

Maryland Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 21, 2021
5 p.m.

Video Conference Call

Commissioners Attending:

Yun Jung Yang, Chair
Tawanda A. Bailey, First Vice Chair
Carole Jaar Sepe, Second Vice Chair
Gloria Chang
Amanda L. Costley
Essita Duncan
Kristi S. Halford
Eugenia B. Henry
Patricia McHugh Lambert
Beth Anne Langrell
Bonnie N. Luna
Brenda J. McChriston
Ishrat N. Memon
Roberta Pardo
Luanne Ruddell

Corrina Yi-Yuan Kuo Shen
Maxine Griffin Somerville
Evelyne S. Steward
Tamara E. Wilson
Marylou N. Yam

Commissioners Absent:

Tammy Bresnahan
Deborah L. Cartee
Maureen G. Colburn
Melissa H. Curtin
Lauren M. Lambert

Staff Attending:

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director

I. Call to Order.....Yang

A. Call to Order

A quorum having been established; the meeting was called to order at 5:12 p.m. by MCW Chair Yang.

B. Approval of Agenda

Chair Yang called for approval of the agenda for tonight’s meeting. Commissioner Yam moved approval of the agenda as submitted. Commissioner Ruddell seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

C. Approval of Minutes of the April 15, 2021 MCW Meeting

The Chair called for any amendments to the minutes of the April MCW meeting. Commissioner Ruddell noted an error in the meeting date at the top of first page and moved approval of the minutes of the April MCW meeting with that correction. Commissioner Somerville seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

II. SWIM Committee Report and Presentation.....Marylou Yam & Evelyne Steward

Phase 2 of the Commission's Status of Women in Maryland research project is complete with the publication of *Maryland Women: A Status Report*, to be released on Thursday, June 10, when it will be presented to the Roundtable Meeting of Commissions for Women in the state, and later posted on the MCW website. Advance copies were sent, electronically, to MCW Commissioners. Commissioner Yam thanked all her committee members, and the researcher, Dr. Rita Kirshstein, for all their hard work and insight in conducting the research and developing the report. She especially thanked the SWIM Committee vice chair, Commissioner Steward, who coordinated the graphic design of the report and created the beautiful PowerPoint slide presentation for tonight's briefing on the report. Commissioner Yam then presented highlights from the report, noting that, although a number of "glass ceilings" for women have been shattered in our state, many disparities remain, including:

- A gender-based wage gap persists and is especially significant for women of color.
- 60% of all minimum wage earners are female.
- Almost 1/3 of all employed women in Maryland work in health care or education.
- Childcare costs represent a huge, and for many, unsustainable percent of working mother's incomes.
- More than half of all community college presidents but only 27% of the presidents of four-year colleges and universities in the state are women.
- In both public and private colleges and universities, as the faculty rank increases, the percentage of women decreases.
- Women make up more than half the faculty of community colleges, but men are more than half the faculty at four-year colleges and universities.
- Among those incarcerated in the state's prisons, men far outnumber women.
- In 2019, there were 36,499 reported cases of domestic violence in the state and 19 women were killed that year.
- More women than men have been diagnosed with COVID, more men have died of the disease.
- There is a significant disparity in infant mortality in the state, with infants born to African American mothers dying at a rate of 10.4 per 1000 births in the state, while for both white and Hispanic newborns, the rate is less than 4 per 1000 births.
- Only three of Maryland's 24 major jurisdictions are headed by women.
- Only 76 of the 188 seats in the Maryland General Assembly are filled by women.
- There are no women among the 10 legislators representing Maryland in the U.S. Congress and Senate.

More data is needed, especially with regard to how these disparities may have been made even worse by the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, the MCW is poised to begin Phase 3 of the SWIM research project.

Commissioner Steward, vice chair of the SWIM Committee, thanked all the commissioners who helped with this study, especially Commissioner Shen and The Foundation for the MCW for its financial support of both Phases 2 and 3 of the research. The SWIM project is a 3-part initiative that began with the 2016 – 2018 Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour. The *Status Report* wraps up Phase 2. The Commission is now ready to examine how women have been affected by the pandemic over the past 14 months and to understand the challenges women face as society recovers.

This study will include a focus on women’s social needs, the economic impact, how it affected work and care-giving responsibilities, women’s mental and emotional needs and family and parenting. It will be carried out in three steps:

- An environment scan to determine what is already known about these issues;
- An online survey
- A series of virtual forums or focus groups

The SWIM Committee hopes to begin the research immediately. The Foundation has approved funding of this research and the goal is to have a report ready to publish before the end of this calendar year.

Commissioner Steward thanked Commissioner Yam for all she has contributed to this work and offered to chair the project as Commissioner Yam’s term on the MCW is complete in June of this year. Commissioner Henry offered to co-chair.

Chair Yang and First Vice Chair Bailey both commended the SWIM Committee members for this excellent work, and thanked them all, especially Commissioners Yam and Steward for an extraordinary effort.

III. Executive Committee Report..... Yang

A. Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame Exhibit..... Yam

The Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame is a product of the MCW. The MCW determines the criteria, solicits the nominations and decides whom to induct each year. The biographies of all the inductees are posted permanently on the website of the Maryland State Archives. The Maryland Women’s Heritage Center is a non-profit organization and a good friend of the MCW. It has, for many years, created and housed a physical exhibit of the Hall of Fame, with large panels portraying photos and a short biography of each inductee. The Heritage Center has recently moved to a new location in a smaller facility that no longer has for such a large and growing exhibit. There are now more than 200 inductees in the Hall of Fame, and five more are typically added each year. The Heritage Center recently asked Notre Dame of Maryland University if it would like to house the display on its campus. NDMU has the only woman’s college in the state and is interested in accepting the exhibit, but there are concerns, including the potential growth if new panels must be added each year, what entity would actually “own” the exhibit, etc.

After some discussion, it was decided that the ARC Committee should meet to consider the MCW’s role, if any, in this transition.

B. CFW Roundtable.....Somerville

The Roundtable meeting is in just three weeks. Two commissions have already responded with a total of 12 registrants. The agenda is set, including Commissioner Yam’s briefing on the Status Report and the roundtable discussion among the CFW representatives. All MCW commissioners are invited to attend and are asked to help with outreach to the CFWs in their counties to encourage their participation. Commissioner Ruddell and Second Vice Chair Sepe offered to contact the CFW in their counties.

C. June Annual Planning Meeting - June 17

Chair Yang asked all commissioners to think about which committees they would like to serve on and/or chair or vice chair, and to please let her know of their interests by June 11. All committee assignments, including appointment of the committee leadership will be decided at the June 17 meeting.

IV. Unfinished Business

A. College Courses at State Penitentiaries

As decided at last month’s meeting, the MCW wrote to the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services urging that the courses to be offered by GW University at Patuxent be made available to incarcerated women as well as to male prisoners. DPSCS Secretary Robert Green sent a very nice letter in response with assurances that women will have access to these and other educational opportunities, including those Gaucher College already offers courses at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women.

B. MCW Enabling Legislation

Commissioners Bresnahan and P. Lambert have agreed to meet with the MCW officers on June 2 to consider whether the MCW should work toward updating its legislation, and if so, how best to pursue this change.

V. New Business

A. Appreciation.....P. Lambert

Commissioner P. Lambert thanked the Commission and the individual commissioners who all reached out to her when her father passed away recently. She said that he was her hero and he had encouraged at least this one little girl to follow her dreams and strive for success.

B. Vaccine-Promoting Lottery.....Vaughan-Prather

The Governor has announced a \$2 million lottery that will provide \$40,000 cash prizes to state residents who have received [coronavirus](#) vaccinations, and a grand prize of \$400,000. Daily drawings for a \$40,000 prize will be held beginning June 1 until July 3. On July 4, the \$400,000 grand prize will be awarded through a random drawing. All state residents 18 and older who received coronavirus vaccinations in Maryland are eligible no matter when the shots were administered. No registration or entry is necessary.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Policy and Legislation (PAL) Committee..... Halford

At last month’s meeting, the MCW decided to write to the chair of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee urging in the 2022 session, the reintroduction of the bill eliminating the use of marriage as a defense against charges of sexual assault. The letter was sent to both the Chair of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee and the House Judiciary Committee. Senator Waldstreicher wrote back very quickly. He is Vice Chair of that committee and was one of the sponsors of that legislation this year. He promised that the bill will be reintroduced in 2022 and thanked the MCW for its support.

1. MLAW.....Curtin

No report.

2. WLB.....Halford

No report.

B. Achievement and Recognition (ARC) Committee..... Pardo

No report except to note that the Maryland State Archives has been posting an announcement on its Facebook page each week, highlighting the women inducted into the Hall of Fame this year.

C. Status of Women in Maryland (SWIM) Committee.....Steward

Commissioner Steward reported that Dr. Rita Kirshstein developed the proposal discussed earlier in the meeting to conduct the research on Maryland Women and COVID-19, including the environmental scan, survey, focus groups and a final report, for a cost, to be covered by The Foundation, of \$18,000. Commissioner Ruddell moved approval of the proposal from Dr. Kirshstein as presented by Commissioner Steward. Commissioner Henry seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

VII. Liaison Reports

A. The Foundation for the Maryland Commission for Women.....Shen

The Foundation’s mission of supporting the MCW’s work to improve the lives of Maryland’s women and girls is being well carried out by its funding of the SWIM project. The Foundation is proud to provide this support. Chair Yang thanked the Foundation and especially Commissioner Shen for making so much of the MCW’s work possible.

B. Maryland Women’s Heritage Center.....Yang

Now in its new home, the Heritage Center is featuring Howard County artist Leigh Marget as its first window exhibit.

C. Women Moving Forward Conference.....Bailey

No further word has been received about the plan to hold the conference at the MCIW in October. First Vice Chair Bailey will watch for updates and keep the commissioner informed.

D. Maternal Mortality Review Stakeholders Group..... Langrell

Commissioner Langrell reached out to the chair of the Stakeholders Group but has not received a response yet.

E. Maryland Women’s History Museum..... Luna

Commissioner Luna will reach out to the Museum’s founders and will send a written update to the Commissioners.

F. UMD SAFE Center..... Costley

No report.

VIII. Staff Report..... Vaughan-Prather

A. Issue Alerts

An announcement of May as National Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month was sent out on May 3.

B. Website Redesign

The DHS Communications web design team has updated the look of the MCW website and created tabs at the top, as suggested by Commissioner Sepe. DHS has its own protocols for its website and the MCW’s “website” has to conform with those standards, but the “look” of the page now has better delineation between DHS information and MCW resources.

IX. Announcements

A. Next MCW Meeting Dates:

- **CFW Roundtable Meeting – June 10 – 6 p.m.**
- Executive Committee – FRIDAY, June 11 – 4:30 p.m.
- **MCW Annual Planning Meeting – June 17 – 5 p.m.**

X. Adjournment..... Yang

Chair Yang thanked all the commissioners again for their very hard work and dedication throughout the weeks in between meetings. She again encouraged the commissioners to think about next year’s committees and where they want to invest their time and efforts as members or leaders of the MCW initiatives.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director
Maryland Commission for Women

APPROVED: June 17, 2021