

Baltimore County Commission for Women Meeting September 19, 2019
Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order 6:02 p.m.

1) Minutes from June 20, 2019, meeting approved

2) Budget Review. \$9,923.16 in the account. \$76.84 was used to cover the August planning meeting expenses.

Discussion moved to the approval process for expenses. Every expense over \$25 has to be approved by the commissioners. This is written into the bylaws. But there is no process for presenting expenses to the commissioners for approval. For instance, one committee chair requested reimbursement for \$1,600 to attend a conference, but the registration never came to the commissioners for a vote. President Howard said that a process is needed so that everyone can't just sign up for an event and then submit for reimbursement.

Discussion then turned to the "Friends of Baltimore County Commission for Women." Libby Bryant is the treasurer but it's unknown who the other "friends" are. It was formed by a group who had hosted an event in support of the commission. Afterward the organizers decided not to give the extra funds to the county, but to make a 501c3 called the "Friends of BCCW" and delegated administrators. Libby Bryant is administering the remainder.

The commission discussed whether the "Friends of Baltimore County Commission for Women" should have a commissioner from the BCCW serve on the Friends board, even *ex-officio*. Commissioner McGuirk Spence said since the Friends of Baltimore County Commission for Women has to file a statement every year with the secretary of state, the commission needs to make sure it is following proper protocol. Treasurer Derman suggested the Friends board member from the commission be the treasurer.

Commissioner McGuirk Spence motioned that the commission investigate the Friends committee further to find out more about its operations and to request that the treasurer be put on the Friends board of directors and file periodic reports to the commission. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved.

3) Absentee Policy. President Howard reported that Commissioner Myrick lost her husband on August 26. The commission will send a sympathy card, having just found out about it. The discussion then moved to absentee policy. Commissioner Owens was marked absent without prior notification. President Howard repeated that the commission policy is to allow three absences that are excused, but three absences that are NOT excused means being removed from the commission. A question remains about whether prior notification is sufficient for an excused absence or whether there has to be a legitimate reason to be excused. A scheduling conflict was not considered "legitimate" because there are only 11 meetings each year and the dates are known well in advance. The discussion on "excused" absences was left unfinished.

4) Committee Reports

A. Voices of Women in Baltimore County Initiative

The Community Conversations was officially titled "Voices of Women in Baltimore County Initiative" to mimic the national commission name. The first event will be held on November 13 at Rosedale Public Library. This is President Howard's district. It was noted that the libraries require long lead times to reserve so all the commissioners hosting these events need to look at dates available at their district libraries and let the other commissioners know at the next meeting.

B. Public Policy. Commissioner Derman noted that the Maryland House of Delegates and General Assembly websites do not have pre-filed bills up so she has no knowledge if anything of importance is coming on the docket. Commissioner Waranch moved that the commission join the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) and pay the \$75 membership fee. The motion was seconded and approved. Liaison Christiana said she will complete the paperwork and make the \$75 budget request approved.

Additionally, the commission needs to confirm that membership in the National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW) enables the BCCW to have access to their resources, including survey results from Baltimore County. The paperwork for membership and \$150 is needed to renew membership in the NACW. Treasurer Derman asked members to submit their requests for memberships so she can put together a tally of how many membership fees the commission wants to pay.

President Howard proposed that the commission support a policy for county employees to be able to transfer unused sick days to coworkers. The policy exists at the state level and in Baltimore City, but the county doesn't have it. Commissioners Derman and Waranch said that it would require research to determine whether that was an HR policy or a legislative issue or something that the commission even has the staff power to do. Liaison Christiana said it would be a conflict of interest for her to work on the topic since she is a county employee and does not want to pursue a policy that affects her specifically.

C. Women's Health. Commissioner Messler said big issues in the county health community now are heart disease in women, pre-pregnancy and post-natal health, depression, and obesity.

D. Domestic Violence. Commissioner Savoy said she met with Commissioner Berkowitz and discussed non-fatal strangulation. The Delta Foundation had scheduled a Domestic Violence Workshop for adults on Oct. 2 at the Randallstown Library. They had called the 11th district delegate to attend. The workshop was providing resources on unhealthy behavior patterns – emotional, physical, psychological and financial — used by perpetrators to maintain control in their relationships.

E. Women of the Year – Commissioners McGuirk Spence and Savoy met to review previous criteria for selection of the Woman of the Year. They agreed the criteria should remain the same with a few tweaks. The budget for the event is about \$3,000 for gifts and repast. They suggested that Towson University cater the affair. They are going to secure a date to advertise and solicit candidates. Last year, the commission requested candidate submissions in November when no one was paying attention. They suggested that the commission start to request submissions in January or February for the event to be held in late March. They noted that the Young Woman of the Year is a high school senior so the commission needs to alert the schools for nominations. Commissioner Hunter said that the nominees should all be notified when they are nominated.

Commissioner Stakias Zdziera noted that the commission has unallocated money in its budget that can be dedicated to the event, and perhaps the commission should move the venue to a more social environment. Commissioner Savoy countered that there's a certain amount of pomp associated with coming to the county offices.

F. 2020 Women's Suffrage Centennial Conference. Commissioner Waranch said she didn't get a chance to coordinate a centennial meeting so she has not developed a budget yet. She questioned whether the county officials should be involved since it's a centennial event.

5) New Business

Commissioner Lampell asked whether the commission has enough "woman power" to help do all that the commission would like to do. It was noted that the county executive liaison is a "staff person" for the commission president. President Howard suggested that Commissioner Kehnemui will send out the meeting agenda a week in advance. Liaison Christiana asked that the minutes be sent to her in a Word document because they have to go on the website.

6) Old Business

A question was raised about putting together a policy related to membership in the National Association of Commissions for Women.

7) Announcements

A. November 1 is the date for the [Baltimore County Delta Sigma Theta Be Safe](#) event at Lifebridge Health and Fitness in Pikesville. This event is about promoting personal safety in the face of domestic violence. Commissioners may want to notify their council members to distribute information on this as they see fit.

B. Baltimore County has implemented the Babies Born Healthy Program (BBH), a care coordination and navigation program to connect women with appropriate clinical services, community resources and social supports to make sure pregnant women have the support they need for health and parenting. Women can participate in BBH anytime during pregnancy or up to 12 weeks post-partum.

It currently serves women in the Ownings Mills (21117) or Cockeysville (21030) areas. Every woman who completes the six-session program is awarded a pack-and-play, a car seat, and other items.

C. Commissioner Perry introduced her guest, Morgan Dowell, to the commissioners. Ms. Dahl is working to pass the Maryland bar exam. She previously worked in the Maryland General Assembly, at Greenwald Consulting, and at the U.S. Sergeant at Arms Council.

D. Commissioner Perry reminded the commissioners about the Delta Foundation of Baltimore County event on November 15 called [Stand Down](#), a commemorative event honoring female veterans for the 688 Central Postal Directory Battalion. President Howard said that she already notified the organization that the commission would not be able to participate.

8) Commissioner Stakias Zdziera requested that a calendar for meeting dates be distributed to the commissioners.

9) President Howard reminded all the commissioners that they are required to be on a committee and were asked to please sign up for one if they have not done so yet.

10) Commissioner Waranch was unanimously appointed to the open vice presidential slot.

Meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.