



**Baltimore County Commission for Women  
Minutes of the Meeting  
Thursday, April 18, 2019**

**Present:** Vonzella Perry, Ruth Howard, Carmen Christiana, Jennie Fernandez, Jacqui Lampell, Brenda Savoy, Cecelia Myrick, Frances Smith, Renee McGuirk-Spence, Sharon Kehnemui, Teresa Messler, Nitsa Zdziera, Helene Waranch

**Excused Absences:** Bella Owens, Emily Hunter, Kimberly Bowen, Lynda Stahl, Sheila Derman

**Unexcused Absences:** Cheryl Brooks, Dorothy Foos, Kelly Carter, Sabrina Jones

**Call to Order:** 6:01 p.m. by President Vonzella Perry

**Minutes of the December Meeting:** December meeting minutes were moved, seconded and approved as submitted.

**Treasurer's Report:** Beginning balance \$8,860.98 Expenses \$2,667.44, ending balance \$6,193.54

**President's Report:** Vonzella talked about the upcoming Baltimore County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority's "Human Trafficking Discussion" taking place April 24, 2019, 6 – 8 p.m. at the CCBC-Catonsville Campus. The Women's Commission will have a table at the event and commissioners were asked to volunteer at the event. Vonzella introduced the two new commissioners: Ad Hoc-Health member, Dr. Teresa Messler and Council 7 member, Sharon Kehnemui. Each spoke about herself.

### **Committee Reports**

**Women's Health:** Dr. Messler reported on several new initiatives underway in the Baltimore County Department of Health which began in the fall of 2018: Babies Born Healthy which has been launched initially in Owings Mills and Cockeysville. It is a care coordination, navigation program, childhood lead poisoning prevention and environmental case management program. Dr. Messler will send the Commission more information about each. In addition, the County has begun a parenting program named Parenting is Hard Work, designed to assist parents of tweens and teens navigate the tricky waters of successful adolescent parenting. The next date is May 15 at the Essex Library; it is designed to help parents learn to communicate effectively, teach responsibility, and learn mechanisms for dealing with difficult tween/teen behavior.

**Women's Equality/Diversity:** Ruth Howard briefed the Commission on the progress of implementing Equality/Diversity forums around the county. Unfortunately, the committee has had some difficulty establishing available dates with the libraries (the preferred venues for the forums). This has resulted in the cancellation of the forum originally scheduled for June. Vonzella Perry told the Commission that, going forward, Carmen Christiana could help the committee with securing library dates. The committee is still planning to go forward with two forums in the fall, one in September (possibly in the north county) and one in November (west side).

**Public Policy Agenda:** In the absence of Sheila Derman, Renee McGuirk-Spence provided the Commission with a brief update of the recently concluded session of the Maryland General Assembly. The Kirwin legislation provided an additional \$255 million to education statewide which includes 3% salary increases. In addition, it provides financial incentives to schools for extending pre-K programs at-risk children and provides a grant program for school-community coordinators who will work with county agencies and the private sector. The legislation also provides for health specialists and the expansion of the Maryland Family Support Center. Additionally, it includes money for tutors. Finally, Governor Hogan inserted the position of Inspector General specifically to look out for cases of misuse and/or fraud involving school funding.

**Human Trafficking:** In the absence of the committee chair, there was no report. However, there was laudatory conversation on the progress the Baltimore County Human Trafficking Work Group is making. Brenda Savoy also invited the Commission to a big HT awareness event, hosted by the Baltimore County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. taking place on April 24 from 6-8 PM at the Community College of Baltimore County Catonsville.

**Domestic Violence:** Nitsa Stakias Zdziera spoke about the very impressive tour of the Safe House at GBMC – for both victims of sexual assault and human trafficking. In addition to the services it provides victims, it takes into account the children of victims by providing safe spaces for them while their mothers are receiving medical and emotional support services. Efforts are currently underway to replicate it at other county hospitals.

It was also announced that there is a LGBT+ Fair being held June 19th from 6-8 PM at the North Point Library in Dundalk.

**Woman of the Year:** Successful event with a great turn out.

**Old Business/New Business:** Vonzella Perry asked the committees to submit their budget requests for the final two months of the fiscal year. Renee McGuirk-Spence suggested that the Commission ask the County to roll over the balance of the FY19 budget to the FY20 budget.

Nitsa Stakias Zdziera made a recommendation that Commission members consider all wearing red to future Women of the Year ceremonies since it is the official color of the Commission.

Frances Smith presented the names of the five candidates who have been proposed for the Nominating Committee: Emily Hunter, Sabrina Jones, Brenda Savoy, Nitsa Stakias Zdziera, and Frances Smith (as Chair). The Commission reviewed the names; Vonzella Perry called for a vote and the slate was approved unanimously.

**Meeting Adjourned:** 7:17 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** May 16, 2019