

Maryland Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 17, 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
Lauren M. Lambert
Patricia M. Lambert
Beth Anne Langrell
Bonnie N. Luna

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

Commissioners Absent:

Luanne Ruddell

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 5:05 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

The Chair called for approval of the agenda, with the addition of an introduction of the two new commissioners. Commissioner Pat Lambert moved approval of the agenda as amended. Commissioner McChriston seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

C. Approval of Minutes of June 18, 2020 MCW Meeting

The Chair called for approval of the minutes of the June meeting. Commissioner Pat Lambert moved approval. Commissioner Langrell seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

II. “Getting to Know You”

Two new commissioners were appointed by the Governor to serve terms that began July 1: Essita Duncan of Prince George’s County and Beth Anne Langrell of Talbott County. The chair invited each to introduce themselves, and then asked all of the other commissioners to each take one minute to introduce themselves and to say why they wanted to serve on the Commission for Women and what they hoped to contribute to its work.

III. Wrap-Up of 2019-2020 Projects & Committee Work

The Chair asked each of the committee chairs to briefly review what their committee accomplished over the past year and what they anticipate will be the challenges for their committees in the coming year.

A. 2020 Women’s Centennial Summit..... Henry and Steward

The collective effort of all the commissioners led to the very successful event. Each commissioner contributed to this work. More than 1000 individuals registered for the Summit, and more than 600 actually signed in online to attend on the day-of. There were others who watched in groups, and another 100 have viewed the video now posted on the MCW website. Commissioner Henry thanked the media outreach team or Commissioners Sepe who created the Summit’s website, Halford who handled the Summits press relations, L. Lambert who handled the social media marketing, and especially her committee’s vice chair, Commissioner Steward for all their creativity and hard work. Commissioner Steward thanked Commissioner Henry for her extraordinary generosity in support of the Summit and her leadership as chair of the planning committee. Commissioner Sepe reported that the Summit’s website has received over 7000 page views and now has links to the video recording of the Summit and the Sheroes Parade posted on the MCW website. Commission Chair Yang noted that it was because of these extraordinary efforts and talents that the Summit drew such an outstanding attendance. Commissioner Bailey led the Parade of 100 Sheroes project which invited nominations of women and girls who have made exceptional contributions to the fight against the pandemic and against racial injustice. Her team of Commissioners Wilson, Chang, and P. Lambert reviewed all the many, many nominations and selected the 100 to be included. She commended Commissioner Steward for her creativity and the hours and hours she devoted to the design of the Power Point slides used in the Parade video. Commissioner Shen, chair of The Foundation for the MCW, reported that, thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, the Foundation now has funds to support future MCW programming. The Summit generated almost \$49,000 in sponsorships – thanks especially to the \$25,100 sponsorship by the Commission to Commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. In large part because of the donated graphic services of Commissioners Sepe and Steward, the cost to produce the Summit was kept to approximately \$20,000, meaning that the Summit generated close to \$29,000 for the Foundation. MCW Chair Yang commended the entire Summit Planning Committee and especially its leadership team of Commissioners Henry and Steward. We have received only the most positive and enthusiastic feedback for the event.

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

Each year, the PAL Committee proposes a set of bills under consideration by the Maryland General Assembly that address issues of concern to the MCW, and then submits testimony on those pieces of legislation. It can get very fast moving during the session (mid-January to mid-April) as the bills move through the legislature. It seems likely that there will be bills introduced in the 2021 session dealing with social justice and police reform.

C. Achievement and Recognition Ceremony (ARC) Committee..... Pardo for Cartee

The Achievement and Recognition ARC Committee is responsible for the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame and the Maryland Women of Tomorrow Awards program. The Hall of Fame honors women whose contributions are of historic significance but many of whom are unrecognized and unknown. The Women of Tomorrow honors high school students with outstanding records of academic achievement, leadership and community service. The ARC Committee started out, about this time last year, with no idea that a global pandemic was in the near future, soliciting nominations from across the state for the 2020 Hall of Fame (HOF) and the Women of Tomorrow Awards (WTA). The MCW received 15 nominations for the HOF, and 27 for the WTA. Two selection committees were established, made up of commissioners and leaders of state-wide women's organizations, who reviewed all the nominations and determined the five honorees for each award. The awards ceremony and reception was planned for March 19, the crystal bowls were purchased and citations secured from the Governor and our U.S. Senators. The week before the ceremony, the MCW was informed that it must cancel the event, for which nearly 200 people had registered, and a catered reception had been planned. WJZ TV's news anchor, Denise Koch, was to be the M.C. for the ceremony. Cancelling this event seemed surreal at the time. Just the cancellation was a huge task that had to be accomplished with very little notice, and it seemed so shocking. This was still a week before the shutdown in Maryland, and no one was anticipating what lay ahead. Despite the cancellation, the MCW still wanted to provide public recognition of the honorees. To accomplish that:

- The MCW developed and sent to its 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.
- A PowerPoint presentation was created, 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, the Archives 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.

For 2021, the ARC Committee will need to consider whether the traditional in-person ceremony and reception is feasible or even desirable at this point. The ARC Committee may want to consider whether an event is necessary, whether in-person or virtual, or whether the steps taken this year make sense for the future. Solicitation of Women of Tomorrow nominees may more challenging, given that most schools are operating virtually right now. However, the very positive response to the call for nominations for the Sheroes Parade makes it seem likely that there will be some wonderful students nominated. Given the times, the Commission may want to consider making COVID-19 responders the theme of the awards for 2021. But all that is something for the new ARC Committee to discuss. Solicitation of nominations typically begins in October, so that committee will need to get to work right away.

D. SWIM Report..... Sepe

The MCW conducted its Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour from 2016 to 2018, publishing the report of the project in August of 2018, and listing the top five issues identified by the women who participated. That was basically an opinion research project consisting of a series of 19 public hearings and an on-line survey in four languages. In 2019, the MCW decided to follow up that project with demographic-data driven research, to further explore the “facts” behind the issues presented. DHS granted some funding for the project and a research firm was contracted through DHS’s procurement procedures. There were serious problems with the product delivered by the firm, and, given the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the contract was cancelled with the firm receiving a partial payment. Commissioners and staff began work trying to take what could be salvaged from the research to produce a meaningful report whose data could not only guide the MCW’s work but also serve to support the MCW’s positions on policy and legislation. However, even that work had to be set aside to make time for the demands of the Summit planning, and the pivot for that event from the original goal of an in person full day conference to a virtual event. The project is still on hold and needs to be completed. It is hoped that with a concerted, concentrated effort, the project could be finished and published by the end of the calendar year. Commissioner Steward suggested that consideration be given to including data on the impact of the pandemic and the civil unrest on women’s lives.

IV. Structure of the Planning Discussion..... Yang

A. Goals for Tonight’s Meeting

- To develop a consensus for and commitment to an agenda for the year
- To engage commissioners as a team in planning and carrying out that agenda
- To develop workplans for each committee with specific goals and activities
- To agree on the responsibilities of each commissioner in accomplishing our agenda for the year.

B. Your Voice Matters

All commissioners are encouraged to participate fully in the discussion and the decision making.

C. MCW Legislative Mandate

The MCW was established by state law in 1971 and charged with certain duties. Commission First Vice Chair Bailey reviewed the MCW’s responsibilities as provided in its enabling legislation, which include:

- Stimulate and encourage study and review of the status of women in the State
- Direct attention to critical problems confronting women
- Recommend methods of overcoming discrimination against women
- Secure appropriate recognition of women’s accomplishments and contributions
- Inform the executive and legislative branches of government on issues concerning women, including offering testimony on these issues before legislative and administrative bodies

D. Criteria for Selection of MCW Priorities and Committees

- Consistent with the legislative mandate of the Commission
- Realistic level of support exists
- Sufficient number of commissioners willing to work on the committee
- Realistic potential for success and widespread impact of the committee
- Necessary expertise exists within the commission
- Compatible with the continuity of current commitments
- Non-duplication of effort, and
- A clear formulation of the objectives and strategies is stated.

V. Formation of Current Committees

A. Achievement and Recognition Ceremony (ARC)

- Deborah Cartee
- Gloria Chang
- Maureen Colburn
- Eugenia Henry
- Lauren Lambert
- Bonnie Luna
- Ishrat Memon
- Roberta Pardo
- Luanne Ruddell
- Carole Jaar Sepe
- Corinna Shen
- Maxine Griffin Somerville
- Evelyne Steward

B. Policy and Legislation (PAL)

- Tammy Bresnahan
- Amanda Costley
- Melissa Curtin
- Essita Duncan
- Kristi Halford
- Pat Lambert
- Brenda McChriston

C. Status of Women in Maryland (SWIM)

- Deborah Cartee
- Kristi Halford
- Beth Anne Langrell
- Ishrat Memon
- Carole Jaar Sepe
- Evelyne Steward
- Tamara Wilson
- Marylou Yam

MCW Chair Yang asked the former chairs of each committee to convene the first meeting of each committee for this year. At that meeting, the committees are asked to select a commissioner to recommend as chair of the committee before the October 8 Executive Committee meeting, and to develop a plan of action for the year to propose to the full Commission at its October 15 meeting.

Commissioners P. Lambert and Curtin asked that the Executive Committee explore ways to make the meetings more substantive, not just presentations of the work of the committees.

VI. Liaisons, Sponsorships & New Projects

As time was running late, the decisions of liaison responsibilities and event sponsorships will be considered at the October MCW meeting.

It is hoped that the SWIM project can be completed by the end of this calendar year. Proposals for new project could be presented at the October Executive Committee meeting, as may be any proposals for restructuring of the meetings, or the committees (assigning certain liaisons to certain committees, etc.)

At the October 15 meeting, the Commission will also discuss plans for the CFW Roundtable meeting which has traditionally be held in-person in coordination with the MLAW Fall Conference.

VII. Announcements

A. Next MCW Meeting Dates:

Executive Committee – October 8, 2020 at 4:30 p.m.

Full Commission - October 15, 2020 at 5 p.m.

B. Maryland Women’s Heritage Center Event – *The Grit Factor* book discussion – September 25

C. 2020 Women’s Legislative Briefing (WLB) will be held on January 31, 2021 as a virtual event.

D. Calvert County Library/CFW – Meet the Author event, featuring internationally renowned novelist Lisa See discussing her new book *The Island of Sea Women*; MCW Chair Yang will serve as moderator.

E. The Governor’s Office of Small, Minority and Women Business Affairs presents a webinar on October 15, 10 a.m. – noon: Empowering Women Entrepreneurs: Unlock Your Path to Purpose, Profit and Prosperity.

F. The Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) will hold its Annual Fall Conference online on November 14.

IX. Adjournment..... Yang

The Chair thanked everyone for all their hard work and meaningful participation. She adjourned the meeting at 7:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director
Maryland Commission for Women

APPROVED: October 15, 2020