

Maryland Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 16, 2017

5 p.m.

Attman-Glazer Building – Room 158
45 Calvert Street, Annapolis, Maryland

Commissioners Attending:

Lee Bachu, Chair
Wandra Ashley-Williams, Secretary
Homayara Aziz
Tawanda Bailey
Marianne Brackney
Deborah Cartee
Gloria Chang
Lorna Forde
Velvet Johnson
Bonnie Luna
Marion Manski
April Nyman
Carole Sepe
Ummu Bradley Thomas

T/C

T/C

A. Diane Williams, Vice Chair
Tamara England Wilson
Marylou Yam
Yun Jung Yang

Commissioners Absent:

Nicole Ingram
Tammy Bresnahan
Anita Riley
Corinna Shen

Staff Attending:

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

I. Call to Order.....Vice Chair A. Diane Williams

The meeting was called to order at 5:07 p.m. by MCW Vice Chair Williams who welcomed those in attendance. Chair Bachu participated in the meeting via conference call.

A. Approval of Agenda

Vice Chair Williams called for approval of the agenda for tonight's meeting. Commissioner Sepe so moved. The motion, seconded by Commissioner Thomas, passed unanimously. It was noted that there may be a few items not on the agenda that can be brought up and discussed under "New Business."

B. Approval of Minutes:

Vice Chair Williams called for approval of the minutes of the October 19 MCW meeting. Commissioner Wilson so moved. Commissioner Ashley-Williams seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

II. Chair’s Report.....Vice Chair Williams

A. Friends of the MCW

Vice Chair Williams thanked Commissioners Nyman, Riley, Thomas and Yang who, along with the Vice Chair, attended the November 10 meeting at the invitation of the Friends of the MCW (FMCW) for the purpose of planning its agenda and projects for the coming year.

The FMCW was established as a private non-profit [501(c)(3)] organization in 1997 to support the programs of the MCW. For several years, three board members of the FMCW have been previous members of the MCW (Former MCW Chairs Helen Holton, Susa Elgin and former Commissioner Deborah Risper). The Board membership has now been increased to five members: Helen Holton, President, Jules Dunham Howie, Vice President/Secretary, Deborah Risper, Treasurer, Ossie Clay, Member and Loretto Gubernatis, Member.

Vice Chair Williams asked Commissioner Yang to report on the November 10 meeting. Commissioner Yang said that those at the meeting were informed that the FMCW has recently amended its mission to include support for programs of other Commissions for Women and women’s organizations. Although it was somewhat unclear, it seems that the FMCW is willing to serve as an entity to hold and distribute funds, but the board members do not plan to serve as fund-raisers. That task would remain the responsibility of the organization needing the funds, but the FMCW would provide a tax-exempt place to receive donations in support of these organizations.

The Commissioners who attended asked if the FMCW intends to change its name as it now plans to work with other organizations and could provide funding for programs not sponsored by the MCW. It was suggested that, because the name of the MCW is included in the name of the FMCW, it could be misleading and imply that MCW is associated with events in which it has no role. Commissioner Thomas reported that there seemed to be a reluctance to change the FMCW name and a board member suggested that perhaps it could use “trade names” such as “Doing Business as” when supporting events not associated with the MCW.

At the November 10 meeting, Vice Chair Williams asked if the FMCW will guarantee the funds necessary for the 2018 Hall of Fame/Women of Tomorrow Awards Ceremony, as it has done in the past. The response was, yes, it would fund the ceremony but would NOT sign the catering contract. Vice Chair Williams asked who signed the contract in the past. The response was the catering company has provided the services in the past without a signature from the FMCW. The FMCW expects the MCW to continue to seek sponsorship donations to assist in defraying the costs. Chair Bachu noted that the FMCW has more than \$40,000 in its holdings.

Secretary Ashley-Williams said that it appears that this relationship is not working for the MCW at this point, and Commissioner Forde noted that it is not possible to do business if the FMCW refuses to sign contracts and therefore guarantee payment to vendors. This could create a financial liability for the MCW.

Commissioner Yang reminded the MCW that, as she advised the Commission at its June planning meeting, she and other Commissioners have established a private non-profit foundation specifically to raise funds to support programs of the MCW. Its articles of incorporation specify that it must have a board with at least seven members, and the majority of board members must be representatives of the MCW. She offered that the WAG Foundation – The Fund for Maryland’s Women and Girls would be willing to sign the contract for the caterer and to guarantee payment to the vendor.

Vice Chair Williams asked that copies of the WAG Foundation’s articles of incorporation and bylaws be shared with the MCW and also asked who are the MCW members serving on the WAG Foundation. The response was: Commissioners Yang, Nyman, Thomas and Chair Bachu.

Commissioner Sepe made a four-part motion, seconded by Secretary Ashley-Williams. After considerable discussion, two parts of the motion were withdrawn and the other two were separated into two distinct motions. Secretary Ashley-Williams called the question, seconded by Commissioner Wilson. The favorable vote on that question was unanimous, with the WAG Board members present recusing themselves. Vice Chair Williams then called for a vote on the remaining two motions:

1. The MCW use the WAG Foundation for its fundraising activities. This motion passed with 11 in favor and one abstention. The WAG Board members present recused themselves from the vote.
2. The MCW write to the Attorney General asking for advice on whether the FMCW should be asked to remove the words “Maryland Commission for Women” from its name and whether anything can be done about any funds the FMCW may have received on behalf of the MCW. This motion passed with 12 in favor. The WAG Board members present recused themselves from the vote.

B. Open Meetings Act Training

Chair Bachu and Vice Chair Williams volunteered at last month’s meeting to serve as the MCW’s designees for the Open Meetings Act training. They now have 60 days to take the training which is offered free of charge online to anyone who is interested: http://www.igsr.umd.edu/VLC/OMA/class_oma_introl.php

C. Zonta Club of Mid-Maryland Proposal

Vice Chair Williams noted the Zonta Club of Mid-Maryland is planning to sponsor a conference on Human Trafficking on April 21, 2018 and has invited the MCW to co-sponsor the event. It is requesting that the MCW send a representative to the planning committee meetings and assist with state-wide outreach for the program. Vice Chair Williams recommended Commissioner Yam to serve as MCW’s representative on Zonta’s planning committee since she is the Chair of the Health and Wellness Committee. Commissioner Yam accepted and is willing to serve on the committee. Commissioner Forde moved that the MCW partner with Zonta Club of Mid-Maryland, as described here, to support the proposed conference, and that Commissioner Yam represent the MCW on the conference planning committee. The motion, seconded by Commissioner Chang, passed unanimously.

III. Unfinished Business

A. NAACP WIN Breakfast Event

The WIN (Women in the NAACP) event on Saturday, October 28 in Columbia, was attended by Commissioners Williams, Johnson, Thomas and Bachu representing the MCW.

IV. New Business

A. IWPR Report on the Status of Women in Maryland Proposal

The Institute for Women’s Policy Research (IWPR) is one of the nation’s most highly respected women’s social and economic research organizations. It maintains state-by-state analysis of demographic, social and economic data pertaining to women and girls. IWPR is preparing to develop new, up to date publications on the Status of Women in the U.S. and in each state, and has written to Commissions for Women and other women’s advocacy groups seeking sponsorship. With a sponsorship of \$2500, the Commission would receive a fact sheet highlighting the economic status of women in the U.S., a press release highlighting the findings, and acknowledgement of the support on the documents and on IWPR’s website. Commissioner Brackney moved that the MCW sponsor this research if funds can be made available in its budget. Commissioner Yam seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

B. Request for Speaker

Martin Luther King Middle School in Prince George’s County is holding a career day for its students on Friday, December 8 from 9 am to 1:30 p.m. and has asked for speakers from the MCW. Chair Bachu volunteered to participate.

V. Committee Reports

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

The call for nominations for the HOF extended from Monday, September 25 to Friday, October 27. Seventeen nominations were received. The Selection Committee has been established and its members are now reviewing the nomination packet. It is hoped that the Selection Committee will meet on December 18 to make the final decisions regarding whom to induct.

B. Women of Tomorrow.....Commissioner Sepe

The call for nominations for the WOT was issued on October 16. The deadline has been extended to December 1. So far, twelve nominations have been received – four for middle schools students and eight for high school students. The WOT Committee met earlier today to identify individuals to invite to serve on the Selection Committee.

C. Listening Tour.....Commissioner Ingram

The Listening Tour is now complete. Nineteen sessions of the Voices of Maryland Women have been conducted since July 2016, with a combined attendance of 824.

The Listening Tour has traveled to:

- Washington County
- Baltimore County
- Garrett County
- WOW Conference at NDMU
- Howard County
- Prince George's County
- Calvert County
- MCIW
- Montgomery County
- Frederick County
- Charles County
- Anne Arundel County
- Harford County
- Allegany County
- St. Mary's County
- Worcester County
- Baltimore City
- Mid and Upper Eastern Shore
- Girl Scouts of Central Maryland

1055 surveys had been completed as of November 6.

Now the hard work of analyzing the data collected from the forums and the survey begins. Once the findings have been determined, recommendations will be developed.

Commissioner Yang thanked all the commissioners who have worked so hard on this project, including her co-chair Nicole Ingram and Commissioner Shen who has attended and handled the on-site registration table at every session but one when she was ill.

She also thanked Commissioners Sepe (Frederick), Thomas (Mid-Shore), Wilson (Baltimore City), Luna (Worcester County) and Cartee (St. Mary's County) who co-facilitated recent sessions. These commissioners, and others, also helped at other sessions. Vice Chair Williams has attended many of the sessions.

The participants in these jurisdictions have listed well over 300 "issues" or "challenges" facing the women of Maryland. Many of them are specific aspects of larger issues, and are likely to be combined once the data analysis begins. The issues are rising to the top right now:

- Affordable, quality child care
- Domestic violence/sexual assault
- Too few women in public office/politically engaged
- Affordable housing for low income women, single mothers and older women
- Transportation
- Addictions and substance abuse problems

Three other issues that are not far behind are:

- Jobs that pay a living wage
- Equal Pay/Comparable Worth
- Sex bias in the schools, steering girls away from STEM and into sex-role stereotyped career preparation
- Human Trafficking

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

Since July, the Committee has sent 15 Issue Alerts to the MCW’s distribution lists of more than 800 individuals and organizations. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather noted that the Listening Tour has greatly expanded the geographic reach of the MCW’s emails, as individuals from as far away as Garrett County in the far western panhandle and Worcester County on the lower eastern shore have been included now.

Commissioner Bailey attended the first planning committee meeting for the 2018 Women Moving Forward (WMF) Conference, and reviewed data regarding incarcerated women and the 2017 WMF Conference evaluations. She noted that the financial literacy seminar in which Chair Bachu participated as a panelist was one of the most popular. In general, the evaluations were very positive and made a powerful statement about the value of this event. The next WMF Conference will be held on April 14, 2018. The committee has already identified one keynote speaker – a formerly incarcerated woman who has made a very successful re-entry.

Commissioner Johnson reported that the U.S. House of Representatives is considering a Resolution to recognize the value and necessity of services to incarcerated parents and their children. She noted that the number of children with incarcerated parents has increased by 80% in the past 20 years; that 2 to 5 million have parents in prison, and that 30 to 50% of incarcerated fathers do not see their children while in prison. All this emphasized the importance of programs like the WMF Conference.

The Education and Outreach Committee is also charged with organizing the Round Table Conference of Commissions for Women in Maryland. This year, the conference will be held in the spring and will serve as a briefing and a thank you for all the Commissions for Women who hosted sessions of the Listening Tour. The Education and Outreach Committee is meeting later this evening after this meeting to discuss the date, time and location of the conference.

E. Legislation and Public Policy

(No report)

F. Health and Wellness.....Commissioner Yam

Since July 1 of this year, the Committee has sent out four Health Alerts and two more are scheduled before the end of the year. The committee has developed a fact sheet on the issue of Human Trafficking in Maryland, listing resources for advocates and service providers. It was suggested that the issue and health alerts be posted on the MCW Facebook page. It was also noted that Montgomery County has developed a card listing resources for victims of human trafficking and it may be possible to produce something very similar for use state wide.

VI. Liaison Reports

A. Maryland Women’s Heritage Center.....Vaughan-Prather for Chair Bachu

The Center is still without a permanent brick and mortar home. It will be offering some programs at a community center in Baltimore but is still in need of assistance in finding a place for its exhibits, including the Women’s Hall of Fame.

B. 19th Amendment Commemoration Commission.....Vice Chair Williams
The Commission to Commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is still working on the planning stages and discussing a location for a marker recognizing Women’s Suffrage. It is scheduled to meet again on November 21, 2017.

C. MLAW.....Vaughan-Prather for Ashley-Williams
The MLAW Annual Fall Conference is this Saturday in Columbia. Commissioners Bachu, Williams, Ashley-Williams, Bresnahan and Riley are scheduled to attend along with the MCW staff.

D. FAMLI Task Force.....Executive Director Vaughan-Prather
The Family and Medical Leave Insurance Task Force met for the final time on November 2 in Annapolis. The Task Force has heard from many experts and advocates for workers and business, completed its deliberations and has developed its report with recommendations to be submitted to the Maryland General Assembly in December.

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

A. Briefing DHS Secretary
Chair Bachu and the Executive Director met for the first time with DHS Secretary Lourdes Padilla on November 13 to discuss the programs and activities of the MCW. The meeting was very positive.

B. Staffing
Management Associate Tammy Wise has returned from her extended leave. The Commissioners welcomed her back warmly.

C. Annual Report
The 2018 Annual Report for the MCW has been printed and is ready for distribution.

VIII. Announcements
No announcements were brought before the commission.

IX. Adjournment.....Vice Chair Williams
Vice Chair Williams adjourned the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director
Maryland Commission for Women

APPROVED: January 18, 2018