

Baltimore County Commission for Women Meeting October 17, 2019
Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order 6:06 p.m.

Present: Brenda Savoy, Carmen Christiana, Cecelia Myrick, Frances Smith, Helene Waranch, Jacqui Lampell, Renee McGuirk-Spence, Sabrina Jones, Sharon Kehnemui, Teresa Messler

Absent Excused: Cheryl Brooks, Jennie Fernandez, Rosalyn Berkowitz, Ruth Howard, Sheila Derman

Absent Unexcused: Bella Owens, Dorothy Foos, Emily Hunter, Kelly Carter, Lynda Stahl, Nitsa Stakis-Zdziera, Vonzella Perry

1) A moment of silence in memory of Rep. Elijah Cummings, who passed away in the morning, was held by Vice President Waranch since President Howard was excused.

2) Minutes from the September 19, 2019, meeting approved.

3) Treasurer's Report — Beginning balance: \$9,923.16

\$150 in dues were paid to the National Association of Women Commissions (NACW); \$75 was paid for dues to the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW).

Ending Balance: \$9,698.16

4) President's Report – President Howard, who was out of town on business, sent a report that Councilwoman Bevins had opted to not sponsor the Voices of Women in Baltimore County Initiative to be held in her district on Nov. 13 at Rosedale Library.

5) Absentees – Vice President Waranch noted that incoming commissioner Amy Blank is not officially a member yet and therefore was not in attendance. Seven commissioners were absent without asking to be excused. Vice President Waranch suggested that after two unexcused absences, the commission send a warning to commissioners, informing them that they will be removed from the commission after a third unexcused absence.

6) Committee Reports

A. Human Trafficking — The Human Trafficking Work Group hosted a guest speaker.

B. Community Conversations – Vice President Waranch reported that she and Commissioner Derman had approached Councilman Izzy Patoka and have scheduled a meeting with him on Nov. 1 to chat about sponsoring the Voices of Women in Baltimore County Initiative event in his district. At that time, they will discuss money, locations, dates, and times. Commissioner Kehnemui noted that she had sent a note to District 7 Councilman Crandell with the sample flier and sponsorship request letter but had not yet received a reply.

Vice President Waranch suggested that commissioners email one another when they have proposed dates from their council members. Commissioner Smith said that she suggests approaching the libraries first to get a set of proposed dates and then seek the council members' feedback. Commissioners agreed to keep one another informed about their progress with council members and

libraries so that districts do not schedule overlapping on dates for their events, and to maintain accountability.

C. Public Policy Agenda

MLAW is hosting its annual legislative agenda planning meeting on Nov. 23 from 9:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at the Chesapeake Arts Center in Brooklyn Park. House Speaker Adrienne Jones will be in attendance. Vice President Waranch and Commissioner Derman are going to attend to represent both the Baltimore County Commission for Women and the Federation of Jewish Women's Organizations. Attendance is \$25 per person, and they will pay their own way.

During the MLAW meeting, people make presentations about bills they would like to propose, and members and attendants are then asked to vote for their top 10 topics. Vice President Waranch suggested that Commissioner Berkowitz offer a legislative proposal at the meeting to make strangulation during domestic violence a felony. She added that she will present the list of proposals to the commission during the Dec. 19 commission meeting so that commissioners can decide whether they would like to offer commission support for any specific legislative proposals.

D. Women's Health – Vice President Waranch noted that October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month and distributed a flier from the Maryland Commission for Women.

Commissioner Messler said she and Commissioner Jones had started to plan for the Healthy Family Fun Fest, and they were going to meet with Susan Burke on Oct. 25 to start putting together details, including the date for the event, which previously has been held in September and in March. Commissioner Messler said she is reviewing vendors who have previously participated. In the past, vendors paid \$50 each to attend and the event ended up paying for itself. The commissioners said they will provide an update at the November meeting.

E. Domestic Violence – Domestic Violence Committee members met with a state House delegate and discussed adding the strangulation during domestic violence to the list of felony statutes. The proposal has been on the docket before but did not pass the Legislature so the delegate and the commissioners are reviewing a list of people to contact to try and attract support this time around.

Vice President Waranch noted that the Maryland Commission for Women has a hotline for women to call seeking resources and inquired whether the commission should promote that phone number on its website or elsewhere. She offered a printed list of resources to give to the Domestic Violence Committee to do research about each of the resources to ensure that the commission wants to promote their organizations and seek opportunities to share this information in other venues. Commissioner Savoy inquired whether funds are available to print trifolds to victims educating them about domestic violence resources. One of the concerns about promoting the resources list is whether the resources are local or national, and what the response times and quality of responses are. Commissioner Messler said many hotlines are national, and they then parse out the information to local community services.

Commissioner Savoy pointed out that Delta program for victims is ongoing at GMBC.

F. Women of the Year – Committee members are ironing out the final timeline for the annual event. Commissioner McGuirk-Spence said the committee will send out the request for nominations around

Jan. 6, 2020, once people are back to work after the holidays. She said the committee would like to nail down the date for the event to the week of March 23, during Women's History Month, but must confirm the date with the county executive. Any of the dates from Tuesday March 24-Thursday March 26 are preferable.

The nomination deadline will be on March 6, after which time applicants will be reviewed and winners decided. The three awards are for the Woman of the Year, the Woman Making a Difference, and the Young Woman of the Year. Save the Date notices are put on the application so that nominees leave the date open, but the Save the Date is sent to the individual making the nomination and the nominee is not notified unless done so by the person nominating her. The committee will encourage the nominators to notify the nominees to keep the date open in case they win. The commission president will notify the winners via email.

The conversation also turned to making sure that the request for nominations is adequately publicized. The request for nominations for the Young Woman of the Year is sent to the school systems while the county's Public Relations Department announces the opening of nominations and sends the information to the libraries for distribution.

G. Bylaws Committee- - Parliamentarian Jones is sending a notice to the committee to schedule a telephone conference call to review revisions to the bylaws.

H. 2020 Women's Suffrage Centennial Conference – Vice President Waranch said she and Commissioner Derman discussed many different formats for this event, but said any effort to get this event off the ground is going to take more than two commissioners. She said the Women's Empowerment Expo previously held had done morning workshops and a luncheon with a speaker, while county agencies and other vendors displayed booths at the event.

Vice President Waranch noted that former Commissioner Natasha Horton had been a liaison for a lot of businesses that participated last time. Since she is no longer with the commission, the vice president asked that other commissioners help organize the event by locating a venue, securing sponsorship, and creating notifications to promote the event. She said the sponsorship levels, fliers, and other materials from the Women's Employment Expo could serve as templates.

The discussion moved to the timing for the event. The 19th Amendment passed Congress on June 4, 1919 (and was ratified August 18, 1919). It was agreed it would be appropriate to hold the event in early June. The discussion also turned to focusing on the type of event and potential guests. A consensus was built around holding a roundtable breakfast for about 300-400 women with a panel of speakers and a moderator.

The conversation then focused on who would be an attractive draw for a guest speaker. Vice President Waranch said that Major Gen. Linda Singh (Army-Ret.) is head of the 19th Amendment Commission for the State of Maryland. She could be a good person to consult with for a potential speaker. It was also suggested that the commission contact the Baltimore County League of Women Voters.

Commissioner Smith said she would inquire about pricing at Goucher. Commissioner McGuirk-Spence said she would investigate Towson University while Vice President Waranch would inquire with Martin's East, Martin's West, and area hotels.

7) New Business

A. Vice President Waranch encouraged commissioners to attend the third Women of the World (WOW) event on March 7, 2020. The program will be held at the incubator space at the Inner Harbor. Two previous WOW events were held at the College of Notre Dame, and had 1,200 attendees, 58 speakers, 10 music and comedy performances, and 30 vendors. The cost is \$40 for the day. The Maryland Commission for Women and Major Gen. Singh are sponsors of the event. WOW is hosting a "think-in," similar to the Voices of Women of Baltimore County Initiative.

B. Commissioner Messler noted that the Babies Born Healthy support group begins on Oct. 22. She distributed fliers and said the organization is looking for a grant to expand the program within the county.

C. Commissioner McGuirk-Spence said the Maryland Family Network is a support center that works with mothers on career counseling and child care, among other issues. The network is hosting a breakfast on Nov 7 at the Suburban Club in Pikesville. There is no fee to attend, but the commissioner requested that commissioners notify her or Commissioner Lampell or Jennifer at the MFN if they want to attend.

Adjournment - 7:13 p.m.