

Maryland Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, September 22, 2016

5 – 7 p.m.

Attman-Glazer Building – Room 158 ♦ 45 Calvert Street ♦ Annapolis, Maryland

Commissioners Attending:

Lee Bachu, Chair
Wandra Ashley-Williams, Secretary
Homayara Aziz – T/C
Tawanda Bailey – T/C
Marianne Brackney
Deborah Cartee
Gloria Chang
Lorna Forde – T/C
Nicole Ingram
Velvet Johnson
Bonnie Nelson Luna
Marion Manski
Betsy Ramirez – T/C
Carole Jaar Sepe
Corinna Shen

Ummu Thomas
A. Diane Williams, Vice Chair
Tamara England Wilson
Marylou Yam – T/C
Yun Jung Yang – T/C

Commissioners Absent:

Tammy Bresnahan
Doris Ligon
April Nyman
Anita Riley

Staff Attending:

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

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

A. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 5 p.m. Chair Bachu welcomed everyone and thanked them all for attending. She introduced newly appointed Commissioner Tamara England Wilson of Baltimore City, and asked all those in attendance to introduce themselves.

B. Approval of Agenda/Minutes:

Chair Bachu called for approval of agenda for this evening's meeting. With the addition of one item under New Business, Secretary Ashley-Williams moved approval of the agenda as amended. Commissioner Thomas seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Chair Bachu called for approval of the minutes of the June 16, 2016 MCW meeting. Vice Chair Williams moved approval of the print version minutes as submitted. Secretary Ashley-Williams seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

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

A. WE3 Conference:

The WE3 Conference, sponsored by the Prince George's County Commission for Women is this weekend, beginning with a reception and awards ceremony on Friday night, and the conference itself on Saturday. The MCW sponsored this conference, and Chair Bachu and Vice Chair Williams will attend Friday night's event, where Vice Chair

Williams has been invited to speak about the MCW's Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour. Management Associate Wise will bring and staff an exhibit table for the MCW, with the "Talk to Us" questionnaires on Friday evening as well. Commissioner Thomas will represent the MCW at Saturday's conference.

B. Elaine Harmon's Memorial Service at WIMSA.....A. Diane Williams, Vice Chair
Vice Chair Williams chaired the 2016 Maryland Women's Hall of Fame when former WWII Women Air Force Service Pilot (WASP) Elaine Danforth Harmon was inducted. Ms. Harmon passed away in April 2015 at the age of 95. Prior to her passing, she wrote a letter requesting to be buried at Arlington Cemetery. While women were not permitted to fly combat missions during WWII, they played a significant role in the war including ferrying airplanes, training combat pilots and towing airborne targets. However, at the time of Ms. Harmon's death, WASPs were denied burial and inurnment at Arlington, so the family stored her ashes in a closet while they undertook a campaign to win the right to a final resting place at Arlington for WASPs. U.S. Representative Martha McSally led the fight in Congress by introducing H.R. 4336. The bill passed the House and Senate in record time and went to President Obama's desk in May 2016. The President signed the "Women Air Force Service Pilot Arlington Inurnment Restoration Act on May 20, 2016. Elaine Danforth Harmon was the first woman to be inurned at Arlington after enactment of the bill. The MCW received an invitation from the family to attend the memorial service for Ms. Harmon at the Women in Military Services for America (WIMSA) Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery on September 7. U.S. Representative McSally was the keynote speaker at the ceremony. Vice Chair Williams and the MCW Executive Director attended the beautiful service.

C. CFW Roundtable Meeting at MLAW Conference.....Tawanda Bailey
For several years, the MCW has convened a meeting of the county Commissions for Women (CFWs) in the state to share resources, information and strategies. The county CFWs report that this meeting is very valuable to them. Last year, the MCW combined that meeting with the annual fall conference of the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW), spending \$1000 to sponsor the conference and the participation of 25 representatives of CFWs, and then held a roundtable meeting with those representatives in the afternoon during the conference. The MCW Bylaws provide that the Education and Outreach (E&R) Committee "fosters community partnerships and builds coalitions through local women's commissions and other community-based organizations . . ." The E&R Committee has offered to work with the Executive Committee to develop the plans and agenda for this meeting. MLAW has already agreed to the proposal and is in the process of securing a meeting place at the conference site. Commission Secretary Wandra Ashley-Williams moved that the MCW spend no more than the \$1000 already agreed upon for this conference, and that if MLAW cannot offer the meeting space as needed without additional charges, the plan will not go forward. Commissioner Brackney seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Further discussion followed regarding the distribution of admission among the various Commissions and the MCW. MCW Vice Chair Williams moved that approximately half of the 30 admissions will go to MCW Commissioners and the other half will be distributed among the county CFWs. Commissioner Sepe seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

D. Incarcerated Women – Request for MCW Advocacy.....Tawanda Bailey

The MCW received a request from the Co-Chair, National Association of Women Judges, Women in Prison Committee. The message transmitted a letter from the President of the Women Legislators of Maryland to the Secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, requesting a meeting. The letter mentions “recent DPSCS proposals and actions prohibiting all letters to prisoners, cutting back on visiting days, and prohibiting holding and hugging visitors, including children, during visits.” The letter asked for a study, conducted by “an outside party,” of the treatment of the more than 800 women in the Maryland Correctional Institute for Women. It recommends “a comprehensive assessment and evaluation of inmate programming to examine how programming might better address the needs of special minority populations, including women.” The letter further recommends that DPSCS create a fully staffed Female Offender Branch headed by a clinical psychologist, and “include it in its policy making process so that the department is aware of the gender ramifications of its actions.”

Commissioner Ummu Thomas moved that a letter of support for this request be sent from the MCW. Commission Secretary Ashley-Williams seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

III. Unfinished Business

A. Criteria for MCW EngagementWandra Ashley-Williams, Secretary

The MCW receives many requests to sponsor events organized by other community organizations, over the course of the year, and commissioners often ask to represent the MCW at similar events. At the MCW’s June planning meeting a task force was appointed to propose criteria for how the MCW makes decisions on which event to sponsor and for the determination of who represents the MCW at such events. Recently, the task force was also asked to propose criteria for issuing certificates of recognition from the MCW to certain individuals whose accomplishments warrant such honor.

The task force consists of Commissioners Ashley-Williams, Brackney, Chang, Ingram, and Sepe. It has not been able to meet in full, but has begun work on these tasks. At this point, the task force is leaning toward recommending no changes in the MCW’s budget. Last year, the MCW spent about \$720 in sponsorships, not including the \$1000 for the MLAW/CFW Roundtable Conference. The task force will likely recommend that the total amount spent on sponsorships not exceed \$1500 and that no sponsorship should exceed \$500. With regard to the individuals who represent the MCW at such events, the task force will likely recommend that the MCW’s three officers be given the first option to attend events at the MCW’s expense, the second option would be offered to the chair of the committee related to the event, and the third option would then be opened to all commissioners. Of course, all commissioners are welcome and encouraged to attend such events and may do so at their own expense. The task force plans to develop an application form which organizations may complete and submit to the MCW Executive Director who will then share the request with the Executive Committee. Commission Vice Chair Williams recommended that the MCW request additional funds in its budget next year for this purpose.

The task force only recently received the additional task for developing criteria for the issuance of certificates of recognition. It will work on this issue and come back to the MCW with recommendations.

IV. New Business

A. Ready, Set GROW! Conference for Women Business Owners

MCW Executive Director Vaughan-Prather reported that the MCW received a request to work with the Governor’s Office on Minority Affairs on an October 18 event: *Ready, Set, GROW! Honoring Women Business Owners*, to be held in the MAC Building at 7001 Aviation Blvd., in Glen Burnie, from 10 am to 1 pm. The Governor’s Office of Minority Affairs offers small business outreach through this signature event. This is a unique procurement connection workshop that brings various agency buyers who will share small procurement opportunities, active solicitations, and forecast opportunities with the small, minority, and women-owned business community. At the request of First Lady Yumi Hogan, the conference will focus on Women Business Owners during this event, and will honor approximately four women business owners for their achievements. The MCW is asked to help reach as many as possible of the various groups of women business owners across the state. The MCW Commissioners expressed their enthusiastic support for this effort and offered to help in any way possible to make this event a success.

V. Committee Reports/Presentation of Work Plans

At the June planning meeting, each committee was asked to convene over the summer and present its proposed work plan for the program year to the MCW at tonight’s meeting.

A. Hall of Fame.....Marianne Brackney

The program honors and recognizes women whose accomplishments and contributions have been of historic significance. The 2017 HOF Planning Committee met via conference call on September 9. The Call for Nominations will go out early next week (September 26 or 27) with a closing date of October 28. The HOF Committee will work with the Women of Tomorrow (WOT) Committee to plan the annual award and induction ceremony in March 2017. Senator Roger Manno has very graciously agreed to sponsor the MCW use of the Miller Senate Office Building again for this event. A request to reserve both Conference Rooms East and West in the MSOB for March 16 has been submitted but will not be acted upon until October 3.

B. Women of Tomorrow.....Lorna Forde and Carole Sepe

The Women of Tomorrow program will honor and recognize Maryland girls in Middle and High School who have earned exceptional records of academic achievement, leadership and community service. The Committee met last week, and hopes to issue the Call for Nominations on October 15, with a closing date of December 2. Four honorees will be selected and will be presented their awards at the ceremony in March. A five-member independent selection committee will be established. The WOT committee will work with the HOF committee to coordinate the plans for that event.

For both the HOF and the WOT programs, the staff is working with the state’s Attorney General’s office and the DHR technology staff to ensure appropriate protocol for the protection of the nominee’s information.

C. Listening Tour.....Nicole Ingram and Yun Jung Yang

The Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour Committee has been very hard at work since the MCW's meeting in June. The goals for the year are to hold regional public forums on women's issues throughout the state, and to conduct a survey as well. The goal of this project is to report the findings of the forums and survey with recommendations to the DHR Secretary, the Governor and the Legislature. This year, the focus will be on collecting the information through the forums and the survey. The report and recommendations will be developed in 2017-2018. The first forum was held July 13, 2016 in Washington County, with an attendance of more than 30. On July 23, the tour traveled to Salisbury for a "mini" session at a conference of the Korean American Women's Society of Maryland, where the survey, translated into Korean, was distributed. More than 40 questionnaires were completed and returned. On August 29, the tour was hosted by the Baltimore County Commission for Women in combination with a commemoration of Women's Equality day and had an audience of more than 60 in Towson. This week, on September 20, the Listening Tour traveled across the mountains to Garrett County in Maryland's western panhandle. Hosted by the Garrett County Commission for Women, the forum was attended by more than 30 women. Next destinations include the Women of the World Festival at the Notre Dame University of Maryland in Baltimore City on October 7; Howard County on October 8, Prince George's County of October 27 and Calvert County in Southern Maryland on November 17. The Montgomery County Commission for Women will host a session of the Listening Tour on April 3. Outreach to the other CFWs in the state is underway with plans to schedule those events in the spring after the HOF/WOT event.

Commissioners were all urged to take the survey themselves and to encourage their networks to participate as well.

D. Education and Outreach.....Tawanda Bailey

The goal of this committee is to increase public awareness of the issues of concern to the women and girls of Maryland, enhance working relationships between CFWs in Maryland and increase awareness of issues surrounding vulnerable populations such as incarcerated women and victims of trafficking. The committee plans to help develop the program for the CFW roundtable meeting on October 22, to develop a fact sheet and resource directory on Human Trafficking in Maryland to post on the MCW website, to support the Women Moving Forward Conference at MCIW and to support the Listening Tour project.

E. Legislation and Public Policy.....Vaughan-Prather for Tammy Bresnahan

Committee Chair Bresnahan was stuck in Chicago by a delayed airline flight, but the committee's work plan proposes to continue a strong and effective role for the MCW in the state's public policy and legislative decision making and to build coalition and cooperation with local CFWs in the state on women's issues. To achieve these goals, the committee plans to support MLAW's work, develop and actively support a legislative agenda for the MCW, co-sponsor the Women's Legislative Briefing and meet with leaders in the Maryland legislature.

F. Communications and Public Relations.....Betsy Ramirez

The committee’s goal is to enhance MCW’s outreach across the state, improving its visibility and credibility and to increase the use of social media and traditional forms of communication. It will do this by enhancing the MCW’s use of Facebook and Twitter, maintaining and updating the MCW’s website, issuing action and issue-alerts to the MCW’s large distribution lists. The committee has already sent out several alerts and has posted lots of information about the Listening Tour and other events on the MCW Facebook page.

G. Health and Wellness.....Marylou Yam

The Committee met by conference call in July to establish its goals for this year, which include: review the MCW’s online health resources directory, develop strategies for making it more accessible, and develop new areas of information not currently addressed. The Committee will send monthly “fact sheets” on women’s health issues to the MCW’s distribution lists, and will develop new sections of the resource directory addressing addictions, medicines, and other issues.

H. Policy and Bylaws.....Marion Manski

This committee plans to conduct a thorough review of the MCW Bylaws, article by article, including a review of the MCW’s enabling legislation to ensure congruency and to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the MCW operations. A “change document” will be created with the Committee’s findings and any recommendations to be put before the full MCW for approval.

VI. Liaison Reports

A. Commission on the Commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the Passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.....Lee Bachu, Chair

The MCW holds two seats on the Commission. MCW Vice Chair Williams holds one of those seats and the other is reserved for the MCW Chair or her designee. MCW Chair will fill that seat. Commissioner Yam noted her interest in the work of this commission and offered her assistance wherever that might be useful.

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

A. Professional Fellow and High School Student Intern

The high school student who was to intern 10 hours per week at the MCW office has withdrawn from the program due to schedule conflicts.

The American Councils for International Education is sending a professional fellow from Moldova to work in the MCW office October 17 to November 11. This is a U.S. State Department funded program to bring young professionals from developing democracies to work in the U.S.

B. Annual Report

The report is completely written and is just waiting for a message from the Secretary before it will be sent for print. It is hoped that it will be ready for distribution before the MCW’s October meeting.

VIII. Announcements

- A. NAACP Maryland Conference.....Wandra Ashley-Williams, Secretary**
The Maryland State Conference of NAACP Branches (MSC-NAACP) will host its annual Legislative Conference on Saturday, October 29, 2016, at the Embassy Suites Hotel by Hilton BWI Airport, Linthicum, Maryland.

- IX. Adjournment.....Lee Bachu, Chair**
MCW Chair Bachu thanked everyone for attending this evening’s meeting and for all their hard work. There being no further business, she adjourned the meeting at 6:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director
Maryland Commission for Women
October 20, 2016

APPROVED: October 20, 2016