

Maryland Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 15, 2015

5 p.m.

Attman-Glazer Building 45 Calvert Street, Room 158 Annapolis, MD

Commissioners Attending:

Lee Bachu, Chair
Wandra Ashley-Williams, Secretary
Tammy Bresnahan
Gloria Chang
Patricia Cornish
Velvet Johnson
Doris Ligon
Bonnie Nelson Luna
Marion Manski
Carole Jaar Sepe
A. Diane Williams, Vice Chair

Commissioners Absent:

Homayara Aziz
Lorna Forde
Helen Holton
Betsy Ramirez
Anita Riley

Staff Attending:

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director

Guest:

Semra Caglar, ACIE Intern

I. Call to Order.....Diane Williams, Vice Chair

Apparently there was a traffic emergency causing many commissioners, including the MCW Chair, to be late to the meeting. Vice Chair Diane Williams established that there was a quorum present at this time and brought the meeting to order at 5:23 p.m. She called for any changes to the minutes of the September 18 meeting. Commissioner Cornish moved approval of the minutes as submitted. Commissioner Luna seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Executive Director Judith Vaughan-Prather was asked to introduce the guest at tonight's meeting, Ms. Semra Caglar. Ms. Caglar is a professional fellow brought to the United States in a program funded by the U.S. Department of State and coordinated by the American Councils for International Education as part of the Citizens Exchange program. She is from the municipality of Van in Turkey, where she works for the local government. She will work full time in the MCW office October 9 – 30.

Commissioner Ligon has invited Ms. Caglar to the African Art Museum of Maryland on Monday, October 19, for a tour and reception 1 – 3 p.m. All the Commissioners are invited to attend.

II. Chair’s Report

A. Roundtable Discussion.....Vaughan-Prather for Lee Bachu, Chair

The MCW has requested funding from the Friends of the MCW to sponsor a roundtable discussion with the other CFWs in Maryland, to be held in conjunction with the MLAW Conference on Saturday, November 14. The plan was to cover the \$45 cost of the MLAW Conference and lunch for those representatives of CFWs who attend. The MLAW conference would provide education and training to the commissioners on legislative issues likely to be addressed in the Maryland General Assembly during the 2016 session, and will introduce them to the representatives of the major women’s advocacy organization. The roundtable discussion would follow the conference and provide an opportunity to connect the members of the various CFWs, sharing their strategies, challenges and plans, and would also provide a venue for launching the MCW “listening tour” initiative if it is approved this evening. \$1500 would cover the registration for 35 commissioners and a platinum sponsorship of the conference. However, it is uncertain whether the Friends of the MCW will provide this funding.

III. Unfinished Business

A. Listening Tour.....Commissioner Cornish

Commissioner Cornish presented a proposal for conducting a listening tour initiative across the state over the next two years. The MCW would invite the county CFWs in each of Maryland’s four regions (Western, Central, Southern and Eastern Shore) to partner in organizing public forums where the women of that geographic area would be invited to present testimony on the issues of concern to them. It was proposed that the first six months of this fiscal year would be spent developing the plan and designing the forums and data collection method, then hopefully two forums could be held in the next six months and two the following six months. Then, the MCW would assess whether more forums were necessary or whether to assimilate the data it has collected and write a report with recommendations. It is possible as the initiative moves along that other venues for forums might present opportunities for gathering more data on specific populations. Commissioner Cornish moved approval of the Listening Tours Initiative. Commissioner Ligon seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Commissioner Cornish will chair the planning committee. Commissioners Ligon, Bresnahan, Sepe and Luna will serve on the committee. A teleconference meeting of this committee will be conducted before the next MCW meeting.

At this point, Commission Chair Lee Bachu, having been delayed by the traffic problems on Route 50, joined the meeting.

B. Proposal to Combine Award Events for Hall of Fame and Women of Tomorrow

In Commissioner Forde’s absence, Executive Director Vaughan-Prather was asked to review the proposal developed by the Education and Outreach Committee, of which the Women of Tomorrow and the Hall of Fame are subcommittees, to hold the award ceremonies for both programs as a single event in March.

After discussion, Commissioner Williams moved that the two awards ceremonies be combined into one event. Commissioner Cornish seconded the motion which passed with a vote of eight in favor and one, Commissioner Johnson, opposed.

Commissioner Williams noted that in the discussions that led to the proposal to combine the two events, she had agreed to a reduction of the number of Hall of Fame honorees to no more than four. It had been noted that the average over the past 36 years has been five honorees per year and with the combined program, having so many honorees may make the event too long. However, in reviewing the data she found that since 2010, the MCW has inducted six women each year and she was very reluctant to reduce that number to four. After much discussion, Commissioner Williams moved that up to six women will be inducted each year into the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion which passed with two votes of opposition and one abstention.

Commissioner Ashley Williams reviewed the proposed changes to the Women of Tomorrow awards program:

- Two grade groups of honorees (Middle School and High School) instead of three (7 & 8, 9 & 10, 11 & 12)
- Two honorees from each group – for a total of four honorees instead of six
- All four students recognized will be designated “honorees” instead of one honoree and one honorable mention
- The award ceremony will be held in conjunction with the Hall of Fame ceremony
- Revise the nomination form to make ensure consistency with the criteria for the award and to make it less burdensome to submit a nomination

Commissioner Ashley Williams moved approval of this proposal. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sepe and passed unanimously.

Further discussion centered on the planning committees of the MCW's three “major initiatives.” Currently, all three are subcommittees of the Education and Outreach Committee.

After discussion with staff and other commissioners, Chair Bachu noted that all three projects – the Hall of Fame, the Women of Tomorrow and the Listening Tour – are the MCW's major initiatives for this year and will involve its largest investment of time and resources, as well as provide its major interface with the public. She recommended that these three subcommittees should be standing committees of the commission. After discussion, it was moved that the Listening Tour, the Hall of Fame and the Women of Tomorrow should act as independent committees as of today. Commissioner Bresnahan seconded the motion.

Commissioner Johnson moved to amend the motion to include a provision that the chairs of the Women of Tomorrow Planning Committee and the Hall of Fame Planning Committee collaborate in planning the award/induction ceremony. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion to amend, and the motion passed unanimously.

A vote was then taken on the amended motion: The Listening Tour, the Hall of Fame and the Women of Tomorrow shall act as independent committees as of today, and the chairs of the Women of Tomorrow and the Hall of Fame will collaborate in planning the award/induction ceremony. The amended motion passed unanimously.

IV. New Business

No new business was brought before the commission.

V. Committee Reports – Proposed Work Plans for 2015 – 2016

A. Education and Outreach – No report other than the previous discussion regarding its meeting earlier this month and the three programs: Hall of Fame, Women of Tomorrow and Listening Tour.

B. Legislation and Public Policy.....Commissioner Johnson
The work plan for this committee is still under development. Commissioner Johnson reviewed the work plan for last year and anticipates that a similar agenda will be developed this year with even more robust legislative activity.

C. Bylaws ReviewCommissioner Williams
The proposed work plan for this committee was distributed in the packets for tonight’s meeting. The goal of this committee for this year is to “review the current Bylaws for compliance with state law and state policy and to ensure Commission business and meetings are conducted effectively and efficiently. The steps planned towards that goal include: Carefully and thoroughly review the current Bylaws that relate to the designation of committees and committee chairs, the number required for a quorum at MCW meetings, the process of election of MCW officers, and provisions for associate and ex officio members. Commissioner Williams said that she will add to the scheduled tasks, incorporation of the change in the committee structure voted upon this evening. She moved approval of the work plan. Commissioner Ashley-Williams seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

D. Communications and Public Relations

Executive Director Vaughan-Prather noted that Commission Ramirez who chairs this committee planned to attend this evening and must be caught in the traffic problem. Commissioner Ramirez has submitted her committee’s proposed work plan which was distributed with the materials for this meeting. The committee’s goal for this year is “to modernize and increase MCW outreach across the state, improving its visibility and credibility; and making use of social media and traditional forms of communication. To achieve this goal the committee proposes to enhance and increase MCW use of social media, develop criteria for its email broadcast announcements and keep records of these, enhance branding with new MCW logo, maintain the MCW website and make full use of its capabilities, create a comprehensive directory and distribution list of active state-level women’s organizations, and post a calendar of “women’s events” on the MCW website. The work plan was approved as submitted. Commissioners Johnson and Sepe volunteered to join the committee.

E. Health and Wellness Committee..... Commissioner Manski
The Health and Wellness Committee has drafted its proposed work plan which focuses on expanding the on-line women’s health resources directory by adding a set of wellness guidelines for women in several age categories, and sending monthly email broadcasts of information about the health issues addressed in the directory. In October, the MCW has already sent three messages to its 260+ email distribution list regarding breast cancer and regarding domestic violence, and posted a link to those sections of the online resource directory on the MCW website homepage. This committee’s work plan was approved by consensus.

VI. Liaison Reports

A. Working Matters Campaign.....Commissioner Ashley-Williams
Montgomery County has passed local legislation providing paid sick leave for many employees in the private sector. Prince George’s County is considering a similar bill by has decided to table the proposal until the anticipated state legislation has worked its way through the Maryland General Assembly. There is some concern that requiring something more of companies in one jurisdiction may encourage those companies to move their operations to another jurisdiction.

B. Women Moving Forward Conference.....Commissioner Johnson
The first meeting for the 2016 WMF conference was held earlier this week. The conference is held at the Women’s Correctional Institute of Maryland, in Jessup and is attended by incarcerated women who expect to be released soon. The purpose of the conference is to help prepare them for successful reentry. It offers help with preparing to reunite with family and children, job search and more. It is scheduled for February 217, 2016. Last year, Commissioner Bachu provided a seminar there and Commissioner Johnson invited the other commissioners to participate in the 2016 event.

VII. Staff Report.....Executive Director Vaughan-Prather

A. Staff Recruitment
The closing date for applications for the Management Associate position in the MCW office was Friday, October 9. The applications are in the process of being screened for eligibility by the Human Resources Development and Training (HRDT) staff. It is hoped that a list of candidates eligible for interviews will be received soon.

B. Volunteer and Intern
The MCW office is currently benefitting from the assistance of three volunteers: Semra Caglar, our Professional Fellow for October 9 – November 6; Taylor Sullivan, a senior at Wootton High School who works two afternoon per week, and Bev Thoms, a volunteer who has been donating her services to the office two afternoons per week for over a year. She was instrumental in the development of the on-line women’s health resources directory and in several other projects of the MCW.

C. Annual Report
The FY 2015 Annual Report is completely written and has been sent to the DHR Communications Office for graphic design and publication.

VIII. Announcements

Commissioner Ashley-Williams reported on the **NAACP Annual Convention** to be held next week, honoring Major General Linda Singh. Among other awards announced will be the Youth Leadership Award to the University of Maryland College Park. Most of the honorees this year are women. Lt. Governor Boyd K. Rutherford will attend.

IX. Adjournment.....Commissioner Bachu

MCW Chair Lee Bachu thanked everyone for attending the meeting, especially after such terrible traffic issues on the way to Annapolis this evening, and for all their very hard work in between meetings. There being no further business, she adjourned the meeting at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director
Maryland Commission for Women
10/22/2015

APPROVED: November 14, 2014