

Maryland Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 21, 2015
5:00p.m.

Attman-Glazer Building 45 Calvert Street, Annapolis, MD

Commissioners Attending:

Dr. Kathleen White, Chair
Lee Bachu, Vice Chair
Lillian Cruz (TC)
Pat Cornish
Lorna Forde
Velvet Johnson (TC)
Roseanna Vogt
Diane Williams

Commissioners Absent:

Wandra Ashley-Williams, Secretary
Dr. Homayara Aziz
Helen Holton
Betsy Ramirez
Anita Riley
Debbie Risper

Staff Attending:

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director

(TC) Attendance via teleconference

I. Call to Order/Approval of Minutes.....Dr. Kathleen White, Chair
Dr. White called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m. She asked the Commissioners present to permit discussion of agenda items out of order until others arrived.

II. New Business

A. Women's Law Center of Maryland – Judicial Appointments.....Velvet Johnson

Commissioner Johnson reported that the Women's Law Center of Maryland had recently written the Governor objecting to the process the Baltimore County Bar Association used to establish a judicial nominations commission that consisted of all white men who then recommended an all white male slate of candidates for appointments to the bench. The Governor responded positively by sending the slate back to the Bar and asking for a more inclusive process. Commissioner Johnson recommends that the MCW monitor this issue and stay in touch with the Women's Law Center of Maryland and MLAW.

B. Nail Technician Workplace Concerns.....Velvet Johnson
Commissioner Johnson reported on two articles recently published in the New York Times regarding the serious health risks and pay exploitation experienced by workers in nail salons and spas. Given that most of the consumers and employees of these establishments are women, this is an area of concern to the Commission. The articles report that regulation of the salons is very lax – at least in New York where the investigation leading to the articles was conducted. There are close to 1000 nail salons in this state, and most likely thousands of workers involved. She noted that research on this issue would be needed to know whether similar conditions exist here in Maryland.

III. Committee Reports

A. Legislation and Public Policy.....Velvet Johnson
Commissioner Johnson reported that the Commission had a very active legislative program this year, and she thanked her committee members for all their hard work. Two of the three legislative initiatives supported by the MCW passed.

HB 225/SB 269 Domestic Violence – Additional Relief

The bill expands the relief available in a final protective order by authorizing a judge to order “any other relief that a judge determines is necessary to protect a person eligible for relief from abuse.”

Outcome: PASSED the House and Senate.

HB 606/SB 477 Domestic Violence – Persons Eligible for Relief

This bill expands the “persons eligible for relief” in the protective order statute to include “an individual who has had a sexual relationship with the respondent within 1 year before filing of the petition.”

Outcome: PASSED the House and Senate.

HB 503/SB 78 Rape Survivor Family Protection Act (Akin’s Law)

This bill allowed rape victims who become pregnant as a result of the rape to ask the family law court to end the parental rights of the rapist.

Outcome: FAILED. No action in the House Judiciary Committee or the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee.

Approval of Minutes: At this point, the Commission achieved a quorum, and Dr. White called for approval of the minutes of the April 9 MCW meeting. Commissioner Forde moved approval and Commissioner Cornish seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

IV. Chair's Report.....Dr. Kathleen White

A. It's Time 2015 Conference

This conference was scheduled for May 1 – 3 at the Baltimore Convention Center, and the MCW had signed on for a robust participation as a community engagement partner. The Commission planned an exhibit table and Commissioner Ashley-Williams was coordinating a team that included Commissioners Riley and Vogt to staff the exhibit all weekend. Dr. White and Executive Director Judith Vaughan-Prather planned to attend. However, due to the civil unrest that occurred in Baltimore City, where the conference was scheduled, the event was cancelled by the organizers. It is hoped that the event may be rescheduled in Baltimore in the future.

B. NACW Conference

Last year the MCW voted to use unexpended funds to send its Chair and Executive Director to the annual NACW Conference. Dr. White noted that if the funds are available, they may be used for this purpose again this year. The 2015 NACW conference is July 19 – 23 in Indianapolis. She asked the Executive Director to send all the commissioners a copy of the NACW budget expenditures so far this year.

C. MSA Intern

For the past decade, the MCW has paid the Maryland State Archives over \$4000 annually for a summer intern at the Archives who develops extensive biographies for the women in the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame, to supplement the biographies submitted by the MCW. Dr. White talked to the director of the MSA and advised that the MCW will support the intern this year, but will re-evaluate whether it can continue that support in future years. That sum represents about 20% of the MCW's operating budget.

D. MLAW Board of Directors Update

The MLAW Board has been reviewing its board member responsibilities and revised the Board of Directors application to request more relevant and in depth information. The call for board members nominations is available at:

<http://mdlegagendaforwomen.org/2015/05/18/call-for-nominations-for-the-2015-16-board-of-directors/>

Dr. White reviewed the status of the bills on the MLAW agenda. In addition to those already reported by Commissioner Johnson, MLAW acted on:

HB 9/SB 105 Maryland Licensure of Direct-Entry Midwives Act (originally the Maryland Home Birth Safety Act)

This bill established a licensing and regulatory system for the practice of direct-entry midwifery under the State Board of Nursing.

Outcome: PASSED the House and Senate.

HB 564 State Personnel – Limits on Use of Leave for Birth, Adoption, Foster Placement, or Care of Child

This bill enables state employees who are spouses to each use their accrued sick leave and family leave benefits for the birth or adoption of their child and prohibits the limit on combined family leave.

Outcome: PASSED the House and Senate.

HB 385/SB 40 Labor and Employment – Maryland Healthy Working Families Act

This bill required employers to allow employees a certain number of annual paid sick and safe days, including earning one hour of paid sick leave for every 30 hours worked, up to a maximum of seven days per year. The safe time component required employers to allow survivors of domestic abuse or sexual assault to use paid sick leave to care for their health after these incidents or seek legal protections or new housing.

Outcome: No action in the Senate Finance Committee or the House Economic Matters Committee.

HB 985 Labor and Employment – Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program – Establishment

This bill would have established a Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program in Maryland and included conducting a feasibility study to evaluate potential economic impact, best program design and implementation.

Outcome: Unfavorable report in the House Economic Matters Committee; withdrawn.

The MLAW Final Report for 2015 is available at:

<http://mdlegagendaforwomen.org/2015/04/29/2015-legislation-final-report/>

V. Unfinished Business

A. Annual Report

The MCW Executive Director has begun drafting committee reports for the Annual Report and will share the drafts with the committee chairs for their input.

IV. Committee Reports Continued:

B. Public Relations and Communications Committee (PR&CC).....Lillian Cruz

The PR&CC worked hard with the Health and Wellness Committee to create a directory of online women’s health resources that has now been posted on the MCW website. Commissioner Cruz commended Commissioner Aziz for her inspiration and management of this project. It is a new and valuable resource for the women of our state.

The PR&CC is now developing a brochure describing the work of the MCW that may be distributed at events. A draft of the content for the brochure was circulated among the commissioners at tonight’s meeting. The Committee was asked to review the content and make any revisions it deems necessary based on the discussion and submit the new draft at the next MCW meeting for a vote.

C. Women of Tomorrow Committee.....Lorna Forde

The invitation/flier for the program has been developed and distributed electronically. The selection committee put in many hours reviewing and evaluating the 24 nominations received and has made its decision on the six students to be honored.

Major General Linda Singh who was recently appointed by the Governor as Adjutant General for the Maryland National Guard and who was recently inducted into the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame has accepted the invitation to serve as keynote speaker.

Commissioner Pat Cornish has secured a number of very nice donations, including bracelets, pens, key rings, flash drives, leather luggage tags, earrings and more for the gift bags for the honorees, from a diverse group of businesses in the state.

Committee Co-Chair Debbie Risper submitted an online request for funding on behalf of the Friends of the MCW to PNC Bank which responded with a very generous \$1000 sponsorship. The total cost of the event is close to \$5000. Commissioner Williams said that her business, Christol Salon & Spa and Salon Christol will donate a sponsorship of \$300. Commissioner Pat Cornish said that her business, PEC Financial Consulting will also sponsor the event. Dr. White thanked the committee for all its very hard work and encouraged commissioners to continue to seek sponsors for the event.

D. Bylaws Review Committee.....Diane Williams

Commissioner Williams asked for approval of the revised bylaws with the changes requested by the MCW, including the removal of language repeating the MCW’s enabling legislation and adding the approved policy for teleconferencing. The revised bylaws were distributed to the commissioners a week before tonight’s meeting. Since there was no longer a quorum at the meeting and as there has not been 30 days since the revisions were received in writing by the commissioners as required in the bylaws, a special meeting will be called on June 25 immediately before the Women of Tomorrow event to vote on the proposed new bylaws. The vote will be on just the two changes described above. Continued review of the bylaws for additional modification will be the work of next year’s MCW. Commissioner Williams thanked her committee members for all their hard work.

E. Proposed Symposium.....Diane Williams

Dr. White has confirmed a time and date for the symposium at the UMBC Ballroom for October 4, for 1 – 4 p.m., at a cost of \$1800 that includes the room and three classrooms, and set up. Catering is available on-site. For example, a “late morning break” refreshment service is \$7.50 per person.

The Executive Director briefed the MCW on the May 20 conference she attended sponsored by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR) presenting its latest reports on *The Status of Women in the States*, with state-by-state data focusing primarily on economic issues. Seven major topics are addressed by the report:

- Work and Family
- Poverty and Opportunity
- Employment and Earnings
- Health and Well-Being
- Violence and Safety
- Reproductive Rights
- Political Participation

The IWPR is interested in conducting similar briefings regionally around the country. The MCW Executive Director was able to talk to the Chair of the IWPR Board of Directors about the possibility of the MCW forming its Symposium around the issues covered in this report with speakers from IWPR.

After further discussion, the MCW adopted the theme of “*Building Bridges to Empower Women: The Difference is You*” for the conference.

Commissioner Williams noted that the help of all the current commissioners will be needed to organize this conference, and she circulated a list of the subcommittees necessary to plan the event, asking those commissioners present to commit to leading one of the major tasks. Commissioner Vogt offered to call each member of the MCW before May 29 to secure their commitments.

At the request of Commissioner Forde, Dr. White will explore whether the UMBC facility could be available on October 17 or 18. She encouraged the committee to develop its budget and its plan for organizing the event.

The Symposium Planning Committee will have a conference call on June 2 at 7 p.m., to include Commissioners Williams, Bachu, Cornish, Forde, Risper, and Dr. White.

VI. Staff Report.....Vaughan-Prather

A. Staff Recruitment

More than 200 applications for the Program Assistant position have been received. The Human Resources and Employee Development Office is reviewing the applications and will send a list of candidates eligible for interview when that task is complete.

B. Volunteer and Intern

Since September, the MCW office has benefitted from the assistance of two volunteers. Bev Thoms has worked two days per week for most of this time on such efforts as the development of the online women’s health resources directory and other initiatives. High school student Lesley Calderon has worked two afternoons per week as well, helping with the preparation for MCW meetings, helping staff the MCW at the Women’s Legislative Briefing and the Women’s Hall of Fame. She has contributed more than 200 hours to the MCW’s work, and has agreed to help staff the upcoming Women of Tomorrow awards ceremony, even though her internship will be complete next week. Ms. Calderon is graduating on May 27 and will go off to University in the fall. At Dr. White’s suggestion, it was decided that Ms. Calderon be presented a certificate of appreciation and a gift from the MCW. Commissioners in attendance made personal donations towards the gift.

VI. Adjournment.....Dr. White
Dr. White thanked the commissioners for attending and for all their very hard work.
Commissioner Cornish moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m. Commissioner Forde
seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted:
Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director
Maryland Commission for Women
05/27/2015

APPROVED *June 25, 2015* _____