

Maryland Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 20, 2023
5 p.m.

45 Calvert Street Annapolis, Maryland

Commissioners Attending:

Tawanda A. Bailey, Chair
Beth Anne Dorman
Essita Duncan - Virtual
Judith Emmel
Kristi Halford - Virtual
Eugenia B. Henry - Virtual
Patricia McHugh Lambert - Virtual
Christine Lee
Brenda J. McChriston
Maxine Griffin Somerville, 1st Vice Chair
Evelyne S. Steward - Virtual
Lenita Walker
Monica Watkins

Tamara E. Wilson
Yun Jung Yang

Commissioners Absent:

Andrea Bottner
Tammy Bresnahan
Deborah Cartee
Kathryn M. Fiddler
Kaprece James
Lauren M. Lambert
Roberta Pardo, 2nd Vice Chair
Jenny Peña Dias
Carole Jaar Sepe

Staff Attending:

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

Guests:

Jeremy Browning, Administrative Director, Maryland Commission on LGBTQ Affairs
Angelique Salizan, Special Assistant to the DHS Secretary

I. Call to Order.....Chair Bailey

A quorum having been established; the meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m.

Commissioner Walker read a quote from Oprah Winfrey, as inspiration for tonight's meeting:

"Use your life to serve the world, and you will find that it also serves you."

Chair Bailey suspended the remaining Opening Business items until after the guest speaker's presentation.

**II. Guest Speaker.....Jeremy Browning, Administrative Director
Maryland Commission for LGBTQ Affairs**

This is a new commission, established in 2021 and held its first meeting in January 2022. Located in the Governor’s Office of Community Initiatives, it currently has 15 commissioners. Mr. Browning started work there in July 2022.

The Commission’s duties include:

- Assess challenges facing the LGBTQ community
- Collect data across state agencies on:
 - Implementation of LGBTQ-inclusive policies
 - Complaints alleging discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity
- Study and establish best practices for inclusion of LGBTQ individuals and communities
- Offer testimony on issues concerning LGBTQ persons before legislative and administrative bodies
- Act as a clearinghouse for activities to avoid duplication of efforts
- Create surveys and appoint advisory committees

The Commission’s priorities include:

- Strategic Planning
- Needs Survey
- Legislative Advocacy
- Work with the Department of Budget and Management on inclusivity in hiring policies
- Develop a resource calendar, especially as June is Pride Month and is fast-approaching

The Commission’s legislative priorities for this year include

- Trans Health Equity Act (passed in the 2023 Maryland General Assembly)
- Modifications to the Commission’s enabling legislation so that it will have 21 members effective October 1, 2023 and add IQ+ to its name.
- Transgender Respect, Agency and Dignity Act – failed this year; would have added protections for incarcerated trans people
- Birth Certificate Modernization Act – also failed but will be reintroduced next year.

The Commission published its 2022 Annual Report that includes data on the challenges faced by LGBTQ persons in almost every aspect of life. The report s available online.

After much discussion, Commission Chair Bailey thanked Mr. Browning for his very informative and compelling presentation. She commended his Commission on the extraordinary amount of work it has accomplished in just its first year and added that there are many areas of mutual concern to both the Commission for Women and the Commission on LGBTQ Affairs. Mr. Browning closed by noting, “We need allies to stand up in rooms where trans people might not be comfortable standing up,” and said that he looks forward to opportunities for our two commissions to work together.

I. (Continued) Opening

A. Approval of Agenda

Chair Bailey welcomed the commissioners in attendance. She added an item (Executive Committee Membership) to the agenda and called for approval of the amended agenda for tonight's meeting. Commissioner Wilson moved approval of the agenda as amended. Commissioner Walker seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

B. Approval of Minutes

Chair Bailey called for approval of the minutes of the February 16, 2023 Commission meeting. Commissioners Dorman, McChriston and Walker noted that their names were omitted from the list of Commissioners attending the 2023 Women's Legislative Briefing (Section 5, B, 3). The minutes will be amended to add their names. Commissioner Wilson moved approval of the minutes with those changes. Commissioner Watkins seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

With that done, Chair Bailey resumed the meeting order of business.

III. Executive Committee Report

A. New Commissioner Appointments

The Commission had one vacant position and five Commissioners whose current terms will be complete June 30 of this year. The Governor has appointed six new commissioners to fill those positions. All six individuals have been confirmed by the Senate during the 2023 MGA session so five will begin their terms on the Commission effective July 1. The appointment of the individual filling the vacant position will become effective as soon as she is officially sworn in by a clerk of the court.

B. CFW Roundtable

Each year, the MCW convenes a meeting of the county/city Commissions for Women (CFWs) across the state to discuss their initiatives, strategies and challenges. This year, Maryland's First Lady Dawn Moore will bring greetings to the meeting which will be scheduled for June 1 at 5 p.m. and will be held virtually so that commissioners from all across the state can participate. The Commission has invited the Lt. Governor to present remarks as well, and it waiting to hear from her staff whether that date will be available on her very busy calendar.

C. Meeting with DHS Secretary López

The MCW officers are scheduled to present a briefing on the Commission's work next Wednesday, April 26.

D. Women's Law Center of Maryland's 50th Anniversary Event

The Women's Law Center is one of the leading and most effective advocates for women in the state and has long been a good friend to the MCW. It hold its 50th Anniversary celebration on May 3. As it did last year, the MCW contributed a sponsorship to support the Law Center.

E. Maryland Women Legislators Caucus

The Caucus has been very supportive of the Commission's work, especially this past year. Each year, after the MGA closes, the Caucus leadership changes. A letter of thanks has been sent to out-going president Lesley Lopez. The new Caucus President will be Del. Edith Patterson of Charles County. The MCW looks forward to continuing a productive relationship with the Caucus under her leadership.

F. Maryland National Guard Leadership

This March, the Commission inducted Brigadier General Janeen Birckhead into the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame. Since then, Governor Moore has promoted her to Adjutant General, meaning that she will be the second woman ever to head the Maryland National Guard.

G. Maryland's Top 100 Women

Each year, The Daily Record publishes its list of Maryland's Top 100 Women based on nominations it receives. Individuals may be selected only every two years, and only three times. Those selected for a third and final time are included in The Dailey Record's Top 100 Women Circle of Excellence. This year, Commissioner McChriston has been selected for the Top 100 Women list and Executive Director Vaughan-Prather is being included in the Circle of Excellence. The MCW has purchased a sponsorship of the event on May 8. Commissioners Bailey, Somerville, P. Lambert, Yang, and Halford plan to attend as guests of the MCW, along with Special Assistant Salazan, MCW Management Specialist Wise and Maryland Women's Law Center Director Michelle Siri.

H. MCW Planning Meeting

Because there will be so many new commissioners effective July 1, the committee membership will have to change significantly, and it makes sense to have the new commissioners participate in planning the agenda for the coming year. Chair Bailey proposed holding the Commission's planning meeting in July, instead of waiting to September to begin work. The consensus of the Commission was to agree with that proposal. Staff will develop a survey to determine a date that works best once we have contact information for the new commissioners. Commissioner P. Lambert offered meeting space in Towson if that would be acceptable.

I. MCW Executive Committee Membership

Commissioner Pardo has been serving as the MCW's Second Vice Chair since she was elected last June. However, she is dealing with health challenges that have made it difficult for her to continue so she has relinquished that position. MCW Bylaws provide that when the position of Second Vice Chair becomes vacant, if there is more than 90 days before the next scheduled election (which is June of 2024) the election shall take place "at that meeting." Commissioner Yang nominated Commissioner Dorman for the position of MCW Second Vice Chair. The nomination was seconded by Commissioner Duncan and Commissioner Dorman was elected unanimously. Commission Chair Bailey noted that much thanks is due to Commissioner Pardo for all her hard work and creative contributions during her term.

IV. Unfinished Business

No unfinished business was brought before the Commission.

V. New Business

No new business was brought before the Commission.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Advocacy and Collaboration Taskforce (ACT).....Wilson

The MCW sent letters to the seven counties that still have not established a CFW:

- Caroline County
- Carroll County (the only county west of the Chesapeake Bay without a CFW)
- Dorchester County
- Kent County
- Queen Anne's County
- Somerset County
- Talbot County

Commissioner Pat Lambert lives in Carroll County, and Commissioner Beth Anne Dorman lives in Talbot County. They were copied with the letters to those Counties. Staff for the Talbot County Council asked us to send the list of counties that do and do not have a CFW, and the mission of each county CFW. That multi-page document was developed, based on our records, and sent to her. Commissioner Dorman already has a meeting scheduled with the Council staff in Talbot County and will be sure the issue of establishing a CFW there is discussed.

MCW also sent a letter of congratulations to the Baltimore City Government for re-activating (again) its CFW, whose new members were sworn in at a ceremony on March 29.

In addition, the MCW members participated in seven outreach activities, mostly briefings about the Commission's work and especially the women and the pandemic report, during March, Women's History Month. These included:

3/1/23 Community College of Baltimore County, American Association of Women in Community Colleges – MCW Briefing - Bailey and Vaughan-Prather

3/11/23 Maryland Association of Student Councils, Charles County– MCW Briefing - Somerville

3/20/23 Maryland Commission on Civil Rights – MCW Briefing – Bailey

3/22/23 Maryland Women's Bar Association – Yang

3/22/23 AAUW Harford County – MCW and SWiM Briefing - Halford

3/23/23 Maryland Nonprofits Association – MCW Briefing – Bailey and Vaughan-Prather

3/28/23 Women Empowering Women, Charles County – MCW Briefing - Somerville

B. Policy and Legislation (PAL) Committee..... Halford

1. MCW 2023 Legislative Platform

The Commission had a very successful year in Annapolis during the Maryland General Assembly. Five of the eight bills supported by the MCW passed!

HB 0004/SB 0129 - Love Is No Defense – passed

HB 0808/SB 0859 - Reproductive Health Protection Act – passed

HB 0705/SB 0798 - Declaration of Rights - Right to Reproductive Liberty – passed

HB 0297/SB 0292 - Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Youth – passed

HB 495/SB 350 - Child Care - Early Childhood Development- Scholarship Program – passed

The other three bills supported by the MCW failed this year. The PAL Committee should consider adding these bills to its 2024 Legislative Agenda:

HB 0523/SB 0759 - Prevention of Forced Infant Separation Act – never left committee

HB 0087/SB 0052 - Access to Period Products – never left committee

HB 1053/SB 0203 - Human Trafficking – Transportation – never left committee

2. MLAW.....Dorman

All the proposed legislation on the MLAW agenda actually passed this year! MLAW very much appreciates the Commission’s support for its work.

C. ARC Committee

1. Hall of Fame.....Walker

The March 16 ceremony at Government House, with the Governor, the First Lady and the Lt. Governor all in attendance was wonderful. The five women inducted into the Hall of Fame were especially honored by the participation of Maryland’s top officials and to be in such a beautiful and historic building, with two having traveled from far out of state (Florida and Louisiana) just to be there.

2. Young Women Leaders Awards.....Lee

The five recipients of the MYWLA award were also very honored by the reception at Government House. It was clear that their parents were thrilled and very proud to watch their daughters stand beside the Governor, First Lady and Lt. Governor. Commissioner Lee is still working on the development of a resource page for the student honorees and asked Commissioners to send her any ideas for resources that might be included.

The ARC Committee has scheduled a virtual wrap-up meeting for May 22 at 5:30.

Chair Bailey thanked the members of the ARC Committee for all their work in making this such a successful event, especially with such short notice to prepare the reception. She thanked Commissioners Steward and Yang for the flowers they brought for the speakers and honorees, and Commissioner Lambert, Walker and Lee for their leadership of this year’s program, from beginning to end. She especially thanked the Foundation for the Commission for Women for its generous support for this event and the scholastic awards for the Young Women Leaders, which is due to the generosity of the Pai Ping Foundation and Commissioner Henry.

VII. Liaison Reports

A. The Foundation for the Maryland Commission for Women (TFMCW)..... Henry

No report.

B. Maryland Women’s Heritage Center.....Bailey

No report.

C. Women Moving Forward Conference.....McChriston

Commissioner McChriston will reach out to see if a date has been selected for the next conference.

D. Maternal Mortality Review Stakeholders Group.....Peña Dias

No report.

E. UMD Safe Center.....Somerville
No report

F. Maryland Semiquincentennial (MD 250) Commission.....Emmel
Is still in the transition stage working toward new leadership.

G. National Association of Commissions for Women.....Somerville/Vaughan-Prather
Plans to hold the annual national conference in Massachusetts have changed, and the organization will not hold a conference this year instead focusing on rebuilding its membership and its strategic plans.

VIII. Staff ReportVaughan-Prather

A. Health and Issue Alerts

During the month of April, two issues alerts were sent to the Commission’s distribution lists reaching a combined audience of more than 1400 readers: Sexual Harassment Awareness and Stress/Self-Care for Women.

B. Regional Meetings of CFWs

Given that there will be no NACW conference this year, staff of the Fairfax County CFW, Montgomery County and the MCW talked briefly about the possibility of organizing a regional conference of CFWs in our eight-state region (Maryland, Delaware, D.C., Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Kentucky and Ohio). Chair Bailey suggested that this topic be considered at the MCW’s annual planning meeting in July.

IX. Announcements

- A.** Commission First Vice Chair Somerville announced that the Charles County CFW – Top Ladies of Distinction are hosting a May 7 event in support of National Minority Health Month with a “Tea with a Purpose.”
- B.** Commissioner Walker reminded the Commissioners that BPW/MD (Business and Professional Women of Maryland) is holding its annual statewide conference on May 6. It will be a virtual event and Commissioner Dorman is the keynote speaker. All are welcome.
- C.** Executive Committee Meeting: Thursday, May 11, 2023 at 4:30 p.m.
- D. May MCW Meeting: Thursday, May 18, 2023 at 5 p.m. (Virtual)**

X. Adjournment

No further business being brought before the Commission, Chair Bailey thanked the Commissioners for all their work and wished them a very good weekend. The meeting was adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted: May 12, 2023

By: Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director

Approved: May 18, 2023