

# Maryland Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, April 9, 2015  
5:00p.m.

Attman-Glazer Building      45 Calvert Street, Annapolis, MD

## Commissioners Attending:

Dr. Kathleen White, Chair  
Lee Bachu, Vice Chair  
Wandra Ashley-Williams, Secretary (TC)  
Dr. Homayara Aziz  
Sylvia Butler  
Pat Cornish  
Diane Fink (TC)  
Lorna Forde (TC)  
Michele Hughes (TC)  
Cynthia Lifson  
Necole Parker  
Betsy Ramirez  
Toni Sandridge  
Roseanna Vogt  
Diane Williams

## Commissioners Absent:

Helen Holton  
Lillian Cruz  
Nicole Drew  
Velvet Johnson  
Anita Riley  
Debbie Risper  
Amanda Rodriguez

## Staff:

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director

*(TC) Attendance via teleconference*

- I. Call to Order/Approval of Minutes.....Dr. Kathleen White, Chair**  
Dr. White called the meeting to order at 5:06 p.m. and called for approval of the minutes of the February 19, 2015 MCW meeting. Commissioner Ashley-Williams moved approval of the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Williams and passed unanimously.
- II. Chair's Report ..... Dr. Kathleen White, Chair**
- A. 2015 Maryland Women's Hall of Fame**  
Dr. White commended the commissioners on the very successful event on March 19. It was very well received by the governor, the First Lady and their daughter, Jaymi Sterling who served as the Mistress of Ceremonies for the program. Dr. White said that the entire event was stellar and she thanked all the commissioners for their help in every aspect of this event, including developing sponsorships.

**B. Maryland NOW Event**

On Sunday, March 22, Maryland NOW held an event at the Maryland Women’s Heritage Center commemorating Women’s History Month. The program was entitled: *Women Working for Social Justice*. Dr. White participated as a speaker in a panel discussion along with Margaret Dunkel, Chair of the Charles County Commission for Women (CFW), Jennifer Jones Peoples, Chair of the Prince George’s County CFW and Lorna Forde, First Vice Chair of the Montgomery County CFW.

Another panel featured author Jerdine Nolen and historians Debra Sandoe McCauslin and Virginia Schurmar. A session on *Women of Faith Working for Social Justice*; included the Rev. Holly Ulmer, moderator; Rabbi Stephanie Bernstein, Temple Rodef Shalom; Donna Hakimian, Representative for Gender Equality and the Advancement of Women for the Baha’is of the United States; and Peggy Maclin, The Sanctuary at Kingdom Square.

Dr. White reported that the event was an excellent opportunity for information sharing and networking.

**C. It’s Time Conference**

The MCW has been invited to participate as an Engagement Partner for *It’s Time 2015: the Partnership Summit to Elevate Women’s Leadership* to be held May 1 – 3 in Baltimore. Dr. White asked Commissioner Fink to describe the conference. Commissioner Find reported that *It’s Time 2015* is a three-day event produced by the *It’s Time* Network, whose convening partners are: Women Donors Network, Global Fund for Women, Women Moving Millions, Women’s Funding Network, and Let Girls Lead. The conference will showcase women’s and men’s organizations working to empower women and girls at all levels and across all sectors. Engagement Partners agree to help with outreach and promotion activities for *It’s Time 2015* helping to build an inclusive network of individuals and organizations working to “accelerate the empowerment and leadership of women and girls.” Engagement Partners receive two full passes to attend the summit and a 25% discount on additional conference registration.

**D. MCW Annual Report**

Dr. White and Executive Director Vaughan-Prather will design a template for developing the MCW annual report for the past year.

**III. Unfinished Business**

**A. Strategic Plan.....Dr. White**

All committee chairs have submitted their committees’ work plans.

**B. Women’s Unity Walk.....Vice Chair Bachu**

Commissioner Bachu originally hoped to organize a walk for women’s rights in Annapolis perhaps as a fundraiser for the Women’s Heritage Center, but given the MCW’s busy schedule this year, it might be best to consider holding the event in 2016. Commissioner Cornish suggested it might be more meaningful to organize such an event around a core issue rather than fundraising. Further consideration of this proposal may take place at the 2015 MCW annual planning meeting in September.

## IV. Committee Reports

### A. Education and Outreach.....Lorna Forde

#### 1. Women of Tomorrow

The Women of Tomorrow awards program will be held on June 25, 5:30 – 8 p.m. at the Sheraton Annapolis Hotel. The contract with the hotel has been signed and the Friends of the MCW have submitted the \$250 deposit. The theme for the event will be *Women of Tomorrow: Building a World of Excellence*. On behalf of the Friends of the MCW, an application for a \$5000 grant from PNC to sponsor the program has been submitted. It is too early to have any further information on this but sponsorships are needed. The 24 nominations received are being reviewed by a six-member Selection Committee whose members are:

Commissioners Diane Williams, Cynthia Lifson, Betsy Ramirez, Diane Fink and Toni Sandridge, along with former Commissioner Lynn Fitrell. A conference call is scheduled for the evening of April 21 to make the final decisions.

Dr. White asked about the keynote speaker and dignitaries who might be invited, noting that last year the Maryland Superintendent of Schools was invited along with the principal and guidance counselor from each honoree's school.

Commissioner Forde noted that commissioners will be needed to volunteer to help out at the event. She also asked for assistance in contacting Cover Girl and Mary Kay Cosmetics, both of which donated items for gift bags for each of the honorees last year. Dr. White has a contact at Mary Kay and Commissioner Ramirez offered to try to find the contact from last year for Cover Girl and to provide that information to Commissioner Forde.

#### 2. 2015 Hall of Fame

As both co-chairs were absent the evening, no further report was presented except that the commissioners again thanked the committee, especially the co-chairs – Lillian Cruz and Amanda Rodriguez - for all their hard work on a very successful event.

### B. Legislation and Public Policy

Committee Chair Velvet Johnson was absent so no report for this month. However, Commissioner Cynthia Lifson reported that a bill to establish a statewide Task Force on Human Trafficking has passed both the House and the Senate and is enrolled (waiting for the Governor's signature). This is the last week of the 2015 Maryland General Assembly and much legislation is still pending final action. Several items on the MLAW agenda are still in play but the paid leave bill has failed. SB78, the Rape Survivors Family Protection Act is not likely to be enacted. Commissioner Hughes reported that on last night's *Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, Maryland was "shamed" along with several other states for failing to enact this bill.

**C. Communications and Public Policy.....Commissioner Ramirez**

The MCW’s new Facebook page is up and running and has 25 “likes” already. She has posted photos from MCW events there and DHR job announcements there as a way to build an audience. She encouraged commissioners to “like” the page.

**D. Health and Wellness**

Executive Vaughan-Prather reported that volunteer Bev Thoms, who has a Masters Degree in Nursing, has worked with the committee’s list of nationally designated months for various women’s health issues and developed lists of internet links to informational resources for each issue. That list has been sent to Health and Wellness Committee Chair Aziz for review. Once the committee has approved the resource directory, it can be posted on the MCW website and should be a valuable resource to Maryland women.

**E. Bylaws.....Commissioner Williams**

The committee has worked to add the new policy on teleconference participation to the MCW bylaws and to remove language that just reiterates the MCW enabling legislation. It hopes to provide a revised version of the current bylaws at the MCW’s May meeting, and to continue to review other issues in the bylaws over the summer months.

At this point, Dr. White asked Commissioner Fink to review the information she presented earlier regarding the *It’s Time Conference* as there were now sufficient commissioners present to take a vote. After some discussion, Commissioner Ashley-Williams moved that the MCW agree to be an Engagement Partner for the *2015 It’s Time Conference* in Baltimore; the MCW’s contribution will be to assist in publicizing the event with no financial obligation. The motion, seconded by Commissioner Williams, passed unanimously.

**F. Proposed Symposium.....Commissioner Williams**

At its February meeting, the MCW voted to hold a symposium, and to invite MLAW, the Women’s Heritage Center, Maryland NOW and NACW to partner with it. The Committee will develop a theme for the conference. Dr. White has several ideas for the theme already. They will be sent out to the full MCW and commissioners are invited to review them and submit their own suggestions. The conference will be held in the fall, possibly on either September 27 or October 4 at the University of Maryland Baltimore Campus. County CFWs in the state will be invited to make presentations. Financial sponsorships need to be secured soon. Commissioners White and Risper will work with Executive Director Vaughan-Prather to develop a proposed budget. Commissioner White distributed a list of committees necessary to plan the event. She asked the commissioners to consider volunteering to chair and to serve on a committee.

Dr. White announced that the meeting would be recessed for a 15-minute break, at 6:05. The Commission reconvened at 6:20 and Dr. White called the meeting to order again.

**V. New Business**

Dr. White announced that she understands from the Governor’s Appointments Office that the appointments of eight of the newest commissioners will conclude next week. Commissioners Butler, Drew, Fink, Hughes, Lifson, Parker, Rodriguez and Sandridge were all appointed after the closing date of the 2014 Maryland General Assembly. They were all sworn-in within 30 days of their appointment, as required, but their names were not submitted for confirmation by the state Senate when it reconvened in January 2015. The appointments of Commissioners who are not confirmed during the current Maryland General Assembly expire at the closing of that Assembly, which is scheduled for April 13, 2015.

Dr. White thanked these eight commissioners for all they have contributed during their brief tenures. They have been active and valued members of the MCW and will be missed. She said that hopes they will want to continue to support the MCW’s work and encouraged them to request reappointment if they are interested in continuing to serve. She presented each of the outgoing commissioners with a certificate of appreciation from the MCW.

No word has been received on when new appointments might be anticipated.

Discussion followed with commissioners commending the outgoing commissioners for all their very hard work, wisdom and dedication to the work of the MCW this past year.

**VI. Adjournment.....Dr. White**

Dr. White thanked the commissioners for attending and for all their very hard work. Commissioner Forde moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 p.m. Commissioner Williams seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

***Respectfully submitted:***  
Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director  
Maryland Commission for Women  
04/10/2015

***APPROVED May 21, 2015*** \_\_\_\_\_