

Maryland Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 21, 2023

5 p.m.

Attman-Glazer Building, 45 Calvert Street, Annapolis, MD

Commissioners Attending:

Pier Blake
Jonathon Carrington
Gloria Dent
Essita Duncan
Judith Emmel
Kathryn M. Fiddler
Maggi G. Gaines
Sarah Klein
Patricia McHugh Lambert
Christine Lee
Brenda J. McChriston
Maxine Griffin Somerville, 1st Vice Chair
Evelyne S. Steward
LaShaune Stitt

Lenita Walker
Monica Watkins

Commissioners Absent:

Tawanda A. Bailey, Chair
Deborah Cartee
Linda Han
Lauren M. Lambert
Jenny Peña Dias
Tamara Wilson

Staff Attending:

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

I. Call to Order.....First Vice Chair Somerville

The meeting was called to order at 5:03 p.m. by First Vice Chair Somerville. Chair Bailey is unable to attend tonight's meeting as her mother passed away last week and services are tomorrow morning. Commissioners all expressed their sympathy for Chair Bailey and her family. First Vice Chair Somerville sent flowers on behalf of the Commission.

A. Approval of Agenda

First Vice Chair Somerville welcomed the commissioners in attendance and called for approval of the agenda for tonight's meeting. Commissioner Dent moved approval of the agenda. Commissioner Duncan seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

B. Approval of Minutes

First Vice Chair Somerville called for approval of the minutes of the July 13, 2023 Commission meeting. Commissioner Dent moved approval of the minutes as submitted. Commissioner Gaines seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

II. Executive Committee Report.....First Vice Chair Somerville

A. Introduction of New Commissioner

Governor Moore has appointed Dr. LaShaune Stitt to fill the vacant position on the MCW. Those in attendance introduced themselves to her.

B. Commissioner Resignations

In the past week, three commissioners have submitted their resignations from the MCW, all for personal reasons: Andrea Bottner, Beth Anne Dorman and Eugenia Henry. The Governor's Appointments Office is aware and will make decisions on new appointments.

C. Former Chair of Baltimore County CFW

Ruth Howard, former chair of the Baltimore County Commission and former board member of the National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW) passed away last month. She had contributed much to her own CFW and to CFWs nationwide and will be missed.

D. Sponsorship of the MNADV Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony

As approved at the MCW's annual planning meeting in July, the MCW will purchase a sponsorship of the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence October 26 Annual Meeting and Awards Ceremony.

E. CFW Initiative

Encouraging the establishment of Commissions for Women in every major jurisdiction in the state was one of the goals of the ACT committee last year. Continuing that effort will become an objective of the MCW Executive Committee this year. Commissioner P. Lambert prepared a report on the current status of CFWs in Maryland for inclusion in the MCW's annual report. Of Maryland's 24 major jurisdictions (23 counties plus Baltimore City), only seven do not have a local CFW. Carroll County is the only county west of the Chesapeake Bay without its own CFW. The other six are all on the Eastern Shore. It is interesting to note that of the seven counties that do not now have a CFW, only Talbot County has any women on its County Council/Board of County Commissioners. The other six counties have only men on their governing boards. Former Commissioner Beth Anne Dorman has offered to continue to encourage the Talbot County Council to establish a CFW there, and Commissioner P. Lambert has developed some contacts in Carroll County who have expressed interest in supporting this initiative there.

III. Unfinished Business

A. Proposed Bylaws Amendments

The proposed Bylaws amendments regarding virtual/in-person attendance was never brought up for a vote. Commissioners Lambert, Dent and Klein volunteered to form a temporary review group to look over the current Bylaws, the proposed amendments and to consider if any other changes are needed. The group will present its recommendations in writing to the MCW at the October meeting so that they may be submitted for a vote of approval at the November meeting.

B. 2023 – 2024 Committee Memberships

Commissioners were asked to review the committee memberships listed in the minutes of the July meeting. Those commissioners who have not already joined a committee were asked to do so. Commissioner Gaines and Fiddler joined the PAL Committee and Commissioner Watkins joined the ACE Committee.

IV. New Business

A. MLAW Board

Commissioner Walker has been elected to the Board of Directors of the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women. PAL Committee Chair Duncan will continue to serve as the MCW's liaison to MLAW. The long-serving Executive Director of the Women's Law Center of Maryland, Michelle Siri, is leaving that post to take on the leadership of the Maryland Legal Services Corporation. She has been an extraordinary leader, and the Center has been the primary sponsor of MLAW. She will be missed in this role.

V. Committee Reports

A. Advocacy, Collaboration and Engagement (ACE) Committee.....Klein

The virtual first meeting of this committee was cut short by strong storms that cut electricity and internet access that evening. Commissioner Klein will develop a revised draft mission statement of the committee and will schedule another meeting soon.

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

1. MLAW (Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women)

The MLAW Fall Conference is scheduled for November 4, featuring Lt. Governor Aruna Miller as the keynote speaker and Del. Edith Patterson. At its annual planning meeting, the MCW decided to use \$1050 of its tiny budget to sponsor the conference and provide admission for local CFW representatives. Commissioner Duncan moved that the MCW sponsor the conference at the Platinum level (\$500) which includes five admissions, and to share as many tickets as possible with the remaining \$550, with the county/city CFWs, after purchasing admission for any additional MCW commissioners who may want to attend. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dent and passed unanimously.

The deadline for submitting recommendations for legislation to be considered at the Fall Conference for inclusion on the 2024 MLAW agenda is October 20.

2. ERA Sign-On Request

The ERA Taskforce of Maryland NOW has asked the MCW to sign onto a letter requesting the introduction of an ERA-affirming resolution in the 2024 Maryland General Assembly. After discussion, Commissioner Gaines moved that the MCW sign onto the letter. Commissioner Watkins seconded the motion which passed with three abstentions. All three commissioners abstaining (E. Duncan, S. Klein, P. Lambert) indicated that they do so “without prejudice.”

C. ARC Committee.....Blake

The Achievement and Recognition Commemoration Committee has met twice and submitted the following recommendation to the Commission:

For the 2024 Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame, the ARC Committee recommends a one-time-only exception to its procedures that no Call for Nominations be issued and that the following women, who have each recently achieved an historic first in Maryland’s history, be inducted:

- Aruna Miller, first Asian American and second woman ever elected Lt. Governor in the history of our state
- Adrienne Jones, first woman and first African American ever elected Speaker of the Maryland House of Representatives
- Brooke Lierman, first woman ever elected Maryland State Comptroller
- Susan Lee, first Asian American Secretary of State in Maryland, first Asian American elected to the Maryland State Senate, first Asian American woman and first Chinese American to be elected to the Maryland General Assembly
- Nancy Pelosi – first woman ever to serve as Speaker of the U. S. House of Representatives

The motion passed with one abstention.

The Call for Nominations for the Maryland Young Women Leaders Awards will be launched on Monday, September 25 with a closing date of October 13 at 4 p.m. The Committee also plans to ask to hold the induction/awards ceremony at Government House in March 2024.

VI. Liaison Reports

A. The Foundation for the Maryland Commission for Women (TFMCW)

Commissioner Steward reported that former Commissioner Henry stepped down from her position as Chair of The Foundation, earlier this week. A board meeting will be scheduled soon to select new leadership. Commissioner Klein noted that she would very much like to be involved with The Foundation and Commissioner Steward offered to communicate her interest to the board.

B. Maryland Women’s Heritage Center

No report

C. Women Moving Forward Conference.....L. Lambert and Blake

No report.

D. Maternal Mortality Review Stakeholders Group

No report.

E. UMD Safe Center

No report

F. Maryland Semiquincentennial (MD 250) Commission.....Emmel

No report

G. National Association of Commissions for Women.....Emmel and Somerville

Commissioners Emmel and Somerville attended the NACW virtual membership meeting on August 12, and learned that plans now are to hold the 2024 NACW conference in Boston. Commissioner Somerville also attended the Women’s Bureau Quarterly CFW meeting on September 12 where a discussion of C190 addressing Gender Based Violence and Harassment in the workplace was discussed.

H. Maryland Commission on LGBTQ Affairs.....Carrington

Commissioner Carrington met with the Commission on LGBTQ Affairs Executive Director, Jeremy Browning on August 1 to discuss the relationship between our two commissions. Mr. Browning offered to attend a meeting of the MCW to discuss appropriate, gender-neutral language if that would be helpful. He also suggested that issues for LGBTQ women and transgender men could be areas of possible collaboration. The Commissioners attending were very receptive to this offer.

VII. Staff ReportVaughan-Prather

A. Annual Report

The FY 2023 MCW Annual Report is written, including a beautiful message from DHS Secretary López. The report is now at the graphics office being designed for print.

B. Staffing Plans

Executive Director Vaughan-Prather plans to retire effective December 1, with a final date in the office of November 17. Commissioner P. Lambert suggested that the Commission might want to request a meeting with Secretary López to discuss the process of finding a new Executive Director and plans for the interim staffing of the office.

VIII. Announcements

A. October Executive Committee Meeting: Thursday, October 12, 2023 at 4:30 p.m. Virtual

B. October MCW Meeting: Thursday, October 19, 2023 at 5 p.m. (Virtual)

IX. Adjournment

No further business being brought before the Commission, First Vice Chair Somerville thanked the Commissioners for all their work and wished them a very good weekend. The meeting was adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted: October 13, 2023

By: Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director

Approved:

DRAFT