

Maryland Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, November 18, 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
Andrea Bottner
Essita Duncan
Judith Emmel
Kristi S. Halford
Eugenia B. Henry
Patricia McHugh Lambert
Brenda J. McChriston
Maria Menucci
Roberta Pardo
Jenny Pena Dias-Hayes
Luanne Ruddell
Corrina Yi-Yuan Kuo Shen

Maxine Griffin Somerville
Evelyne S. Steward
Lanita Walker
Tamara E. Wilson

Commissioners Absent:

Tammy Bresnahan
Deborah L. Cartee
Gloria Chang
Lauren M. Lambert
Beth Anne Langrell

Staff Attending:

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

I. Call to Order.....Yang

A quorum having been established; the meeting was called to order at 5:03 p.m. by Chair Yang.

A. Approval of Agenda

Chair Yang noted a few amendments to the agenda, including the very recent appointment of a new commissioner. She called for approval of the agenda for tonight's meeting. Commissioner Ruddell moved approval of the agenda as amended. Commissioner Somerville seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

B. Approval of Minutes of the October 21, 2021 MCW Meeting

The Chair called for any amendments to the minutes of the October MCW meeting. Commissioner Halford moved approval of the minutes as submitted. Commissioner Somerville seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

C. Appointment of New Commissioner

Today, the Governor appointed Lenita Walker, of Prince George's County, to the Commission for Women, effective immediately. We reached out to Commissioner Walker this afternoon to invite her to attend tonight's meeting, and although given very short notice, she was able to attend. Commissioner Walker and those in attendance introduced themselves to one another.

II. Executive Committee Report.....Yun Jung Yang, Chair

A. Holiday Meeting Schedule

Commissioners were reminded that the MCW does not meet in December. The next meeting of the full Commission will be January 20, and all three committees will be hard at work in the meantime.

B. Letters to Baltimore City and Wicomico County

A letter was sent to the Wicomico County Council and Executive commending them on the reactivation of their CFW. A letter to the Baltimore City Mayor and Council urging them to appoint commissioners to their currently inactive CFW has been drafted and is awaiting approval from DHS to ensure that such advice is within the purview of the MCW.

C. Commissioner Attendance

Commissioners were reminded that the state law establishing the MCW provides that any commissioner who misses 50% of the Commission meetings in a 12-month period has resigned. Since the MCW began holding its meetings virtually in 2020, overall attendance has been excellent for almost all commissioners. The staff will be required to submit an attendance report early in 2022. Any commissioner whose attendance has been less than 50% in calendar year 2021 will need to submit a waiver request to the Governor’s Appointments Office explaining the necessity of the absences.

III. Unfinished Business

A. Letters to Other Counties Re: CFWs

At last month’s MCW meeting, the Commission decided to see if it is within its purview to write to the eight counties in our state that do not now have Commissions for Women: Caroline, Carroll, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne, Somerset and Talbot Counties. Draft letters have been developed and are waiting for DHS approval.

IV. New Business

No new business was brought before the Commission.

V. Committee Reports

A. Status of Women in Maryland (SWiM) Pandemic Impact Research.....Wilson

The SWiM Committee has been working hard this past month. The survey, using an on-line questionnaire available in five languages (English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean and French) closed October 15 with 4845 questionnaires received. Of those, more than 4600 were actually complete and are now included in the data analysis. The committee also held six focus groups. The research consultant is now analyzing the data collected, including the more than 1300 write-in responses to the optional open-ended questions in the survey. She and will develop a first draft of the report by December 15. The SWiM Committee will review the draft and submit a final report to the Executive Committee. It is hoped that the final report can be presented for the MCW’s approval at the January 20, 2022 meeting.

No meeting of the SWiM Committee are scheduled. It will conduct its work via email in November, December and January.

Chair Yang thanked Commissioners Wilson, P. Lambert for their leadership, and thanked all the SWiM Committee members for their continued work on this important project.

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

The PAL Committee met on November 16 following the MLAW Fall. PAL plans to meet every month throughout the Maryland General Assembly (MGA) 2022 session. The PAL Committee has reviewed all the proposals presented at the MLAW Fall Conference.

There are three upcoming actions for the MCW:

- MLAW will invite each of its members to rank the proposals presented at its conference from highest support to lowest. As a member of MLAW, the MCW can participate in this vote. The proposals and a Google Poll (or something similar) will be sent to our commissioners as soon as possible so the commissioners can decide what the MCW will recommend to MLAW.
- From the vote of its membership, MLAW will develop a list – its Agenda – of the bills it will support in the 2022 MGA session and will then invite its members to sign on in support of the entire agenda. The MCW PAL will recommend to the MCW whether to sign on in support of the MLAW agenda, when that time comes. That question will be presented to the MCW either as a Google Poll (or something similar) or as a motion at the January MCW meeting, if the timing permits.
- The PAL Committee will also develop a list of legislation it proposes the MCW support this year, which may include some or all of the MLAW agenda and may include other legislation as well. Again, that list may be presented to the MCW for an electronic vote or may be presented at the MCW’s January meeting.

1. Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW).....Halford for Langrell

The annual fall conference was held virtually on November 13, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., with an attendance of at least 200 individuals. Commissioner Langrell did a wonderful job moderating panel discussion in the plenary session. The MCW was a Platinum Sponsor of the conference and sent a total of 26 attendees: 11 MCW commissioners and staff and 15 representatives of 10 different county CFWs.

2. Women’s Legislative Briefing (WLB).....McChriston

Commissioner McChriston attended the November 5 planning meeting for the 2022 WLB. The Briefing will be held virtually on January 30. The theme of the conference will be “Voting Women Change Everything.” The keynote speaker will be Melanie Campbell, president/CEO, National Coalition on Black Civic Participation. Other speakers include Valerie Irvin, former Montgomery County Councilmember, and Lorna Virgili, Hispanic Information Officer with Montgomery County Government, and there will be breakout sessions focusing on various aspect of the issue. Commissioners are invited to volunteer to serve as a moderato for a break-out session, if interested. The planning committee is working on a strategy for spotlighting the events’ sponsors effectively, given virtual forum.

C. Achievement and Recognition (ARC) Committee.....Pardo

The ARC Committee met last week, and will meet monthly though April, 2022. Nominations are open until 4 p.m. on Monday, November 22. The Committee is establishing the Selection Committees now. Once the determination of the honorees is made, the committee will begin work on the website recognizing their achievements, with a goal of launching the website on March 17. Chair Yang thanked the committee and its leadership for their continuing work.

VII. Liaison Reports

A. The Foundation for the Maryland Commission for Women.....Shen

The Foundation thanks Commissioner and Foundation Board Member Henry for so generously agreeing to fund the five \$500 scholastic awards for the Maryland Young Women Leaders Awards for the second year.

B. Maryland Women’s Heritage Center.....Yang

Throughout the year, pedestrians and motorists who pass by the MWHC headquarters at 333 N. Charles Street can view a rotating window exhibit that showcases the work of Maryland women artists. On Saturday, November 13, the Center held an opening reception for Baltimore artist and Roland Park Country School art teacher Megary Sigler. On November 14, the Center, along with the Howard County Historical Society and the William G. Pomeroy Foundation, unveiled a new historic marker honoring the life and work of noted Ellicott City suffragist Laura Laurenson Byrne, at the Museum of Howard County History in Ellicott City.

C. Women Moving Forward (WMF) Conference.....Bottner

There has not been any communication as to whether there will be a conference this year.

D. Maternal Mortality Review Stakeholders Group.....Pena Dias

Commissioner Pena Dias has been officially appointed to the MMRS Group, but the Group has not met since then.

E. Maryland Women’s History Museum.....Emmel

Commissioner Emmel reached out to the founder of the MWHM. The organization hopes to reopen in March of 2022 at a new location. Commissioner Emmel and Executive Vaughan-Prather will arrange a meeting with the founder at the new site in the spring .

F. UMD SAFE Center.....Somerville

The Center continues to experience an influx of new clients needing services. The women served by this organization have been especially hard hit by the pandemic and are very much in need of additional services. Plans are being made for an event on January 22. The Commissioners will be invited. Recently, Shared Hope International released a report grading each state in the U.S. on its response to child and youth sex trafficking. Based on an evaluation of criminal laws and efforts to ensure robust and trauma informed protections are in place for trafficking victims. Maryland was assigned a failing grade. The assessment included the state’s criminal provisions, identification of and response to victims, continuum of care, access to justice for trafficking survivors, prevention and training. Commissioner Somerville offered to share the link to the report with all the commissioners so that they may read it between now and the January MCW meeting and to consider whether there is a role or response appropriate for the MCW in this issue.

G. Maryland250 Commission.....Emmel

The commission met last month and will continue meeting monthly as plans are made to commemorate the country’s 250th birthday – July 4, 2026. The 30-member commission is still in its formative stages and is setting up its committees to plan Maryland’s role in the celebration. Nineteen other states have also established 250 Commissions.

VIII. Staff Report.....Vaughan-Prather

A. Holiday Office Hours/Staffing

Maryland state government, and the MCW offices, will be closed on Thanksgiving Day and American Indian Heritage Day – November 26 and 27. The staff will be on leave November 15 as well.

B. Committee and MCW Meeting Schedules

The staff prepared a list of all MCW meetings, Executive Committee meetings, PAL, SWiM and ARC Committee meetings from November 2021 through June 2022. That document was attached to the packets for tonight’s meeting. Calendar invitations were sent to the commissioners for these meetings as well. There was some discussion about the amount of email this generates, but the commissioners agreed that they want to continue receiving the calendar invitations and appreciate the written list as well.

IX. Announcements

A. Executive Committee Meeting: Thursday, December 9, 2021 @ 4:30 p.m.(tentative, if needed)

B. Executive Committee Meeting: Thursday, January 13, 2022 @ 4:30 p.m.

C. MCW Meeting: **Thursday, January 20, 2022 @ 5:00 p.m.**

X. Adjournment

Chair Yang thanked all the commissioners, especially her Vice Chairs and the Committee leaders, for all their hard work and their attendance tonight. She wished all very happy and safe holidays. No further business being brought before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 6:01 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted: January 13, 2022

By: Judith Vaughan-Prather

Approved: January 20, 2022 (Date)