

Maryland Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, January 19, 2023

5 p.m.

Virtual Meeting

Commissioners Attending:

Tawanda Bailey, Chair

Andrea Bottner
Beth Anne Dorman
Essita Duncan

Judith Emmel
Kathryn M. Fiddler

Eugenia B. Henry

Kaprece James

Lauren M. Lambert

Patricia McHugh Lambert

Christine Lee

Brenda J. McChriston

Jenny Peña Dias

Carole Jaar Sepe

Maxine Griffin Somerville, 1st Vice Chair

Evelyne S. Steward

Lenita Walker

Yun Jung Yang

Tamara E. Wilson

Commissioners Absent:

Tammy Bresnahan

Deborah Cartee

Kristi Halford

Maria Menucci

Roberta Pardo, 2nd Vice Chair

Monica Watkins

Staff Attending

Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director

Tammy Wise, Management Associate

I. Call to Order.....Chair Bailey

A quorum having been established; the meeting was called to order at 5:04 p.m.

A. Meeting Inspiration

Chair Bailey read a quote from Governor Moore's speech at his swearing-in ceremony on January 18, as inspiration for tonight's meeting:

"And today is our opportunity to begin a future so bright, it is blinding. But only if we are intentional, inclusive, and disciplined in confronting challenges, making hard choices, and seizing the opportunity in front of us."

*--Governor Wes Moore
January 18, 2023*

B. Approval of Agenda

Chair Bailey welcomed the commissioners. She called for approval of the agenda for tonight’s meeting. Commissioner Yang moved approval of the agenda as proposed. Commissioner Dorman seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

C. Approval of Minutes of the November 17, 2022 MCW Meeting

The Chair called for any amendments to the minutes of the November MCW meeting. Commissioner P. Lambert moved approval of the minutes as submitted. Commissioner Somerville seconded the motion which passed with one abstention.

II. Executive Committee Report..... Chair Bailey

A. Transition in Maryland State Government

Governor Moore and Lt. Governor Aruna Miller were sworn in yesterday in a beautiful ceremony at the State House in Annapolis. Governor Moore has already appointed many new department secretaries, including Senator Susan Lee who will now serve as Secretary of State and Rafael López, the new Secretary of the Department of Human Services where the MCW office is located. The Maryland General Assembly is in session now with many new chairs of its committees as well.

B. Women’s Bureau Regional Conference

The U.S. D.O.L. Women’s Bureau is conducting a second meeting for Mid-Atlantic Region CFWs on February 7. All members of Commissions for Women in the eight-state region (Maryland, Virginia, D.C., Delaware, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Kentucky) are invited to attend.

C. Social Media Initiative.....Pardo, 2nd Vice Chair

No report.

D. Women’s Caucus Briefing

On December 9, Chair Bailey and ACT Chair Wilson, accompanied by Executive Director Vaughan-Prather presented a briefing on the MCW’s work and especially the report on Maryland women and the pandemic, at a meeting of the Caucus of Maryland Women Legislators in Annapolis, at its invitation. The legislators received the briefing very enthusiastically, offered their support for the recommendations and expressed interest in helping ensure that every county in the state has an operating CFW.

E. Joint Committee on Children, Youth and Families Briefing

In a virtual meeting on December 6, MCW Chair Bailey, and ACT Chair Wilson, accompanied by Executive Director Vaughan-Prather, presented a briefing on the report on Maryland women and the pandemic to the Maryland General Assembly’s Joint Committee on Children, Youth and Families, at its request.

F. National Security Agency Women Employees’ Resource Group

The Commission has been invited to a “meet and greet” with the NSA Women Employees’ Resource Group at its February 3 in-person meeting in Annapolis. MCW Chair Bailey, Vice Chairs Somerville and Pardo, and ACT Chair Wilson have all agreed to participate along with Executive Director Vaughan-Prather.

III. Unfinished Business

A. Reflections on the November DEI Training

The Commissioner shared their thoughts about the training provided by the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights at the MCW’s November meeting, noting the importance of the information presented, that it is important to understand that while we hope to speak with a united voice for women, we are not a monolith and no one voice represents all the voices of women; understanding and respecting different perspectives is important to the MCW’s work. Chair Bailey said that she hopes the MCW will incorporate all that was learned into its future work.

B. MLAW Sign-On

A vote was taken via email on whether the MCW should sign-on in support of the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) agenda for this year. The vote was 14 in favor and 7 opposed, so the MCW notified MLAW that the MCW’s name may be added to list of supporters.

IV. New Business

No new business was brought before the Commission.

V. Committee Reports

A. Advocacy and Collaboration Taskforce (ACT).....Wilson

The Baltimore City CFW is almost up and running again. New Commissioners have been appointed and are waiting for confirmation by the City Council. The Commission is planning an event in March to celebrate its re-activation.

Commissioners Dorman and P. Lambert offered to work with the ACT to encourage the establishment of CFWs in Talbot and Carroll Counties.

B. Policy and Legislation (PAL) Committee..... Halford

1. Funding Legislative Proposals

As one of his first acts in office, Governor Moore today released funds that had been approved by the 2022 General Assembly but withheld by former Governor Hogan. Among other things, \$10 million will be made available to support the Time to Care Act passed last year and \$3.5 million will support the Abortion Care Act, also passed last year.

2. MCW 2023 Legislative Platform

A list of eight legislative initiatives was presented to the MCW by the PAL Committee as a proposal for the MCW’s own legislative agenda for the 2023 session of the Maryland General Assembly:

PROPOSED MCW 2023 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Repeal of Marriage as a Defense to Sex Crimes - Love is No Defense: This bill proposes to repeal the law allowing marriage as a defense to sex crimes.

Reproductive Health Protection Act: This legislation will create protections in our laws for pregnant individuals seeking abortion care, as well as those providing support to pregnant

individuals (including health care providers, support organizations, and volunteers), from civil, criminal, and administrative liability.

Prevention of Forced Infant Separation Act: This bill would establish beds for incarcerated women and their newborns at the incoming pre-release facility for incarcerated women.

Declaration of Rights - Right to Reproductive Liberty: This legislation will lead to a ballot measure to create a constitutional amendment to protect the rights of individuals to make their own reproductive health decisions in Maryland.

Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Youth: This bill will provide a safe harbor for child victims of sex trafficking and prevent their further victimization by connecting them to rehabilitative and supportive services through the already established Regional Navigator program, while providing a pathway to prevent any criminal or delinquent charges brought against them that are directly related to their trafficking.

Wage Pass-Through for Quality Care and Good Jobs: This legislation will amend law to increase state Medicaid reimbursement rates for long term care facilities and ensure a percentage for skilled nursing facility care force wages and benefits.

Child Care Sustainability Act: Sustain investments in the Child Care Scholarship Program ensuring access to affordable childcare for Maryland families.

Access to Period Products (HB 87/SB 52): Allow SNAP and WIC recipients to use their benefits to purchase diapers and menstrual hygiene products.

Commissioner Wilson moved adoption of these bills as the MCW’s legislative agenda for 2023. Commissioner Yang seconded the motion which passed with 16 in favor and two opposed. Commissioners Bottner and Duncan stated that they voted in opposition to the motion because they do not support the two reproductive rights bills included in the list.

3. MLAW.....Dorman

As discussed earlier, the MCW has voted to sign on in support of the MLAW 2023 agenda. The Marriage is No Defense Act was heard today. MLAW will hold a virtual legislative briefing (different from the Women’s Legislative Briefing sponsored by the Montgomery County CFW) on February 1 at 5 p.m. MCW will contribute as a sponsor of this event as well.

4. Women’s Legislative Briefing.....McChriston

The WLB will be held virtually on Sunday, January 29, 12:30 – 5 p.m. The MCW is a community co-sponsor of this event. The theme of this year’s WLB is *Empowered Women Protect Democracy*. It has several very powerful speakers lined up and will include leadership training for middle and high school students. Commissioners who have asked to be registered to attend are Commissioners Bailey, Somerville, Pardo, Fiddler, James, Sepe and L. Lambert. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather and Management Associate Wise will also be registered. Commissioner Stewart registered to attend as well.

The MCW has shared publicity for the event with its distribution lists.

- C. ARC Committee..... L. Lambert**
The Selection Committees met in December and identified the five women to be inducted into the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame and the five high school students to receive the Maryland Young Women Leaders Awards. The staff is working with the honorees to develop the necessary information for the website.

Commissioner Lambert, with the enthusiastic support of Chair Bailey, proposed that the commission consider an exception to the usual process of selecting inductees to enable the induction of five women making history right now by being elected or appointed as “firsts” in their office. Considerable discussion followed and, after a vote, the motion failed by a vote of six in favor and nine opposed with one abstention.

Commissioner Wilson then moved that the ARC Committee be directed to develop a proposal for another way to formally recognize these five women. Commissioner James seconded the motion which passed with a vote of 14 in favor and three abstentions.

Commissioner Steward moved that the ARC Committee be directed to review its Policy and Procedures Manual and develop rules that permit some flexibility and ability to respond to current events or to permit the inclusion of women the MCW deems qualified but who have not been nominated/selected by the standard process. Commissioner McChriston seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

VI. Liaison Reports

- A. The Foundation for the Maryland Commission for Women (TFMCW).....Steward**
The Foundation Board will hold a planning meeting on January 25 to discuss new fundraising strategies to support the MCW’s work.
- B. Maryland Women’s Heritage Center.....Bailey**
Chair Bailey attended the Center’s last Board meeting in December. The Center has a number of activities scheduled this month and in the next few months.
- C. Women Moving Forward Conference.....McChriston**
No report.
- D. Maternal Mortality Review Stakeholders Group.....Peña Dias**
No report.
- E. Maryland Women’s History Museum.....Emmel**
Unfortunately, plans have not been able to move forward for the proposed museum in Queen Anne’s County.
- F. UMD SAFE Center.....Somerville**
A panel discussion on race equity in access to medical care is scheduled for January 26 at the UMD Capital Medical Center in Largo. Commissioner Somerville is meeting with the Board regularly. The Center would be willing to present a briefing on its work on Human Trafficking at a MCW meeting.

- G. Maryland Semiquincentennial (MD 250) Commission.....Emmel**
The MD 250 Commission met in December. It is hoping to develop a partnership with Maryland Public TV to support some of its programming proposals.
- H. National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW).....Somerville**
The Board is meeting on a quarterly basis and is in the process of planning its 2023 annual conference.

VII. Announcements

- A. Executive Committee Meeting:** Thursday, February 9, 2023 @ 4:30 p.m. (Virtual)
- B. MCW Meeting:** **Thursday, February 16, 2023 @ 5:00 p.m. In-Person**
- C. Governor’s Inauguration Activities**
Commission Chair Bailey and Commissioner Wilson attended the Governor’s inaugural ball in Baltimore last night. It was a very well-attended event and a wonderful opportunity to participate in this historic occasion.
- D. Lunar New Year**
Commissioner Yang noted that this Sunday, January 22 will mark the beginning of the Lunar New Year celebrated by most Asian-Americans. She wished everyone the best of luck in the new year.

VI. Adjournment

No further business being brought before the Commission, Chair Bailey thanked the Commissioners for the very spirited discussion this evening. The meeting was adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted: February 9, 2023
By: Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director

Approved: February 16, 2023