

# Maryland Commission for Women

## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 16, 2023

5 p.m.

Attman-Glazer Building 45 Calvert Street Annapolis, Maryland

### Commissioners Attending:

Tawanda A. Bailey, Chair  
Pier Blake (Virtual)  
Jonathon Carrington  
Gloria Dent (Virtual)  
Essita Duncan  
Judith Emmel  
Kathryn M. Fiddler  
Maggi Gaines  
Linda Han  
Sarah Klein (Virtual)  
Lauren M. Lambert  
Patricia McHugh Lambert  
Brenda J. McChriston  
Maxine Griffin Somerville, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair

Evelyne S. Steward  
LaShaune Stitt (Virtual)  
Lenita Walker  
Monica Watkins

### Commissioners Absent:

Christine Lee  
Jenny Peña Dias-Hayes  
Tamara Wilson

### Staff Attending:

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

## I. Call to Order/Approval of Agenda and Minutes.....Chair Bailey

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m. by Chair Bailey who welcomed the commissioners in attendance. Once a quorum was established, she called for approval of the agenda for tonight's meeting and the minutes of the October 19, 2023 meeting. Commissioner P. Lambert moved approval of both. The motion was seconded by First Vice Chair Somerville and passed unanimously.

## II. Executive Committee Report.....Chair Bailey

### A. Commission Vacancies

As of January 1, 2024, there will be five vacant positions on the Commission. Of those five positions, two expire June 30, 2024, two have one year remaining and one has two years remaining in the terms. Commissioners appointed and confirmed to those three positions during the Maryland General Assembly will begin serving immediately – probably April or May of 2024. The other two terms take effect July 1, 2024. In addition, the terms of four current commissioners will expire June 30, 2024 and only one of those commissioners, First Vice Chair Somerville, is eligible for and requesting reappointment. If the Governor fills all those positions before then, there will be at least eight and possibly nine new commissioners in July 2024. An agenda for new commissioner orientation is in the Executive Director's files and will be available to the new director and the new chair.

## **B. Planning Meeting Date**

Because of the anticipated number of newly appointed commissioners, the Executive Committee has set the date of July 18 for the FY 2024 annual planning meeting.

## **C. Maryland State Libraries Speaker Request**

The state libraries provide a series of podcasts for the visually impaired and have invited a representative from the Commission to participate in an interview in February to be aired in March during Women's History Month. Chair Bailey has accepted the invitation.

## **III. Unfinished Business**

### **A. Proposed Bylaws Amendments**

Commissioners P. Lambert, Dent and Klein volunteered to form a temporary "taskforce" to look over the current Bylaws and the previously proposed amendments and to consider if any other changes are needed. Chair Bailey and First Vice Chair Somerville joined in the discussions. The Bylaws require that commissioners receive written notice of any proposed amendments at least 30 days before voting on whether to accept those changes. A marked-up draft of the current Bylaws with proposed amendments was provided to each commissioner in the packets for this evening's meeting. The amendments will be voted upon at the Commission's January meeting.

## **IV. New Business**

No new business was brought before the commission.

## **V. Committee Reports**

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

Using the newly approved process for introducing new business to the Commission, the ACE Committee proposes that the Commission adopt a "theme" each year to highlight its work. The Governor has declared 2024 [Maryland's Year of Civil Rights](#). Throughout 2024, museums and organizations across the state will present programming that celebrates Maryland's role in civil rights. After some discussion, Commissioner Klein moved that the Commission make "Maryland Women and Civil Rights" its theme for 2024. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McChriston and passed unanimously. An appropriate "tagline" will be developed by the ACE Committee and presented to the Commission for a vote of approval by the January meeting, if not sooner.

Executive Director Vaughan-Prather noted that there are many civil rights leaders, advocates and activists, including the iconic [Gloria Richardson](#) and [Harriet Tubman](#), in the [Maryland Women's Hall of Fame](#). It would be possible for the staff to create "issue alerts" featuring one of those heroines each month of 2024.

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

#### **1. MLAW (Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women)**

The November 4 MLAW Fall Conference presented information on 18 bills to be introduced in the 2024 Maryland General Assembly. MLAW is preparing a ballot for its members to select which of those bills will be included on the MLAW platform. The PAL Committee will participate in that ballot on behalf of the Commission. Once the MLAW platform is finalized, it will be presented to the full Commission to vote on whether to sign on in support.

## **2. Legislation**

Three of the bills the Commission supported last year did not pass. These addressed training on the recognition and prevention of human trafficking, forced infant separation from incarcerated mothers, and access to period products. Commissioner Duncan proposed that the Commission agree now to continue its support for those bills if reintroduced in 2024.

Commissioner McChriston so moved. First Vice Chair Somerville seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

## **3. 2024 Women's Legislative Briefing (WLB).....Klein**

The event will be held at the Universities of Maryland at Shady Grove campus on January 28. The Commission decided at its June 2023 planning meeting to sponsor the WLB at the "Opal" level which included three admissions and an exhibit table. The planning committee is seeking recommendations for possible panelists. Commissioners are urged to send any recommendations to Commissioner Klein.

## **C. ARC Committee..... Blake**

**HOF:** The five women to be inducted into the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame this year have all been notified and sent draft biographies with a photo to approve for publication. Three (House Speaker Jones, Comptroller Lierman and Secretary of State Lee) have finalized the documents. Commissioner Blake is reaching out to the staff for Lt. Governor Miller and Congresswoman Pelosi to secure their approval.

**MYWLA:** Commissioner Dent announced that the Maryland Young Women Leaders Award Selection Committee met twice and has identified the five extraordinary young women who will receive the award in 2024. All 37 nominees and their nominators have received notice of the decision. Those not selected were sent certificates of commendation. The Selection Committee, made up of university faculty and the executive director of the state bar association, was exceptional and should be thanked, recognized at the ceremony, and invited to participate again next year.

**Ceremony:** Maryland's First Lady's chief of staff has confirmed that Government House (the Governor's mansion) will be the venue for the ceremony again this year, and that the First Lady is willing to serve as the MC for the event. Commissioner Blake will work with the First Lady's staff to coordinate the menu and other arrangements.

**Exhibit:** Commissioners Stitt and Walker, along with Executive Director Vaughan-Prather attended the opening of the physical exhibit for the Hall of Fame in the new Science Center on the campus of Notre Dame of Maryland University. The exhibit was originally created by the Maryland Women's Heritage Center and features short biographies of each of the more than 200 women who have been inducted into the Hall of Fame. The Heritage Center no longer has enough room for the exhibit. Former commissioner and current NDMU President Dr. Marylou Yam offered to create a new home for the display. It is a beautiful location and commissioners are encouraged to visit. Commissioner Walker presented remarks on behalf of MCW Chair Bailey at the ribbon cutting event.

## **VI. Liaison Reports**

- A. The Foundation for the Maryland Commission for Women (TFMCW).....Klein**  
Commissioner Klein was elected to the Foundation board of directors and then to the office of Foundation President. She encouraged commissioners to consider joining and/or supporting the Foundation as it provides support for many of the Commission's projects including the MYWLA scholastic awards and the catering for the ARC Ceremony.
- B. Maryland Women's Heritage Center.....Chair Bailey**  
The Center has several events planned. Invitations have been sent to commissioners.
- C. Women Moving Forward Conference.....L. Lambert and Blake**  
No report.
- D. Maternal Mortality Review Stakeholders Group.....Pena Dias-Hayes**  
No report.
- E. UMD Safe Center.....First Vice Chair Somerville**  
No report
- F. Maryland Semiquincentennial (MD 250) Commission.....Emmel**  
The Governor has signed an executive order reestablishing the Commission and it has been meeting regularly making plans to celebrate Maryland's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- G. National Association of Commissions for Women.....Somerville**  
No report.
- H. Maryland Commission on LGBTQ Affairs.....Carrington**  
A date will be set in the early months of 2024 for the Executive Director of the Commission on LGBTQ Affairs to present a training at one of the MCW meetings.

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

### **A. Annual Report**

The FY 2023 MCW Annual Report has been printed. Copies were brought to the meeting.

### **B. Transition Plans**

The [announcement soliciting applications for the Executive Director](#) position was released yesterday, with a closing date of November 29. Commissioners are urged to share the announcement with anyone who may be interested. This will be a time of enormous transition for the Commission, with a new Executive Director, elections for Commission officers in June, and so many new commissioners coming onboard shortly after. It can be an exceptional opportunity, especially under the new administration, to really move the commission forward, but it will require leadership on the part of the current commissioners. Executive Vaughan-Prather thanked the commissioners, both current and former, especially Chair Bailey, for all the time, expertise and talent they contribute to the work of the Commission.

## **VIII. Announcements**

- A. January Executive Committee Meeting: Thursday, January 11, 2024, at 4:30 p.m. Virtual**
- B. January MCW Meeting: Thursday, January 18, 2024, at 5 p.m. VIRTUAL**

## **IX. Adjournment**

No further business being brought before the Commission, Chair Bailey thanked the Commissioners for all their work and wished them a very good weekend. The meeting was adjourned at 6:21 p.m.

**Drafted By:** Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director (at the time)

**Submitted:** January 18, 2024

**By:** Tammy Wise, Management Associate

**Approved:** January 18, 2024