

MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

**401 Hungerford Drive, 8th Floor Conference Room
Rockville, Maryland 20850**

MEETING MINUTES

June 22, 2011

7:15 p.m.

ATTENDING

- Leila Aridi Afas
- Vanessa E. Atterbeary
- Noha A. Bakr
- Jennifer Cryor Baldwin
- Chandra Walker Holloway
- Wilma K. Holmes
- Larniece McKoy Moore
- Manar S. Morales
- Jocelyn Samuels
- Jane Smith

STAFF

- Judith Vaughan-Prather
- Paula Rodgers

ABSENT

- Miriam J. Carter (Resigned)
- Jaclyn Lichter Vincent
- Ivonne C. Lindley
- Nick Martinez

GUEST

- Selena Mendy Singleton, District Director, Office of Congresswoman Donna Edwards

I. CALL TO ORDER / APPROVAL

OF AGENDA AND MINUTES.....Vice President Holmes

Vice President Holmes called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather offered two additional items for the agenda and the revised agenda was approved.

Commissioner Walker Holloway noted one correction to the Minutes stating that she volunteered to participate in the meeting regarding child support enforcement. Upon the motion made by Commissioner Atterbeary and seconded by Commissioner McKoy Moore, the Minutes of the May 25, 2011 meeting were approved as amended.

Appreciation was expressed to Commissioner Aridi Afas who provided the commissioners' dinner for the meeting.

II. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT Vice President Holmes

A. FY12 Planning Meeting: September 7, 2011

Commissioners were asked to note that the date for the Annual Planning Meeting was changed to September 7, 2011 at 6:00 p.m. This is not a normal night for the CFW to meet. The location will be determined later.

B. Summer Study Discussion – Next Steps

Vice President Holmes asked whether MCCFW wants to request a “summer study” as had been suggested by some Councilmembers, to look into possibilities of restoring some CFW sponsored counseling services. Commissioner Atterbeary said she definitely thought the CFW should request a meeting. The Commissioners discussed whether a meeting should be requested just for discussion to see where the councilwomen are on this possibility, or if it might be more effective to develop a plan to propose.

Commissioners Aridi Afas, Atterbeary, Cryor Baldwin and Holmes expressed an interest in participating in a discussion on restoration of some of the CFW counseling services with the Councilwomen. Commissioner Atterbeary will call and see if she can schedule a July meeting with the Councilwomen after the Council returns from vacation.

III. STAFF REPORT..... Vaughan-Prather

A. Closing of Counseling Center

The Counseling and Career Center is effectively closed; counselors have not seen clients since the end of May and workshops have ceased. Client files are being packed up and with the Client Intake Database; client files will be confidentially secured and stored in the County’s confidential archives. Counseling Manager Elma Rambo is retiring and four counselors have accepted Reduction in Force status with severance packages. Program Specialist Clotilde Puertolas was transferred to the Department of Public Libraries. (*Staff Update: On June 30, Counselor Nancie Kenney accepted a position with the Health and Human Services Department.*)

B. Transition/Move to New Location

Executive Director Vaughan-Prather and Administrative Specialist Paula Rodgers will be moving sometime in July. The CFW, as part of the new Community Engagement Cluster (CEC) will be located on the third floor of the Rockville Library. Effective July 1, Administrative Specialist Paula Rodgers duties will transition to the new CEC.

C. Annual Report

Staff will be drafting the FY11 Annual Report. Commissioners are asked to submit reports of their speaking engagement activities for inclusion in the Report.

D. SWIM Report Request from New Haven, Connecticut

Executive Director Vaughan-Prather received a call from an employee of the New Haven, Connecticut government who is planning to conduct a study on the status of women in that community. She and a planning committee researched on-line and found the copy of the 2007 MCCFW Status of Women Report on our website. They contacted Executive Director Vaughan-Prather for more information and said that they found MCCFW's Report to be the most informative study found.

E. Offers to Continue Workshops and Information and Referral Services

Several Counseling Center volunteers offered to continue their services to the CFW if the County could provide parking. Lawyers who have presented legal workshops for the Center offered to continue to present such workshops and there is an interest by financial literacy experts to do financial planning workshops. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather can set up a meeting to work out the details, but will need commissioners who are interested to work on this possibility.

Commissioners will need to have more active roles in carrying out MCCFW initiatives because, other than the director, there is no staff support to the MCCFW.

F. 2012 Women's Legislative Briefing

The next Women's Legislative Briefing is scheduled for Sunday, January 29, 2012. The University of Maryland Shady Grove facility has been confirmed and staff is finalizing the contract and down payment to lease the facility. Vice President Holmes, who agreed to serve as the Chair of the 2012 WLB Planning Committee, has invited First Lady Michelle Obama as the Keynote Speaker. AARP has committed to be a co-sponsor of the 2012 WLB. Again, commissioners will have to be actively involved in the work for the 2012 event.

G. Women's Power Conference

Several women's business organizations of the Washington Metro Area have joined forces to create the Women Business Consortium with "the sole purpose of executing the largest, most relevant local women's conference." A request was received for the MC CFW to co-sponsor the conference by helping to publicize it. The 2011 Power Conference will be held September 7 at the Bethesda North Marriott Hotel and Conference Center. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather explained MCCFW's policy for co-sponsoring outside events. Commissioner Morales moved that MCCFW sponsor the 2011 Women's Power Conference; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Cryor Baldwin and unanimously passed.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Child Support Enforcement

On June 13, 2011, Executive Director Vaughan met with the County Office of Child Support Enforcement, the County Attorney and the State's Attorney to discuss enforcement issues. (See *May 25 2011 Minutes, Item V.A*). The States Attorney's Office has a policy regarding the prosecution of non-payment cases, but the policy results in practically no prosecutions even in egregious cases. The Office of Child Support Enforcement has the tools it needs to enforce court-ordered child support from parents who are gainfully employed, have Social Security numbers, file tax returns, etc. However, for parents who move from job to job, who may be paid in cash, don't file tax returns, etc., it can be almost impossible to enforce the order, and cases can become tens of thousands of dollars in arrears. Although it was recognized that incarcerating the non-paying parent will only make it even more impossible for that parent to support his or her children, the Child Support Enforcement staff reports that the threat of prosecution often encourages such parents to find a way to pay their support obligations.

Commissioners expressed interest in knowing how large a problem this is in Montgomery County, how many cases are there that could be described as being "egregious" in failure to pay support, and what percent of the total number of cases do they represent? Commissioner Walker Holloway suggested that research on the impact of incarceration might also be needed--e.g., is incarceration typically successful in remedying the situation?

Executive Director Vaughan-Prather will provide Commissioner Walker Holloway with copies of the policy distributed by the States Attorney at the meeting. Enforcement of child support collection is an issue that impacts female heads of households in Montgomery County, and MCCFW may want to discuss this at the September 7, 2011 Planning Meeting to decide whether to get involved in examining the issue.

Commissioners Commissioner Walker Holloway agreed to work with Executive Director Vaughan-Prather on the research and drafting whatever correspondence is necessary.

B. F. Scott Fitzgerald Literacy Conference - Update

Author Annie Prue had to withdraw her commitment to serve as Keynote Speaker and honoree for the F. Scott Fitzgerald Literacy Conference in October. Award-winning author Maxine Hong Kingston has been selected as the 2011 Conference Honoree. Maxine Hong Kingston is the author of *The Woman Warrior, China Men, Tripmaster Monkey, The Fifth Book of Peace, and I Love a Broad Margin to My Life*. At the May 25 MCCFW meeting, the commissioners voted in favor of supporting the Conference and they expressed their continued support with the change in keynote speaker.

C. New Commissioner Recruitment

Commissioner Martinez and Executive Director Vaughan-Prather conducted a total of 14 interviews in May and their recommendations were sent to the County Executive who made his appointments earlier today. The County Council will confirm the appointments on June 28 and, at that time the names of the appointed commissioners will become public. The appointments are effective July 1 and the new commissioners will be invited to the July 27, 2011 MCCFW meeting.

Editor's note: the date of the Council confirmation was changed to July 12.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Women on Corporate Boards

Executive Director Vaughan-Prather attended a recent meeting of the Women's Executive Leadership Network (WELN) hosted by the County's Office of Economic Development. At that meeting, there was discussion of a *Washington Post* article reporting that women make up only two percent of corporate boards in America, even though they control seventy percent of purchasing decisions. Commissioners expressed an interest in identifying the corporations headquartered in Montgomery County and studying the gender balance of board members. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather suggested MCCFW consider, at its FY 12 planning meeting, undertaking a "Get on Board" initiative.

VI. LIAISON REPORTS

A. Muslim Women in the Arts Program and Other Events

Commissioner Bakr has served as speaker in several programs over the past few months: a panel of *Women in Civic Engagement*, sponsored by The Shiite Islamic Center; a workshop on domestic violence that was the third in a series sponsored by the Sunni Mosque in Northern Silver Spring; a workshop on *How to Connect with Muslim Women in the Community*, sponsored by the Clearinghouse on Women's Issues; and a workshop entitled *I Speak for Myself*, focused on American Muslim women under age 40 the Takoma Park Folk Festival. On June 20, there was a briefing at the Capital Building, "*A Solution In Search of a Problem - Debunking the Sharia Myth.*" On two separate occasions, Commissioner Bakr was interviewed by Voice of America to discuss the position of women and Islamic law and Egyptian Women in the Political Process. Commissioner Bakr said that she would pass along the radio interview schedule with the commissioners.

The Montgomery County Office of Diversity issued a request for county departments to present workshops on diversity issues. Commissioners Aridi Afas, Bakr and Morales expressed an interest in serving on a panel to discuss issues related to Muslim women.

B. National Association of Commissions for Women (NACW)

The 41st Annual NACW Business Meeting and Conference will be held on July 20-23 in Phoenix, Arizona. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather will not be attending this year even though she is a member of the NACW Board of Directors, due to budget cuts.

C. Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW)

MLAW is seeking nominations for 2011-12 board members. For the past two years, President Lichter Vincent and Commissioner Atterbeary have served as MCCFW's representatives to MLAW's board of directors. Commissioner Atterbeary explained that MLAW meets once a month in Columbia, Maryland and at those meetings, representatives establish the legislative agenda and plan the legislative conference. Commissioners McKoy Moore and Mederos expressed interest in sharing the liaison role. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather will send them additional information about MLAW.

VII. ELECTION OF NEW CFW PRESIDENT

Commissioner Atterbeary was the announced candidate for 2011-12 CFW President. There were no nominations from the floor. Commissioner Samuels moved the nomination of Ms. Atterbeary as MCCFW's 2011-12 President. The motion was seconded by Commissioners Aridi Afas and Morales and was unanimously accepted.

VIII. FAREWELL TO EXITING COMMISSIONERS

Certificates of Appreciation from the County Executive were presented to outgoing Commissioners Jocelyn Samuels and Jane Smith, thanking them for the service on MCCFW. Certificates for absent Commissioners Miriam Carter and Ivonne Lindley were also prepared and will be mailed to them.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- A. A note from for Commissioner Lichter Vincent thanking Commissioners for the baby present was shared.
- B. Commissioner Samuels reported on the June 20, 2011 Supreme Court decision to block a massive sex discrimination lawsuit against Wal-Mart on behalf of female employees. The Court's decision makes it harder to mount large-scale bias claims against the nation's biggest companies. Commissioner Samuels said the decision was very discouraging for advocates and some in Congress are looking for a legislative remedy. Commissioner Mederos confirmed that Congresswoman DeLauro's office is working on this.

- C. Executive Director Vaughan-Prather pointed out that Vice President Holmes was featured in a June 16, 2011 *Washington Post* article on elementary school commencement graduations.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Bakr moved adjournment of the meeting; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Walker Holloway and the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

**Minutes Submitted By
Paula S. Rodgers
Montgomery County Commission for Women**