



Business and
Professional
Women / St. Petersburg-
Pinellas

2022-2023 PUBLIC POLICY SUBMISSION

BPW/FL Public Policy Award Submission 2022-2023

The programming goal of BPW/St. Petersburg-Pinellas is to maintain a balance of speakers whose topics or life stories are geared towards working women and align with BPW's mission and BWP/FL's public policy platform.

When scheduling presenters, the First Vice President/Program Chair and the Program Committee consider national monthly observances and commemorations, issues facing working women at the local and national levels, current affairs and matters that concern members as community citizens. Overall, we aim for our speakers and topics to underscore BPW's public policy platform or one or more of BPW's key pillars: personal, professional and political.

In 2022-2023, BPW/St. Petersburg-Pinellas "consistently advocated, educated and informed its members on the focus issues of equality for all (emphasis on ERA); economic equity, workplace safety, healthcare, the environment, and voting rights and access" in the following ways:

- We had 6 keynote presentations delivered by guest speakers at the luncheon meetings on topics specific to our Public Policy Platform (held on the first Thursday of each month);
- "Legislative moments" delivered by the Legislative Committee every other month at the luncheon meetings;
- The annual Equality Day Tea held in August 2022;
- The Working Women's Forum "Advocacy in Action" held in October 2022;
- The twentieth annual "Unhappy Hour" observing Equal Pay Day held in March 2023;
- Members sharing important political events via our Facebook Page;
- Meeting with locally elected officials; and
- Related news posts to the LO's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/BPWSPP.

June 2: Jim Nixon – "Turning Points" a History of LGBTQ+ Issues, Progress and Work Still to be Done



June is PRIDE month in St Petersburg and to kick it off, BPW welcomed Jim Nixon on Thursday, June 2nd. Jim is the Director of the Mayor's Action Center and LGBTQ Liaison for the City of St. Petersburg. IN his role as the LGBTQ Liaison, he serves as an accessible and friendly ear to the city's LGBTQ community and elevates LGBTQ-related concerns to the city executive and other city officials. He's serving as both a spokesperson for the Mayor's Office to the local LGBTQ demographic as well as a representative of LGBTQ interests to the leaders of St. Petersburg Government.

Jim has been a constant marketing force in the LGBTQ community throughout Tampa Bay. Nine years ago he began working on reorganizing a grassroots committee, the St. Pete LGBTQ Marketing Committee, to focus on marketing the Tampa Bay area as an LGBTQ vacation destination, which directly impacted the IGLTA 2017 Global Convention held in St. Petersburg in May 2017.

Over the past five years, he has worked on many initiatives making St. Petersburg an inclusive and welcoming city. He was able to modify the city's Anti-Bullying policy to include sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression in all youth-facing services. He assisted in the inclusion of LGBTQ Businesses in the Greenhouse SBE program and successfully navigated St. Pete's Human Rights Campaign Municipal Equality Index resulting in the city receiving a perfect score every year.

He now comes to BPW to share a history of LGBTQ+ issues, progress and work still to be done.



July 7: Michael Lundy - Gender and Racial Justice in Housing

Please join us on Thursday, July 7, 2022 as we welcome Michael Lundy, President and CEO of the City of St. Petersburg Housing Authority. Mr. Lundy is relatively new to the area having joined the St. Petersburg Housing Authority in 2020 after leaving a position in Birmingham, Alabama. He has over four (4) decades of experience in affordable housing management and real estate development. Most recently he is overseeing the redevelopment of Jordan Park in St. Petersburg, as well as several other projects, that you will hear more

about on July 7.

Mr. Lundy is a strong advocate of education and housing programs which support social and economic independence. He also believes that affordable housing programs can help position low-income families to become self-sufficient through education training and employment opportunities.

We are excited that Mr. Lundy is able to join us in July to provide information about gender and racial justice in housing. Are there discrimination and economic inequities that makes it harder for women? Does housing instability have other negative impacts on women and minorities? Is there a correlation to housing and nutrition? Join us on Thursday, July 7 to have these and other housing questions answered by Michael Lundy, President and CEO of the St. Petersburg Housing Authority.



August 4: Personal Enrichment Through Mental Health Services (PEMHS) AND THE Crisis in Mental Health Related to COVID

Did you know that there was a Wellness Center being planned in Pinellas County, to assist with all aspects of mental health? Have you heard of the You Good campaign or Largo Strong? If not, you will want to join us for our August 4, 2022 luncheon meeting where we will welcome Maxine Booker, CEO of Personal Enrichment Through Mental Health Services, or more commonly known at PEMHS. Maxine will update us on the progress and the purpose of the new Wellness Center, and how PEMHS, and other community-based programs, will be assisted by a community-based

Wellness Center. Maxine will also be providing an update about the continuing effects of COVID-19 and programs that PEMHS has in place to assist.



November 3: Barry Burton – State of the County

We hope you will join us on Thursday, November 3, 2022 as we welcome for the first time, Pinellas County Administrator, Barry Burton to our lunch meeting. Mr. Burton will provide an update on the state of the county. As the chief administrative officer for Pinellas County he will also provide information on the goals of the County, per the Strategic Plan.

Mr. Burton has many responsibilities, not the least of which includes building collaborative relationships with municipal and community partners. Has this been easier or harder now that one of Pinellas County's longest sitting Commissioners is now the Mayor of the City of St. Petersburg?

Mr. Burton also works with Development Review Services, Economic Development, Housing and Community Development, all of the things that have been in the news at many levels. Are there things we need to know?

Please join us on Thursday, November 3rd as we welcome Barry Burton, Pinellas County, County Administrator.



January 5: Tara Newsome – The Times Have Found Us

The time has found us. *Thomas Paine, January 1776 – Common Sense: Addressed to the Inhabitants of America.*

Join us on January 5, 2023 as we welcome Professor Tara Newsom to BPW/St. Petersburg-Pinellas. Professor Newsom will speak on Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, "*The time hath found us*" and the relevance to today's political climate, as well as our BPW/FL Public Policy Platform.

Professor Newsom is the founding Director of SPC's Center for Civil Learning & Community Engagement, which is strategically designed to create diverse civic leadership through public service. She tells her students that she will do her best to encourage and cultivate their critical thinking skills and arm them with the tools to be successful, academically and personally.

The time has found us.



February 2: Kenneth Welch - Mayor City of St. Petersburg

Please join us on Thursday, February 2, 2023 as we welcome St. Petersburg Mayor, Kenneth T. Welch. In his first appearance to BPW/St. Petersburg-Pinellas Mayor Welch will present his first State of the City address.

Ken is a lifelong resident and servant of St. Petersburg and Pinellas County, having grown up in the Gas Plant area and attending local public schools. Ken learned about service to our community from a long family history, including from his father, who was a city council member.

A third generation St. Pete resident, Ken lives in St. Petersburg today with his wife of 30 years, Donna, and their two daughters.

LEGISLATIVE MOMENTS

In 2022-2023 BPW/St. Petersburg-Pinellas focused primarily on personal accountability and participation.

Legislative Moment topics included:

June Legislative Moment: after returning from the Annual State Conference, BPW/SPP legislative chair wanted to make sure that all members knew about the newly approved Public Policy Platform. She also provided information regarding the upcoming supreme court ruling re Roe v Wade

August Legislative Moment: The Women's suffrage was about the right of women to vote in elections. Beginning in the mid-19th century, some people sought to change voting laws to allow women to vote. Liberal political parties would go on to grant women the right to vote, increasing the number of those parties potential constituencies.

We hope that you will join us for a Mad Hatter Tea Party – Unleashing Women’s Voices on August 20, 2022 from 2:00 to 4:00 at the Hawthorn Bottle Shop. As this is such an important time for women and making sure we keep our right to vote leadership determined that we would not charge a different amount for non-members who would like to join us, the cost is \$26.

We also encourage you to participate in the BPW/FL Zoom event on Friday, August 26 from noon to 1:00 when we will have a presentation by Amber Erickson Hurdle regarding the women’s suffrage movement and the importance of women voting.

Important things that happened on this date in history:
1944 Anne Frank was captured.

1892 Lizzie Borden’s parents were found dead.

1964 The remains of three civil rights workers whose disappearance on June 21 garnered national attention were found buried in an earthen dam near Philadelphia, Mississippi.

1753 George Washington became a Master Mason

2012 Oscar Pistorius becomes the first amputee runner to compete at the Olympics

August 26, 1939 first televised baseball game

2016 Quarterback Colin Kaepernick sits during national anthem, gives interview about it for the first time

1968 Democratic convention besieged by protesters as the Democratic National Convention gets underway in Chicago, thousands of antiwar demonstrators take to Chicago's streets to protest the Vietnam War a

October Legislative Moment: Voting in Pinellas County in 2022

By the time we meet again we will be really close to the end of all of the TV campaign ads. Do you, like me, wish they would actually say something in these ads about why I should vote for them instead of telling me how bad the opponent is? Are there less meaningful debates between the candidates that are open to all voters? These are just a couple of the questions I ask myself all the time. But I digress . . .

There has been so much talk about mail in ballots and if they are good, if it is done correctly, etc., as well as, new legislation in many states, including Florida, being introduced to change how we vote, I thought today might be a good time to talk a little about mail in ballots or voting by mail.

Florida has allowed mail in ballots since the legislation was passed in 2016. If you remember, prior to that it was called absentee voting and you HAD to have a reason to vote by mail. Now any registered resident of the State of Florida may request a mail ballot from their supervisor of elections, without any reason at all. In Pinellas County you can request a mail ballot by calling the supervisor of elections office, sending an email, or by completing an online form. The Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections website is: www.votepinellas.com

We heard a lot about the counting of the mail ballots after the last election. So let me shed a little light on how it is done in Florida. Pursuant to Florida law the canvassing board begins tabulating ballots AFTER the first Logic and Accuracy test, which is generally 21 days prior to the election. Ballots then continue being processed as they arrive through Election Day. In Florida the first election results are partial mail ballot results. Mail ballots continue to be processed during election night.

Before we go any further, even I had to find out what is the Logic and Accuracy test? It is a process done by the canvassing board that is designed to provide an overview of the election vote

counting process and to verify that the ballot counting equipment prepared for the election is properly reading and tabulating votes and after it is conducted the equipment is sealed for the election.

One common mistake that voters who receive mail in ballots make is thinking that their mail ballot can be returned to their precinct polling place. Mail ballots CANNOT be received at precinct polling places to be counted, ONLY to be cancelled. The safest way to know your ballot will be counted is to drop it off at a designated location PRIOR to election day. Mail service is unfortunately unreliable, however, if you do mail your ballot, please do so at least 7 days prior to election day and know that you can follow your ballot once it has been received by the Supervisor of Elections.

Another very common mistake, and probably one of the biggest is the voter's failure to sign the mail ballot envelope, but this, like most mail ballot mistakes is able to be cured, if you mailed your ballot and you can track it through the supervisor of elections website. Again that website is www.votepinellas.org.

Mail ballots are out in the mail now, so be on the look out for yours. Some important dates to remember:

Election Day is Tuesday, November 8, Voter Registration closes on October 11, Early voting in Pinellas County begins October 24th and ends on November 6.

Thank you and don't forget to educate yourself on the candidates and go VOTE.

December Legislative Moment: For this month's legislative moment I thought it might be interesting to follow up on our DEI moment from last month regarding holidays. So, I started to research legislation regarding holidays; religious or not. What I found is that there is a lot of conflict surrounding them.

Nothing quite compares to the controversy surrounding Thanksgiving, though. Thanksgiving is the most politicized American holiday of the 19th century. The reason for this is because anti-slavery clergy used Thanksgiving as the day on which to preach abolitionist sermons, and the South stopped celebrating it. Years after the Civil War ended, Texas Gov. Oran Milo Roberts described Thanksgiving as "a d---ed Yankee institution" and refused to have it in his state. In 1863 Lincoln became the first president to declare a general purpose Thanksgiving Day "for the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies" — though the date wouldn't be firmly and permanently settled until 1947.

One of the problems with Thanksgiving Day, was that it required a theological workaround, as it was not in the bible. Puritans were doctrinally opposed to annual holidays, but believed that a special Day of Thanks for God's goodness could be declared as often as the people had special reason to be grateful.

The rise of Halloween and Christmas remind us that holidays do not require official sanction to become wildly popular; in fact, the federal government did not create any until 1870 and Halloween is still not an official holiday.

Holidays are regularly co-opted by social and political movements. The temperance movement, with prominent women leaders concerned about the impact of drunken husbands on wives and children, held Fourth of July parades urging independence from King Alcohol, while the Washingtonians, a mass movement of men working to contain their own drinking habits, held rallies on Washington's birthday.

The United States has established by law the following 12 permanent federal holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday, Inauguration Day (every four years following a presidential election), George Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth National Independence Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day.

Although frequently called public or national holidays, these celebrations are only legally applicable to federal employees and the District of Columbia, as the states individually decide their own legal holidays.

On January 16 we will be honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. King won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 for combatting racial inequality with non-violent resistance. We are living in a time now, that should cause all of us take another look at what Dr. King had to say and how relevant it continues to be. After his death, Dr. King was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day was established as a holiday in numerous cities and states beginning in 1971 and became an official holiday at the federal level by legislation enacted and signed by President Reagan.

But did you know, a year after the federal government made Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday a holiday — Virginia created Lee-Jackson-King Day, an incoherent compromise that a later governor, Douglas Wilder, called "insane." The idea was to avoid giving two paid holidays in January. Lee-Jackson Day was separated from Martin Luther King Day in 2000 and abolished altogether by the Old Dominion in 2020.

Last month I advised that BPW/SPP is considering purchasing at table of 10 at this year's Martin Luther King, Jr. Breakfast sponsored by the National Council of Negro Women of St. Petersburg Metropolitan Section. Unfortunately, to date, no one has made payment for the breakfast. The ticket price is \$65 per person and we need 10 people and their payments today, if we are going to be able to purchase a table. So, before you leave, please see Sheila with your payment, if you would like to attend at the BPW/SPP table.

Thank you and I hope you all have very Happy Holidays.

Legislative Moment – February 2023: As we enter the 2023 legislative season I wanted to take this opportunity to remind new and seasoned members of the BPW/FL Public Policy Platform. The Public Policy Platform is six tiers: 1) Equality for All; 2) Economic Equity, Opportunity and Self-Sufficiency; 3) Safe Workplace; 4) Health Care; 5) Environment; and 6) Voting Rights and Access.

You can learn more about the platform by going to the BPW/FL website at bpwfl.org. by hovering over the Public Policy tab you will see the Public Policy Platform, as well as, the Equal Rights Amendment and our Public Policy News page. The BPW/FL Public Policy Committee is committed to keeping our membership informed about our Platform and articles and legislation pending about it.

As we get ready for the start of the legislative session on March 7th I encourage you to review the Public Policy News page frequently for what BPW is following and/or supporting. This is also where you will find any call-to-action requests.

As we move into February, I hope that we will all take an opportunity to honor Black History month by supporting black owned businesses; learning about noteworthy black figures and their contributions; donate to charities that support anti-racism equity and equality; and purchase, read and share books by black authors.

I would also be remiss if I didn't mention Equal Pay Day, which will be recognized this year on March 14, 2023. Please mark your calendars to be in attendance at our annual Unhappy Hour for Equal Pay Day, watch our weekly TBT newsletter for more information soon.

Legislative Moment – April 2023: BPW/SPP leadership used this opportunity to discuss the proposed drafted BPW/FL Public Policy Platform. Members were given an opportunity to question and comment on the proposed Public Policy Platform and were provided the email address for Kristin Smith, BPW/FL Public Policy Chair for any comments or concerns regarding the Platform. Each member was encouraged to voice their individual thoughts to Kristin in advance of the vote to be taken at State Conference.

Equality Day Tea

In 1920 the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was adopted and the women's suffrage movement ended.

19th Amendment

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

BPW/St. Petersburg-Pinellas celebrated its annual Equality Day with an unconventional wine and charcuterie event at the Hawthorne Bottle Shoppe, in St. Petersburg. The Hawthorn Bottle Shoppe is a female owned and operated local business in St. Petersburg. Approximately 20 BPW members and their guests, including St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce President and

CEO, Chris Steinocher, celebrated the addition of the 19th Amendment which granted women the right to vote. The Equality Day Tea Committee members included Jerri Evans, chair and legislative chair; Kristin Smith, President; Lily Alcott, Janine Duffy, Membership Chair, and Nylma Laureano. The committee secured the venue and provided door prizes for tea participants.

Kristin Smith, BPW/SPP President, 2022-2023 welcomed one and all.

The BPW/SPP tea was memorable, fun and informative and we look forward to celebrating again in 2024.



WORKING WOMEN’S FORUM – “Advocacy in Action”

Advocacy in Action! We talk a lot about advocacy at BPW but what does it really mean and how do you, as an individual, or as part of a team, advocate for yourself, your child, your organization? These and many other valuable questions were answered by our panelists and moderator at the annual Working Women’s Forum. Committee Members: Michele Cavallo and

Amanda Cummins, Co-Chairs; Kristin Smith, President; Sheila Barry-Oliver, Tami Simms, Christine Weigle, Amy Dinovo, Jerri Evans, Janine Duffy, Christie Bruner, and Nylma Laureano.

Our panelists and moderator were:



Dawn Hunter, JD., MPH, Southeastern Region Director,
Network for Public Health (Moderator)



Shanell Rae, Ph.D., Director of Diversity and Inclusion,
Tampa General Hospital



Marcia L. Avarado, PE, Structural Market Leader, WGI



Kimberly Jackson, ED, Strategic Policy Solutions



UNHAPPY HOUR FOR EQUAL PAY

On March 14, 2023, BPW/St. Petersburg-Pinellas held our 20th annual Unhappy Hour to mark Equal Pay Day, joining women's organizations around the country in recognizing the ongoing issue of the wage gap. The day chosen annually as Equal Pay Day is symbolic, representing the day in the current calendar year that all women, on average, must work to, until they have finally earned the same amount that a man in a similar job would have earned in just the prior calendar year. At present, the average earnings for all women in the U.S. are roughly 83 cents for every dollar earned by a man, and the gap is even wider than that average for women of color. We recognize Equal Pay Day to continue to raise awareness of the wage gap, and the need to close it.

Our 20th annual Unhappy Hour took place at Webb City Cellars and was attended by 40 people in our community – a mix of women and men, BPW members and non-members. As in prior years, BPW did receive proclamations from the City of St. Petersburg and from the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners, declaring March 14 to be Equal Pay Day.

