

Maryland Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 17, 2016

5 p.m.

Conference Call: 1-877-668-4493 Code: 998-170-211

Commissioners Attending:

Wandra Ashley-Williams, Secretary

Lee Bachu, Chair

Marianne Brackney

Tammy Bresnahan

Gloria Chang

Lorna Forde

Nicole Ingram

Velvet Johnson

Doris Ligon

Bonnie Nelson Luna

Marion Manski

Betsy Ramirez

Anita Riley

Carole Jaar Sepe

A. Diane Williams, Vice Chair

Yun Jung Yang

Commissioners Absent:

Homayara Aziz

Patricia Cornish

Corinna Shen

Staff Attending:

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director

Tammy Wise, Management Associate

I. Call to Order.....Lee Bachu, Chair

The meeting was called to order at 5:01 p.m. Chair Bachu welcomed all the commissioners to this evening's conference call, and thanked them all for attending. Chair Bachu then called for approval of the minutes of the February 18, 2016 MCW meeting. Commissioner Ashley-Williams moved approval of the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Williams and passed unanimously.

II. Chair's Report: Roundtable Lee Bachu, Chair

A. Governor's Appointments to the MCW:

Since the last meeting, the Governor has appointed another five new commissioners, bringing the total to 24, so there is one vacancy remaining. We have been advised that, in addition to Nicole Ingram, the Governor nominated Deborah Cartee of Anne Arundel County and Marylou Yam of Baltimore City through the Green Bag Nomination process. Later, he nominated Tawanda Bailey of Frederick County, April Nyman of Anne Arundel County and Ummu Bradley Thomas of Caroline County. All have been sent to the Senate Executive Nominations Committee for a hearing before being sent to the full Senate for confirmation. It was recommended that these new appointees/nominees be invited to attend the April 7 Hall of Fame/Women of Tomorrow event.

B. Friends of the MCW

At last month's meeting, the commission had the opportunity to meet Susan Elgin, former MCW chair and chair of the board of trustees for the Friends of the MCW. Very shortly after that meeting, Susan retired from the FMCW board. That leaves two board members: former commissioners Debbie Risper and Helen Holton.

C. MNADV Conference Sponsorship

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) has asked the MCW to support its annual conference as a Silver Sponsor for \$250 which will provide a quarter page ad in the program book, an exhibit table, a link to the MCW website from the conference web page, and one admission for the day-long event. The MNADV is one of the leading women's advocacy organizations in the state and a frequent partner with the MCW on events and issues. There are sufficient funds in the MCW FY 16 budget to support this sponsorship, and the Executive Committee recommends this to the MCW. Commissioner Yang moved that the MCW sponsor the MNADV conference at the \$250 level, and Commissioner Manski seconded the motion. The staff was asked to request that the MCW receive admission for an additional commissioner instead of an exhibit table. Chair Bachu called for the vote and asked if there were any objections. There being none, she declared the motion passed unanimously. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather reminded the Commission that its Bylaws state that votes taken during a conference call are to be conducted as a roll call. It was the consensus of the Commission that everyone on the call had been given the opportunity to vote against the motion, and since no one had raised any objections, the motion has passed unanimously. Chair Bachu asked if everyone agreed, and all responses were affirmative.

D. MWHC Membership

The MCW was instrumental in the founding of the Maryland Women's Heritage Center. The Center is a non-profit organization that desperately needs everyone's support if it is to continue providing its important exhibits on women's history and women's rights in Maryland. It is one of the very few such organizations in the country, and is the permanent home to the physical exhibit of the Maryland Women's Hall of Fame. It has established a membership program and is inviting supporters to join. The Executive Committee recommends that the MCW join as an annual organization member at a yearly cost of \$150. In addition, the Center is offering a one-time opportunity to support the organization as a "Founding Mother" – as indeed the MCW was – with a one-time sponsorship of \$1000. The Executive Committee recommends that the MCW become a Founding Mother for the Maryland Women's Heritage Center, both to support the Center, and to increase the MCW's visibility as a leader among women's organizations in the state. There are sufficient funds in the MCW budget this year to support this expense, and staff has, at the Executive Committee's request, gained approval from the Secretary's office for the expense. After discussion, Commissioner Sepe moved that the MCW submit \$1000 to become a "Founding Mother" of the Maryland Women's Heritage Center. Commissioner Luna seconded the motion. Commissioner Ramirez asked if the MCW could schedule a meeting at the Center to provide an opportunity for all the commissioners to visit there. It was suggested that the June MCW planning meeting be held there, if it can be made available. Many commissioners expressed enthusiasm for this proposal. Chair Bachu called for a vote on the \$1000 sponsorship for the MWHC and asked if there were any objections. Hearing none, she declared the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Ashley-Williams noted that the MCW does not have a lot of money to fund other organizations' events and it is only because of the MCW's very special relationship and history with the MWHC that this support is being given.

E. Annual Planning Meeting

The MCW decided to hold its annual planning meeting in June in order to be ready to start work on its projects and initiatives at the onset of the new fiscal year. The Commission typically meets on the third Thursday evening of the month. Chair Bachu proposed that the meeting begin 3 – 7 p.m. on Thursday, June 16, and that the MWHC be asked if the meeting could be held there. Commissioners in attendance agreed and asked the staff to see if the Center could be available on that date and time.

III. April 7 Hall of Fame/Women of Tomorrow Ceremony and Reception

.....**Commissioners Williams, Ashley-Williams and Forde**
Commissioner Williams, Chair of the 2016 Hall of Fame reported that planning is well underway for the combined ceremony of the 2016 Maryland Women's Hall of Fame and Maryland Women of Tomorrow. She thanked her very hard-working co-chairs, Commissioners Ashley-Williams and Forde for their collaboration as the two committees work together to make this first-time event a tremendous success.

The event will be held in the Miller Senate Office Building (MSOB). The induction and award ceremony will be held in Conference Room East, 5:30 – 7:30 pm. A lovely reception is planned for our honorees and guests immediately following the ceremony in Conference Room West.

A very nice invitation/save the date flier was designed by the DHR Communications office, with lots of input from the planning committee. It has been widely distributed to the MCW distribution lists. All commissioners are encouraged to share it with their networks. A beautiful program booklet has been designed with similar graphic themes and has been sent to the printer.

MCW has received sponsorships for the event from PNC Bank (\$2500), AARP Maryland (\$2500), CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield (\$500) and the Women Legislators of Maryland (\$500). In addition, the opportunity to make donations in support of the event is available at the registration site, and so far over \$200 in small donations has been received there. The Friends of the Maryland Commission for Women has agreed to provide \$4700 to support the event. Registration for this event is already approaching 200 and we are still three weeks away from the date. It was decided to open the registration to 250, and then reconsider a higher number if that becomes necessary. The awards for the honorees have been ordered.

The Hall of Fame honorees will be interviewed for a video to be produced by Maryland Women's Heritage Center board member and professional videographer Loretto Gubernatis. The interviews will be taped in the lobby outside the MSOB Conference Room. A commissioner is needed to serve as coordinator/host for the interviews – to help make the process run smoothly and keep everything on schedule. That commissioner will have to arrive at 2:30, but will be finished with her task by 5:30 and can relax and enjoy the rest of the program.

There are other very important tasks for which commissioners are asked to volunteer. All need to plan to work that evening for the program to go well. Commissioners were sent a list of responsibilities for which help is needed.

Commissioner Forde is working with the caterer on both the menu and the set up for the reception. Staff was asked to send the menu to the commissioners.

Commissioner Williams said she wanted to thank Commissioner Shen publicly for her exceedingly generous offer to cater the reception only charging for the serving staff. Since the committee was able to raise sufficient funds to cover the reception costs, a donation such as this was not necessary, but it was still very much appreciated.

Commissioners then considered the list of tasks presented by the planning committee and agreed to the following responsibilities:

- Table Top and Reception Coordinating Committee & Awards Table Set Up
 - Nicole Ingram, Coordinator
 - Carole Jaar Sepe
 - Yun Jung Yang
- Registration Table at Ceremony
 - Gloria Chang
 - Anita Riley
- Signs
 - Tammy Wise
- Coordinate Interviews and Interviewees
 - Yun Jung Yang
- Power Point Presentation Operation
 - Marion Manski
- Hostess/Greeter for Ceremony
 - Betsy Ramirez
 - Velvet Johnson
- Hostess/Greeter for Reception
 - Marion Manski
- Clean up Afterwards
 - Everyone

Commissioners Forde, Ashley-Williams and Williams thanked all the commissioners for their support.

IV. Unfinished Business

A. Ratify Vote on Bylaws Changes.....Commissioner Williams

A proposal to amend the MCW Bylaws to permit MCW meetings held entirely via conference call under certain circumstances, was discussed at the MCW's February meeting and distributed to commissioners via email again on February 19. An email vote to approve the proposed amendment closed March 14. Twelve commissioners voted, 11 approved the proposed change and 1 abstained. The proposal was therefore approved via the email vote. Commissioner Anita Riley moved that the vote to approve

the proposed Bylaws change be ratified. Commissioner Yang seconded the motion. Chair Bachu asked if there were any objections. Hearing none, she declared the vote unanimous in favor of the motion, and the Bylaws amendments approved.

V. New Business

No new business was brought before the Commission.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Education and Outreach.....Commissioner Forde

No report this evening.

B. Legislation and Public Policy..... Commissioner Johnson

The committee will draft letters within the next few days to be sent to the appropriate committees in the Maryland General Assembly in support of the bills presented at the MCW's January meeting.

C. Public Relations and Communications..... Commissioner Ramirez

The MCW Facebook page now has over 800 "friends" which is excellent, and the committee continues to update its content.

D. Health and Wellness Committee

No report.

E. Listening Tour.....Commissioner Yang for Commissioner Cornish

The Committee is preparing the messages inviting county CFWs to partner with the MCW in this initiative. They will be sent out after the Hall of Fame/Women of Tomorrow event in April.

VII. Liaison Reports

A. Women Moving Forward Conference.....Commissioner Johnson

The conference is scheduled for April 23 at the Women's Correctional Institute in Jessup. The MCW still has a supply of special conference bags that it can provide for the women attending this event. Commissioner Johnson said that she will ask the conference planners if that would be useful this year.

VIII. Staff Report.....Executive Director Vaughan-Prather

A. MCW Budget

A report of the appropriations and expenditures so far this year was included in the packets for this evening's meeting. The MCW's operating budget is small, and some of the line items will need adjusting in future years to more accurately reflect the MCW's needs.

B. NACW Conference

The annual conference of the National Association of Commissions for Women is organized each year by a member commission. In 2010 the conference was held in Maryland, organized by the Montgomery County Commission for Women with help from the other CFWs in the state. This year, the conference will be hosted by the Hawaii Commission for Women. The staff has been advised that the MCW budget may

not be used to cover the conference costs this year, but commissioners could attend and represent the MCW, if they are willing to pay the costs personally. Chair Bachu asked the staff to send information about the conference to the commissioners.

C. Office Renovations

The painting and re-carpeting of the MCW office that took place during the weeks of February 1 – 12 is complete. The physical reorganization of the office is working very well, and now there are two complete workstations for volunteers and interns and a small meeting space.

D. Attendance Report

Staff is required to submit, before the end of this month, a report on commissioners' attendance at MCW meetings. State law provides that any commissioner who "fails to attend at least 50% of the meetings of the board or commission during any consecutive 12-month period shall be considered to have resigned." (State Government Article, § 8-501 of the Annotated Code of Maryland)

E. Nigerian Women Inaugural Ceremony

The MCW has received an invitation to sponsor and/or attend the inaugural gala of the Nigerian Women Association of Maryland Metro Inc. to be held on April 30, 2016, 9 p.m. – 2 a.m. Sponsorships range from \$500 to \$5000 and up. Commissioner Sepe noted that the state Commission for Women should support only events related to Maryland. Commissioner Chang agreed, and asked if the MCW has any experience with this organization. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather pointed out that this is a state-wide organization. Commissioners noted the need for the MCW to develop criteria for the events and organizations it sponsors, given the number of requests it receives and the MCW's limited budget. It was suggested that this topic be included on the agenda for the June planning meeting.

Commissioner Ashley-Williams noted that the MCW earlier in tonight's meeting voted to provide sponsorships to two other organizations and suggested that those votes should be reconsidered until after such time as criteria for MCW sponsorship have been put in place. Chair Bachu responded that those votes have already been taken. Commissioners Forde, Johnson and Riley said they had not voted on those earlier motions.

Considerable discussion followed regarding the method by which those votes had been taken. Commissioner Ashley-Williams moved that the vote to support the MWHC with a "Founding Mother" sponsorship be reconsidered. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. A roll-call vote was taken, and the motion failed with four votes in favor, and eight opposed.

Although it was not unanimous that this next step was necessary, it was decided to re-take the three votes conducted earlier, this time via roll-call vote in order to assure that every commissioner is able to vote and aware that the vote is occurring.

The motion to provide a \$250 sponsorship for the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence conference passed by a vote of nine in favor, two opposed and two abstentions.

The motion to provide a one-time-only \$1000 “Founding Mother” sponsorship of the Maryland Women’s Heritage Center passed by a vote of nine in favor and three abstentions.

The motion to approve the Bylaws amendments passed unanimously.

IX. Adjournment.....Chair Bachu
MCW Chair Bachu thanked everyone for attending this evening’s meeting, and for their persistence in giving serious consideration to important and sometimes difficult decisions. She noted that the upcoming Hall of Fame/Women of Tomorrow event is an opportunity for all the commissioners to work together and should be an uplifting event. There being no further business, Commissioner Bachu adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:
Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director
Maryland Commission for Women
May 12, 2016

APPROVED: May 19, 2016