

Maryland Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 16, 2024
5 p.m.

Virtual

Commissioners Attending:

Tawanda A. Bailey, Chair
Pier Blake
Jonathon Carrington
Essita Duncan
Maggi Gaines
Sarah Klein
Lauren M. Lambert
Patricia McHugh Lambert, 2nd Vice Chair
Christine Lee
Brenda J. McChriston
Maxine Griffin Somerville, 1st Vice Chair
Evelyne S. Steward
LaShaune Stitt
Lenita Walker
Tamara Wilson

Commissioners Absent:

Gloria Dent
Judith Emmel
Kathryn Fiddler
Linda Han
Monica Watkins

Staff Attending:

Ariana Kelly, Executive Director
Tammy Wise, Management Associate

- I. Call to Order/Approval of Agenda and Minutes..... Chair Bailey**
Once a quorum was established the meeting was called to order by Chair Bailey who welcomed the commissioners in attendance. She called for approval of April 18, 2024 minutes. Second Vice Chair P. Lambert moved approval of the minutes, Commissioner Blake seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously. Chair Bailey called for approval of today’s agenda. Second Vice Chair P. Lambert moved approval the agenda, Commissioner Walker seconded, and it passed unanimously.
- II. Executive Committee Report.....Chair Bailey**
- A. Introduction to Ariana Kelly.....Executive Director Kelly**
Executive Director Kelly thanked the commissioners for joining the meeting, their dedication, and for hiring her into this position. She will be spending the month of June meeting with each commissioner to maximize the capacity of the commission, bring out the best in each commissioner, and move things forward in the State of Maryland. Executive Director Kelly briefed the Commission on her background and experience that she is bringing to the Maryland Commission for Women (MCW), which formed her passion for policy, advocacy, and community building. Chair Bailey praised Executive Director Kelly for her passion and all of the work that she has done.
- B. Officer Elections**

Today is the deadline for all nominations. If a commissioner would like to submit a nomination please send it to Management Associate Wise tonight for the election at the June 20 meeting. Commissioner Klein asked were there multiple candidates for each position, and if not, will the nomination deadline be extended. Chair Bailey responded explaining that all commissioners are encouraged to run for office and can be nominated or can nominate themselves by today's deadline. If there are multiple commissioners running for a position there will be time to address the commission detailing their qualifications. We will not know how many nominations there are until after tonight. More discussion ensued amongst the commissioners. Second Vice Chair P. Lambert pointed out that even if there is just one candidate they cannot be automatically elected without the necessary votes. Commissioner Klein inquired if it is a majority vote or a specific fraction of the Commission to secure the election. Chair Bailey explained that the Commission has never been in that situation and that all elections have resulted in a majority vote. There was more discussion about the nominations and process ending in all commissioners satisfied with the procedures as outlined.

C. Annual Planning Meeting

Chair Bailey informed the Commission that the MCW has not gotten any new commissioners appointed and they will not be appointed by July. There are also changes happening in the MD Department of Human Services (DHS) that will impact the commission. Due to these two factors, our planning session has to be moved from July to later in the year. Executive Director Kelly stated that she needs additional time for the transition period to strategically prepare and to build the relationship with the DHS and the Moore-Miller Administration and general logistics of the office of the MCW. She would like the planning meeting to be moved to September for a solid strategic plan and to assess where we are as an organization having maximum impact for this year and our three-year plan.

III. Unfinished Business

A. Maryland Firemen's Association

In 2023, a senator asked that the Maryland Firemen's Association be renamed to Maryland Firefighter's Association to be more inclusive of women. In support of the request, the MCW sent a letter to the then President of the Association. The vote did not pass. It was brought to Chair Bailey's attention that the request will be brought up again this year at the June meeting, so she again sent a letter, this time to President Smothers in support of this change to highlight that the change would recognize women in this field and their contributions. President Smothers is confident that the name change will pass in June. Chair Bailey expects to have more information by next month's meeting.

IV. New Business

A. Plans for the Maryland Commission for Women

Executive Director Kelly explained that we are approaching the 60th anniversary of the MCW next year. She was hired with the understanding that the MCW would become more integrated into DHS and reflect the work that the Moore-Miller Administration is doing on behalf of women's issues in our state, strengthening relationships between the community and women's organizations, find connections, identify work that needs to be done, and identify a point person in state departments to make sure that our work is a priority. The Administration wants to invest in the Commission to give it a chance to show what can be done while building out a three-year strategic plan incorporating the Moor-Miller Administration's values.

Moore-Miller Administration Values
Be Responsive

Be Everywhere
 Be Data-Driven Heart-Led
 Follow Through
 Move Urgently
 Over-Communicate
 Be Innovative
 Be Audacious
 Move with Integrity
 Be Courageous
 Challenge the Status Quo
 Outcomes Focused

Executive Director Kelly continued. By aligning with these values the MCW will get a significant investment to accomplish the work that needs to be done. As the new Executive Director, she has noticed that the budget for the MCW has decreased over the last 20 years and would like to see it increased by building bridges, strengthening relationships, and having the commissioners able to do the work they want to do. Additional discussion ensued with the commissioners expressing support for trying to increase the budget and stating that they would do anything to support this effort.

V. Committee Reports

A. Advocacy, Collaboration, and Engagement Committee.....Stitt

Commissioner Stitt began her report by wishing all of the mothers a happy Mother’s Day. She thanked the commissioners that signed up to assist with the upcoming Commission for Women Roundtable meeting. She informed the Commission that there has been a shift in the format of the Roundtable because, according to DHS policy, the host of the Zoom call has to be a DHS employee, so some of the duties that commissioners signed up to do cannot be performed. We met with the Graphics Department and sent out a Save the Date. We have an invitation designed that still needs to be sent out. The registration will be through Zoom. The breakout groups will have to be revised because of the number of participants. Executive Director Kelly noted that the office would send out the invitation ten days in advance and follow up with a call to solidify the RSVPs. The meeting will be held on May 30 from 5:00 – 7:30pm, virtually.

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

Commissioner Duncan reported that the four bills that were waiting on the Governor to sign have been signed. The bills that were signed are: 1 – Equal Rights Amendment, 2 – Sexual Crimes: Definition of Consent and Repeal of Threat of Force, 3 – Prevention of Solicitation of a Minor Through Child Pornography, 4 – Reproductive Health Clinics Security Grants. For Reproductive Health Clinics Security Grants the funding has not been given, so we have to keep working and partnering with these organizations to secure favorable outcomes. Commissioner Duncan noted that after the primary election, Maryland has five women Congressional nominees.

B. ARC Committee..... Blake

No report.

VI. Liaison Reports

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

There is a pot of money that has been held by the Friends of the Maryland Commission for Women that they were not willing to relinquish to the Foundation for the Maryland

Commission for Women and not willing to spend it on MCW priorities. The Friends are now ready to return the money that was earmarked for the MCW's initiatives.

- B. Maryland Women's Heritage Center..... Chair Bailey**
The Heritage Center has a number of events coming up and also plans to meet with Executive Director Kelly soon. They are currently experiencing some turnover and are looking for individuals to join their board. They welcome off-going commissioners to apply. They have also put together the Hall of Fame panels to be displayed at the Notre Dame of Maryland University. Chair Bailey encouraged commissioners to visit this exhibit.
- C. Women Moving Forward Conference.....L. Lambert**
The WMF planning meetings were held on April 23 and May 7. The conference is scheduled for Saturday, October 5, 2024 at the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women. The theme will be Build your wealth, health, finances, mind, body, and soul. It will be a full-day event with a plenary portion and various workshops. They are still in the planning phase and Commissioner L. Lambert will update the Commission as details become available.
- D. Maternal Mortality Review Stakeholders Group.....Fiddler**
No report.
- E. UMD Safe Center.....First Vice Chair Somerville**
No report.
- F. Maryland Semiquincentennial (MD 250) Commission.....Bailey for Emmel**
Chair Baily reported that the inaugural event is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, June 22. There are several events around the state that will be endorsed by the 250 Commission. She encourages all MCW members to sign up for their newsletter to stay informed. The website is <https://mdtwofifty.maryland.gov/>.
- G. National Association of Commissions for Women..... Somerville**
The NACW is planning a convention from July 24-28 in Boston. Registration is now open. They have released a call for presenters and the theme is strength of sisterhood throughout time. If commissioners are interested in being a presenter, proposals are due on May 31, 2024 and there is a variety of topics and suggestions around the theme, but you are not limited to those that are on their website.
- H. Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs.....Carrington**
Pride season is May and June. There will be a number of events around the state and everyone is encouraged to participate.
- I. Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women.....Bailey**
We have always had a liaison with MLAW and now we need to fill that position. Executive Director Kelly asked Commissioner Walker if she would step into this role and she graciously agreed. Commissioner Walker then reported that MLAW recently held a legislative wrap-up, giving a final report on the nine bills it supported. Seven bills passed. The two bills that did not pass are Firearm Background Checks and the Criminal Injury Compensation Board. She believes that they plan to support these two bills next year if they are introduced. The Fall Conference is going to be held on Saturday, November 23, 2024 in Columbia, MD.

- VII. Staff Report.....Executive Director Kelly
 - Met with Secretary Lopez and he is fully supportive of the MCW.
 - Still in the process of onboarding.
 - The staff has established a weekly planning process.
 - Met with Chair Bailey and the Executive Committee. Met with Executive Director of the Montgomery County Commission for Women. Will meet with former Executive Director

of the MCW Judith Vaughan-Prather and newly hired Executive Director of MLAW Catherine Hill.

- Meeting scheduled with Budget to get approval to bring interns on board.
- Met with the Women Legislators of Maryland. They would like to secure the partnership with the MCW in regards to the Hall of Fame program in coming years.
- Reviewed all of the Annual Reports and publications. Currently compiling a history in support of increasing the budget.
- Recounted history of MLAW to commissioners, explaining how MLAW began with the MCW and spun off 20 years ago.
- Met with 5th graders at the Federal Prep School.
- Working on increasing visibility and attending as many events as possible. Due to the lack of an Executive Director for six months there is not much to show in the Annual Report.
- Priority is to get interns into the office. We have a number of well qualified candidates already.
- Plan to have more meetings with DHS and other partners to implement our goals.
- Working on an annual communications and events calendar.
- Keeping a list of policy and program topics for June’s meeting. We are discussing the MCW office location with DHS. DHS wants the office moved to Baltimore and wants the MCW integrated into DHS better. This conversation is ongoing and more information will be shared. Commissioner Walker asked how the move will impact the in-person meeting location. Executive Director Kelly explained that it would not impact the location. The staff is flexible and will defer to the commissioner’s preference.

VII. Announcements.....Bailey

- A. **June Executive Committee Meeting:** Thursday, June 13, 2024, at 4:30 p.m. Virtual
- B. **Commission Meeting – Thursday, June 20, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. (In-Person)**

VIII. Adjournment

No further business being brought before the Commission, Chair Bailey thanked the Commissioners for all their work. The meeting was adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

Drafted By: Tammy Wise, Management Associate
Submitted: June 18, 2024

Approved: June 20, 2024