

Maryland Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 18, 2020
5 p.m.

Video Conference Call

Commissioners Attending:

Yun Jung Yang, Chair
Tawanda A. Bailey, First Vice Chair
Carole Jaar Sepe, Second Vice Chair
Tammy Bresnahan
Deborah L. Cartee
Gloria Chang
Maureen G. Colburn
Amanda L. Costley
Essita Duncan
Kristi S. Halford
Eugenia B. Henry
Lauren M. Lambert
Patricia M. Lambert
Bonnie N. Luna
Brenda J. McChriston

Ishrat N. Memon
Roberta Pardo
Luanne Ruddell
Corinna Yi-Yuan Kuo Shen
Evelyne S. Steward
Tamara E. Wilson
Marylou N. Yam

Commissioners Absent:

Melissa H. Curtin

Staff Attending:

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director
Tammy Wise, Management Associate
Fatara Odifa, Administrative Officer

I. Call to Order.....Yang

A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:02 p.m. by MCW Chair Yang. A quorum was established. She welcomed everyone and thanked the commissioners for participating this evening and for all their hard work between meetings.

B. Approval of Agenda

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

C. Approval of Minutes of May21, 2020 MCW Meeting

The Chair called for approval of the minutes of last month's meeting. Commissioner Bresnahan moved approval. Commissioner P. Lambert seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

II. COVID 19 and Women Dr. Sherita Hill Golden, John Hopkins Medical Institute
Chair Yang introduced Dr. Golden, Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer and Professor of Medicine at Johns Hopkins Medicine, whom had been invited to discuss the disparate impact of the pandemic on women. Dr. Golden said that while more men than women have died of COVID-19, there are other implications of the pandemic. The stay-at-home, work-from-home orders have meant that many women have to try to care for and school their children while also working full time. Some have found that they just can't balance those competing demands and have had to leave the workforce. She said that there really is no end to the pandemic in sight, yet. Even after a vaccine is developed, we won't be able to return to "normal" until the entire world population has been vaccinated. She noted that black and Latina women are more frequently working in "essential worker" positions, and did not have the luxury of working from home. Many were required to work without adequate personal protection equipment, so were more often exposed to the disease. For this and other reasons, including decades of systemic racial inequalities in housing, employment, access to health care and to healthy foods, African Americans have been over-represented among the COVID deaths.

Originally, it was posited that this was because conditions like heart disease, obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes occur more frequently in this population. But it is important to ask why that is so. The history of the U.S. in segregated housing, predatory lending, lack of support with public works and uneven educational opportunities account for this discrepancy. Historic red-lining practicing in home sales and mortgage lending have resulted in segregated neighborhoods lacking in jobs, parks and green spaces, access for grocery stores with fresh produce, deteriorating housing with exposure to environmental risks such as lead paint.

The medical and scientific communities also have contributed to these inequalities with a history that includes eugenics theories of inferior races – with no scientific foundation, and other practices including medical experimentation using African Americans often as unwitting subjects. The remnants and legacy of those biases and practices still affect African American access to health care. Fear and suspicion regarding the medical profession often leads to less frequent and lesser quality of care.

Police brutality, housing insecurities, and inequality in education are all manifestations of this history.

Commissioner Colburn asked if, in the plans for reopening public accommodations, have there been discussions regarding accommodating these inequities. Dr. Golden replied that the pandemic is a tale of two Americas – the privileged and the non-privileged. The numbers are going down for the privileged but have not receded as much for the disadvantaged. We need to examine all those intersections as we make decisions about when and how to re-open.

Commissioner Pat Lambert asked how the MCW could effectively collect data on this issue, what questions should be asked, and of whom. Dr. Golden said that currently, COVID-19 data is being examined by gender, and also by race, but we need to look both race and gender to determine the uneven impact.

Commissioner Wilson asked how the MCW can help get this message out to others around the state. Dr. Golden recommended asking for the data and discussing the legacy of structural racism across the country. The MCW could also support legislation to address some of the social determinants of health. She said that, just as there are legal requirements for a certain number of

fire hydrants in any neighborhood, there could be requirements for grocery stores, parks and green spaces.

After further discussion, Chair Yang thanked Dr. Hill for her very informative presentation and said that she hoped that the MCW could invite her back for updates in the months to come.

III. Executive Committee Report.....Yang

A. New Commissioners

Governor Hogan appointed four new commissioners, who were all confirmed by the Senate during its 2020 session. However, because courts were closed, the new commissioners were unable to be sworn in by the clerks of the court so their appointments could not become effective. We just learned on Wednesday that the two whose appointments begin immediately upon swearing in, were finally able to get that done yesterday, so they are now active members of the MCW. Essita Duncan of Prince George’s County and Luanne Ruddell of Garrett County were introduced and welcomed to the MCW. Two others were appointed to terms that will begin on July 1. Staff will reach out to them to see if they have been able to be sworn in. A virtual orientation session will be arranged for all four new commissioners during the summer months.

B. Women and COVID-19 Research..... Steward

After the presentation at last month’s meeting by the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women about its research project, and reinforced by today’s presentation, Commissioner Steward proposed establishing a committee to explore the feasibility of conducting research on this issue in Maryland. The Foundation for the Maryland Commission for Women has agreed to fund such a project for up to \$20,000 if the MCW decides to undertake this research. Chair Yang noted that it would be an exploratory committee to see what could be accomplished within that budget and it would develop a proposal to share with the MCW at its September planning meeting. Commissioner Steward so moved, and Commissioner Colburn seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Chair Yang asked Commissioner Steward to chair the exploratory committee. Commissioner Steward said that she will send an email to all the commissioners inviting anyone else who is interested to join.

IV. Unfinished Business

A. Facemask Donations

Commissioner Henry purchased 250,000 surgical face masks, although she has recently learned that she may actually receive 500,000. She has offered to donate some to any non-profit organization in Maryland. The organization must provide its Federal tax I.D. number and must sign a liability waiver. She hopes to have the equipment delivered to a facility in Gaithersburg where it might be possible to arrange for everyone to pick up their cartons of masks and have a group photo taken. Chair Yang thanked Commissioner Henry saying, “Your generosity is beyond extraordinary.” Chair Yang coordinated with other commissioners to offer the donated masks to organizations serving women. They reached out to domestic violence service providers and ethnic culture service centers around the state and as of the date of this meeting, the MCW has arranged to donate masks to 17 organizations in 10 counties. Each organization will receive 2000 masks. This means that, through Commissioner Henry’s generosity and the outreach initiative of our commissioners, the MCW has ensured that at least 34,000 facemasks will be available to organizations serving some of

Maryland’s most vulnerable women. Chair Yang thanked the commissioners who participated in the outreach effort:

Allegany County – Chair Yang

- Family Crisis Resource Center

Anne Arundel County - Commissioners Cartee, Nyman and Pardo

- YWCA Domestic Violence Services

Baltimore County - Commissioner Wilson

- Family Crisis Center

Carroll County - Commissioner Costly

- Family and Children’s Services of Central Maryland
- Rape Crisis Intervention Services

Frederick County - Commission Vice Chairs Bailey and Sepe

- Health Department

Garrett County – Chair Yang

- The Dove Center

Harford County – Commissioner Halford

- SARC

Howard County – Commissioner Curtin & Chair Yang

- HopeWorks
- Dar Al Taqwa, Inc.

Montgomery County – Commissioners Memon, Steward and Yang

- National Center for Children and Families
- Muslim Community Center
- Family Justice Center
- Stepping Stone Shelter

Prince George’s County – Commissioners Lauren Lambert and Colburn

- Community Crisis Services
- Family Justice Center
- CASA de Maryland

Commissioner Henry said that if commissioners know of other organizations that need masks, they should contact her or Chair Yun who has been coordinating the outreach.

Chair Yang noted that the organizations have uniformly expressed their deep appreciation both to Commissioner Henry for her enormous generosity and to the Commission for Women for reaching out to them, ensuring that organizations serving women have the necessary PPE to protect their staff and their clients.

V. New Business

A. MCW Statement on Racial Injustice.....Bailey and Wilson

MCW First Vice Chair Bailey said that given the recent cases of flagrant racial injustice and police brutality that have been reported, it has become incumbent upon organizations to take a stand. She and Commissioner Wilson drafted a statement of solidarity with the campaign for justice and Black Lives Matter.

Black Lives Matters – Taking A Stand Against Systemic Racism

The Maryland Commission for Women supports equal justice under the law for all people, and opposes any form of discrimination or oppression for any reason. Therefore, at a time when our nation finds itself in the midst of a pandemic that disproportionately impacts African Americans, we are both horrified and disheartened that African Americans continue to be subject to systemic racism and violence.

The Maryland Commission for Women is deeply saddened and also outraged by the recent senseless murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery. The deaths of these unarmed African Americans have shed light on the countless others, named and unnamed African Americans, whose lives were taken by police officers and/or vigilantes and compel us to stand in solidarity with the African American community and all who have issued a call for action.

The Maryland Commission for Women stands in solidarity because we stand for equal justice under the law for all people. We stand in solidarity because we oppose any form of discrimination or oppression for any reason. We stand in solidarity because the lives of those murdered mattered. We stand in solidarity because Black lives matter.

The Maryland Commission for Women takes this stand in solidarity with all those working for an end to systemic racism, racial terror, violence, and police brutality. We encourage each of you to do the same.

After discussion, MCW First Vice Chair Bailey and Commissioner Wilson, moved, seconded by Commissioner Steward, that the MCW accept the statement with and additional line, as proposed during the conversation:

Too many wives have lost their husbands, too many sisters have lost a sibling, too many precious children have lost a parent and too many mothers have lost a child.

Commissioner Pat Lambert moved to amend the motion to include that the MCW will hold a public listening session on the issue in the future. Commissioner Wilson did not accept the amendment. After further discussion, Commissioner Colburn called for a vote. The motion passed with 22 in favor and two opposed.

Commissioner P. Lambert then moved the MCW consider holding a public listening session on the issue of racial injustice and women as a follow up to the adopted statement. Commissioners Wilson and Halford seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

VI. Committee Reports

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

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

- C. 2020 Women’s Centennial Summit.....Henry and Steward**
 The Steering Committee has worked very hard to pivot the event from the planned in-person conference to a virtual summit. The planning effort will now be transitioning to the full Joint Summit Planning Committee, which includes representation from the 19th Amendment Commission because the 19th Amendment Commission has signed on as a Heritage Sponsor, contributing a \$25,100 sponsorship. The firm of MeetingTomorrow is now under contract with the Foundation for the Maryland Commission for Women to serve as the technology production company for the event. Judge Mary Ellen Barbera, the first woman ever to serve as the Chief Judge on Maryland’s highest court, the Court of Appeals, has accepted the invitation to present the keynote address for the Summit, with a focus on “From the Right to Vote to the Right to Lead.” The suffrage history panel was confirmed last month. The Women Thought Leaders Panel will discuss “Women’s Leadership and the Intersectionality of Gender and Race in Times of Crisis.” Former Baltimore City Health Officer Leana Wen, YWCA USA CEO Alejandra Castillo, and founder and CEO of the Bernard Center for Women, Politics and Public Policy, Michelle Bernard, have all agreed to participate on this panel. We are still waiting to hear from one last panelist. The 100 Sheroes Project is led by First Vice Chair Bailey. A letter has been sent out to all the local Commissions for Women in the state and to state-wide women’s organizations, inviting them to make nominations by July 17. The next meeting of the Joint Summit Planning Committee is scheduled for Thursday, June 25 at 8 a.m.

VI. Liaison Reports

- A. The Foundation for the MCW..... Shen**
 Foundation President Shen reported that the Foundation is in good financial shape and stands ready to support the MCW activities, including the Summit

- B. Maryland Women’s Heritage Center.....Yang**
 The MWHC board of directors met last Saturday. As a result of the pandemic, it has had to cancel all of its planned activities. It is developing a slide show, with the Maryland Historic Trust and offered to share it during the Summit, if time permits. The Center’s Executive Director will appear in a MPTV broadcast tomorrow night, highlighting the July 5 and 6 broadcasts of a two-part, four-hour documentary, “The Vote.” While the MWHC had to cancel its sponsorship of several other events, it confirmed its \$5,100 sponsorship of the Summit.

- C. 19th Amendment Commemoration CommissionSteward**
 The 19th Amendment Commission met last week and confirmed its \$25,100 sponsorship of the Summit. The board members are excited to partner with the MCW on this event, and its chair is representing it on the Summit Joint Planning Committee.

- D. MLAW**
 No report.

- E. 2020 Women Moving Forward Conference..... Bailey**
 No update.

- F. Maternal Mortality Review Board..... Costley**
 No update.

- G. Maryland Women’s History Museum..... Luna**
No update.
- H. UMD SAFE Center..... Costley**
No update.
- I. Women’s Legislative Briefing..... Colburn**
No update.

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

A. Update on the SWIM Project

Fatara Odifa continues her work revising the SWIM report. A draft will be ready for review by the Commission very soon. At last month’s meeting, Commissioners Cartee and Sepe volunteered to review the draft and help prepare the final report.

B. Farewell to Fatara

The contract with MCW staff Fatara Odifa ends June 30 and Ms. Odifa has found another position. Her contributions have been significant and she has been a wonderful and important member of the team for the past six months. We are all very sorry to see her leave, but commend her for her excellent work and wish her all the very best in the next phase of her career.

VIII. MCW Officer Elections

The candidates for the MCW’s Vice Chairs are running unopposed:

- Tawanda Bailey – First Vice Chair
- Carole Jaar Sepe – Second Vice Chair

Commission Chair Yang moved that they both be elected by a vote of acclamation. Commissioner Bresnahan seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

There were two candidates for the office of Commission Chair:

- Corinna Yi-Yuan Kuo Shen
- Yun Jung Yang

Each candidate was provided two minutes to speak of her vision for the commission and her plans for leadership over the next two years. Using Google Forms for the polling, the election was held by secret ballot.

VIII. Announcements

A. Next Meeting Dates

- **2020 Women’s Centennial Summit: August 26 9 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**
- **Executive Committee Meeting: September 10** (others in the interim to be decided)
- **MCW Annual Planning Meeting: September 17, 2020 at 5 p.m.**

B. Results of the Election of MCW Chair

The result of the secret ballot was 15 votes for Commissioner Yang, seven votes for Commissioner Shen.

Newly re-elected Chair Yang thanked the commissioners for their votes and pledged to work inclusively with all the commissioners as the MCW moves forward on its agenda. She commended Commissioner Shen for her dedication to the work of this commission and to its Foundation.

IX. Adjournment.....Yang

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and for all their hard work and meaningful participation. She adjourned the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director
Maryland Commission for Women

APPROVED: September 17, 2020