

METROWEST COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN BYLAWS

PREAMBLE

The organization and rules of procedure of the MetroWest Commission on the Status of Women as created by Chapter 335 of the Acts of 2014 shall be as follows:

ARTICLE I—NAME

The name of this organization shall be the MetroWest Commission on the Status of Women.

ARTICLE 2—PURPOSE

The purpose of the MetroWest Commission on the Status of Women (“the Commission”) shall be to advance women and girls toward full equity in all areas of life and to promote the rights and opportunities for all women and girls. The mission of the Commission is to provide a permanent, effective voice for women and girls in MetroWest communities, described by Chapter 335 of the Acts of 2014 as including the towns of Ashland, Bellingham, Dover, Franklin, Holliston, Hopkinton, Hudson, Maynard, Medfield, Medway, Millis, Natick, Needham, Norfolk, Northborough, Norwood, Sherborn, Southborough, Stow, Sudbury, Walpole, Wayland, Wellesley, Westborough, Weston, and Wrentham and the cities of Framingham and Marlborough. The Commission stands for fundamental freedoms, basic human rights, and the full enjoyment of life for all women and girls. This Commission shall have the following responsibilities:

- a) Study, review and report on the status of women and girls in the MetroWest communities;
- b) Inform leaders of business, education, health care, state and local governments and the communications media of issues pertaining to women and girls;
- c) Serve as a liaison between government and private interest groups concerned with issues affecting women and girls;
- d) Serve as a clearinghouse for information on issues pertaining to women and girls;
- e) As deemed necessary and appropriate:
 1. Assess programs and practices in all state agencies as they affect women and girls;
 2. Advise executive and legislative bodies on the effect of proposed legislation on women and girls;
 3. Identify and recommend qualified women for appointive positions at all levels of government;
 4. Promote and facilitate collaboration among local women's commissions and among women’s and girl’s organizations in the MetroWest communities; and
- f) Establish a method of sharing goals, actions and missions between the Commission and the appointing Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women.

ARTICLE III—REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The Commission shall annually, not later than May 15, report the results of its findings and activities of the preceding year and its recommendations to the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women.

ARTICLE IV—POWERS OF THE COMMISSION

The powers of the Commission shall include, but not be limited to the following:

- a) Collaborate with concerned organizations, groups, states and local agencies and officers on issues of common concern;
- b) Use voluntary and uncompensated services of private individuals, agencies and organization as may, from time to time, be offered or required,
- c) Recommend policies and make recommendations to state and local agencies and officers to effectuate the purpose of the Commission;
- d) Enact by-laws for its own governance;
- e) Hold regular public meetings, conduct fact-finding hearings, and hold other public forums as it deems necessary; and
- f) Take other actions as it deems necessary to effectuate its purposes.

ARTICLE V—MEMBERS

SECTION 1. MEMBERS

The members of the Commission shall consist of nine Commissioners who are appointed by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women from a pool of applicants who reside in the MetroWest region and shall be appointed for random one, two, and three-year terms based on the current vacancies. Commissioners shall not be reappointed for more than two (2) consecutive terms; provided, however, that former Commissioners may reapply to serve on the Commission after one (1) year has passed since their last term.

SECTION 2. DIVERSITY

Members of the Commission shall be drawn from diverse racial, ethnic, religious, age, sexual orientation, and socio-economic backgrounds from throughout the MetroWest region and shall have had experience working toward the improvement of the status of women and girls in society.

SECTION 3. MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS

Members shall be subject to the provisions of chapter 268A of the General Laws as they apply to special state employees.

SECTION 4. TERMS OF OFFICE

Members shall serve a term of three years or the term that was assigned to her based on the seat she filled—and until her successor is appointed. Each Commissioner is eligible to serve two consecutive three-year terms.

SECTION 5. VACANCIES

Any Commissioner may resign by delivering a written notice of resignation to the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women and copying their Chair. The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women will have the authority to fill the vacancy with a new Commissioner for the balance of the unexpired term.

SECTION 6. APPOINTMENTS

Applications shall be solicited on a rolling basis throughout the year for appointment consideration during the annual appointment period which occurs in September of every year or during any time in which the Commission has a vacancy. The Commission will send its appointment recommendations to the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women, which is the appointing authority. The appointments will be made with staggering terms that match the needs of the Commission. Appointments shall begin January 1 of each year if filling an expired term, or on a date determined by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women if filling an unexpired term.

ARTICLE VI—FINANCES

SECTION 1. FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the Commission shall be July 1 through June 30.

SECTION 2. FUNDING

The Commission may accept and solicit funds, including any gifts, donations, grants, or bequests, or any federal funds for any of the purposes of the enabling legislation.

SECTION 3. ACCOUNTS

Such funds shall be deposited by the elected Treasurer in a separate account and expended by the Commission in accordance with the law and the donor or grantors intent.

ARTICLE VII—COMPENSATION AND LIABILITY

SECTION 1. COMPENSATION

Commissioners shall receive no compensation for their services.

SECTION 2. LIABILITY

No person who is now or who later becomes a member of this Commission shall be personally liable to its creditors for any indebtedness or liability, and any and all creditors of this Commission shall look to the assets of this Commission for payment.

ARTICLE VIII—OFFICERS

SECTION 1. OFFICERS

The Commission shall elect from among its Commissioners a Chair, a Vice-Chair, a Treasurer, and a Secretary. Only members of the Commission shall be eligible for nomination and election as officers. If an officer of the Commission shall, during her term of office, no longer be a member of the Commission, she shall automatically cease to be an officer of the Commission.

SECTION 2. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Officers shall be elected annually at the last official meeting of the fiscal year. The officers shall be elected by a majority of the Commissioners.

SECTION 3. OFFICERS' TERM OF OFFICE

The elected officers shall serve for a term of one year. The elected officers shall not serve more than two successive terms in any particular office. However, under extenuating circumstances (as determined by a majority vote by members of the Commission), an officer may serve a third consecutive one-year term.

SECTION 4. OFFICER VACANCIES

A vacancy in the Chair's office shall be filled until the next annual election by the Vice-Chair. All other vacancies shall be filled by a majority vote of the members of the Commission. In the event the Chair and Vice-Chair are both unable to preside, a quorum of the Commission shall elect a temporary Chair.

ARTICLE IX—DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

The duties of the officers are as follows:

SECTION 1. CHAIR

The Chair shall be entrusted to act and carry out policies and decisions of the Commission between meetings of the Commission. The Chair shall assure that the legislative mandates of the Commission are carried out as prescribed by the Legislature and as formulated in these by-laws to:

- a) Call and preside at all meetings of the Commission and conduct these in accordance with parliamentary rules;
- b) Be an ex-officio (non-voting) member of all committees, with the exception of the nominating committee;
- c) Call special meetings when deemed necessary or desirable;
- d) Set the agenda for Commission meetings;
- e) Serve as spokesperson for the Commission or direct such representation before the public and governmental bodies;

- f) Oversee all recommendations and reports to the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women; and
- g) Perform such other duties as the Commission may prescribe from time to time.

SECTION 2. VICE-CHAIR

The Vice-Chair shall perform all duties of the Chair in the event of the Chair's absence or inability to serve, or in the event of a vacancy in that office until it is filled and shall perform other duties as are designated by the Commission.

The regular role of Vice-Chair includes these responsibilities:

- a) Oversee orientation of new Commissioners, ensuring that all Commissioners are properly sworn in and maintain required training and certifications;
- b) Propose and facilitate new training for Commissioners when appropriate, including bringing them up to speed on matters pertaining to the work and business of the Commission; and
- c) Serve as the Chair of an ad-hoc Bylaws Committee when amendments to the bylaws are being discussed and proposed for approval by the full Commission.

SECTION 3. SECRETARY

The Secretary shall:

- a) Be responsible for writing and reviewing the minutes of all regular and special meetings of the Commission;
- b) Assure that copies of the minutes and any financial statements are sent to all members of the Commission and the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women prior to the next meeting;
- c) Assure that an attendance roster is maintained for each Commission meeting and committee meeting;
- d) Act as historian to the Commission by assuring that all general correspondence, records of meetings and committees, and business before the Commission is maintained; and
- e) Perform all other duties necessary for the maintenance of adequate records, files and communications of the Commission.

SECTION 4. TREASURER

The Treasurer shall perform the following duties and all other duties as are designated by the Commission:

- a) Ensure that all financial records are maintained and shall oversee budget preparation and reporting;
- b) Submit the Commission's application for fall and spring grant funding as provided by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women and manage all expenses related to the grant; and
- c) Ensure that any Commissioner seeking reimbursement for expenses has the proper paperwork completed and submitted to the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women for processing.

ARTICLE X—COMMITTEES

SECTION 1. ORGANIZATION

The Commission may create such committees, as it deems necessary to carry out the work of the Commission.

SECTION 2. STANDING COMMITTEES, SPECIAL COMMITTEES, AND TASK FORCES

The Commission may establish standing committees for permanent ongoing tasks. Additionally, special committees and task forces may also be established. The work of the standing committees, special committees, and task forces shall be determined by goals and objectives established annually by the Commission. All committees shall submit their recommendations to the full Commission for approval for such recommendations to be acted upon.

Commissioners may volunteer to serve on the committee of their choice.

Chairs and Co-Chairs of any standing committees created by the Commission shall be elected by the members of the individual standing committees at their first meeting of the fiscal year.

The Commission is empowered to appoint committees, taskforces, councils, or other appropriate bodies to study specialized areas of concern and report their findings to the Commission; to disseminate information on issues relating to women and girls; to develop and promote programs and services to women and girls; and to advocate for women and girls' equity.

Membership on such committees shall not be limited to Commissioners. Special representatives other than Commissioners may be appointed by the Chair to serve on task forces for the period of time designated by the Commission and would submit interim reports on their special assignments as the Commission requests.

Only Commissioners may vote to elect special committee Chairs, and only Commissioners may be Chairs of special committees.

ARTICLE XI—MEETINGS

SECTION 1. SCHEDULE

The Commission shall meet at least six times during the calendar year. Meeting locations will rotate throughout the MetroWest region or be held remotely and shall be accessible in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A calendar of dates shall be set at the first meeting of the fiscal year. This calendar of dates shall be distributed to all Commissioners and can be amended by a majority vote of the Commission.

SECTION 2. QUORUM

In the absence of a quorum, the executive committee can act on behalf of the Commission on any matters deemed urgent, provided that a quorum of the executive committee is present.

SECTION 3. OPEN MEETING LAW

All meetings shall be conducted in compliance with the Open Meeting Law. Executive sessions, as per the law, may be conducted.

SECTION 4. SPECIAL MEETINGS

The special meeting of the Commission can be called by either the Chair or by a majority vote of the Commission.

The purpose of the meeting shall be stated in the call. No business can be transacted at the meeting except that stated in the call and, except in cases of emergency, at least three-day notice must be given to the membership. A special meeting can be conducted only if a quorum of the Commissioners is present.

SECTION 5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Observers may attend meetings of the Commission and may be granted the privilege of the floor by majority vote of the Commissioners. Normally, fifteen minutes will be set-aside at the beginning of the meetings for this purpose. In addition, visitors may speak to specific issues as that arise during the meeting at the discretion of the Chair and the Commissioners.

SECTION 6. ATTENDANCE

All Commissioners are expected to maintain regular attendance at meetings of the full Commission and to participate fully and effectively in such committees or task forces as are necessary and appropriate to conduct the business of the Commission. It is an expectation of the Commission that if a Commissioner is unable to attend, that a notification will be sent to the Chair at their earliest convenience. The Secretary of the Commission shall maintain a record of attendance at each Commission meeting. After a Commissioner's third absence from regularly scheduled meetings of the full Commission, the Chair of the Commission shall notify the appointing authority, the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women, of the failure of that Commissioner to comply with the Commission's attendance requirements; provided, however, that such Commissioner may attach her own explanation for the reasons for her absences.

ARTICLE XII—VOTING PRIVILEGES

At any Commission meeting or committee meeting, each Commissioner shall be entitled to one vote each time a vote is called. Voting by proxy shall not be allowed.

ARTICLE XIII—AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

These bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the Commission by a two-thirds vote of the Commissioners present and voting, provided that the proposed amendment has been submitted at the previous meeting.

ARTICLE XIV—POLICY ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS

The Commission shall adopt policies as needed. Policies may be adopted, amended, or repealed by a majority of all votes cast by the Commissioners present and voting, provided that the proposed material has been submitted at the previous meeting.

ARTICLE XV—PARLIMENTARY PROCEDURE AUTHORITY

When not in conflict with these bylaws, Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the actions of the Commission.

ARTICLE XVI: COMMISSIONER EMERITA

Any Commissioner who serves two full three-year terms is eligible to become a Commissioner Emerita. To become a Commissioner Emerita, such Commissioners whose terms have expired may request such a title from the Commission, which shall be approved at the Commission's discretion. The purpose of a Commissioner Emerita is to remain connected to the work of the Commission and to continue to participate and have a voice. Commissioner Emeritus may participate in all meetings of the Commission but shall have no voting privileges.