

Maryland Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, December 18, 2014

6:00 p.m.

51 Monroe Street, Rockville, MD 20850

Commissioners Attending:

Dr. Kathleen White, Chair
Dr. Homayara Aziz
Lillian Cruz
Diane Fink
Velvet Johnson
Cynthia Lifson
Varsha Mathur
Necole Parker
Toni Sandridge
Roseanna Vogt

Staff:

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director
Lesley Calderon, Student Intern

Commissioners Absent:

Lee Bachu, Vice Chair
Wandra Ashley-Williams, Secretary
Sylvia Butler
Pat Cornish
Nicole Drew
Lorna Forde
Helen Holton
Michele Hughes
Ginger Miller
Betsy Ramirez
Anita Riley
Debbie Risper
Amanda Rodriguez
Cara Tenenbaum
Diane Williams

I. Call to Order/Approval of Minutes.....Dr. Kathleen White

Dr. White called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. She noted that there was not a quorum, so she could not call for approval of the minutes of the MCW meetings on October 16 meeting or November 20. She asked the staff to poll the MCW via email to obtain approval of the minutes in a vote that will be ratified at the next meeting. She welcomed all those in attendance especially since last week's meeting had to be postponed until this evening due to inclement weather in some parts of the state. She thanked the commissioners for their delicious and generous contributions to the refreshments at the MCW networking session and visit to the MCW office just prior to this meeting.

II. Chair's Report Dr. Kathleen White

A. Introduction of New Commissioners

The Governor has appointed four new commissioners to fill the vacant terms on the MCW: Amanda Rodriguez of Prince George's County, Diane Fink of Frederick County, Cynthia Lifson of Howard County and Necole Parker of Prince George's County.

Dr. White asked those in attendance to introduce their selves. This means that all 25 positions on the MCW are now filled, but two of the current commissioners are in terms that expired in June, 2014.

B. November 1 Coalition of 100 Black Women Conference

Dr. White presented a keynote address at the conference of the Coalition of 100 Black Women in Anne Arundel County, discussing the issues confronting the women of our state and how the MCW is addressing those concerns, including the MCW's priority issues and its strategic plan.

C. Proposed Symposium

Because there was not a quorum at tonight's meeting, Dr. White tabled the discussion of a proposed April symposium on women's issues in Maryland until the January MCW meeting. She said that a committee to plan the symposium will be needed.

D. Human Trafficking Conference

The MCW was invited by the Baltimore County Commission for Women to co-sponsor a conference on human trafficking to be held January 31, 2015. However, MCW could not accept the invitation as the cost of co-sponsorship was \$1200 which is far beyond what the MCW's budget will permit. MCW offered to help with the conference in other ways.

E. Attendance and Participation

Dr. White stressed the importance of commissioners attending the MCW meetings, emphasizing the attendance requirements. She said that the MCW's work is critical and that it is very important the Commissioners note the dates of future meetings and plant to attend.

III. Unfinished Business

A. Women's Legislative Briefing

The 2015 Women's Legislative Briefing is scheduled for Sunday, January 25. At the December meeting, Commissioner Drew proposed that the MCW sponsor the WLB at the \$125 Gold Sponsor level. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather polled the commissioners on this and among the 13 who responded, the vote was unanimous in support of this proposal, so the MCW has signed on as a Gold Sponsor. Commissioner Drew represents the MCW on the WLB planning committee and Commissioner Johnson has been invited to moderate one of the seminars at the WLB. Commissioner Diane Williams is co-chairing the Pre-Registration Committee for the WLB. It was decided that she is also officially representing the MCW on the planning committee, so that her contributions will count as part of the MCW contribution to the event.

B. Strategic Plan

Dr. White urged committee chairs to submit the work plans for their committees for this year prior to the January meeting so that the MCW Strategic Plan may be finalized at the January 15 meeting.

IV. New Business

No new business was brought before the Commission.

V. Committee Reports

A. Education and Outreach

Committee Chair Ginger Miller is absent. No report.

1. Women of Tomorrow Awards Program

Committee Co-chairs Lorna Forde and Debbie Risper are both absent. No report.

2. Hall of Fame..... Varsha Mathur

Twelve women were nominated for induction into the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame in 2015. The selection committee is reviewing those nominations and will meet tomorrow morning by conference call to decide on the honorees. This is the Hall of Fame’s 35th anniversary year, and that will be highlighted in the publicity for the event. Commissioner Cruz agreed to ask Senator Manno if he would sponsor the MCW’s use of the Miller Senate Office Building for the March 13 Induction Ceremony. Dr. White asked Commissioner Mathur to send a report that includes information about any sponsorships, consideration of admission fees, plans for the reception, etc. Commissioner Parker offered to join the planning committee for the Hall of Fame.

B. Legislation and Public Policy.....Velvet Johnson

The Committee’s focus has been primarily on its contribution to the planning of the Women’s Legislative Briefing. Commissioner Drew is the official MCW representative to the planning committee, and now Commissioner Williams is her co-representative to the committee. Commissioner Johnson will moderate a panel at the event. In addition, the Committee is considering its priorities for the upcoming session of the Maryland General Assembly. Commissioner Lifson joined the committee. She anticipates legislation that will give judges more flexibility in ordering relief in domestic violence cases, permitting judges to order “any other additional relief that is warranted” in a domestic violence order.

C. Public Relations and Communications.....Lillian Cruz

The Committee is organizing a social media piece and is deciding which platform will be best for communication about MCW’s work.

Dr. White suggested that the MCW send a letter of congratulations to the newly elected Governor and Lt. Governor. Those in attendance approved the recommendation. Commissioner Cruz will draft the letter. It is to be printed and ready for signature by each of the commissioners at the January 15 meeting.

D. Health and Wellness

Committee Chair Dr. Aziz was not present for this part of the meeting. No report.

E. Maryland Women’s Heritage Center

Committee Chair Holton is no present. No report.

F. Ad Hoc Committee on the Bylaws

Committee Chair Williams was not present but submitted the Committee’s work plan for the year and a written report of her committee’s work so far:

The current MCW bylaws have language that repeats the MCW’s enabling legislation. This language has been removed from a draft that will be presented to the MCW as having it there creates the impression that these provisions are within the MCW’s purview to change, and they are not. The Commission cannot change or override state law. The bylaws should refer to those aspects of the MCW’s operations that are within its authority to control. Commissioner Vogt is reviewing the entire bylaws to ensure their compliance with the Maryland Open Meetings Act.

Dr. White directed the Committee to develop a proposal for whether and how call-in participation in MCW meetings will be permitted. The proposal is to be presented for a vote at the MCW’s January 15, 2015 meeting. The rest of the Committee’s work can be conducted during the remainder of the year.

VI. Liaison Reports.....No Reports

VII. Staff Report.....Judith Vaughan-Prather

A. Commissioner Badges and Business Cards

Badges for the new commissioners will be ordered as soon as possible. New business cards are needed for all commissioners, but will not be ordered until after the change of administration.

B. Holiday Schedule

State offices are closed December 24, 25, 31 and January 1. Program Manger Young and Executive Director Vaughan-Prather will be out of the office on December 26 and January 2. Vaughan-Prather will be in the office December 29 and 30.

VIII. Announcements

The Women Legislators of Maryland will hold its Annual Opening Reception on Tuesday, January 13, 2015, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. at Governor Calvert House in Annapolis. For more information visit www.WomenLegislatorsMD.org.

IX. Adjournment.....Dr. White

Dr. White thanked the commissioners for attending and for all their hard work. She adjourned the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director
Maryland Commission for Women
01/15/2015

APPROVED 1/15/2015