

Maryland Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 20, 2020

5 p.m.

Video Conference Call

Commissioners Attending:

Yun Jung Yang, Chair
Tawanda A. Bailey, First Vice Chair
Carole Jaar Sepe, Second Vice Chair
Tammy Bresnahan
Deborah L. Cartee
Gloria Chang
Maureen G. Colburn
Amanda L. Costley
Melissa H. Curtin
Essita Duncan
Kristi S. Halford
Eugenia B. Henry
Lauren M. Lambert
Patricia M. Lambert
Beth Anne Langrell

Bonnie N. Luna
Ishrat N. Memon
Roberta Pardo
Luanne Ruddell
Corrina Yi-Yuan Kuo Shen
Evelyne S. Steward
Maxine Griffin Somerville
Tamara E. Wilson
Marylou N. Yam

Commissioners Absent:

Brenda J. McChriston

Staff Attending:

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director

I. Call to Order.....Yang

A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:04 p.m. by MCW Chair Yang. A quorum was established. She welcomed everyone and thanked the commissioners for participating this evening and for all their hard work between meetings.

B. Approval of Agenda

Due to scheduling conflicts, Commissioner Curtin asked that her report be moved up on the agenda. The Chair called for approval of the agenda, with this amendment. Commissioner Shen moved approval of the agenda as amended. Commissioner Henry seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

C. Approval of Minutes of October 15, 2020 MCW Meeting

The Chair called for any amendments to the minutes of the October meeting. Hearing none, she called for a motion to approve. Commissioner Yam moved approval of the minutes of the October 15 meeting as submitted. Commissioner Somerville seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

II. Amended Agenda Item

A. MLAW Fall Conference.....Curtin

The annual fall conference of the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) was a huge success. It was held virtually this year, for the first time, and had its largest attendance ever with 330 individuals registered and 42 sponsors! Commissioner Curtin was commended by the commissioners for her excellent moderation of the conference as its Mistress of Ceremonies. The theme of the conference was Gender, Race and COVID-19's Impact on Maryland. After the opening panel discussion, 17 state bills that will be introduced in the 2021 session of the Maryland General Assembly were presented. All MLAW members will be invited to vote on which of those bills will be included in MLAW's agenda for 2021. Commissioner Bresnahan said that the MCW PAL Committee will review the list when the vote is requested and will recommend the bills it believes the MCW should support. Commissioner Curtin said that in the debriefing on the conference, the planners were advised that of all those who responded to the follow-up survey, 99% said that they plan to take action as a result of attending the conference. The Commissioners thanked Commissioner Curtin for all her time and work on this conference and congratulated her on the success of the event.

III. Executive Committee Report..... Yang

A. Commissioner Updates

Commissioner Shen mentioned incidents of harassment she has experienced in her neighborhood. Commissioners expressed their sympathy and support for her and her family.

B. Bylaws Review

As directed during the October MCW meeting, the MCW officers and Executive Director reviewed the MCW's current Bylaws as approved in September 2018. Several changes are proposed that reflect the newly available, and necessary, meeting technology, the need for change necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, etc. In addition to several minor grammatical and formatting changes, the following substantive changes are proposed:

- **Article I Officers and Elections, Section 4 Ballot Election:**
Provide for "either paper or electronic ballots" in elections of MCW officers
(*underlined text is new*)
- **Article III Standing and Ad Hoc Committees, Section 1 Standing Committees:**
Change "Women of Tomorrow Awards" to "Maryland Young Women Leaders Awards"
- **Article VI The Executive Committee Section 1 Duties:**
(e) Change "Approve requests for Commission activities and sponsorships" to "Approve requests for Commission partnerships and sponsorships, in accordance with the MCW's accepted guidelines."
- **Article VIII Commission Meetings and Attendance Section 9 Attendance via Teleconference:**
 - *Throughout:* Change "teleconference" and "teleconferencing" to "video/teleconference" and "video/teleconferencing" (virtual)
 - (b) & (k): delete provisions that virtual meetings may be held only in emergencies

- (c): delete prohibition of chair presiding over meeting virtually
- (d): delete limit on number of commissioners who may participate virtually in and one MCW meeting
- (e): delete limit on number of times per year each commissioner may participate virtually in MCW meetings
- (f): delete statement that public will not have access to teleconference line
- (g) and (h): delete requirements for prior approval of commissioner requests to participation virtually in MCW meetings
- (j): delete requirement for roll call voting when meeting virtually

After some discussion, Commissioner Steward moved that the proposed changes be accepted as submitted. Commissioners Wilson and Lambert seconded the motion which passed unanimously. It was noted that the MCW Bylaws require 30-days’ notice of any proposed change to the Bylaws, so a vote to “officially” incorporate these changes will have to take place at the MCW’s next meeting in January. Commissioners all received notice of the proposed changes this week, along with a copy of the current Bylaws, the proposed changes and the Bylaws with those changes incorporated. That will provide the required notice for a vote at the January meeting.

IV. Unfinished Business

A. MLAW Conference Sponsorship

As approved at the October meeting, the MCW was a Platinum (\$500) sponsor of last weekend’s MLAW Fall Conference and purchased another 25 tickets for our own commissioners and for representatives of the county and city Commissions for Women in our state. Altogether, 28 commissioners and staff attended as “guests” of the MCW, representing eight local CFWs and the MCW. The conference being held virtually meant that commissioners from Maryland’s far corners could attend, some for the first time. Commissioners from Worcester County on the lower Eastern Shore and Garrett County on Maryland’s far western panhandle, and many in between, were all able to participate this year.

B. CFW Roundtable Meeting..... Somerville

The Committee coordinating the 2021 CFW Roundtable Meeting met on October 23 to begin planning. The Committee hopes to hold the CFW Roundtable Meeting on Thursday, May 6, 2021 at 6:00 – 8:30 p.m. as a virtual event. The agenda will include:

- Celebration of the 50th anniversary of the passage of the MCW’s enabling legislation
- Release of the SWIM Report
- CFWs sharing their successes, their priorities and their challenges
- Discussion of strategies for collaboration and support for each other
- Invitation to all the CFWs to collaborate in Phase 3 of the SWIM project

The CFW Roundtable Planning Committee also recommends that:

- The MCW reach out to the county/city CFWs now, inviting them to share the dates of events they are planning for 2021, and send a reminder again in January
- The MCW create a calendar of those events on the MCW website
- This invitation can include a mention of the MCW’s own planned events, including the Hall of Fame/Young Women Leaders Awards; the CFW Roundtable Meeting, and the MCW’s 55th anniversary year.

MCW Chair Yang thanked Commissioner Somerville and the members of the 2021 CFW Roundtable Planning Committee for their work and excellent recommendations.

V. New Business

No new business was brought before the Commission.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Policy and Legislation (PAL) Committee..... Bresnahan

The Policy and Legislation Committee will review the MLAW legislative proposals and recommend to the Commission which to support, and which to incorporate into the Commission’s own legislative platform for 2021. Under the restrictions required by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Maryland General Assembly will hold most hearings and meetings virtually. Exceptions will require extensive precautions. Commissioner Halford is serving as the MCW’s liaison to the 2021 Women’s Legislative Briefing, coordinated by the Montgomery County CFW. The event will be a virtual conference held on January 31, 2021. The theme for this year will be: Beyond 2020: Advocating with Strength for Equality and Justice. An opening plenary session will include a panel of women working “on the front lines” in health, public safety, corrections, government, etc., followed by breakout sessions on such topics as economic justice, safety, shattering the glass ceiling, etc.

B. Achievement and Recognition (ARC) Committee..... Cartee

The nominations were officially opened on October 26 and will remain open through November 30. Invitations to statewide women’s organizations to send representatives to participate on the two selection committees have been sent and the seats on the committees are almost full. It is hoped that the nominations may be sent to the selection committees on December 4 and that the committees can make their decisions on whom to honor on December 14. Nominations are coming in exceptionally slowly this year. It seems likely that the effects of the pandemic, including home schooling for most students, combined with the distractions of the recent national and state elections, have made it difficult for students and faculty to focus on this. However, outreach continues, and the committee has options to discuss on moving forward. For now, commissioners are urged to help with outreach and share the call for nominations with educators in their communities.

C. Status of Women in Maryland (SWIM) Committee..... Yam

The contract with the researcher was put into effect and she has submitted an outline for the subjects to include in the research. The committee met on October 22, reviewed the proposal, made some suggestions and will meet again on November 23 to approve the final outline so the compilation of data can begin. The plan is for the research and report writing to be complete by January 15. Then the focus will shift to the design of the publication.

VII. Liaison Reports

A. The Foundation for the Maryland Commission for Women.....Shen

The Foundation is currently supporting two projects: the SWIM research and the Maryland Young Women Leaders Award – thanks to Commissioner Henry’s extraordinary generosity through the foundation she has established in her father’s name.

B. The Maryland Women’s Heritage Center..... Yang

The MWHC board meets again on December 5, but just issued a press release today with good news: The Center has finally found a new physical “home.” Marian House in Baltimore has taken over operations of the historic Women’s Industrial Exchange at 333 North Charles Street in Baltimore and has agreed to lease 1000 square feet of storefront space to the Heritage Center. Marian House provides transitional and permanent housing to women and children in need. It plans for the Women’s Industrial Exchange to become a women-oriented center for downtown Baltimore.

C. 19th Amendment Commission.....Steward and Yang

The Commission to Commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, was scheduled to officially “sun set” (cease operations) on October 31, 2020, having completed its work. Both the staff supporting the commission and its chair thanked the MCW for its support and collaboration, especially with regard to the 2020 Women’s Centennial Summit.

D. Women Moving Forward Conference..... Bailey

Plans for the 2021 conference, traditionally held in April at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women are on hold for now. It is unlikely that an in-person event can be held this coming Spring. Commissioner Bailey offered to remain in the liaison role with the WMF planning committee, as she has been involved for several years and is already on its distribution list, and will let Commissioners Colburn and McChriston know as soon as the committee decides that it makes sense to begin planning an event for the women incarcerated in the MCIW.

E. Maternal Mortality Review Stakeholders Group..... Langrell

No report at this time as the group has not met recently.

F. Maryland Women’s History Museum..... Luna

Commissioner Luna sent her report to the commissioners via email just prior to the start of this meeting.

G. UMD SAFE Center..... Costley

No report at this time as the group has not met recently.

VIII. Staff Report..... Vaughan-Prather

A. Annual Report;

The [2019 – 2020 Annual Report](#) has been published on the MCW website. However, due to a closure of the print facility necessitated by the new surge in the pandemic, printing of hard copies will not be possible for several weeks.

B. Outreach to County/City CFWs

In order to invite the local Commissions for Women to attend the MLAW Conference, it was necessary to completely update our contacts for those commissions. This is a time-consuming effort as the leadership often changes over the summer, and since most have no staff, locating the new leaderships can be painstaking. However, it is well worth the effort. We were delighted to have so many represented at the MLAW conference, and we now have established contact with the leadership of all 15 Commissions for Women in the state which will greatly facilitate communication and collaboration. Most expressed real appreciation for the outreach.

VIII. Announcements

Next Meeting Dates:

- Reminder: NO MEETING IN DECEMBER
- Executive Committee – January 14, 2021
- **MCW Meeting – January 21, 2021**

IX. Adjournment..... Yang

Chair Yang wished the commissioners a safe and happy holiday season. She thanked them for all their hard work and dedication throughout what has been an especially challenging year and said that she looks forward to working with everyone in 2021.

The meeting was adjourned the meeting at 6:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director
Maryland Commission for Women