

# Maryland Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, June 16, 2016  
3 p.m.

Maryland Women's Heritage Center ♦ 39 W. Lexington Street, Baltimore, 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  
Bonnie Nelson Luna  
Marion Manski  
April Nyman  
Betsy Ramirez  
Carole Jaar Sepe  
Corinna Shen

Ummu Thomas  
A. Diane Williams, Vice Chair  
Marylou Yam  
Yun Jung Yang

## Commissioners Absent:

Doris Ligon  
Anita Riley  
Velvet Johnson

## Host and Guest Speaker:

Diana Bailey, Managing Director, MWHC

## Staff Attending:

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

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

### A. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 3:28 p.m. Chair Bachu welcomed all the commissioners to this evening's meeting, and thanked them all for attending. She asked all those in attendance to introduce themselves, and thanked Diana Bailey and the Women's Heritage Center for hosting the MCW meeting this afternoon.

### B. Approval of Minutes:

Chair Bachu called for approval of the minutes of the May 19, 2016 MCW meeting. Vice Chair Williams moved approval of the minutes as submitted. Commissioner Forde seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

### C. Election of Officers:

Chair Bachu asked Executive Director Vaughan-Prather to conduct the election. At the June meeting in even numbered years, the MCW elects its three officers for a two-year term. Calls for nominations were sent out in May. The following commissioners were nominated for office:

For the office of Chair: Lee Bachu  
For the office of Vice Chair: Diane Williams  
For the office of Secretary: Wandra Ashley Williams

Commissioner Thomas moved election of these three officers by a vote of acclamation. Commissioner Yang seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

**D. Presentation on the Maryland Women’s Heritage Center.....Diana Bailey**

Ms. Bailey welcomed the commissioners to the Maryland Women’s Heritage Center. She described the history of the center and its current activities and then took the commissioners on a tour of the center, including the exhibits on the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame, Maryland Women in the Arts, Women in Science and Technology, and Maryland’s Unsung Heroines.

**E. MNADV Conference.....Wandra Ashley-Williams, Secretary**

Commissioner Ashley-Williams represented the MCW at the annual conference of the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence on June 3. The MCW was a co-sponsor of this conference and received a full-page ad in the program book. The conference provides training for service providers and was a good opportunity for the MCW to increase its visibility as well as demonstrate its support for their work.

**F. White House Summit: United State of Women.....A. Diane Williams, Vice Chair**

Commissioners Williams and Brackney were invited as “change makers” to attend the June 14 conference. President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden addressed the attendees, as did First Lady Michelle Obama and Media Celebrity Oprah Winfrey. It was an inspiring and informative event that the two commissioners were honored to attend representing the Commission for Women. Commissioner Williams reported that the First Lady reminded those in attendance that “we are stronger when we work together.” Commissioner Williams noted that women’s advocates were encouraged to focus their work on Educational Opportunity, Economic Empowerment, Violence Against Women, Entrepreneurship/Business Innovation, Leadership and Civic Engagement and Health/Wellness for women

**G. Commissioner Resignation**

Chair Bachu reported with regret that Commissioner Cornish has tendered her resignation from the MCW. Commissioner Cornish’s second term on the MCW is complete at the end of this month but a replacement had not yet been appointed. She served eight years as a commissioner and as chair of the MCW for two years. It was her initiative that launched the MCW Listening Tour project. Her contributions are many, very much appreciated, and will be missed.

**II. Planning Process.....Lee Bachu, Chair**

**A. Introduction to Planning Process:**

Chair Bachu noted that the purpose of this evening’s meeting is to set the agenda for the MCW for the coming fiscal year (July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017), to establish the MCW’s committees, and to engage the commissioners as a team in carrying out that agenda. She said that she will be encouraging all the committees to work inclusively, ensuring that all committee members are actively involved in decision making and planning of the committees’ work.

## **B. Operations and Support**

### **1. Bylaws and Enabling Legislation:**

Chair Bachu noted that the MCW was created by an act of state law and has certain mandated responsibilities, most notably to advise the Governor and the Legislature on the issues of concern to the women of the state, and to recognize the accomplishment and contributions of Maryland women. The MCW's meetings and activities are also governed by its Bylaws. The MCW office has a staff of two – an Executive Director and a Management Associate. It is the job of the staff to manage the MCW budget and its resources, to support the MCW's work, to ensure that the work emanating from the office is appropriate for an office of state government, and to serve as a liaison between the MCW and the DHR Secretary's office.

### **2. Partnerships with Other Organizations:**

Commissioner Ashley-Williams reviewed the programs the MCW sponsored in the past year, discussed the purposes and criteria for sponsorship and asked for a task force to develop specific criteria for the MCW in making these decisions. Commissioners Ingram, Sepe, Chang and Brackney volunteered to work on this task force which will work over the summer and bring recommendations to the full commission at the September meeting.

### **3. Friends of the MCW**

Commissioner Williams described the Friends of the Maryland Commission for Women, a 501(c)3 organization established in 1997 to receive donations in support of the activities of the MCW. The FMCW has about \$40,000 in its bank account. It guaranteed \$4800 for the Hall of Fame/Women of Tomorrow event this year. All of those funds, plus \$900 more, were returned to the FMCW through the fundraising carried out by the MCW. Commissioner Williams recommended inviting the board of directors of the FMCW to attend a MCW meeting in the fall to discuss the relationship between the two organizations.

## **III. Identification of Key Priorities and Issues for 2016 – 2017**

### **A. Appointment of Committee Chairs**

Earlier in the month, notice went out to commissioners asking them to advise the Chair of their interest in chairing MCW committees. Chair Bachu appointed committee chairs for 2016 – 2017, and commissioners volunteered to serve on the committees as follows:

- **Legislation and Public Policy**
  - Tammy Bresnahan, Chair
  - Lorna Forde
  - Nicole Ingram
  - Ummu Thomas

- **Education and Outreach (Women Moving Forward Conference):**
  - Tawanda Bailey, Chair
  - Marianne Brackney
  - Nicole Ingram
  - Betsy Ramirez
  - Yun Jung Yang
  
- **Health and Wellness**
  - Marylou Yam, Chair
  - Homayara Aziz
  - Deborah Cartee
  - Gloria Chang
  - Marion Manski
  
- **2017 Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame**
  - Marianne Brackney, Chair
  - Deborah Cartee
  - Nicole Ingram
  - Bonnie Luna
  - April Nyman
  - Corinna Shen
  - Yun Jung Yang
  
- **2017 Women of Tomorrow Awards**
  - Carole Sepe and Lorna Forde, Co-Chairs
  - Homayara Aziz
  - Marianne Brackney
  - Tammy Bresnahan
  - April Nyman
  
- **Listening Tour**
  - Yun Yang and Nicole Ingram, Co-Chairs
  - Tawanda Bailey
  - Tammy Bresnahan
  - Deborah Cartee
  - Doris Ligon
  - Bonnie Luna
  - Betsy Ramirez
  - Carole Sepe
  - Corinna Shen
  - Ummu Thomas
  - Marylou Yam
  
- **Communications and Public Relations**
  - Betsy Ramirez, Chair
  - Homayara Aziz
  - Nicole Ingram
  - April Nyman
  - Ummu Thomas

- **Ad Hoc Governance/Bylaws Review**
  - Marion Manski, Chair
  - Tammy Bresnahan
  - Deborah Cartee
  - Lorna Forde
  - Ummu Thomas
  - Diane Williams
  
- **Executive Committee (MCW Officers and Committee Chairs)**
  - Lee Bachu, Chair
  - Diane Williams, Vice Chair
  - Wandra Ashley-Williams, Secretary
  - Tawanda Bailey
  - Marian Brackney
  - Tammy Bresnahan
  - Marion Manski
  - Betsy Ramirez
  - Carole Sepe/Lorna Forde
  - Yun Jung Yang/Nicole Ingram
  - Marylou Yam

MCW Chair Bachu and Vice Chair Williams will serve as members of all MCW Committees.

Committee chairs are asked to convene a meeting of their committees before the end of July to develop a proposed work plan for the coming year. The work plans are to be sent to the Executive Committee for tentative approval with final approval at the September MCW meeting. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather asked to attend those committee meetings.

#### **B. Priority Issues**

The Commission re-affirmed its commitment to the two priority issues identified last year to guide its focus this year:

- Economic Equity and Security for Women
- Safety, Health and Wellness for Women

### **IV. Unfinished Business:**

#### **A. Legislative Committee Report**

Commissioner Bresnahan reported that Governor Hogan signed Equal Pay bill (HB1003/SB481), originally introduced by Senator Lee. He also signed the Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Task Force bill (HB 740) originally introduced by Delegate Ariana Kelly, and the Designation of Lay Caregivers bill (HB 1277/SB366) which the Commission supported. Commissioner Brackney moved that the MCW write to the Governor commending his signature of these important pieces of legislation. Commissioner Yam seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

**B. Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Task Force**

As mentioned above, this bill passed and has been signed by the Governor. The bill creates a state-wide task force to study the feasibility of establishing a employee-funded insurance program to provide some level of pay for employees during family and medical leave. The bill provides that:

- The Executive Director of the MCW is a member of the Task Force
- The Task Force is staffed by the office of Legislative Services
- The MCW must apply for any federal funds that become available related to the work of the Task Force.

The MCW learned in mid-May of a call for proposals from the U.S. Department of Labor Women’s Bureau for research on Family and Medical Leave programs. The due date for those proposals was June 6. The MCW has submitted a proposal for just under \$250,000. If awarded, the grant will fund research to be conducted by two non-profit research firms with deep expertise in this issue. The MCW would manage the grant.

**C. CFW Roundtable Meeting**

For several years, the MCW has convened a meeting of the county Commissions for Women in the state to share resources, information and strategies. The county CFWs report that this meeting is very valuable to them. Last year, the MCW combined that meeting with the MLAW conference, spending \$1000 to sponsor the conference and include 25 representatives of CFWs to attend, and then held a round table meeting with those representatives in the afternoon during the conference. After discussion, Commissioner Forde moved that the MCW convene a CFW Roundtable session again this year in coordination with the MLAW conference, and to spend no more than \$1000 for this purpose. Commissioner Luna seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

**V. Announcements**

**Baltimore Women’s Classic:** Commissioner Bresnahan reminded the commissioners of the June 26 Baltimore Women’s Classic – the largest 5K all-women’s race in the country. Commissioners were encouraged to register and participate. Discussion followed about possibilities for commissioners participating as a team in similar events, both as a team-building opportunity and to build the visibility of the commission in other venues.

**VI. Adjournment.....Chair Bachu**

MCW Chair Bachu thanked everyone for attending this evening’s meeting and for all their thoughtful and participation. She repeated her determination that the work of the full Commission and all of its committees will be inclusive and transparent and that all commissioners will be included in decision making. There being no further business, Commissioner Bachu adjourned the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

***Respectfully submitted:***

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director  
Maryland Commission for Women  
June 20, 2016

**APPROVED: September 22, 2016**