

# Maryland Commission for Women

## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 15, 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  
Melissa H. Curtin  
Essita Duncan  
Kristi S. Halford  
Eugenia B. Henry  
Patricia M. Lambert  
Beth Anne Langrell  
Bonnie N. Luna  
Brenda J. McChriston

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

#### Commissioners Absent:

Lauren M. Lambert

#### 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 5:03 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

Due to scheduling conflicts, Commissioners Shen and Bresnahan have both requested that their reports be moved up on the agenda. The Chair called for approval of the agenda, with these amendments. Commissioner Langrell moved approval of the agenda as amended. Commissioner Costley seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

##### C. Approval of Minutes of September 17, 2020 MCW Meeting

The Chair called for approval of the minutes of the September meeting. Commissioner Duncan moved approval. Commissioner Bresnahan seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

## **II. Amended Agenda Items**

### **A. The Foundation for the Maryland Commission for Women Liaison Report..... Shen**

Commissioner Shen is President of the Foundation which was established in 2017 to raise funds to support the MCW's program, projects and initiatives. The Foundation is in good financial shape following the 2020 Women's Centennial Summit and has pledged its support for the SWIM project to be discussed later in this evening's meeting. She thanked the Commissioners who serve on the Foundation Board of Directors for their hard work and encouraged all Commissioners to support the Foundation's efforts.

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

The Policy and Legislation Committee met on October 7 to develop its plan for the 2020 – 2021 program year.

The PAL Committee recommends the following workplan for 2020 – 2021

- Select several bills (5 – 6 that will likely each be cross-filed) on which to focus the MCW's support, present this proposed legislative platform to the full MCW at its January meeting
- Carry out an engaged advocacy effort in the Maryland General Assembly this year, possibly with meetings with legislators about the bills the MCW supports, etc. Each PAL Committee member will commit to take the lead on one piece of the MCW's adopted legislative platform.
- Continue to strengthen the MCW's reputation as a competent and credible resource to the legislature
- Initiate an exploration of the feasibility of strengthening the MCW's enabling legislation. This is likely to be a multi-year project that will begin after the MGA closes in April. Commissioner P. Lambert agreed to lead the initial exploration by comparing the MCW's legislative mandate with those of other Commissions for Women in our state and in other states.

The PAL Committee recommends to the MCW that it continue its support of legislation to require the Maryland Department of Corrections to operate a pre-release facility for the women incarcerated at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women. This was the only bill out of six initiatives supported by the MCW during the 2020 session of the MGA that did not pass.

The following PAL Committee members agree to represent the MCW on the two organizations below:

- MLAW – Melissa Curtin
- WLB – Kristi Halford

The PAL Committee will schedule its regular meetings for the first Wednesday of each month at 4 p.m.

The PAL Committee will meet at 4 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month until June 2021.

### **III. Executive Committee Report..... Yang**

#### **A. Commissioner Updates**

MCW Second Vice Chair Sepe, as co-president of the League of Women Voters of Frederick County, encouraged everyone to be sure to vote in the November 3, 2020 elections. Information on voting may be found at [vote411.org](http://vote411.org).

#### **B. Appointment of MCW Committee Chair and Vice Chairs**

The following commissioners were appointed to lead the MCW's 2020 – 2021 Committees:

- **PAL Committee:** Commissioner Bresnahan, Chair; Commissioner Halford, Vice Chair
- **ARC Committee:** Commissioner Cartee, Chair; Commissioners Pardo and L. Lambert, Vice Chairs
- **SWIM Committee:** Commissioner Yam, Chair; Commissioner Steward, Vice Chair

#### **C. Bylaws Review**

It has been suggested that the MCW Bylaws may need to be reviewed, especially with regard to the provisions for virtual meetings. The Executive Committee will examine the Bylaws and present recommendations for amendments at the November MCW meeting. The vote on any recommended changes will take place at the January MCW meeting.

### **IV. Unfinished Business**

#### **A. Liaisons for 2020 – 2021**

The following liaisons were appointed:

- Maryland Women's Heritage Center – Yang
- Foundation for the MCW – Shen
- Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women – Curtin
- 2021 Women's Legislative Briefing (WLB) – Halford
- 2021 Women Moving Forward Conference – Colburn and McChriston
- Maternal Mortality Review Stakeholders Group – Langrell
- National Association of Commissions for Women – Sepe and Vaughan-Prather
- Maryland SAFE Center – Costley
- Maryland Women's History Museum - Luna

#### **B. CFW Roundtable Meeting**

For the past six years, the MCW has invited representatives of county Commissions for Women (CFWs) in the state to a meeting to share plans, challenges unique to CFWs, and strategies for advocacy. For the past five years, that roundtable meeting has been held in conjunction with the annual Fall Conference of the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women. This was done partly to encourage CFWs to take advantage of the information and networking available at the MLAW Conference, and also for the efficiencies of joint event planning and attendance. The MCW was able to pay the MLAW registration fee for representatives of the County CFWs, and then invited them to a special two-hour meeting in the afternoon of the conference. The CFWs have expressed appreciation of the opportunity to meet with other CFWs and to share information. This year, the MLAW Conference will be held virtually. As the issue of travel time and costs are no longer present, it might make sense to hold the Roundtable on a different date. The Executive Committee will plan a virtual roundtable meeting for CFWs on December 1. Any Commissioner interested in participating in the

planning process would be most welcome. (Commissioners Somerville and Ruddell both volunteered, via email during the meeting, to work on this project.)

**C. Sponsorship of Non-MCW Events and Memberships in 2020 – 2021**

- MLAW Fall Conference – the conference will be held virtually this year, and the registration fee will be \$20 per person instead of \$50 as in the past. Sponsorships will also be available ranging from \$100 to \$500. In recent years, the MCW has supported the conference with a \$1500 sponsorship that included attendance for 30 representatives of CFWs. After considerable discussion, it was decided that the MCW, if its budget permits, will purchase a Platinum Sponsorship at \$500, and will negotiate for 30 admissions at \$20 each for the local CFW and MCW representatives.
- Commissioner P. Lambert moved that with this one change (MLAW), and with some flexibility to meet small year to year cost differences, the MCW approved sponsorships and memberships for 2019 – 2020 should be continued for 2020 – 2021, budget permitting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Halford and passed unanimously.

**V. New Business**

**A. Speakers/Presenters for MCW Meetings**

Commissioners have expressed interest in having more issues addressed substantively, and all are invited to suggest topics and/or speakers for future meetings.

**B. Structure of MCW Meetings**

Commissioner Colburn asked if the MCW meetings could be structured to include fewer committee and liaison reports and more discussion of issues. Considerable discussion followed. Commissioner Wilson noted that the Commission is different from a corporate or even a non-profit board. It is an advisory board created by state law. Not only is it charged with certain responsibilities, but it also is required to follow certain protocols. Committees cannot take action independently of the MCW, so they must make reports to the full Commission. In addition, a public record is required for all actions of the Commission, therefore reports must be made at meetings so they may be entered into the minutes. Some commissioners suggested putting at least the liaison reports onto a “consent agenda.” The Executive Committee will consider all that’s been said and look for some creative ways to set the meeting agendas.

**VI. Committee Reports**

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

The MCW’s enabling legislation requires it to recognize women’s contributions and accomplishments – that is the purpose of the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame and the Women of Tomorrow Awards. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, last year’s induction and awards ceremony had to be cancelled only a week before the event and recognition was provided on the MCW’s website.

The ARC Committee met on September 30 to start planning for the 2021 program. It appears unlikely that the induction and awards ceremony can be held in-person in March 2021, so possible alternatives were discussed. There is also some feeling that the name of the Women of Tomorrow Award is in need of updating to more accurately and meaningfully reflect its purpose. The ARC Committee put several proposals before the Commission for a decision:

1. Proposed that the 2021 induction and awards be made through an on-line platform, format to be decided soon. Commissioner Yam so moved. The motion was seconded by Commissioner P. Lambert and passed unanimously.
2. Proposed several possibilities for new names for the leadership award for young women. Commissioner Steward moved, seconded by Commissioners Duncan and Henry, to rename the award: the Maryland Young Women’s Leadership Award. The motion passed with a vote of 23 in favor and one abstention.
3. Proposed providing a monetary award, instead of a crystal bowl, to each of the five students selected by the Commission. Commissioner Henry has very generously committed to provide, through the Foundation, funding for five \$500 scholastic awards to the winners of the Maryland Young Women’s Leadership Award, for each of the next five years. Commissioner Wilson moved that the Commission accept the offer of the Foundation, with great appreciation for Commissioner Henry’s generosity, to provide a \$500 scholastic award to each of the five students selected by the MCW for the award each year. Commissioner Steward seconded the motion which passed unanimously.
4. Proposed to open the nominations for both the Hall of Fame and the Maryland Young Women’s Leadership Award on October 19, if possible, and a closing date of November 20 for receipt of the nominations. Commissioner Wilson so moved. The motion, seconded by Commissioner Halford, passed unanimously.

**B. Status of Women in Maryland (SWIM) Committee..... Yam**

One of the MCW’s mandates in its enabling legislation is to study the status of women in the state and identify areas of disparity. The MCW has been engaged in this study for several years, and is now hoping to complete the second part of a three-phased research project:

Phase 1 – the Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour and Survey – Initiated in 2016 and completed in August 2018.

Phase 2 – the SWIM initiative – collecting hard data from existing databases (Census, police reports, health department, labor department, and others) that provide a statistical “snap shot” of the status of women in the state. The MCW was provided some funds in 2019 through DHS to hire a contractor whose services were, in the end, unsatisfactory and although the contract was concluded early, those funds are no longer available. The SWIM Committee proposes that a different researcher, well known to the MCW and who worked on the data analysis and report writing for Phase 1 of this initiative, be hired through the Foundation, to complete this phase of the research. Dr. Rita Kirshstein has submitted a proposal to gather extant data on several pertinent issues selected by the Committee, and create the content for a report that will consist of one- to two-page “fact sheets” on each issue. The cost for the research and report writing will be \$7500. The MCW would then work with the DHS graphics office to design the fact sheets for publication on the MCW’s website. These can be updated and expanded whenever new data becomes available. Completion of this project as a virtual report will not only provide information useful to the MCW’s work but will also help bring visibility and credibility to the MCW. Completion date is estimated to be January 2021.

The Foundation for the Maryland Commission for Women has agreed to provide \$7500 and is willing to contract with Dr. Kirshstein for Phase 2 of this initiative, pending approval by the MCW of the proposed project.

Commissioner Yam moved approval of the proposal that the Foundation contract with Dr. Kirshstein to conduct the research and write the report, with the MCW SWIM Committee providing oversight and guidance. The MCW will maintain final approval of all resulting products. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Steward and passed unanimously.

When the demographic data gathering and analysis part of this project is complete, the Committee plans to move forward with Phase 3 – Women and COVID-19 and other social crises – which will involve rich conversations asking women in Maryland how they’ve been impacted by the multiple crises of the past year, focusing on the intersectionality of gender, race and economic class. Initiation date to be early 2021.

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

The 2019 – 2020 Annual Report for the MCW has been drafted. The Committee Chairs have each reviewed and approved the chapters covering the work of their committees, and the text has been sent to the DHS graphics office for layout and design. Once it is published, it will be posted on the MCW website and the MCW leadership is likely to be invited to brief the DHS Secretary on the MCW’s work over the past year.

**VIII. Announcements**

**Next Meeting Dates:**

- Executive Committee – November 12, 2020
- **MCW Meeting – November 19, 2020**

**IX. Adjournment..... Yang**

The Chair thanked everyone for all their hard work. She adjourned the meeting at 6:53 p.m.

*Respectfully Submitted: November 19, 2020*

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director  
Maryland Commission for Women

**APPROVED: NOVEMBER 19, 2020**