



**Louisiana Commission on Marriage and Family**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING**  
*May 10, 2011*  
*10am DCFS Iberville Building 9-104*

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**Heather Doss called the meeting to order at 10:06AM**

**II. ROLL CALL**

**The roll was called with the following results:**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Lisa Andry  
Neil Bernard  
Heather Doss  
Peggy Gehbauer  
Gene Mills  
Audrey Pugh  
Linda Ruffin (Paul Pastorek)  
Katherine Spaht  
Dorothy Wallis

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Gordon Atwell  
Sharon Broome  
A. G. Crowe  
Penny Dastugue  
Wayne DuBose  
David Helveston  
Frank Hoffman  
Michael Johnson  
Daniel Kirk  
Fred Lowery  
Sue Morrill  
Tony Perkins  
Fred Selby  
Tiffany Simpson  
Murphy Toerner

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Ms. Musgrove of JPAMS

**III. BUSINESS CONSIDERED**

Ms. Doss presided over the meeting and called it to order at 10:05 am. Those present received a copy the last meeting minutes. Ms. Doss said since the group was short of a quorum, the minutes could not be approved.

## VI. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Doss said we need to clearly define who is on the Commission and update the letterhead. Lisa Andry has a copy of the current members from the Commission website. It will get updated by the next meeting.

Ms. Doss asked for any reports from the subcommittees?

Gene Mills said there was not one to report from his subcommittee. Legislation session is underway. But indirectly related, he said, there were reports of an effort at the U.S. Congressional level to intercept or to receive and acknowledge a letter that came from the Navy brass that dealt with the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy and specifically how the military will handle same sex marriage within the military. Family Research Council published a report yesterday.

Mr. Mills will be publishing something on it today. Apparently there is a committee hearing and there are a number of Congressional members that are investigating the Navy brass attempting to move – unconstitutionally outside their jurisdiction, to advance a same sex marriage effort. Particularly in regions where the military may operate but the jurisdictional authority and/or the law of the land there does not afford them that opportunity. He asked if the commission wants to weigh in on this but he thought it should at least be aware by virtue of the fact that the military is present everywhere.

The Navy is at such a high profile at this moment because of acquiring the number one target on America’s most wanted list last week. Now an effort is being made to advance a same sex marriage agenda through the Navy brass. There were sixty members of the 400 plus member (congressional) body who signed on to a letter admonishing the Navy brass to come clean with whatever it is they were attempting to do. This has just developed in the last 24 hours.

Ms. Doss heard news reports about it on American Family radio while traveling.

Mr. Mills said there will be a House committee hearing tomorrow about Navy chaplains performing same sex marriage ceremonies. FYI: John Fleming is on the Armed Forces committee.

Ms. Doss asked if Mr. Mills had a newsletter. He asked for an email address and he would forward information. That was all the news Mr. Mills had to report. And the levees are holding, he said.

Old Business:

Mike Johnson who co-chairs the subcommittee with Ms. Doss is putting together, in the Caddo/Bossier area, a healthy marriage initiative. He will have a power point presentation for the next meeting. There was no other old business.

Ms. Musgrove was visiting. She is with JPAMS Student Info systems – They provide intervention and communicate with parents of truant students in danger of failing. It has been in Shreveport for 28 years and in several other parishes. Ms. Doss thanked her for joining us.

Legislation will last until June 23. Since it would be a busy time with the session, the Commission decided to bypass the month of June.

Mr. Mills said it would be good to hear from the legislators periodically during the session on matters of marriage and family that are being considered at the capitol. There are very few bills at this point in time. Katherine Spaht said there would be next session.

If the Commission wants to start anything, Ms. Spaht said we would need to start in July to talk about what the Commission wants to do for the next session.

The first Tuesday in July is on July 5<sup>th</sup>. May have the next meeting the second week on Tuesday, July 12 due to the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday.

Next legislation session is coming up the spring of 2012.

It is time for the Commission to look at something substantive to bring before the legislature. Ms. Spaht said the Commission on Marriage and Family has been in existence since 2000. Ms. Doss has been with the Commission a couple of years.

Lisa Andry spoke of a study with a federal grant partnered with the University of LA, Lafayette on a Fatherhood Initiative. There are actual interviews of non custodial parents. There is other research at the Cecil Picard Center. Ms. Andry said it was amazing to see the statistics, data and how the program affected the fathers. Ms. Andry will get a copy of the final report from ULL Picard Center and the grant research. The Fatherhood program may be something the Commission wants to look at. Also, Family Road has a fatherhood program. We need to look at how to get both parents to focus on the child.

Audrey Pugh said it can work. It did with her grandson. Ms. Pugh said she spoke with her daughter and the child's dad. When he walks in a room, be so excited to see him. He will never feel like he is not loved. No arguing in front of him. People will say he is a happy child. Whenever there was an activity at school, parents and grandparents attended. His father was there even if he had to drive all night to get there. Both parents put the child on the bus the first day of school. Make the child feel important. It can work.

Lisa Andry said it is an education process. This grant was federally funded. Ms. Andry just wrote a letter of support for Mr. Ellerbee of the Dixon Correctional Institute who does work with the prison population and reentry. They applied for a grant from two different places to help incarcerated fathers with reentry. Child Support Enforcement goes periodically to do a presentation at DCI to talk about child support. Access and Visitation has a small grant. There are four A & V attorneys for the whole state. Ms. Andry said they do their best but they can't serve the whole community.

The idea is for the commission to support. There are a lot of initiatives and grants such as the Healthy Marriage Initiative. The funding is never really met.

Ms. Doss was just on a conference call with Federal partners. She will pull up emails to find out about grant money available. There was no other business.

Ms. Doss adjourned the meeting at 11:00AM.