

Maryland Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes
 Thursday, May 21, 2020
 5 p.m.

Conference Call

Commissioners Attending:	
Yun Jung Yang, Chair	Ishrat N. Memon
Tawanda A. Bailey, First Vice Chair	April Nyman
Carole Jaar Sepe, Second Vice Chair	Corinna Yi-Yuan Kuo Shen
Tammy Bresnahan	Evelyne S. Steward
Deborah L. Cartee	Ummu Bradley Thomas
Gloria Chang	Tamara E. Wilson
Maureen G. Colburn	Marylou N. Yam
Amanda L. Costley	
Melissa H. Curtin	Commissioners Absent:
Kristi S. Halford	Roberta Pardo
Eugenia B. Henry	
Lauren M. Lambert	Staff Attending:
Patricia M. Lambert	Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director
Bonnie N. Luna	Tammy Wise, Management Associate
Brenda J. McChriston	Fatara Odifa, Administrative Officer

I. Call to Order.....Yang

A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m. by MCW Chair Yang. She welcomed everyone and thanked the commissioners for participating this evening and for all their hard work between meetings. In this time of the COVID-19 crisis and social distancing, it was again not possible to meet in person. Understanding that everyone’s schedules have been disrupted so significantly, it was especially encouraging that to have a near-perfect attendance for this meeting.

B. Approval of Agenda

The Chair called for approval of the agenda. Commissioner Pat Lambert moved approval of the agenda. Commissioner Bresnahan seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

C. Approval of Minutes of April 16, 2020 MCW Meeting

The Chair called for approval of the minutes of last month’s meeting. Commissioner Pat Lambert moved approval. Commissioner Henry seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

II. COVID 19 and Women – Massachusetts Commission for Women

Commissioner Audrey Hall and Executive Director Jill Ashton, of the Massachusetts Commission for Women, presented a briefing on the MCSW’s research project on the impact of the pandemic on the women of that state. The MCSW established an Action Committee with 10 commissioners to collect data and develop an Action Plan in the very early stages of the crisis. It convened an on-line public hearing on April 2, accepting both virtual and written testimony. More than 100 people participated. The MCSW then posted an on-line survey, open to responses from April 3 through April 9. Using every social media outlet available to them, the MCSW commissioners reached out as broadly as possible to the women of their state – and more than 2000 completed the questionnaire. The final report combined data from both the hearing and the survey.

The data collected demonstrates that all the challenges women normally face were exacerbated by the pandemic. “Our social infrastructure is full of cracks and those cracks widened in the wake of the crisis.” Pregnant women were afraid to deliver their babies in hospitals full of sick patients and didn’t want to deliver without their significant other present. Yet, insurance doesn’t cover the cost of delivery at home via midwife. Eleven percent (11%) of respondents reported that they had already lost their jobs. Incarcerated women could not maintain social distancing nor could they observe recommended hygiene practices. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of essential workers reported lacking resources to support their continued work outside their homes. Victims of domestic violence found that their abusers were weaponizing the pandemic – withholding necessary hygiene products like hand sanitizer, masks and sanitizing wipes, for example. Women also reported that they bear the majority of the responsibility of caring for others, even when trying to work from home.

The MCSW sent the report, which includes “Areas for Immediate Attention,” to the Governor and the legislature, and then was shared widely with the other women’s organizations in the state. The response has been very positive.

Commissioner Pat Lambert asked how the changes in the use of technology necessitated by the pandemic are likely to affect how we operate post-pandemic. Ms. Ashton responded that that we have all learned to use technology more and that by doing so more people may participate. We are finding ways to use technology to break down barriers to access. Even when we are able to meet in person again, we will probably still want to permit more virtual participation than in the past.

The MCSW plans to follow up on the project with virtual listening sessions, some of which will address specific populations, like younger women.

After discussion, Chair Yang thanked Ms. Hall and Ms. Ashton for their very informative presentation and congratulated them on the success of this important project. Both offered their assistance if the MCW should decide to take on a similar project.

III. Executive Committee Report.....Yang

A. COVID 19 impact on the Women of Maryland

Dr. Sherita Hill Golden, MD, MHS, Professor of Endocrinology and Metabolism and Vice President, Chief Diversity Officer, Johns Hopkins Medical Center has accepted our invitation to present a briefing to the MCW at the June 18 meeting, to discuss the disparate health impact of COVID-19 on women in this state.

B. September Planning Meeting

Traditionally, the MCW has held its annual planning meeting in June, so that work can begin over the summer on projects. However, since the 2020 Women’s Centennial Summit is scheduled for August 26 and the SWIM report still requires the Commission’s attention, the Commission decided to hold the planning meeting in place of its September meeting. It is hoped that the newly appointed, but not yet confirmed commissioners will be able to join the MCW at that time. Commissioner Steward offered to help plan the agenda for that meeting.

C. Teleconferencing for Future MCW Meetings

Until the stay at home order and group size meeting restrictions are lifted, the MCW will continue to meet via videoconferencing. However, the MCW may want to consider using technology for meetings even after the restrictions are lifted, which would require a change in the MCW Bylaws. Commissioner Pat Lambert suggested establishing a Governance Committee to review the Bylaws every year. Both matters may be good topics of discussion at the September planning meeting.

IV. Unfinished Business

No unfinished business was brought before the Commission.

V. New Business

A. Election of MCW Officers

The election of all three MCW officers will take place at the June 18 MCW meeting. The nominees are:

For Second Vice Chair:
Carole Jaar Sepe

For First Vice Chair:
Tawanda Bailey

For Chair:
Corinna Yi-Yuan Kuo Shen
Yun Jung Yang

Candidates will make brief, one to two-minute statements at the June MCW meeting. The elections will be conducted via secret ballot at the end of the meeting and officers will assume the office immediately following the vote.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Policy and Legislation Committee.....Bresnahan
No Report

B. Achievement and Recognition Committee.....Cartee
No Report

C. 2020 Women’s Centennial Summit.....Henry and Steward

Commissioner Henry thanked the Summit Steering Committee for all its hard work over the past weeks. As originally planned, the Summit was to be an all-day conference with a reception at Government House with the Governor and the First Lady at the end of the day. Many meetings and site visits were held, but plans had to change as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Summit is still scheduled for Wednesday, August 26, 2020, but now as a virtual, digital conference.

Much has been accomplished since the last MCW meeting. Just this afternoon, we received approval to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the 19th Amendment Commission, the MCW and the Foundation for the MCW. The 19th Amendment Commission is exploring whether it can make some funds available to support the event. It is hoped that it can be the Heritage Sponsor with a contribution of \$25,100 to support the event.

The Steering Committee has reviewed proposals from four technology companies and has selected MeetingTomorrow as the vendor to produce the technological aspects of the Summit. Much thanks is owed to Second Vice Chair Sepe for all her very careful review of the proposed contract and to Commissioner Steward for her very hard work in general and for preparing the presentation for this evening’s meeting.

Commissioner Steward reported that the theme will still be “From the Right to Vote to the Right to Lead” and it will be a three to four-hour long event involving a keynote address, two panel discussions and a closing. There will be a “Parade of Sheroes” scrolling during breaks, featuring Maryland women who have contributed significantly to the fight against the pandemic. This will include medical personnel and first responders, teachers and store clerks who made it possible for everyone to buy groceries and medicines, individuals in the community who donated face masks or held food drives, and much more. County Commissions across the state, and other women’s organizations will be invited to submit nominations for inclusion in the 100 Sheroes Parade.”

All commissioners are encouraged to join in the planning for the Summit. Commissioner Steward shared the subcommittee list and invited every Commissioner to review the project and let her know by the end of next week in which areas they want to help.

Chair Yang thanked Commissioners Henry and Steward for their leadership of this project which has demanded so much of their time and expertise. She also thanked Vice Chairs Bailey and Sepe for their contributions which have been invaluable as the plans had to change so quickly.

VI. Liaison Reports

A. The Foundation for the MCW..... Shen
Foundation President Shen congratulated the 2020 Summit planning committee on all its hard work, and stated that the Foundation stands ready to support the MCW activities. She also thanked Commissioner Henry for nominating her for Chair of the MCW.

Chair Yang thanked Commissioner Shen for her leadership as President of the Foundation and for its support of the Summit.

B. Maryland Women’s Heritage Center.....Yang
The MWHC board of directors has a meeting scheduled for next week. The MWHC has agreed to sponsor of the Summit and has contributed \$5,100 in support.

C. 19th Amendment Commemoration CommissionSteward
The 19th Amendment Commission was the major sponsor of the WOW Festival that had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Commissioners Steward is one of the MCW liaisons to that Commission and invited it to join the MCW in sponsoring the Summit. Dr. Singh, chair of the 19th Amendment Commission has met several times with the Summit Steering Committee and has contributed suggestions for speakers, as well as having agreed to serve as the moderator for the panel discussion on the history of the Suffrage Movement in Maryland.

D. MLAW.....Curtin
The MLAW board met last Sunday evening. It seems likely that the annual Fall Conference will have to be held as a virtual event. The MCW has held its Roundtable Meeting of CFWs in the afternoon of the Fall Conference, and that arrangement may not make sense this year. Commissioner Curtin volunteered to help plan the Roundtable Conference this fall.

E. 2020 Women Moving Forward Conference.....Curtin and Bailey
No report.

F. Maternal Mortality Review Board.....Costley
The Board will likely not meet again until the fall.

G. Maryland Women’s History Museum.....Luna
No report at this time, but Commissioner Luna will reach out to the Museum organizers when things have settled down a bit.

H. UMD SAFE Center.....Costley
No report.

I. Women’s Legislative Briefing.....Colburn
No report.

VII. Staff Report.....Vaughan-Prather

A. Issue Alerts

The MCW has continued to issue notices, announcements and alerts during the stay-at-home period, using the MCW’s Facebook page, its email distribution lists and website to stay connected with our constituents and to provide useful information, especially in this time of crisis. So far, this fiscal year, the MCW has issues 69 bulleting and announcements:

- 14 Health Alerts
- 10 Issue Alerts
 - 5 Announcements
- 15 Event Invitations and Announcements
- 25 Facebook Posts

It is anticipated that at least 15 more will be issued before the end of June. Much thanks to Tammy Wise for her work on these communications.

B. Update on the SWIM Project

Fatara Odifa continues her work revising the SWIM report. It is very much hoped that a draft can be ready for review by the Commission in June and that the report can be ready for design and publication before June 30. Commissioners Cartee and Sepe volunteered to review the draft and help prepare the final report.

C. NACW Voices of Women in America Project

Because so much has changed since this project began, NACW is unlikely to complete the report. The data collected is all pre-COVID-19. Any member CFW may request the data received from the community it serves.

VIII. Announcements

A. COVID-19 Donation

Chair Yang thanked Commissioner Henry for her extraordinarily generous donation of thousands of pieces of personal protection equipment to the state’s Emergency Management Centers. Commissioner Henry personally donated 160 boxes of face shields, 100,000 surgical masks, all FDA rated. She would like to make additional donations to police stations and child care centers and could use some help identifying donation recipients and transporting the equipment. Commissioners Bailey, Curtin and Memon offered to help. Photos from the day of the first donations are posted on the MCW Facebook page.

B. Next Meeting Dates

- **Executive Committee Meeting: June 11, 2020 at 4 p.m.**
- **MCW Meeting: June 18, 2020 at 5 p.m.**

Both meetings will be held as teleconferences, with video as well as audio, using Google Meets as a platform.

IX. Adjournment.....Yang

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and for all their hard work and meaningful participation. She adjourned the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director
Maryland Commission for Women

APPROVED: June 18, 2020