

Maryland Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, June 15, 2023
5 p.m.

Attman-Glazer Building, 45 Calvert Street, Annapolis, MD

Commissioners Attending:

Tawanda A. Bailey, Chair
Andrea Bottner
Deborah Cartee
Beth Anne Dorman – 2nd Vice Chair
Essita Duncan
Judith Emmel
Maggi G. Gaines
Kristi Halford
Kaprece James
Patricia McHugh Lambert
Lauren M. Lambert
Brenda J. McChriston
Carole Jaar Sepe
Maxine Griffin Somerville, 1st Vice Chair
Lenita Walker
Tamara E. Wilson
Yun Jung Yang

Commissioners Absent:

Tammy Bresnahan
Kathryn M. Fiddler
Eugenia B. Henry
Christine Lee
Jenny Peña Dias
Evelyne S. Steward
Monica Watkins

Staff Attending:

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

- I. Call to Order..... Chair Bailey**
Having established a quorum, Chair Bailey called the meeting to order at 5:07 p.m. Commissioner L. Lambert read a quote from Maya Angelou, as inspiration for tonight’s meeting:

“The woman who truly intends to live a good life is already living phenomenally since intent is part of achievement.”

A. Approval of Agenda

Chair Bailey welcomed the commissioners in attendance. She called for approval of the agenda for tonight’s meeting. Commissioner Halford moved approval of the agenda. Commissioner P. Lambert seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

B. Approval of Minutes

Chair Bailey called for approval of the minutes of the May 18, 2023 Commission meeting. Commissioner Duncan noted that she is incorrectly listed as absent from that meeting, but she attended virtually. Commission P. Lambert moved approval of the minutes with that correction. Commission James seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

II. Executive Committee Report

A. CFW Roundtable

Each year, the MCW convenes a meeting of the county/city Commissions for Women (CFWs) across the state to discuss their initiatives, strategies and challenges. This year, Maryland's First Lady Dawn Moore was the opening speaker. Her remarks were phenomenal and inspiring! Ruth Howard, former chair of the Baltimore County CFW and now a member of the Board of the National Association of Commissions for Women, discussed developments with NACW as well. The June 1 meeting was held virtually so that commissioners from across the state could participate. There are 17 local CFWs in the state, 15 of them participated in the meeting, with a total of 55 attendees.

B. Meeting with DHS Secretary López

MCW Chair Bailey, Second Vice Chair Dorman and Executive Director Vaughan-Prather met with DHS Secretary Rafael López and some of his staff earlier this week. (First Vice Chair Somerville is ill and could not attend.) The DHS leadership was very receptive to the MCW's mission and goals, and the alignment with those of the DHS. Commissioner Dorman reported that Secretary López is open to the MCW's proposing greater resources. She noted that the MCW's operating budget is only about \$22,500 per year – representing an expenditure of less than \$1000 per county. The Secretary noted that the three factors most predictive of a child needing to be separated from its family are domestic violence/sexual assault, mental health issues, and substance abuse – all areas of concern to the MCW as well. She suggested that the MCW develop a proposal for what it could accomplish with additional resources and submit it for consideration.

C. July Meeting Date and Location

The Commission's annual planning meeting will be held on July 13, 2023 at 3 p.m. at the AARP headquarters, One Park Place, Suite 475 in Annapolis. In-person attendance is very much encouraged for this annual meeting, but a virtual option will be available.

D. New Commissioner Orientation Session

Five of the newly appointed Commissioners will be offered a virtual orientation session to be held on June 23 at 10 a.m. New Commissioner Gaines will participate in the same orientation session on June 28 at 10 a.m.

III. Unfinished Business

A. Maryland State Firemen's Association (MSFA)

The MCW wrote to the MSFA urging it to change its name to reflect the diversity of its membership with a gender-neutral term such as "firefighters" instead of "firemen." The President of the Association responded that the issue is up for a vote at its statewide conference in Ocean City. However, such a change requires an affirmative vote of 75% of those in attendance, and several alternative names are "on the ballot," thus it seems unlikely that any one name will win a three-quarters majority. Since the issue was considered at last year's

conference and failed, it is likely that it will not be considered again for several years. Commissioners discussed several possible strategies for further work on this issue.

B. Proposed Bylaws Amendments

The proposed Bylaws amendments regarding virtual/in-person attendance will be on the agenda for the July 13 planning meeting.

IV. New Business

No new business was brought before the Commission.

V. Committee Reports

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

Second Vice Chair Dorman is trying to schedule a meeting with a Talbott County Councilwoman to discuss the possibility of establishing a CFW in that jurisdiction. Commissioner P. Lambert contacted the Carroll County Council and received a response asking for a list of the counties that do and do not have a CFW, the mission of the MCW, and a few other items of information. Staff will help draft a response.

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

First Vice Chair Dorman who has represented the MCW on the board of the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) has let that board know that she will not seek re-election this year. MLAW would like continued representation from the MCW, and a liaison can be identified at the July planning meeting. Commissioner McChriston reported that the Montgomery County CFW has begun the process of planning for the 2024 Women’s Legislative Briefing (WLB), which will be held on Sunday, January 28 next year. It will be held in-person for the first time since the pandemic, with the theme of “Transformation through Legislation.” Commissioner P. Lambert suggested that the WLB might want to include seminars for women seeking election to public office.

C. ARC Committee.....L. Lambert

Commissioner Lambert reported that there are some funds (around \$4200) in the MCW’s operating budget that could be used to fund interns at the Maryland State Archives (MSA) to work on updating the Maryland Women’s Hall of Fame (HOF) biographies published on the MSA website. Honorees were first inducted into the HOF in 1985. There are now almost 200 biographies published and some of those have become significantly outdated – both in terms of events and language/terminology. It is hoped that those funds can be used to resume the intern program and have it focus specifically on updating the existing biographies. For the future, care should be taken that the bios are written, as much as possible, using language that will not become outdated. Commissioner Lambert suggested that it may be possible for Chat GPT to be helpful with this project.

VI. Liaison Reports

A. The Foundation for the Maryland Commission for Women (TFMCW)

No report.

B. Maryland Women’s Heritage Center.....Bailey

The Center is hosting an artist’s reception on July 15 at its Baltimore location, showcasing the hand-cut paper artistry of Hannah Cohen. Commissioner Wilson will try to attend.

C. Women Moving Forward Conference.....McChriston

It appears that there are no plans to hold the conference this year.

D. Maternal Mortality Review Stakeholders Group

No report.

E. UMD Safe Center

No report

F. Maryland Semiquicentennial (MD 250) Commission.....Emmel

This Commission now has new leadership. Commissioner Emmel will meet with her to suggest inclusion of the HOF in the plans to commemorate the state’s 250th anniversary in 2026.

Activities will take place throughout several years surrounding the semiquicentennial date.

G. National Association of Commissions for Women.....Vaughan-Prather

Although NACW will not hold its annual conference this year, it is planning a membership meeting where officers will be elected.

VII. Staff ReportVaughan-Prather

A. Annual Report

Staff begin work on the FY 23 Annual Report soon, with the goal of publication by the end of the summer. Draft chapters on each committee’s work will be shared with the Committee Chairs for approval before publication.

VIII. Announcements

A. July Executive Committee Meeting: Thursday, July 6, 2023 at 4:30 p.m. Virtual

B. June MCW Meeting: Thursday, July 13, 2023 at 3 p.m. (In-Person)

C. Farewell and Appreciation

Chair Bailey noted that with the completion of their terms and the Governor’s appointment of new commissioners, the MCW is losing some of its most long serving and valuable members. Commissioner Bresnahan chaired the PAL Committee for many years, and her legislative expertise will be sorely missed. Commissioner Halford, who is also the Vice Chair of the Harford County CFW, chaired the MCW’s PAL Committee for the most recent two years and was exceeding effective at involving her committee members in the advocacy work.

Commissioner James was just appointed last year and immediately became a valued member, including serving on the MCW’s foundation. She is about to become the Chair of the Charles County CFW, and so our relationship can continue. Commissioner Sepe served as the MCW Second Vice Chair for four years and on the MCW for eight. She contributed not only to the overall leadership of the MCW but also to the work of many of its committees. Commissioner Yang has served on this commission for eight years, chairing its Voices of Maryland Women Listening Tour, including traveling to the Republic of Moldova to help launch a “Voices of Moldovan Women Listening Tour,” and serving as MCW Chair for four years. While we look forward to all that the new appointees will bring, there is just no way to replace what these commissioners have contributed, nor to thank them enough for their contributions.

IX. Adjournment

No further business being brought before the Commission, Chair Bailey thanked the Commissioners for all their work and wished them a very good weekend. The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted: July 7, 2023

By: Judith Vaughan-Prather, Executive Director

Approved: July 13, 2023