

Maryland Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 6, 2015
5:30 p.m.

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

Commissioners Attending:

Lee Bachu, Acting Chair
Wandra Ashley-Williams, Secretary
Homayara Aziz
Gloria Chang
Lillian Cruz (TC)
Lorna Forde (TC)
Doris Ligon
Bonnie Nelson Luna
Marion Manski
Betsy Ramirez
Anita Riley
Diane Williams

Commissioners Absent:

Tammy Bresnahan
Patricia Cornish
Helen Holton
Velvet Johnson
Carole Jaar Sepe

Staff Attending:

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director

Guest:

Samantha Blizzard, Special Assistant (TC)
to DHR Secretary Sam Malhotra

- I. Call to Order/Approval of Minutes.....Lee Bachu, Acting Chair**
Acting Chair Lee Bachu called the meeting to order at 6:43 p.m., and welcomed everyone in attendance to this specially scheduled meeting. The Governor has appointed six new commissioners, and she and Executive Director Vaughan-Prather just met with them for an orientation to the MCW.
- II. Greetings from DHR.....Samantha Blizzard, Special Assistant to the Secretary**
DHR Secretary Sam Malhotra sent greetings to the Commission through his Special Assistant who participated in tonight's meeting via teleconference, and asked her to welcome the new commissioners. He considers the work of the MCW very important and thanked all the commissioners for their efforts. Ms. Blizzard encouraged the Commission to work through its Executive Director who is responsible for bringing issues to her as necessary. Ms. Blizzard will take issues that need his attention to the Secretary. She said that she understands that the Commission is active legislatively and that it is necessary to coordinate the legislative advocacy through the Secretary's legislative staff.

Commissioner Bachu thanked Ms. Blizzard and the Secretary for their support of the Commission's work.

III. Introduction of New Commissioners

Commissioner Bachu invited those in attendance to introduce themselves to one another. There are six newly-appointed commissioners, but two were unable to attend this evening’s meeting. An orientation session will be set for them before the next Commission meeting. There are now seventeen commissioners and eight vacant positions.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Ashley-Williams moved approval of the minutes of the June 25, 2015 MCW meeting. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

V. Unfinished Business

A. October 25 Symposium.....Diane Williams

Last spring, the MCW voted unanimously to hold a symposium which was scheduled for October 25 on the campus of UMBC. The plan was to organize a conference focused on the recently released Institute for Women Policy Research report on the Status of Women in the States, discussing the implications of the data for women in Maryland. For a variety of reasons, the planning for the conference has been delayed and Commissioner Williams moved that the Symposium be postponed and that whether and when to hold such a conference be discussed at the MCW annual planning meeting in September. Commissioner Cruz seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

B. Proposed Summer Studies

1. Women of Tomorrow.....Lorna Forde

The MCW held a very nice awards program June 25, presenting six young women with the Women of Tomorrow awards. Commissioner Forde recommended that a small committee be formed to review what worked well with the program and what might work more effectively, and to bring recommendations to the full commission at the fall planning meeting. Commissioners Forde, Ramirez, Ashley-Williams and Lee agreed to serve on the committee.

2. Bylaws.....Diane Williams

Commissioner Williams chaired the Bylaws Review Committee this past year. The committee made several recommendations which were adopted at the Commission’s June 25th meeting. These changes primarily established policy for teleconference participation in MCW meetings, removed language that simply restated the Commission’s enabling legislation, and made structural adaptations necessitated by those changes. However, there are a number of other issues that deserve some attention, including the number of committees, the designation of committee chairs, the number required for a quorum at MCW meetings, the conduct of MCW elections, associate and ex officio members, and possibly other provisions.

Commissioner Williams recommended the formation of a committee to review the entire bylaws and make recommendations to the full Commission at its fall planning meeting.

After considerable discussion, Commissioners Ashley-Williams moved that a Bylaws Review Committee with at least five members be formed at the annual planning meeting to undertake, during the coming year, a full review of the bylaws. Commissioner Riley seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

C. Annual Planning Meeting.....Lee Bachu

For several years, the Commission has held a special meeting in September to develop its agenda for the coming year. Last year, the meeting was held on a Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the Conference West Room at the Miller Senate Office Building. A Senator must sponsor the use of the room and the facility is now charging a \$150 fee. After discussion of several possible dates and times, Commissioner Williams moved that the MCW hold its annual planning meeting on Friday, September 18, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Commissioner Riley seconded the motion which passed by a vote of nine in favor and two opposed.

VI. Election of MCW Officers

Commissioner Bachu explained that the MCW bylaws provide that officers are elected to two-year terms. Elections are held in even-numbered years. Interim elections fill vacant positions until the end of the current term at which point new elections are held. Recent changes in the MCW membership created a vacancy in the office of the MCW Chair term expiring in 2016.

A. MCW Chair

Commissioner Riley moved that Commissioner Lee Bachu, the only announced candidate, be elected by vote of acclamation to the office of Chair. Commissioner Ashley-Williams seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

B. MCW Vice Chair

Commissioner Bachu’s election as Chair creates a vacancy in the position of Vice Chair. Secretary Ashley-Williams opened the floor for nominations. Commissioner Diane Williams announced her willingness to serve. Commissioner Riley nominated Commissioner Cornish, and Commissioner Manski announced her willingness to serve. A paper ballot was distributed and the two commissioners teleconferencing were offered the opportunity to vote via text message to the Executive Director. After tabulation of the votes, it was announced that Commissioner Diane Williams has been elected Vice Chair. Commissioners Bachu and Williams were congratulated on their elections; Commissioners Cornish and Manski were thanked for their willingness to serve.

VII. Adjournment.....Chair Bachu

There being no further business to conduct, newly elected MCW Chair Bachu adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director
Maryland Commission for Women

Approved: September 18, 2015