

**Commission for Women  
Department of Administration  
November 10, 2020**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
NEVADA COMMISSION FOR WOMEN  
DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION  
November 10, 2020

The meeting of the Nevada Commission for Women was called to order by Chair Jo Etta Brown at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 10, 2020 via teleconference call. **Exhibit A** is the meeting agenda, **Exhibit B** is NRS 233I, **Exhibit C** is the Attorney General Open Meeting Law Manual, and Exhibit D is the Nevada Commission for Women Operational Guidelines. All exhibits are available and on file in the Department of Administration, Director's Office.

**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Richann Bender  
Jo Etta Brown  
Durette Candito  
Heather Engle  
Diane Fearon  
Jennifer López  
Jennifer Rogers Markwell  
Ann Silver

**COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Flor Bernal-Gonzalez  
Victoria Ruiz-Marin

**D of A STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Molly Walt

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Katie Armstrong, Deputy Attorney General, Attorney General's Office

**Agenda Item #3 – Public Comment**

Marlene Lockhart spoke on behalf of Nevada Women's Lobby supporting the Nevada Commission for Women to approve the rejection of the possibility of being de-commissioned and repurposed as a non-profit, 501c(3) organization. Caroline Punches spoke on behalf of American Association of University of Women (AAUW) of Nevada and concurred with Nevada Women's Lobby not wanting to see the Nevada Commission for women de-commissioned and repurposed as a non-profit, 501c3 organization.

Caryll Dzedziak, Women's Research Institute of Nevada, informed the Commissioner she was on the conference call to address any questions Commissioners might have regarding Agenda Item #8.

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Commissioners welcomed newly appointed Commissioner Jennifer Rogers Markwell and introduced themselves to Commissioner Rogers Markwell.

**Agenda Item #4 – FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: Review and approval of Minutes from August 10, 2020, Nevada Commission for Women meeting.**

Commissioner Richann Bender made a motion to approve the August 10, 2020 Nevada Commission for Women Meeting Minutes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Diane Fearon. Motion passed, with one abstention from Commissioner Jennifer López.

**Agenda Item #5 – FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: Review and approval of Minutes from September 29, 2020, Nevada Commission for Women meeting.**

Commissioner Durette Candito made a motion to approve the September 29, 2020 Nevada Commission for Women Meeting Minutes. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Richann Bender. Motion passes, with one abstention from Commissioner Jennifer López.

**Agenda Item #6 – INFORMATION ONLY: Overview of Nevada’s Open Meeting Law and Chapter 233I of the Nevada Revised Statutes**

Deputy Attorney General, Katie Armstrong, presented the Commission for Women with an overview of Nevada Revised Statute 233I, the State of Nevada Attorney General’s Open Meeting Law Manual, and the Nevada Commission for Women’s Operational Guidelines, Section IV. Communications.

**Agenda Item #7 – FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: To approve the rejection of the possibility of being de-commissioned and repurposed as a non-profit, 501c(3) organization which will require our time to be spent on fundraising rather than the study and evaluation of important issues affecting women in Nevada. The Commission for Women requests the Director of Department of Administration put forth a department budget that enables the Commission to maintain its purpose and carry out the responsibilities we accepted upon our appointments.**

Background information: The Nevada Commission for Women exists for the purpose of evaluating issues affecting women throughout Nevada and advising the Governor’s Office and our State Legislature on the opportunities and challenges in such areas as pay parity, job advancement, work/life balance, public service, and potential discrimination due to gender. Commissioners are appointed by the Governor and this Commission has always been supported by the respective Governor in office.

Commissioner Ann Silver made the motion for Nevada Commission for Women Commissioners to reject any possibility of the Nevada Commission for Women to be de-commissioned and repurpose as a non-profit, 501c3 organization and asked the Chair to call for a second to the motion made by Commissioner Ann Silver. Commissioner Richann Bender seconded the motion. Commissioner Durette Candito asked is someone could clarify why this is even happening. Chair Brown stating it is part of an item that went before the Governor for consideration and it is part of a budget issue. Commissioner Candito then asked why consider de-commission the Commission. Commissioner Silver stated that Department of Administration was asked by the Governor to make budget reductions and the Director of Department of Administration proposed having the Commission for Women become a 501c3 nonprofit

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organization to save money. When Commissioner Silver was advised of the Department of Administration's intention, she drafted the motion in hopes that her fellow Commissioners send a message to the Director of Administration that the Commission does not want to be a nonprofit organization. Commissioner Candito stated that she is a little shocked that in this age of the "Me To" movement and the fact that Nevada has the largest women legislator in the country that the Commission for Women would be cut in this manner. Commissioner Candito continued by stating the Commission for Women's staff position was cut to part-time in the Special Session and she feels the Commission for Women has already been cut enough. Chair Brown stated the results of the agenda item vote will be emailed to Director Freed by Chair Brown. After Director Freed has sent the results of the vote to Governor Sisolak, Chair Brown will then send an email to the Commissioners. Chair Brown also stated that the request to put forth a department budget that enables the Commission to maintain its purpose and carry out the responsibilities accepted by Commissioners upon their appointments will go to the Governor and will not need to go to legislator. Chair Brown stated that a bill to fund the staff position for the Commission for Women will not be needed because the request by the Commission to fund the Commission will go to Director Freed who will then submit to Governor Sisolak for approval. Commissioner Richann Bender commented that since the Commission for Women was created by legislation, she thought that in order to de-commission the Commission, it would have to go to legislator. Chair Brown stated that is not true and that the Commission will not be going away, since the Commission is voting to "reject" the possibility to be de-commissioned. Commissioner Jennifer López commented on how women have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic in a number of different ways and when the research is looked at, women are impacted by the amount of domestic violence and sexual violence they are forced to endure, and a record number of women are leaving their jobs to care for their children and to make sure their children are participating in their education. Commissioner López continued to state that with the disproportionate impact the pandemic is having on women, she would encourage Director Freed to reconsider cutting the Commission for Women; now is the time to work towards investing in the Commission for Women, because now is the time to advocate for women in these challenging times. Commissioner Heather Engle echoed Commissioner López's comments and added that she finds it awful that de-commissioning the Commission is even being considered during this time, especially in 2020, when women are celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Commissioner Ann Silver commented that she agrees with her fellow Commissioners comments and this action item is the first response to Director Freed's proposal, it is the first step stating that the Commission for Women "rejects" the proposal. The vote was recorded as a roll call vote. Unanimously, Commissioners present at the meeting voted in approval to reject of the possibility of being de-commissioned and repurposed as a non-profit, 501c(3) organization which will require our time to be spent on fundraising rather than the study and evaluation of important issues affecting women in Nevada. The Commission for Women requests the Director of Department of Administration put forth a department budget that enables the Commission to maintain its purpose and carry out the responsibilities we accepted upon our appointments.

Chair Brown stated that she will email Director Freed the outcome of the vote for the Commission to become a nonprofit 501c3 organization. Chair Brown will also ask Director Freed to forward this information to Governor Sisolak and to email Chair Brown the results from Governor Sisolak. Chair Brown will then email all Commissioners the results and the results will be posted on the Commission website. Commissioner López asked if Chair Brown will be

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copied on the communication between Director Freed and the Governor's office; Chair Brown responded stating yes, she will be copied on the communication. Chair Brown stated at the next Commission meeting, Commissioners will be voting on a formal letter to be sent to Governor Sisolak from the Commission for Women.

At the discretion of the Chair, Chair Brown postponed Agenda Items #8-12 until the Commission knows the status of the Commission. Staff, Molly Walt, asked if Agenda Item #8 could be voted on, since representation from Nevada Research Institute of Nevada (WRIN) was in attendance at the meeting. Chair Brown stated she did not want to entertain the request made by Ms. Walt and explained it is within the powers of the Chair to postpone agenda items. Deputy Attorney General, Katie Armstrong, reminded Chair Brown to call for public comment before adjourning the meeting. Commissioner Silver asked when the next Commission meeting will be. Chair Brown stated the next meeting will be in December and the agenda items taken off today's meeting will be discussed at that meeting. Commissioner López asked if Agenda Item #8 could be heard so there is a way to have a continued presence for the Nevada Commission for Women. Chair Brown disagreed and stated that the agenda items should not be heard until the Commission's request has been granted by the Governor. Commissioner López respectfully disagreed and thinks the Commission should still move forward with Agenda Item #8. Commissioner López continued to state that even if the Commission is de-commissioned the information can be removed for the website. Commissioner López stated the Commission should still have their name out in the community, and if the outcome with the Director of Department of Administration is favorably, the Commission will not lose a month's time of the information that can be shared with the public. Chair Brown stated Commissioner López's comments are on the record. Commissioner Fearon stated that she supports Commissioner López's comments.

**Agenda Item #8 – FOR POSSIBLE ACTION: To approve the action to allow Women's Research Institute of Nevada (WRIN) to add the Nevada Commission for Women's name, link to the Commission's website, Commission's logo, and pictures from events of WRIN and Nevada Commission for Women working together to WRIN's Partnership Page.**

**Agenda Item #9 – INFORMATION ONLY: Nevada Commission for Women Empowerment Virtual Workshop Update**

**Agenda Item #10 – INFORMATION ONLY: Nevada Commission for Women 2020 Goals**

**Agenda Item #11 – INFORMATION ONLY: Commission "Call to Action" Updates**

**Agenda Item #12 – INFORMATION ONLY: Commissioner Updates**

**Agenda Item #13 – INFORMATION ONLY: New business/Comments or items of discussion**

Commissioner Brown asked Commissioners for new business and/or comments. No new business and/or comments were reported.

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**Agenda Item #14 – Public Comment**

Sondra Cosgrove, League of Women Voters of Nevada, stated that she supports the resolution passed and would like to see the Commission continue.

**Agenda Item #15 – FOR POSSIBLE ACTION – Adjournment**

Commission Ann Silver motioned to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Heather Engle. Meeting was adjourned at 2:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Molly Walt*

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Molly Walt, Staff, Nevada Commission for Women

Exhibit A	Meeting Agenda
Exhibit B	NRS 233I
Exhibit C	Attorney General Open Meeting Law Manual
Exhibit D	Nevada Commission for Women Operational Guidelines