

# Maryland Commission for Women

## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 19, 2017

5 – 7 p.m.

Attman-Glazer Building – Room 164 ♦ 45 Calvert Street, Annapolis, Maryland

### Commissioners Attending:

Lee Bachu, Chair  
Wandra Ashley-Williams, Secretary  
Homayara Aziz  
Tawanda Bailey  
Marianne Brackney  
Tammy Bresnahan  
Deborah Cartee  
Gloria Chang  
Lorna Forde  
Nicole Ingram  
Velvet Johnson  
Bonnie Nelson Luna  
April Nyman  
Betsy Ramirez  
Anita Riley

Carole Jaar Sepe  
Corinna Shen  
Ummu Thomas  
A. Diane Williams, Vice Chair  
Tamara England Wilson  
Marylou Yam  
Yun Jung Yang

### Commissioners Absent:

Doris Ligon  
Marion Manski

### Staff Attending:

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director  
Tammy Wise, Management Associate

## I. Call to Order..... Chair Bachu

### A. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 5 p.m. Chair Bachu welcomed everyone and wished all a very happy new year.

### B. Approval of Agenda/Minutes:

Chair Bachu called for approval of the agenda for this evening's meeting. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather asked to add to the Staff Report an item regarding Commissioner terms and the appointment/reappointment process. Commissioner Sepe moved approval of the agenda as amended. Commissioner Riley seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Chair Bachu called for approval of the minutes of the October 20, 2016 MCW meeting. Vice Chair Williams noted a change to item II A. on page 1, to keep the format consistent with the rest of the document. Commissioner Brackney moved approval of the minutes as amended. Commissioner Yam seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

**II. Chair's Report..... Chair Bachu**

**A. MLAW Legislative Briefing and Reception**

The Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) is holding its annual legislative briefing and reception on Tuesday, January 31 at the House Office Building in Annapolis. The invitation was sent out to all commissioners earlier this month. At this point, the registration is completely full and MLAW has started a waiting list. Chair Bachu asked Commissioner Riley, who is a member of the MLAW Board of Directors, to see if there is any possibility of a few more commissioners who were unable to register being able to attend. She agreed and will let the commissioners know in the next few days.

**B. MCASA Legislative Briefing and Reception**

The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) held its annual legislative briefing and reception in Annapolis on Tuesday, January 17. At the event, former Commissioner Michele Hughes was among three who were honored as “outstanding Marylanders who demonstrate exemplary leadership and compassion through their commitment to ending sexual violence in Maryland.” Commissioners Cartee and Bresnahan represented the MCW at the event.

**C. Washington County CFW Invitation**

The Washington County Commission for Women has extended an invitation to the MCW to send two representatives as its guests to its annual Circle of Sisters event during Women’s History Month on March 30 in Hagerstown. Commissioners Ingram and Bailey volunteered to represent the MCW at this event.

**D. MCW Speaking Engagements at CLUW and in Montgomery County**

MCW Chair was invited to speak to the Chesapeake Chapter of the Coalition of Labor Union Women in Lanham on December 1. They were interested in learning more about the Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour and discussed the possibility of arranging a session for women involved in labor unions and public safety careers. A representative of CLUW will be in touch with the MCW office to discuss that possibility.

At the invitation of the Montgomery County Executive, MCW Chair Bachu also spoke at an event in Silver Spring on December 19 celebrating the 2016 Summer Olympians from that county. Two of those Olympians are women who won gold medals and broke world records. Both are being inducted into the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame in March. Chair Bachu’s remarks included information on women’s history of participation in sports and especially this year’s Olympics in which women outnumbered men both as members of the U.S. team and as medal winners.

**E. Friends of the Maryland Commission for Women...Vice Chair A. Diane Williams**

The FMCW is a 501(c)(3) organization established in 1997 to support programs of the MCW or programs that support the mission of the MCW. Former MCW Chair Helen Holton is the new chair of the FMCW and former commissioner Debbi Risper continues as the treasurer. They requested a conference call on January 11 with the MCW officers and the chairs/co-chairs of the Hall of Fame and Women of Tomorrow Committees. FMCW agreed to support the Hall of Fame/Women of Tomorrow ceremony again this

year, and said they “are excited to strengthen its relationship with the MCW.” Anyone interested in serving on the board of the FMCW should contact Helen Holton directly.

After the March 16 ceremony, the MCW is invited to meet with the FMCW to discuss the relationship between the two organizations and fundraising strategies.

**III. Unfinished Business**

**A. Criteria for MCW Engagement ..... Secretary Ashley-Williams**

The committee working on this issue is still in the process of developing proposed policies and procedures for MCW sponsorship of and representation at events sponsored by other organizations. A full report with recommendations will be presented to the full Commission for review, consideration and a vote at the next meeting.

**B. MLAW..... Secretary Ashley-Williams**

Because she had to leave this evening’s meeting early, Commissioner Ashley –Williams made a brief report on the MLAW Board of Directors. Both she and MCW Chair are on the Board of Directors, along with Commissioner Riley. Members of the Board do not specifically represent organizations and are elected to the Board as individuals. MLAW’s legislative agenda will be presented at next week’s event in Annapolis which will be attended by advocates for women as well as by members of the Maryland General Assembly.

**IV. New Business**

**A. Commission Meeting Attendance Policy.....Chair Bachu**

The Executive Committee has instructed the MCW staff that there are to be no exceptions made to the MCW’s policy as outlined in the Bylaws regarding attendance at MCW meetings and participation via teleconference. Specifically:

- Each Commissioner may attend MCW meetings via teleconference no more than twice in a 12-month period.
- No more than four commissioners may participate in any one meeting via teleconference, requests for teleconferencing will be granted in the order in which they are received.
- Requests to attend via teleconference must be received by the Chair and the Executive Director at least 24 hours in advance.

**V. Committee Reports**

**A. Hall of Fame.....Commissioner Brackney**

The date and location of the induction and awards ceremony for both the Hall of Fame and the Women of Tomorrow is: Thursday, March 16 at the Miller Senate Office Building in Annapolis. Twenty-three nominations were received. The Selection Committee met on December 2 in MCW Chair’s office with both Chair Bachu and Vice Chair Williams attending, along with Executive Director Vaughan-Prather. This year, there were many truly outstanding nominations and the decision was very difficult. In the end, the Selection Committee decided that eight nominees should be inducted. The honorees and their nominators have been notified and invited to the ceremony. Commissioner Forde asked whether that decision (to induct eight instead of the traditional 4 or 6) should have been brought to the full Commission for a decision before

it was formalized. The MCW Bylaws state: “The Committee will receive nominations and establish an independent selection committee from a cross section of residents of the estate to make the final decisions on the inductees.” There is no specification in the Bylaws of the number of individuals to be inducted. However, Commissioner Brackney apologized for not consulting with the full commission on this change from tradition and asked if any commissioners disagreed with the decision of the Selection Committee. There being none, she thanked the Commission for its support and concluded her report by encouraging all commissioners to attend the wonderful ceremony being planned.

**B. Women of Tomorrow.....Commissioners Forde and Sepe**

Seventy-three nominations for the Women of Tomorrow were received – 11 middle school students and 62 high school students from across the state, stemming from 16 of Maryland’s 23 counties and the city of Baltimore, including Maryland’s eastern shore and the far western panhandle of the state. The Selection Committee met today to make the determinations of who among the many outstanding young women will receive the award. Although the Call for Nominations said that there will be two middle school students and two high school students selected, the Selection Committee chose two middle school and three high school students because there was a tie in the scoring. Commissioner Forde moved that the Women of Tomorrow awards be given to these five students. Commissioner Brackney seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

**C. Listening Tour.....Commissioners Ingram and Yang**

A schedule for the Listening Tour sessions planned for the spring was included in the packets for tonight’s meeting and is posted on the MCW website. Reports of all sessions held so far are also posted on the website. On November 17, the Listening Tour traveled to Calvert County at the College of Southern Maryland Prince Frederick Campus, and hosted by the Calvert County Commission for Women. An enthusiastic and well-informed crowd of more than 30 people gathered to “talk to us” about the concerns of women and girls in their community. MCW Vice Chair A. Diane Williams, Commissioners Bresnahan, Cartee, Shen, and Thomas all attended along with committee chair Yang, and the MCW staff. The Voices of Maryland Women online survey in several languages is posted on the MCW website and Facebook page. So far, a total of more than 450 surveys have been completed online, with 427 in English, four in Spanish, 17 in Chinese, and three in Korean plus around 40 in hard copy. Commissioners are encouraged to share the link to the on-line survey with their networks. Four more sessions of the Listening Tour are already scheduled for the spring, after the Hall of Fame and Women of Tomorrow ceremony has taken place. Commissioner Brackney asked when the entire project will be complete. Commissioner Yang responded that the project was planned as a two-year initiative, and the first session of the tour was held in July 2016. Since then, eight sessions have been held with a total audience of more than 270 individuals. (The scheduling of sessions was paused from December to April to avoid conflicting with the Hall of Fame/Women of Tomorrow project.) It is hoped that the remainder of the hearings to be scheduled will be held by December of 2017 and that the report of the findings and recommendations can be ready by July of that 2018.

**D. Education and Outreach.....Commissioner Bailey**

Commissioners Thomas and Bailey attended the Prince George’s County CFW’s WE3 Conference on December 10. It was a well attended and well-organized event.

So far this program year, the MCW has sent out more than 30 Issue Alerts on a variety of topics to our distribution lists of more than 500 people and organizations across the state. In addition, Commissioner Bailey attended the first planning meeting for the Women Moving Forward (WMF) Conference at the Maryland Correctional Institute for Women (MCIW) in Jessup. The planning committee has identified the closing keynote speaker and is in the process of developing the seminars and opening program. Commission Chair Bachu, Commissioner Ingram and the MCW staff volunteered to help staff the WMF conference on April 8 at the MCIW. A team of college students from Indiana State University have won a grant to fund a study of the efficacy of the WMF conference – to determine how helpful it is to women transitioning from the prison back into their communities. Chair Bachu has conducted a seminar on financial literacy at the WMF conference before and offered to do so again this year. Commissioner Bailey will also offer the possibility of a session of the Listening Tour to be held at the MCIW, either as part of this conference or at another time.

**E. Communications and Public Relations...Chair Bachu for Commissioner Ramirez**  
Chair Bachu commended Commissioner Ramirez for her very hard work on the MCW Facebook page and noted that Commissioner Ramirez is working with the MCW staff to give them access to the page and to develop a new page for the MCW. An old page apparently created by former interns or commissioners now long gone is complicating the current page that had to be named “Mary Land” because the old page was still online. She recommends that the staff, in consultation with her, work to have the two pages currently associated with the MCW taken down, and create an entirely new page. Commissioner Johnson offered to reach out to Commissioner Ramirez who chairs this committee and offer her help.

**F. Legislation and Public Policy..... Commissioner Bresnahan**  
The 2017 Women’s Legislative Briefing, coordinated by the Montgomery County CFW, is next Sunday, January 29 at the Universities at Shady Grove in Rockville. Historically, a crowd of more than 600 attends this event, co-sponsored by many of the women’s advocacy organizations across the state, including the MCW. Several of our commissioners, including Commissioners Bresnahan, Bailey, Yam and Yang are serving as panelists in the seminars offered at the conference. MCW will have an exhibit table there and commissioners are encouraged to help staff the table.

The MCW has signed onto the MLAW Legislative Agenda and is sending representatives to both the MLAW and MCASA briefings this month. Commissioner Bresnahan will set up a tracking system for following the bills on the MLAW agenda. The Maryland General Assembly is in session now and things tend to move very quickly.

**G. Health and Wellness.....Commissioner Yam**  
One of the committee’s goals for this year is to develop a set of health issue alerts that can be sent out on a monthly basis correlating with the health issues identified in the MCW’s online Women’s Health Resource Directory. So far this year, the committee has sent out six of those alerts and has more in development. The committee has also updated that directory adding a section on Human Trafficking, among other new topics. Commissioner Forde suggested sending health alerts via Facebook as well as via email as some commissioners will find this an easier way to share them with their networks.

**H. Bylaws Review .....Commissioner Cartee for Manski**  
This committee is diligently working on its review of the MCW Bylaws, article by article and will be ready before the annual planning meeting in June with a set of recommendations.

**VI. Liaison Reports**

**A. Maryland Women’s Heritage Center.....Chair Bachu**  
The Center is planning an event on March 5 to celebrate the expansion of its exhibit of the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame.

**B. 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment Commemoration Commission.....Vice Chair Williams**  
The charge of this commission is to develop strategies for commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment to the U.S. Constitution granting women the right to vote (in 1920). Vacancies on this commission have been filled with appointments by the Governor, and its enabling legislation also requires the Governor to designate the chair from among the members. Activities of the commission are on hold until the Governor makes that designation.

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

**A. Task Force to Study Family and Medical Leave Insurance**  
The task force has now met twice. At its most recent meeting it received briefings from researchers at the National Partnership for Women and Families and the Women’s Research and Education Institute. The reports covered various models of providing paid family and medical leave in use in several states around the nation. The enabling legislation requires the task force, which is co-chaired by Senator Brian Feldman and Delegate Ariana Kelly, to make a report with recommendations by December 2017.

**B. Annual Report**  
The report is published and posted on the MCW website. Copies were distributed to commissioners at this evening’s meeting.

**C. Commissioner Terms, Appointment and Reappointment Process**  
The 25 positions on the MCW are each a four-year term and the dates of the terms are staggered so that each year at the end of June, approximately one-fourth of the commissioners are in expiring terms. Commissioners may serve up to two full terms. When vacancies occur mid-term, Commissioners may be appointed to fill those vacant terms for the time remaining in those terms. So, it is the dates of the terms itself, not the date of a commissioner’s appointment that determines when the term expires. Several of the current commissioners were appointed this past year to partial terms. On June 30, 2017, seven terms on the MCW will expire. Commissioners in those terms should request reappointment immediately if they are willing to continue to serve and if they are eligible for reappointment. Commissioners who have served two full terms are not eligible for reappointment but may continue to serve until a new commissioner has been appointed to fill their terms/positions on the Commission. Commissioners whose terms are expiring this year are: Wandra Ashley-Williams (completing her second full term), Nicole Ingram, Velvet Johnson, Anita Riley (completing her second full term), Diane Williams (completing her second full term), and Marylou Yam. One other expiring term is currently vacant. The staff will write to commissioners in these terms to provide the link to the online application site.

**VIII. Adjournment.....Lee Bachu, Chair**  
MCW Chair Bachu called for any announcements. None were put forward. She thanked everyone for attending this evening's meeting and for all their hard work. There being no further business, she adjourned the meeting at 6:42 p.m.

***Respectfully submitted:***

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director  
Maryland Commission for Women  
February 10, 2017

**APPROVED: February 16, 2017**