

# Maryland Commission for Women

## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 16, 2020

5 p.m.

### 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  
Kristi S. Halford  
Eugenia B. Henry  
Lauren M. Lambert  
Patricia M. Lambert  
Bonnie N. Luna  
Brenda J. McChriston

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

#### Commissioners Absent:

April Nyman  
Roberta Pardo  
Ummu Bradley Thomas

#### Staff Attending:

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

#### I. Call to Order.....Yun Jung 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 and thanked them all for participating. In this time of the COVID-19 crisis and social distancing, it was not possible to meet in person. Understanding that everyone's schedules have been disrupted so significantly, it was especially encouraging that so many commissioners made time to call in for this meeting. She asked each commissioner to "check in" and just let everyone know how she and her family are holding up and stressed the importance of staying connected. Several commissioners mentioned their gratitude for the leadership of Governor Hogan in getting Maryland, and the nation, through this crisis.

##### B. Approval of Agenda

The Chair offered one addition (Process of Election of MCW Officers) to the agenda for this evening's meeting and called for approval of the agenda as amended. Commissioner Henry moved approval of the agenda. Commissioner Bresnahan seconded the motion which passed unanimously. The Chair reviewed a few "ground rules" for meeting via conference call: mute your phone when not speaking; identify yourself every time you speak; each motion will be handled as a roll-call vote; be patient with each other as we get comfortable using new technology.

**C. Approval of Minutes of February 20, 2020 MCW Meeting**

The Chair called for approval of the minutes of last month’s meeting. Commissioner Henry moved approval. Vice Chair Bailey seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

**II. Executive Committee Report.....Yang**

**A. Status of Women in Maryland (SWIM) Research Project**

A second draft of the report has been received from the contractors conducting the research. Commission staff is reviewing and re-organizing the report and will continue working with the three Commission officers to continue the revisions. Fatara Odifa is taking the lead on the staff work for this project.

**B. New Appointments to the Commission for Women**

Governor Hogan has re-appointed, and the Senate has confirmed the reappointment of three commissioners to second four-year terms:

- Tawanda Bailey (2020-2024)
- Deborah Cartee (2020-2024)
- Tamara Wilson (2020-2024)
- Two of our current commissioners were “interim appointments” to vacant, unexpired terms. Since their original appointments occurred between Senate sessions, the appointments required confirmation by the Senate this year. Both were confirmed:
- Kristi Halford (appointed to an unexpired term that ends 2022)
- Patricia McHugh Lambert (appointed to an unexpired term that ends 2023)
- The Governor also appointed four new commissioners. All four were confirmed by the Senate in March:

Luanne Ruddell (appointed to a vacant unexpired term that ends 2022)

Maxine Somerville (appointed to a four-year term effective July 1)

Beth Anne Langrell (appointed to a four-year term, effective July 1)

Essita Duncan (appointed to a vacant, unexpired term that ends in 2020, and then to a full four-year term effective 2020)

The re-appointees and new appointees all need to be sworn in by a clerk of the court, but the courts are not open for that kind of business right now. Since Commissioners Bailey, Cartee and Wilson were sworn in when originally appointed, they can serve at least until the end of their first term on June 30, but may need to be sworn in again when the courts reopen. Commissioners Halford and Lambert were sworn in when they were first appointed and needed only to be confirmed by the Senate, which they now are. The four new appointees do not become effective as commissioners until they are sworn in. The Governor’s Appointments Office is looking for a work around for this situation.

The Commission moved its annual planning meeting to the fall this year (after the Summit). It is hoped that the situation will be resolved by then and that the new commissioners can officially participate by then.

### **C. MCW Response to the COVID-19 Crisis**

Chair Yang asked the Commissioners to consider whether there is a role the MCW should play in the response to the crisis. Commissioner Steward suggested exploring the production of some kind of MCW-branded face mask/scarf that the Foundation could acquire to donate to women in need. Commissioner Cartee supported the concept but suggested that the branding be more general, perhaps relating to the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment. Commissioner Lambert said there might be liability issues in providing personal protective equipment. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather discussed some of the ways women may be adversely impacted by the health crisis. According to the Maryland Department of Health, as of this writing, there are a total of 11,572 confirmed cases of CVD-19 in our state. Of those, 6249 (54%) are women and 5323 (46%) are men. As of this writing, there have been 425 CVD-19 related deaths in the state. Of these, 198 (47% have been women and 227 (53%) have been men. (Data from <https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/>) It's still relatively early in this crisis, so the numbers and proportions will change. However, we know that women are more likely to work in jobs that deal with the crisis face-to-face, such as health care workers, grocery store clerks, child care providers, residential care facility employees) and so women may be more often exposed to the virus in their workplaces, and do not have the option to work from home. Women also make up the majority of workers in low-paying occupations with no benefits (waitresses, hospitality workers, retail store employees, hair and nail-care professionals, for example), industries that have been especially hard hit by the "shut down" and whose employees can least afford to take leave without pay and without health insurance. Mothers, especially single mothers, face even greater challenges balancing work and family and now home-schooling as well.

## **III. Unfinished Business**

### **A. WOW Festival in Baltimore**

The Women of the World Festival that had been scheduled for March 7 at the Columbus Center in Baltimore's Inner Harbor was cancelled due to the growing concerns about COVID-19. It was being hosted by the Notre Dame of Maryland University and the 19th Amendment Commemoration Commission was the major sponsor. Neither NDMU nor the WOW, Inc. is planning to reschedule the conference this year.

### **B. Delaware Commission for Women**

At the invitation of the Delaware CFW, the Chair and Executive Director traveled to Wilmington on March 2 to provide a presentation on the conduct of a listening tour similar to the Voices of Maryland Women project. The DCFW had already scheduled four listening sessions around the state but it is likely that those will have to be postponed or cancelled.

### **C. Calvert County Commission for Women**

The Chair was invited to present the keynote address at the Calvert County Women of the World (WOW) ceremony on April 18. That event has been tentatively rescheduled for the fall.

### **D. USA Today Women of the Century**

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, USA TODAY NETWORK launched the multiplatform "Women of the Century" project, to recognize and celebrate women from across America for their inspiring accomplishments in the 100 years since the ratification of women's right to vote. The MCW Chair participated on the committee to select one woman to represent Maryland. The committee reviewed about 15

nominees, most drawn from the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame. We have not received word on who made the final list.

**E. Frederick County RAV for Women Honors Vice Chair Bailey**

The Frederick County CFW held its annual awards event on March 12 (the night before the ban on large gatherings was implemented!) MCW First Vice Chair Tawanda Bailey was honored as the “Up and Coming Woman of The Year.” Commissioners congratulated her on a well-deserved award.

**IV. New Business**

**A. Election of MCW Officers**

Elections of MCW officers are held in alternate years at the June meeting. Calls for nominations will be sent to all commissioners very soon. Nominations will be due back before the May 21 MCW meeting where the candidates will be announced, and the election will take place at the June meeting. All three current officers are willing to run for re-election and to serve another two-year term.

**V. Committee Reports**

**A. PAL (Policy and Legislation) Committee..... Bresnahan**

The MCW has sent letters for supporting the following bills:

- SB210/HB248 - Protective Orders - Relief Eligibility - Rape & Sexual Offenses
- SB225/HB523 - Employee Accommodations: Pregnancy & Childbirth
- HB123/SB217 - Wage History and Wage Range
- HB0242/SB0206 - Criminal Procedure - Motion to Vacate Judgment - Human Trafficking – the True Freedom Act
- HB0608/SB0682 - Correctional Services - Prerelease Unit for Women - Requirement to Operate
- HB0233/SB0212 - Criminal Law - Assault in the First Degree - Suffocation or Strangulation - designating intentional suffocation and strangulation as Assault in the First Degree (Currently it is a second-degree offense.)

All of these bills, except HB0608/SB0682, passed! While the failure of the bill to require the operation of a pre-release unit for incarcerated women is disappointing, this is still a remarkable success ratio. Commissioner Bresnahan thanked the staff and her committee for all the hard work that went into this effort.

**B. 2019 ARC (Achievement & Recognition Ceremony) Committee.....Cartee**

The Induction and Awards Ceremony scheduled for Thursday March 19, 2020 had to be cancelled on March 12, which involved:

- Cancelled the caterer - rolling deposit over to next year's event
- Cancelled the M.C. and other speakers
- Cancelled the Miller Senate Office Building
- Contacted all the honorees and their nominators, and parents of the WTA students
- Notified the honorees that their awards and certificates are in the MCW office and we will arrange to get them to the honorees once we are able to access the facility again.
- Contacted all the Eventbrite registrants
- Notified everyone on our distribution lists
- Posted an announcement on the MCW website and Facebook

To provide public recognition of the honorees, we developed and sent to our distribution lists two press releases, one about the HOF inductees and one about the WTA honorees, both with brief biographies of each of the honorees.

We then created a PowerPoint presentation, which the DHS Communications office transformed into a [video with full biographies](#) of each of the 10 honorees; posted on the MCW website.

The [ceremony program book](#) is now also posted on the MCW website.

The Maryland State Archives posted the biographies of each of the [HOF inductees on its website](#), as it does every year, and throughout March, featured one of the 2020 HOF inductees each week on its Facebook page.

A link to the [Maryland Historic Trust Story Map](#) on the campaign for women's suffrage in Maryland is now posted permanently on the MCW website home page.

Commissioner Cartee thanked her committee and the staff for all their hard work in organizing this year's Hall of Fame and Women of Tomorrow Awards. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather thanked Commissioner Cartee for her exceedingly valuable leadership and contributions to ensuring that the public recognition of the honorees was meaningful.

**C. 2020 Women's Centennial Summit.....Henry and Steward**

The Summit is scheduled for Wednesday, August 26, 2020 in the House Office Building (HOB) with Speaker of the House Adrienne Jones presenting the keynote address. However, it seems unlikely that an in-person conference will be a possibility at that point. The Summit Steering Committee and the full Summit Planning Committee have met to discuss possible options, and considered several options. It is the recommendation of the Committee that a virtual, digital Summit be organized. The theme would be "From the Right to Vote to the Right to Lead" and it would likely be a three to four-hour long event involving a keynote address, two panel discussions and a closing. A draft of the proposed agenda was shared with the commissioners. Commissioner McChriston moved that the Commission accept the proposal of the Summit Planning Committee and work to organize a half-day online Summit with the goal of publishing on August 26. Commissioner Costley seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Commissioner Steward serves as the liaison between the MCW and the 19th Amendment Commission which was also discussing the possibility of a virtual summit since the WOW Conference was cancelled. She suggested that the 19th Amendment Commission and the Maryland Women's Heritage Center be invited to collaborate with the MCW in organizing one summit. Commissioner McChriston moved that the MCW Summit Steering Committee (the three MCW officers and the two Planning Committee co-chairs) be authorized to talk with the chair of the 19th Amendment Commission and the Heritage Center and to decide whether to enter into an agreement with either or both to plan the Summit. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

**VI. Liaison Reports**

- A. The Foundation for the MCW..... Shen**  
The Foundation held two meetings in March before the COVID-19 crisis became evident. It has now put all fundraising on hold. However the Foundation is in good financial standing and is in a position to support the Summit.
- B. Maryland Women’s Heritage Center.....Yang**  
No further report.
- C. 19th Amendment Commemoration Commission .....Steward**  
No further report.
- D. MLAW.....Curtin**  
Six of the nine bills MLAW supported passed this year! The annual Fall Conference is currently scheduled for November 14 this year. Commissioner Curtin sent MLAW’s final legislative report out to all the Commissioners via email today.
- E. 2020 Women Moving Forward Conference.....Curtin and Bailey**  
The April 11 conference for those incarcerated at the Maryland Correctional Institute for had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 crisis. The planning committee has decided to use the same plans it had developed for this year’s event for the conference next year scheduled for April 24, 2021.
- F. Maternal Mortality Review Board.....Costley**  
The Board held a virtual meeting focusing mostly on organizational issues.
- G. Maryland Women’s History Museum.....Luna**  
No report at this time, but Commissioner Luna will reach out to the Museum organizers when things have settled down a bit.
- H. UMD SAFE Center.....Costley**  
No report.
- I. Women’s Legislative Briefing.....Colburn**  
No report.

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

**A. Staffing**

All three of the MCW staff are working from home. Tammy Wise has developed a number of Issue and Health Alerts that have gone out to the Commission’s distribution lists. Fatara Odifa is working hard on the SWIM Report. The director’s cell phone number was shared with the Commissioners in case they need to reach her by phone. Otherwise the staff still has access to the office email. Everyone is becoming more experienced with technology and social media for communication.

**B. NACW**

The annual conference of the National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW) is scheduled for July in Louden County, Virginia. We haven't received word but it seems likely that the conference will be cancelled, postponed or revised into an online event. The Voices of Women in America survey being conducted online has been closed now as it seemed unwise to combine responses from before the crisis with those affected by it. A second survey more attuned to the current situation is under consideration.

**VIII. Announcements**

**A. Next Meeting Dates**

- **Executive Committee Meeting: May 14, 2020 at 4 p.m.**
- **MCW Meeting: May 24, 2020 at 5 p.m.**

Both meetings will be held as teleconferences, with video as well as audio, using WebEx as a platform.

Commissioner Chang suggested that the Commission create an online resource directory for seniors who may be feeling stressed an alone during this time of social distancing. Commissioner Bresnahan offered to provide some resources including a wonderful site that the Frederick County Office on Aging has posted – an online community center.

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

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and for all their hard work and meaningful participation. She adjourned the meeting at 6:49 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted:*

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director  
Maryland Commission for Women

**APPROVED: May 21, 2020**