

Baltimore County Commission for Women Dec. 19, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Call to order – 6:03 p.m.

Present - Amy Blank, Brenda Savoy, Carmen Christiana, Cecelia Myrick, Helene H. Waranch, Jacqui Lampell, Renee McGuirk-Spence, Ruth Howard, Sabrina Jones, Sharon Kehnemui, Sheila Derman, Teresa Messler, Vonzella C. Perry

Absent - Cheryl Brooks, Dorothy Foos, Emily Hunter, Frances Smith, Jennie Fernandez, Kelly Carter, Nitsa Stakias Zdziera, Rosalyn Berkowitz

1) Meeting minutes approved by acclamation

2) Treasurer's Report – Treasurer Derman said \$9,698.16 was in the account. There were no charges since the previous meeting.

3) President's Report – President Howard asked the commissioners to review the proposals suggested by the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW) for the coming Maryland legislative session and to determine whether they wish to support any of the initiatives. President Howard noted that Commissioner Lynda Stahl resigned due to family commitments.

4) Vice President Waranch submitted a renewal letter for her appointment to the commission. Commissioner McGuirk-Spence said she had also been notified of her renewal but had not received her reappointment letter yet.

5) Committee Reports

A. Human Trafficking – The workgroup has been dormant. Since Bella Owens' resignation, the workgroup needs to select a new chairwoman, which it plans to do at its quarterly meeting in February. There are two vacancies because Kimberly Bowen, who moved out of state, will also need to be replaced. Commissioner Smith had previously expressed interest in serving and Commissioners Savoy and Myrick also said they would like to be appointed to the workgroup. Members of the workgroup are drawn from police, schools, and health care officials, are appointed by the county executive. The workgroup also has two BCCW commissioners on it. Since the commission was responsible for organizing the workgroup, the question was raised about whether the commission can appoint its own representatives or whether the county executive must recommend to the work group participants from the commission. Liaison Christiana suggested that whoever is interested in filling the vacancies submit her name to the county executive and she will confirm the process before the February workgroup meeting.

B. Community Conversations — The first meeting of the Voices of Women of Baltimore County Initiative will be held in District 6 on Wednesday, Jan 22. Commissioner Savoy said that the District 4 councilman would like to hold his event in early February. Commissioner Kehnemui said that the District 7 councilman was looking at Feb. 27. Commissioner Smith had reported prior to the meeting that the District 3 councilman would like to host his event on March 4, 5, or 6. Commissioner McGuirk-Spence said that the District 1 councilman prefers to host an event in May or June. Commissioner Derman did

not have a tentative date set but was in communication with the councilman. Commissioner Zdziera was not available to provide a date for District 5.

The commission has started compiling an email database for distribution of commission announcements.

C. Public Policy Agenda – Commissioners Derman, Berkowitz, Blank, and Savoy all attended the MLAW meeting, where they heard 19 presentations for legislative proposals. Members of MLAW are requested to vote on the issues that MLAW would pursue in the next legislative session, but Commissioner Derman reported that nine issues have already been selected, including the one proposed by Commissioners Savoy and Berkowitz on making attempted strangulation in the course of a domestic violence act a felony-prosecutable offense.

Commissioner Derman said that several other proposals were discussed, including some very complex and emotional issues like Medical Care Leave.

Commissioner Blank suggested that the county budget director come and brief the commission in order to inform it about budget issues that may impact women. Liaison Christiana suggested that the administrative officer would be better suited for a briefing. Additionally, the county executive is going to be doing a series of town hall meetings where he will discuss budget priorities. Liaison Christiana said she would speak with the administrative officer about scheduling a time for a briefing.

D. Women's Health – Commissioner Jones said that they are looking for a date for the health fair. President Howard noted that St. Stephens AME in Essex would be willing to host a September event.

E. Domestic Violence – Commissioner Savoy said she and Commissioner Berkowitz will attend the meeting in the State House in Annapolis when the strangulation bill is introduced. Commissioner Savoy also suggested having women who have been victims of domestic violence speak at the Voices of Baltimore County Women Initiative meetings. However, President Howard said she would prefer to let the women who attend decide the issues for discussion so as not to tilt the direction of the conversations, which will be used as guidance for the commission to recommend issues for the county executive and council to consider in the following years.

F. Women of the Year – The awards ceremony will be held on March 25. Announcements calling for nominations will go out the week of Jan. 26. It is an online application. The nominations will close the week of Feb. 25 so that the commissioners will have time to evaluate the candidates and select winners, send invitations, and pick up awards and other event materials.

Commissioners Myrick, Waranch, Savoy, McGuirk-Spence, and Derman agreed to meet in January to review the nominations announcement and other planning materials and scheduling.

G. 2020 Women's Centennial Conference – Vice President Waranch put together an outline for the proposed event to be held Thursday, June 4, 2020, at the Sheraton Hotel in Towson. The breakfast will be \$25 to attend and will feature a panel with a moderator who will discuss the history of women's suffrage, and then discuss with the panel pending and future women's issues. In order to promote the event, a working account for registration payments needs to be set up. The commissioners approved the

outline and Commissioners Waranch and Kehnemui will schedule a date to arrange a promotional strategy. President Howard suggested trying to get a commissioner on local morning news.

Vice President Waranch asked whether the commission also wants to coordinate attendance at the Maryland Commission for Women's full day conference on August 26, where state House Speaker Adrienne Jones will give the keynote address. Commissioners may decide to register individually, or the commission could sponsor participation.

6) Old Business

Liaison Christiana said that the county executive recently appointed a new county attorney, James Benjamin, who agreed to provide an update before the next county meeting about the status of the Friends of Baltimore County Commission for Women nonprofit, which in the past had managed financials on behalf of commission activities. The "Friends" is a registered and incorporated 501(c)3. Liaison Christiana said she is confident that new county attorney will provide a path forward regarding managing commission fundraising and spending.

Secretary Kehnemui said that three commissioners had attended none of the four commission meetings in the 2019-2020 session. Liaison Christiana suggested that the county executive and respective council members be informed of the vacancies that will occur from their failure to follow the by-laws on attendance before notices are sent of their expulsion from the commission.

7) Announcements

Commissioner Perry announced that she had asked to not be reappointed to the commission and is retiring from service. Commissioners expressed thanks for her service, including as the commission's immediate past president.

Adjournment 7:29 p.m.