussed last month to have the application returned by December 10th. Her name and contact information needs to be added for questions, and Ms. Kisatsky’s contact information will need to be added as well to collect the applications. Ms. Bennett-Santoro recommended placing the Morris County logo at the top of the document. Ms. Kisatsky can provide the logo.

Several members tested the fillable Google form and it worked great. Ms. O’Keeffe recommended several trial runs to ensure its working before the document is sent to the Nonprofits. Ms. Bennett-Santoro commented that if we want the forms back by December 10th, we would need to send them out fairly quickly and not wait until the November meeting, as there probably won’t be enough time before the deadline. Ms. O’Keeffe recommended that the subcommittee approve the changes and have Ms. Ugalde revise the Google document. Once the document is revised, send it to the full Committee to review and test the fillable areas to ensure they work. Once this is done to the satisfaction of the Committee, Ms. Kisatsky will then send the application out to area Nonprofits.

Ms. Bjornson stated that as we have more membership, we can start to really focus on housing and healthcare as our initiative in 2023. She recommended that in 2024, the Seeds of Change award can be a theme focused on Housing and Healthcare.

It was noted that that December 10th is a Saturday, the return date was changed to December 9th. The candidate will be chosen in January, 2023, and be presented with the award in March 2023. The sooner we lock in the date with the County Information Officer the better as the agenda fills up very quickly. Ms. Bennett-Santoro recommended the first meeting in March. Ms. Bjornson asked the Committee to

draft an email that can be sent out with the nomination form. Ms. Errico stated that Ms. Kisatsky has the email from last year that can be revised and used. Ms. Boyce recommended that a picture of last years recipient be included in the nomination form, the Committee agreed.

- c. Action/Planning – Ms. O’Keeffe asked the Committee to start thinking about Housing as Healthcare for next year. Ms. Bjornson was asked to speak briefly on this topic: Family Promise did apply and we’re almost at the final award stage of a \$1.7 million grant for Housing as Healthcare. And so that was for the congressionally directed spending through Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill’s office and it's working with the hospitals and the jails and looking at how Healthcare is impacted by homeless status, that was very pertinent during COVID. Now even more so with the housing crisis impacting different level people, people with different socioeconomic status. Housing is a crisis everywhere right now. There were 75 projects that were narrowed down to 15. Our project was one of the 15, it was passed in the Senate, and now it has to pass in the House. Family Promise continues to follow up on the status of the grant with Congresswoman Sherrill’s office.

Ms. Boyce added that to note, thinking back to the ALICE report that we received, and the vulnerability and the income challenge for older single females in Morris County. Also noting that nationally, seniors are the fastest growing first time homeless/unhoused population demographic. And two, to the healthcare piece, we actually are still determining what the long term impacts of COVID are. It looks like it's going to be serious. So housing as healthcare, and housing as a social determinant of health. It’s timely for the Committee to take this up right now.

Ms. Errico stated that she went to her Human Services Association meeting last week. There’s a New Jersey Division on Women within the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and she made contact with Anna Martinez. They're going to be incorporating recommendations from the State’s Commission on Women. They are making some recommendations, and I thought there might be information that could be interesting for this Advisory Committee to look at and see where there might be crossovers or items that would be pertinent to our local area. Ms. Errico will make that contact and see if the Committee can look at ideas to bring into the new year. In New Jersey, (the second in the county), there is going to be a new law for newborn home visitation. Families with newborns will be able to have home visits with nurses to assist with the transition.

Old Business:

- a. ACoW meeting format/process discussion – Ms. O’Keeffe began the discussion by speaking about the meeting format for next year. In past meetings, the Committee discussed the need for Subcommittee meetings, where most of the work should be done. It was suggested that meetings can be held one month with the full Committee and the Subcommittees can meet the following month so the Subcommittees can also meet regularly.

The Committee agreed to vote on this matter at the November meeting. The Committee agreed to keep the meeting day to the 3rd Wednesday of the month. Conducting in-person meetings was discussed as well as the convenience of meeting remotely. The Committee would need to commit to in-person meetings. Ms. Errico stated that the County is still experiencing a delay with the implementation of the hybrid model and there are also technical issues that are being corrected. Ms. Bjornson recommended that the Subcommittees consider meeting in-person and the full Committee meet virtually. Ms. O’Keeffe recommended, and the Committee agreed that this matter be voted on at the November meeting.

New Business:

- a. Nominating Committee – Ms. Bjornson stated that Ms. O’Keeffe will be stepping down as Chair at the end of this year. A new Chair needs to be chosen. Ms. Bjornson, due to other obligations, will not be taking over the Chair position, but will remain as the Vice Chair. Ms. Errico stated that there needs to be a Nominating Committee. Ms. Bjornson and Ms. Bennett-Santoro agreed to be on this Committee. Ms. Errico stated the Committee can create the slate, but members would need to make an official vote at the January meeting to install the new officers.

Public Sections: None

Next Meeting: November 16, 2022 via Microsoft Teams *Ms. O’Keeffe will not be available, Ms. Bjornson will conduct the meeting.

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 6:38p.m.