

# Maryland Commission for Women

## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 15, 2015

5:00 p.m.

Attman-Glazer Building 45 Calvert Street, Annapolis, MD

### Commissioners Attending:

Dr. Kathleen White, Chair

Wandra Ashley Williams

Dr. Homayara Aziz

Lee Bachu (TC)

Sylvia Butler

Pat Cornish

Lillian Cruz

Nicole Drew

Diane Fink

Lorna Forde

Michele Hughes

Velvet Johnson

Cynthia Lifson

Necole Parker

Betsy Ramirez (TC)

Anita Riley

Debbie Risper (TC)

Amanda Rodriguez

Toni Sandridge

Roseanna Vogt

Diane Williams

### Commissioners Absent:

Helen Holton

Varsha Mathur

Cara Tenenbaum

### Staff:

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director

Crystal Young, Program Administrator

*(TC) Indicates attendance via teleconference*

## I. Call to Order/Approval of Minutes.....Wandra Ashley-Williams

Commissioner Ashley-Williams called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. She explained that the Chair would be arriving late and called for approval of the minutes of the MCW meetings on October 16, November 20 and December 19, 2014. Commissioner Hughes moved approval of the October minutes. Commissioner Riley seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Commissioner Hughes moved approval of the November minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Riley and passed unanimously. Commissioner Fink moved approval of the December minutes. The motions was seconded by Commissioner Sandridge and passed unanimously.

## II. Chair's Report .....Wandra Ashley-Williams for Dr. Kathleen White

### A. Commissioner Resignation

Commissioner Miller has submitted her resignation from the MCW due to scheduling conflicts. Commissioner Tenenbaum has told the staff that she intends to resign for the same reason, but has not yet formally submitted her resignation. That will mean

that there are four positions on the MCW to fill: two vacancies will be created by these resignations, and two commissioners are serving in terms that expired in July 2014, but have not yet been filled by another appointment.

**B. Transition/Governor’s Green Bag**

At the beginning of each year, the Governor’s appointments office prepares the “Green Bag,” and requests the attendance records for all commissioners.

Commissioners whose terms expire this year will be asked to submit their resumés and a new commissioner profile form. It is possible that all commissioners will be asked for that information this year. An attendance record for all current commissioners was distributed at tonight’s meeting. Commissioners were reminded that the MCW enabling legislation provides that any commissioner who fails to attend 50% of the regularly scheduled meetings has resigned. Commissioners may submit a request to the Governor for a waiver. Commissioners were encouraged to review their own attendance records and to take any action that might be appropriate.

**III. Unfinished Business**

**A. Strategic Plan**

Dr. White has asked committee chairs to submit the work plans for their committees for this year prior to the January meeting. So far, work plans have been submitted by the Public Relations and Communications Committee, the Legislation and Public Policy Committee and the Ad Hoc Committee on Governance.

**IV. New Business**

**A. Proposed Women’s Unity Walk.....Lee Bachu**

Vice Chair Bachu reported that she is interested in organizing a walk through Annapolis, to be led by the MCW, demonstrating women’s unity. She suggested that the MCW consider sponsoring the event in the Fall of 2015 or the Spring of 2016.

**B. Proposed National Conference.....Lee Bachu**

Vice Chair Bachu would like the MCW to consider organizing a national conference, perhaps sponsoring the annual meeting of the National Association of Commissions for Women.

*Editor’s Note: At this point, MCW Chair Kathleen White arrived and conducted the remainder of the meeting.*

**V. Committee Reports**

**A. Education and Outreach**

Committee Chair Ginger Miller has resigned from the MCW so a new chair for this committee is needed. Commissioner Forde volunteered to take on that responsibility.

**1. Hall of Fame**

This is the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame. Program Administrator Crystal Young announced the names of the six honorees selected for 2015 induction. The ceremony will be March 19 at the Miller Senate Office Building, thanks to Commissioner Cruz who helped secure the sponsorship by Senator Manno for the MCW use of that facility. Arrangements for the reception

must wait until after the new Governor’s staff transition. Commissioner Cruz offered to help secure a local news broadcaster to serve as Mistress of Ceremonies. The staff was asked to draft a sponsorship solicitation packet for review by the committee. Commissioner Parker has already sent the staff some sample packets that may be helpful.

**2. Women of Tomorrow Awards Program.....Debbie Risper**

The committee co-chairs are reviewing the 2013 organizing timeline and the nominations forms and will revise both for the 2015 event. Commissioner Risper is reaching out to former Commissioner Lynn Fitrell who chaired the event last year. The committee is developing the selection committee that will review the nominations and determine the honorees and is considering inviting former honorees to assist. Dr. White asked the committee to develop a written report and timeline for this year to present at the next MCW meeting.

**B. Legislation and Public Policy.....Velvet Johnson**

The Legislation and Public Policy Committee has concentrated most of its resources so far toward the upcoming Women’s Legislative Briefing. The MCW will have a pretty robust participation in that event. Commissioners Drew, Williams and Forde are all on the planning committee, Commissioner Forde as co-chair and Commissioner Williams as a sub-committee co-chair. Commissioner Johnson is leading a seminar and several other commissioners are panelists that day. The MCW will have an exhibit table there and Dr. White will participate in the President’s Networking session. The MCW’s information has been submitted for inclusion in the Networking Directory. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather has given many hours of consulting with the planning committee leadership and the Montgomery County CFW staff. MCW has posted the announcement of the WLB with links to the registration site in two places on its website and has sent out announcements of the event to our state-wide distribution lists multiple times.

In addition, the Legislation and Public Policy Committee has developed its workplan, which was included in the packets for tonight’s meeting. The committee hopes to meet soon with the leadership of the Caucus of Maryland Women Legislators. The committee also plans to meet with the DHR Secretary’s legislative liaison and the new Governor’s legislative staff as well, when the time is appropriate.

**C. Public Relations and Communications.....Lillian Cruz**

The Committee drafted a letter of congratulations to the newly elected Governor and Lt. Governor and their wives. It was suggested that the MCW invited the Governor or his designee to a MCW meeting. Work continues on updating the MCW website. Dr. White suggested that events organized by other CFWs in the state be posted on the MCW website. Commissioner Cruz agreed to look into this possibility.

**D. Health and Wellness.....Dr. Homayara Aziz**

Dr. Aziz will send information for posting on the MCW website to Commissioner Cruz tomorrow. She edited a book on health for Asian Americans, focusing specifically on women’s issues in the book. She is also leading a symposium on urinary incontinence in March and is looking for a venue. Dr. White asked the committee to address the needs of “women on the margin” to provide education about

their health and fitness needs and access to health care coverage. Commissioner Butler noted that she volunteers to visit elderly women living in nursing homes and suggested that other commissioners might want to do something similar.

**E. Maryland Women’s Heritage Center**

Committee Chair Holton is not present. Commissioner Cornish noted that both she and MCW Chair Dr. White are members of the WHC board of directors which has a meeting scheduled for February.

**F. Ad Hoc Committee on Governance.....Diane Williams**

Committee Chair Williams thanked the members of her committee – Commissioners Butler, Drew and Vogt and the staff who assisted them. She reviewed the written proposal distributed in the packets for this evening’s meeting that outlines possible procedures for teleconferencing in MCW meetings. Dr. White commended the committee for its hard work and thanked the committee for developing a well-thought-out proposal.

Commissioner Williams reported that the Committee surveyed several other Commissions for Women and several other state boards and commissions to determine their policies and practices for teleconferencing. Some have specific policies in this regard and some do not; some permit it, and some do not. In developing the proposed draft, the committee kept in mind relevant laws including the Open Meetings Act and MCW’s enabling legislation.

Some of the most significant provisions of the proposed policy are:

- Participation by teleconference, if appropriately approved, will count as attending the MCW meeting.
- Individual commissioners may attend via teleconference no more than twice in a twelve-month period.
- No more than four commissioners may attend via teleconference at any one meeting.
- The meeting may not be presided over by teleconference.
- Authorization to participate via teleconference must be requested at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting and will be granted in the order in which the requests are received.

Commissioner Williams moved approval and incorporation of the proposed policy into the MCW bylaws. Commissioner Drew seconded the motion. Considerable discussion followed. Commissioner Risper proposed an amendment to language in the policy that prohibited a commissioner from operating a motor vehicle while teleconferencing in a MCW meeting. Commissioner Ramirez seconded the proposed amendment, which would read: “It is strongly recommended that commissioners not operate a motor vehicle while participating on the teleconference.” Commissioners Williams and Drew accepted the proposed amendment. The motion to adopt the proposed policy, as amended, passed unanimously.

A copy of the adopted policy is attached to these minutes.

**VI. Liaison Reports**

**A. Women’s Legislative Briefing.....Nicole Drew**

The Briefing is scheduled for Sunday, January 25, 12:30 – 6 p.m. Doors and registration open at 11:30. Commissioner Drew noted that in addition of the participation in the planning process, reported earlier this evening by Commissioner Johnson, there are six MCW commissioners participating as speakers on the seminar panels: Commissioner Johnson is moderating the “Advocacy” seminar; Commissioner Aziz is a speaker and Commissioner Tenenbaum is moderating the “Senior Women and Long Term Care” seminar; Commissioner Holton is speaking in the seminar on “Women in Leadership,” and Commissioners Lifson and Rodriguez are both panelists in the “Health and Safety” seminar.

Commissioner Drew noted that the MCW’s exhibit table at the Briefing can be an important source of visibility and networking and she circulated a sign-up sheet for commissioners to take shifts “staffing” the table. She said that throughout the event, commissioners would be ambassadors for the MCW and she encouraged all to attend. MCW Chair Dr. White said that this is an important women’s event in our state and she hoped that the MCW would be very well represented there.

The committee has edited the press release announcing the event and hopes to post it on the MCW website.

**B. MLAW.....Dr. White**

MLAW’s members and leadership are, of course, actively involved in planning the WLB. The MLAW agenda is typically distributed to everyone attending the Briefing. MLAW has a board meeting scheduled for the end of February and its annual legislators’ reception will be held on February 12 in Annapolis, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.

**C. Working Matters Campaign.....Wandra Ashley-Williams**

Commissioner Ashley-Williams attended the December meeting of the Working Matters Campaign for Paid Sick Leave. She distributed a fact sheet with data on the need for paid sick days and offered to forward to the staff some information packets on this issue to be distributed to the commissioners. She noted that President Obama met in Baltimore today with advocates on this issue.

**VII. Staff Report.....Judith Vaughan-Prather**

The staff is working hard to support the various committees of the MCW. The intern from Georgia has returned home but has been in touch. The high school student intern works diligently two afternoons per week. Right now she is focusing on developing a list of the MCW’s accomplishments over its 50-year history. Another volunteer, a former legislative staffer, is being recruited for possible support to the Policy and Legislation committee.

**VIII. Announcements**

Wandra Ashley-Williams announced that a “Freedom Conference” is being held in Baltimore County on January 31. It will focus on the faith community’s partnership with hospitals and other health care providers. She will send information about the conference to the staff for distribution to the commissioners.

**IX. Adjournment.....Dr. White**  
Dr. White thanked Commissioner Ashley-Williams for conducting the first part of the meeting. She thanked the commissioners for attending and for all their very hard work. She adjourned the meeting at 6:51 p.m.

***Respectfully submitted:***  
Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director  
Maryland Commission for Women  
02/19/2015

***APPROVED: February 19, 2015***

**MCW Bylaws Amendment Approved January 15, 2015**  
**Policy Enabling Teleconference Attendance for MCW Meetings**

- Scope. The policy applies to the public meetings where the full Commission is convened for the purpose of conducting the business of the Maryland Commission for Women.
- It is the expectation that every Commissioner will make every attempt to physically attend 100% of the MCW meetings.
- The Commission recognizes that, although physical presence at its meetings is essential to carrying out the business of the Commission, circumstances may necessitate attendance by telephone.
- Commissioners may attend meetings by telephone (hereinafter referred as “teleconference”) provided that the public body and the individual Commission member complies with the established procedures, and the meetings are held in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
- The Commission shall not hold its regularly-scheduled meetings entirely via teleconference. Every effort will be made to ensure that the meeting location has the equipment needed to permit participation via telephone (teleconferencing).
- The Chair, or the designated presiding officer, will not preside over the meeting via teleconference.
- No more than four (4) members of the Commission may participate by teleconference for any regularly scheduled meeting of the full Commission.
- An individual commissioner may attend via teleconference no more than twice in any 12-month period.
- The MCW staff shall provide an established teleconference number for full Commission meeting purposes only. The teleconference number is intended for the Commissioners only and not the public.
- Requests for Participation by Telephone. In order for a commissioner’s participation via teleconference to count for attendance purposes, the Commissioner must request permission to participate in the meeting via teleconference by notifying the Chair and the Executive Director via email or telephone at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting. The Commissioner is encouraged to give as much advance notice as possible.
- Teleconference Approval. Authorization to attend via teleconference shall be granted by the Executive Director in the order in which such requests are received. Commissioners requesting teleconference participation, and the MCW Chair, shall be notified of the approval as soon as possible after receipt of the request. On the date of the meeting, the staff shall provide the MCW a list of those who will attend via teleconference.
- Meeting Procedures. Any Commissioner who is permitted to participate via teleconference must comply with the following:

- Identify herself/himself upon entering the teleconference (or at an appropriate time if doing so would disturb the proceedings) and when speaking during the meeting
- Operate his or her telephone conference line on “mute” except when speaking to minimize any distracting outside noises.
- It is strongly recommended that commissioners not operate a motor vehicle while participating on the teleconference
- Give full attention during the meeting, including remaining on the phone for the duration of the meeting. If a Commissioner needs to leave the meeting early, he or she should notify the Chair in advance of the meeting.
- Voting by Teleconference. No Commissioner may vote or participate in the discussion via teleconference unless officially approved to participate in that manner. When there are Commissioners officially attending via teleconference, all decisions made by the Commission during that meeting shall be made via verbal Roll Call Voting.