

# Maryland Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, June 17, 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  
Tammy Bresnahan  
Deborah L. Cartee  
Gloria Chang  
Essita Duncan  
Kristi S. Halford  
Patricia McHugh Lambert  
Bonnie N. Luna  
Brenda J. McChriston  
Roberta Pardo  
Luanne Ruddell  
Corrina Yi-Yuan Kuo Shen  
Maxine Griffin Somerville  
Evelyne S. Steward  
Tamara E. Wilson

### Commissioners Absent:

Maureen G. Colburn  
Amanda L. Costley  
Melissa H. Curtin  
Eugenia B. Henry  
Lauren M. Lambert  
Beth Anne Langrell  
Ishrat N. Memon  
Marylou N. Yam

### Guests Attending:

Andrea Bottner  
Judith Emmel

### Staff Attending:

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

## I. Call to Order..... Yang

### A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:04 p.m. by MCW Chair Yang. She welcomed everyone in attendance, including the two newly appointed commissioners, attending tonight's annual planning meeting as guests. Their terms on the commission begin July 1, 2021.

### B. Approval of Agenda

Chair Yang called for approval of the agenda for tonight's annual planning meeting. Commissioner Somerville moved approval of the agenda as submitted. Commissioner Halford seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

### C. Approval of Minutes of the May 20, 2021 MCW Meeting

The Chair called for any amendments to the minutes of the May MCW meeting. Commissioner Luna moved approval. Commissioner Somerville seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

At this point, a quorum was established.

## II. Introductions

Chair Yang invited the two newly appointed commissioners, Andrea Bottner and Judith Emmel to introduce themselves to the commission, and then invited all the current commissioners to introduce themselves.

## III. Wrap-Up of the 2020/2021 Projects and Committee Work

### A. 2020 Women’s Centennial Summit.....Steward

The past year has been especially challenging for everyone. August 26, 2020 marked the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment to the U.S. Constitution, guaranteeing American women the right to vote. Planning for this event began in 2019, but in mid-2020 as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic became apparent, the planning committee was forced to “pivot” from the anticipated in-person event to a virtual conference – the first ever planned by the MCW. Attended by more than 650 individuals, it featured a panel on the history of the women’s suffrage movement, including the involvement of black women despite overt and covert racism embedded in the movement, and a panel of women “thought leaders” discussing women’s leadership and the intersectionality of race and gender. Commissioner Steward said she was most proud of the virtual “Parade of 100 Sheroes” created for the Summit, featuring women and girls across the state who had contributed to the fight against the pandemic. This may have been the largest audience ever attending an event organized by the Commission for Women.

### B. Policy and Legislation (PAL) Committee .....Bresnahan

The MCW established a state legislative platform of eleven bills (six issues, with five having been cross-filed in both houses). The MCW was disappointed with the failure of the Marriage is No Defense bill (abolishing the protection of spouses from charges of sexual assault against each other) and has written to the committee leaders in both the House and the Senate urging the re-introduction and passage of the bill in the 2022 Maryland General Assembly.

### C. Achievement and Recognition Committee.....Cartee

For the second year, the induction of the five honorees into the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame and the presentation of the awards to the winners of the Maryland Young Women Leaders Awards had to be virtual. A website was designed for this purpose. For the first time, thanks to the generosity of the Pai Ping Foundation, and Commissioner Henry, a \$500 scholastic award was presented to each of the high school students selected as Maryland Young Women Leaders. Calls for nominations for both the Hall of Fame and the Young Women Leaders will be issued in the Fall, and the recognition, whether in person or virtual, will take place in March 2022.

### D. Status of Women in Maryland (SWIM).....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*, just released on Thursday, June 10, when it was presented to the Roundtable Meeting of Commissions for Women in the state, and posted on the MCW website. The MCW has now initiated Phase 3 of the SWIM research project, examining the impact of the recent pandemic on the lives of Maryland women, with a goal of completing the study by the end of this calendar year. A research consultant has been hired, thanks to the generosity of the Foundation for the Maryland Commission for Women, and the SWIM Committee will coordinate and oversee the project.

**E. Other Initiatives:**

- 1. Health and Wellbeing Alerts.....McChriston**  
The MCW posts a “Year of Women’s Health” resources on its website, related to national health awareness month designations, and every month shares women’s health alerts with its distribution lists. This year, in response to the increased stress created by the pandemic, a small work group created a special series of four health alerts, beautifully designed by Commissioner Steward, focusing on self-care and well-being. The alerts were sent out, one each week of April – National Stress Awareness Month.
  
- 2. CFW Roundtable Meeting.....Somerville**  
Each year, the MCW invites the 15 county/city Commissions for Women (CFWs) in the state to meet to share strategies, challenges, information and ideas with each other and to develop networks among them. This year’s Roundtable Meeting was held just last week, June 10, and it too, for the first time was held virtually. The result was wonderful as every county CFW sent representatives and a total of 70 individuals participated, by far the largest CFW Roundtable meeting ever. Second Vice Chair Sepe has worked with the MCW staff to develop a short survey of the county CFWs, after the Roundtable. Their responses will be compiled into a report to be shared with all of them.
  
- 3. MCW Statute Study Group.....P. Lambert**  
Some of the language in the MCW’s enabling legislation is a bit outdated. A small group of commissioners is studying what the legislation might look like if it were updated, and whether such an effort, which would likely take at least a couple of years to change the state law, is worth undertaking.
  
- 4. Response to Urgent Matters.....McChriston**  
Commissioner McChriston noted that the MCW had also been able to respond to current events during the past year such as its issuing public statements in support of Black Lives Matter and support for the Asian Pacific Islanders in the U.S. It is important, she noted, to leave some room in the MCW’s workload to allow for such emerging issues and events when they arise.

**IV. Structure of the Planning Discussion.....Bailey**

**A. MCW Legislative Mandate**

Among the duties outlined in the MCW’s enabling legislation are:

- Study the status of women in our state
- Recommend methods of overcoming discrimination
- Recognize women’s accomplishments and contributions
- Provide informed advice to the executive and legislative branches of government on the issues concerning the women of our state
- Direct attention to critical problems confronting women

**B. Goals for the Planning Session**

- To develop consensus for and commitment to a plan of action for the year
- To engage commissioners as a team
- To develop work plans for each committee
- To agree on the responsibilities of each commissioner in accomplishing the agenda

**C. Criteria for the Selection of MCW Priorities and Committees**

First Vice Chair Bailey reviewed the MCW’s adopted criteria for selection of projects, including consistency with MCW legislative mandate and mission, non-duplication of others’ work, realistic potential for success, sufficient expertise onboard, and a clear formulation of objectives, The MCW has already agreed on the three committees for this program year: ARC, PAL and SWIM.

**D. Every Commissioner’s Contribution is Important**

These three projects will make for a very full agenda. The work of every Commissioner is needed for these projects to be successful. Every Commissioner is invited to join a committee.

**V. Formation of Current Committees and Appointment of Chairs.....Yang**

At last month’s meeting, Commissioners were invited to let the Chair know of their interest in chairing or vice chairing one of the committees. She appointed new chairs for each committee and invited the Commissioners to identify the committee/s on which they want to serve:

**A. Achievement and Recognition Ceremony (ARC) Committee**

- Chair: Pardo
- Vice Chair: L. Lambert
- Vice Chair: Somerville
- Bottner
- Cartee
- Chang
- Emmel
- Henry
- Luna
- McChriston
- Memon
- Shen
- Steward

**B. Policy and Legislation (PAL) Committee**

- Chair: Halford
- Vice Chair: Duncan
- Bottner
- Bresnahan
- Duncan
- Emmel
- Lambert
- Langrell
- McChriston

**C. Status of Women in Maryland (SWIM) COVID-19 Research Committee**

- Chair: Wilson
- Vice Chair: P. Lambert
- Duncan
- Halford
- Langrell
- Ruddell
- Shen
- Somerville
- Steward

**D. MCW Enabling Legislation Study Group**

- Bailey
- P. Lambert
- Bresnahan
- Sepe
- Yang

All three MCW officers will serve as members of all three committees. Chair Yang reminded the new Chairs of the three committees to mark the dates of the Executive Committee meetings on their calendars.

Commissioner Pardo thanked Commissioner Cartee for her consistent and wise leadership of the ARC Committee for the past several years. Commissioner Halford commended Commissioner Bresnahan’s extensive experience and wisdom as chair of the PAL Committee. Commissioner Wilson thanked both Commissioners Yam and Steward for all the creativity and hard work they contributed to the SWIM Committee this past year.

**VI. Liaisons Sponsorship and New Projects.....Sepe**

**A. Liaison Relationships**

Second Vice Chair Sepe reviewed the current year’s liaisons to other organizations and invited commissioners to volunteer for those liaison opportunities this year. The following Commissioners will serve in these roles:

- |  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| • Maryland Women’s Heritage Center             | Yang                       |
| • Foundation for the MCW                       | Henry, Shen, Steward, Yang |
| • MLAW   | Langrell                   |
| • 2021 Women’s Legislative Briefing            | McChriston                 |
| • 2021 Women Moving Forward Conference         | Bottner, McChriston        |
| • Maternal Mortality Review Stakeholders Group | Langrell                   |
| • Maryland Women’s History Museum              | Emmel, Luna                |
| • Maryland SAFE Center                         | Somerville                 |
| • National Association of CFWs (NACW)          | Vaughan-Prather            |

Commissioner P. Lambert asked that the liaison reports at the MCW meetings be kept very brief, or perhaps submitted in writing, as the nine reports take time away from the MCW's own work and its ability to respond to unanticipated events that occur during the year. Commissioner McChriston agreed and wondered if the MCW can really handle all the liaison relationships and still put enough energy into its own projects. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather noted that it is important for the MCW to have good working relationships with the organizations in the state that support its mission and contribute leadership on important women's issues, such as the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence and the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault.

Commissioner Steward noted that the topic of the meetings and agenda has come up often and asked if the Executive Committee would like a commissioner or two to conduct a short survey of the Commissioners over the summer, asking their opinions on the structure of the meetings. Commissioners P. Lambert, McChriston and Steward volunteered to develop a survey to present to the Executive Committee before sharing with the full Commission.

### **B. Sponsorship of 2021 – 2022 Events and Memberships**

The Commissioners reviewed and discussed the events to which the MCW contributed a sponsorship and the organizations for which the MCW purchased a membership in 2020 – 2021. Commissioner Ruddell moved approval of the sponsorships presented and Commissioner P. Lambert seconded the motion. After discussion, the motion was tabled to the MCW's September meeting. Commissioner McChriston moved that the MCW pay its NACW membership, since it is due now, but not sponsor the annual conference. Commissioner P. Lambert seconded that motion which passed unanimously.

### **C. New Possibilities for 2021 – 2022**

Second Vice Chair Sepe suggested that the MCW develop a quarterly newsletter to send to all our distribution lists announcing all the activities sponsored by the county CFWs and other activities of the organizations to which the MCW maintains a liaison. Commissioner McChriston wondered if the MCW really has the capacity to maintain a quarterly newsletter, given all that it has undertaken for the coming year. Second Vice Chair Sepe asked for a small workgroup to develop a proposal for the scope of some form of quarterly communication vehicle. She and Commissioner McChriston will explore the option and report back to the Executive Committee in September.

## **VII. Announcements**

- A.** The MCW received a very nice note of thanks from the family of the late Linda Mahoney, in response to the sympathy card the Commission sent.
- B.** The MCW has asked the Attorney General's Office for advice on what the MCW's role is, if any, in the proposed transfer of the Hall of Fame physical exhibit from the Maryland Women's Heritage Center to Notre Dame of Maryland University.
- C.** Chair Yang reminded those in attendance that they really are the "eyes and ears" of the MCW and invited them to bring information and issues to the MCW's attention when appropriate.
- D.** The recently published **Maryland Women: A Status Report** provides a list of issues around which the MCW can focus its work, including speakers invited to MCW meetings and the PAL Committee's legislative platform.
- E.** The Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs in creating a new office for women veterans and has been invited to brief the MCW on this initiative at the MCW's October meeting. The MDVA is currently seeking a program director for this new office. The job announcement will be shared with the MCW's distribution lists.

F. Governor Hogan just announced this afternoon that the newly created federal Juneteenth Holiday will be celebrated tomorrow in Maryland and state government offices, including the MCW will be closed.

**VIII. Adjournment.....Chair Yang**

Chair Yang thanked the Commissioners whose terms are complete effective June 30 for everything they have contributed, stating that their voices will be missed. First Vice Chair Bailey also thanked the Commissioners who are leaving and welcomed the new Commissioners. She noted that special thanks are due to Commissioner Steward, even though her term is not ending, for all the hard work and creativity she contributed to the MCW's work.

Chair Yang reminded the Commissioners that the Commission will not meet again until September but that the Committees will likely be hard at work over the summer months.

Next Executive Committee Meeting: Thursday, September 9 at 4:30 p.m.

Next Commission Meeting: Thursday, September 16 at 5 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

**Respectfully Submitted By:**

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director

**Approved:** September 16, 2021