

# Maryland Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, May 19, 2016  
5 p.m.

45 Calvert Street    Annapolis, Maryland

## Commissioners Attending:

Lee Bachu, Chair  
Tawanda Bailey  
Marianne Brackney  
Gloria Chang  
Lorna Forde  
Nicole Ingram  
Velvet Johnson T/C  
Doris Ligon  
April Nyman  
Betsy Ramirez  
Carole Jaar Sepe  
Corinna Shen  
Ummu Bradley Thomas  
A. Diane Williams, Vice Chair  
Marylou Yam  
Yun Jung Yang

## Commissioners Absent:

Wandra Ashley-Williams, Secretary  
Homayara Aziz  
Tammy Bresnahan  
Deborah Cartee  
Patricia Cornish  
Bonnie Nelson Luna  
Marion Manski  
Anita Riley

## Guest:

Debbie Risper, Friends of the MCW

## 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 5:22 p.m. Chair Bachu welcomed all the commissioners to this evening's meeting, and thanked them all for attending. Traffic problems delayed the arrival of many of the commissioners. Approval of the minutes of the March meeting was delayed until a quorum arrived.

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

#### A. Nigerian Women Society of Maryland Inaugural Ceremony:

At the March meeting, the commission discussed the request from the Nigerian Women's Society of Maryland Metro, Inc., for sponsorship of its inaugural ceremony. At the request of Maryland's First Lady, MCW Chair Bachu attended the event on her behalf. Commissioner Ashley Williams attended the event representing the MCW, and as part of its ongoing outreach to the diverse communities of Maryland's women, the MCW contributed a \$150 sponsorship for the program which included a full-page "ad" in the program book and inclusion in the rolling power point display featured throughout the event. The NWSMM leadership was very appreciative of the support and participation.

## **B. Annual Meeting**

The MCW's annual planning meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 16 at 3 – 7 p.m. at the Maryland Women's Heritage Center at 39 West Lexington Street in Baltimore. Staff will ask if parking arrangements can be made for the commissioners. At this meeting, the MCW will set its work plan and form its committees for the coming fiscal year and will set its leadership team in place.

## **C. Process for Nomination and Election of MCW Officers**

Chair Bachu explained that terms of office for the MCW Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary are two years long. The MCW Bylaws specify that election of MCW officers are held in the even-numbered years. If an office becomes vacant mid-term, special elections are held to fill that office for the remainder of the term of that office. Last year, the offices of the MCW chair and vice chair became vacant as the Chair's term as a commissioner expired and new appointments to the Commission were made. Special elections were held for those two offices for the year remaining in the term of each office. All three offices are now up for election in June 2016.

Chair Bachu noted further that in years past, because the MCW held the Women of Tomorrow event in June, it did not hold a regular meeting that month, so elections had been held via email vote. Last year, the MCW held a special meeting on August 6 to elect the officers to serve the one year remaining in the term of CFW Chair, and CFW Vice Chair (as the Vice Chair was elected that night to the position of Chair).

Nomination forms were sent to all commissioners on May 11, and hard copies were available at this evening's meeting. The time-line for the elections is as follows:

- May 25, 2016 – Completed Nomination Forms and Personal Statements received in MCW office.
- May 27, 2016 – Nomination forms and personal statements emailed to commissioners
- June 16, 2016 elections conducted at MCW Meeting – no proxy or email voting

## **D. Trucker of the Year Award**

This year, for the first time in its history, the Maryland Trucking Association (MTA) is presenting its Trucker of the Year Award to a woman, Ms. Annette Womack, who drives for Giant Food, Inc. The MTA is very proud of this and invited the MCW to send a representative to the award ceremony. Commissioner Ashley-Williams attended the event on April 8, even though it was the morning after the MCW's own big event the evening before. Now, Ms. Womack is nominated for the American Trucking Association's national award for Trucker of the Year. The MCW sent a letter endorsing her candidacy and urging her receipt of this prestigious award.

## **III. Unfinished Business**

### **A. Criteria for Sponsoring Events**

This past year, the MCW has received a number of invitations to sponsor woman-focused events around the state. Commissioner Ashley-Williams has offered to draft a policy for decision making when such requests are received to be presented at the June MCW meeting.

**B. 2016 Hall of Fame/Women of Tomorrow .....Vice Chair Williams**

Commissioner Williams, who chaired the 2016 Hall of Fame committee and worked with Commissioners Ashley-Williams and Forde, chairs of the Women of Tomorrow program, to plan the April 7 awards ceremony and reception. The event was a huge success. Commissioner Williams thanked the MCW Chair, her co-chairs and all the commissioners who worked so hard on every aspect of the event. She noted that six extraordinary women were inducted into the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame, including WWII Air Force pilot Elaine Danforth Harmon. Ms. Harmon died just last year and her son and family have waged a campaign to secure her and all the members of the Women Air Force Service Pilots (WASP) a final resting place in Arlington National Cemetery. Thanks to their efforts, such a bill has now passed Congress and is on President Obama’s desk waiting for his signature.

Commissioners Williams thanked the Friends of the Commission for Women (FMCW), especially FMCW Board Member Debbie Risper, for its support. She noted that the revenues from sponsorships and donations exceeded expenses by more than \$900, which will contribute to the FMCW funds to support future MCW programs.

Guest at tonight’s meeting and former commissioner Debbie Risper asked to present a final financial report to the MCW regarding the revenue and expenses for the April 7 event. Ms. Risper, Treasurer of the FMCW, commended the MCW for the success of its program – especially the first time combination of the two award ceremonies into a single event. She said that this was clearly a good move and that the program was wonderful. She submitted a written report to Commissioner Williams indicating that the total revenue for the event was \$6,616.87 and the total expenses were \$5672.78, meaning that \$984.09 was added to the FMCW account, after all the bills for the event were paid.

MCW Chair Bachu thanked Ms. Risper for her support and congratulated the committee chairs for the success of this year’s program.

**IV. New Business**

No new business was brought before the Commission.

**V. Committee Reports**

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

No report this evening.

**B. Legislation and Public Policy.....Vaughan-Prather for Commissioner Johnson**

*(Note: Commissioner Johnson joined the call later.)* In April, the committee sent letters to the Maryland General Assembly in support of five cross-filed bills (ten, total) including:

- HB155/SB278 – Criminal Law Stalking – Misuse of Electronic Communication
- HB314/SB346 – Peace Orders – Grounds for Relief
- HB1277/SB336 – Hospitals – Designation of Lay Caregivers
- HB623/SB866 – Human Trafficking, Vacating Convictions
- HB646/SB593 – Child Conceived Without Consent

The stalking bill, the peace order bill and the hospital bill all passed. The other three failed but will almost certainly be introduced again next year.

Chair Bachu thanked Commissioners Johnson and Bresnahan for all their hard work on this year's legislative activity.

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

The MCW Facebook page now has 800 - 900 "friends" which is excellent, and the committee continues to update its content. Commissioner Ramirez and Executive Director Vaughan-Prather met with staff from the DHR Communications Office. An overhaul of the website is being designed to conform with a new look for the DHR website and to create a more appealing and easily accessed site. The information currently available on the website is being re-organized and some is being graphically designed. Two new informational pieces: a directory of on-line resources for girls interested in STEM careers is being developed and a fact sheet on the demographics of Maryland women is being produced. Both items will be prepared for print as well as online publication. Commissioner Ramirez encouraged the commissioners to send her their recommendations as well as information about events, etc., for the website and the Facebook page.

**D. Health and Wellness Committee**

No report.

**E. Listening Tour.....Commissioner Yang**

MCW Chair Bachu has appointed Commissioner Yang as co-chair of the Listening Tour Committee. Commissioner Cornish is out of the state on business this week. Commissioner Yang reported that the full committee – which now has 14 members – met last week on a two-hour conference call to develop its plan. She noted that there are 23 counties plus Baltimore City in Maryland, making the total number of jurisdictions 24. There are Commissions for Women in 14 of these jurisdictions. The Committee has decided to hold a listening tour in each jurisdiction where there is a CFW, asking the CFW to host the event and to participate. Because the CFW in Garrett County volunteered at last November's CFW Roundtable Meeting, it will be invited to sponsor one of the first events. Commissioner Ingram is the current president of the Washington County CFW which is also interested in hosting an event – possibly on July 13, so the planning Committee decided to begin with the counties in Western Maryland over the summer and fall months. On the Eastern Shore, there are eight counties (not counting Cecil) and only one CFW. However there are three representatives of the Eastern Shore on the MCW – from Talbot, Caroline and Wicomico Counties. Two events will be organized on the Eastern Shore – possibly at community colleges in the region. The Committee is preparing the messages inviting county CFWs to partner with the MCW in this initiative. The Committee was asked to share the more detailed plan, including the format for the sessions and guidelines for participating commissions, with the full Commission for further discussion at the June MCW meeting.

**F. Bylaws Committee.....Commissioner Williams**

The MCW Bylaws were modified at the March 17 meeting to provide procedures for conducting a full MCW meeting via conference call when weather or other emergencies make that necessary.

**VI. Approval of Minutes/Introduction of New Commissioners.....Chair Bachu**  
By this time, sufficient commissioners had arrived to constitute a quorum, so Chair Bachu called for approval of the minutes of the March 17, 2016 MCW meeting. *(Note: the copy of the minutes sent via email to the commissioners lists Commissioner Bresnahan as absent, but she did attend the last meeting. The printed copy of the minutes presented to the Commissioners this evening lists her as present.)* Commission Vice Chair Williams moved approval of the minutes as submitted. Commissioner Yam seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Six new commissioners were appointed and confirmed in April, and for five of them, this is their first meeting. Chair Bachu asked all those in attendance to introduce themselves to one another.

**VII. Liaison Reports**

**A. Women Moving Forward Conference.....Commissioner Johnson**  
The conference for residents who are within six to nine months of release from the Women’s Correctional Institute in Jessup, was held April 23, and was attended by almost 200 residents. Commissioner Johnson, Executive Director Vaughan-Prather, and Management Associate Wise attended and helped staff the conference. The MCW contributed special conference bags for the women attending this event. Chair Bachu thanked Commissioner Johnson and the staff for their work on this event. She noted that she has participated in previous years and that it is an important program for the MCW to support.

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

**A. Intern Changes**  
The Maryland State Archives, which maintains the Women’s Hall of Fame online presence, hires an intern each summer – with funding from the MCW – to conduct more in depth research and develop professional documented biographies for the women in the Hall of Fame. This year, the MSA staff advised us that the intern it had selected backed out of the program, so that research will have to wait until next year.

The Professional Fellow from Cambodia through the U.S. State Department funded American Councils for International Education was denied entry into the U.S. and will not work in the MCW office this month as scheduled.

Taylor Sullivan, the student intern from Wootton High School who has worked in the MCW office two afternoons per week for this entire school year, has successfully completed her internship and is graduating this month. She is off to Maryland University in the fall.

**B. Annual Report**

Staff has already begun drafting chapters of the FY 16 Annual Report, which will be shared with committee chairs.

**C. HB 740 – Family and Medical Leave Task Force**

Staff was informed last week that legislation passed with important implications for the MCW. Delegate Ariana Kelly called the office to say that a bill she introduced, which originally proposed to establish a paid family and medical leave insurance program in

the state, was amended to instead create a task force to study that possibility. That bill did pass. If the Governor does not veto the measure, it will become law effective June 1.

With regard to the MCW, the bill provides:

- The MCW Executive Director or her designee serves on the Task Force
- The MCW must apply for any federal funds that become available for the purposes of the Task Force.

Delegate Kelly then informed the staff that in fact, there is now a grant funding opportunity presented by the U.S. Department of Labor for proposals to study the very issues addressed by the Task Force legislation. The staff is working with the administration of DHR to first secure approval to apply for those funds and then to develop a grant proposal which must be submitted before June 6.

**D. Staffing**

The Executive Director will be on leave May 31 – June 11. Management Associate Tammy Wise will cover the office during that time. However, this means that the grant proposal mentioned above must be complete before May 27.

**IX. Announcements**

Commissioner Yam announced that the Women of the World Baltimore festival will be held on the campus of the Notre Dame of Maryland University in Baltimore, October 7 and 8. She distributed fliers announcing the event and invited all the commissioners to attend. She said that she would be happy to host a session of the MCW Listening Tour as part of the festival.

**X. Adjournment.....Chair Bachu**

MCW Chair Bachu thanked everyone for attending this evening’s meeting and for all their hard work in between meetings. There being no further business, Commissioner Bachu adjourned the meeting at 7:12 p.m.

***Respectfully submitted:***

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director  
Maryland Commission for Women  
June 8, 2016

**APPROVED: June 16, 2016**