



**Baltimore County Commission for Women
Minutes of the Meeting
Thursday, September 15, 2016**

PRESENT: Bella Owens, Vonzella Perry, Carmen Christiana, Kimberly Bowen, Cheryl Brooks, Linda Forsyth, Jennie Fernandez, Dorothy Foos, Mary Fosu, Ruth Howard, Sabrina Jones, Kelly Carter, Jacqui Lampell, Renee McGuirk-Spence, Frances Smith, Nitsa Zdziera. Phyllis Hall (new Ad Hoc-Health)

EXCUSED ABSENCES: Theresa Barrett, Sheila Derman, Helene Waranch, Nancy Surosky

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES: Lynda Stahl, Emily Hunter, Cecelia Myrick

CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m. by President Bella Owens

MINUTES: June, accepted with revisions. August, accepted with revisions.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Beginning balance \$10,000.00; Expenses \$1,125.19; Ending balance \$8,874.81 (until June 30, 2017)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Announcement: Bella opened the meeting with an invitation for anyone interested in attending the "Women Artists" event taking place on October 15, 2016, 10:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the Maryland Women's Heritage Center in Baltimore.

New Commissioner: Bella announced Ad Hoc (Health) member Mary Fosu's departure from the commission and introduced her replacement, Phyllis Hall, Bureau Director, BCDH, Bureau of Healthcare Access. Phyllis spoke a few words about herself followed by a round of introductions from the other commissioners present at the meeting.

Women's Listening Tour: Bella provided a recap handout and talked about the Voices of Maryland Women on Women's Equality Day "A Report on the Listening Tour for Baltimore County" which took place on August 29, 2016. She spoke about the top five issues and actions that were voted on by the attendees. The top five included: 1) Harassment and discrimination against women wearing hijabs; 2) Insufficient funding for public schools and child care, especially for the early grades, all-day pre-K and head start programs; 3) Human Trafficking in Labor and Sex; 4) Need for Legal Aid in Civil Cases including domestic violence, employment, housing, divorce, child care custody and support; and 5) Too few women in public office. The report was submitted to the County Executive. Jacqui commented on the diverse and dynamic crowd present at the event and stressed that issues discussed would need following up. Frances suggested that in the future participants should not place all of their votes on one issue.

New Policies: Bella stressed to all the commissioners diligence in attending the meetings, there are ten scheduled for this fiscal year and attendance is very important, as well as the level of involvement and commitment with any of the initiatives open for the Commissioners.

Open Meetings: Beginning October 1, 2016, all meetings will become "open meetings." The agenda will be uploaded to the county's site, 24-hours prior to the meeting, as well as the minutes. With meetings now becoming public there was a question about security and protocol for the public and attendance. These questions will be deferred to the law office. Both Jacqui and Renee inquired about having meetings at different locations other than Towson. Bella said that it would have to be limited to the east and the west corridor of the county.

Priority Initiatives/Committees 2016-2017: Going forward a proposal and summary report will be created for every event to track budgeting. This new form will take effect with the Family Health Fun Fest taking place September 24, 2016. Ruth said that she would look into a post event questionnaire.

2016-2017 Planning Calendar: The updated calendar was distributed. Ruth asked to include the African American Festival taking place in Towson on September 17, 2016.

PRIORITY INITIATIVES/STANDING COMMITTEES 2016-2017:

Primary Role: Investigate Recommend Inform Advocate

Human Trafficking: Frances Smith, Kimberly Bowen

Domestic Violence: Nitsa Zdziera, Carmen Christiana

Women's Health: Sabrina Jones, Vonzella Perry

Public Policy: Linda Forsyth, Sheila Derman

Diversity/Women's Equality: Ruth Howard, Kelly Carter

Education & Internship: Emily Hunter, Sabrina Jones (tentative)

Information & Outreach: Jacqui Lampell, Nancy Surosky

Woman of the Year: Renee McGuirk-Spence, Jacqui Lampell, Cheryl Brooks, Cecelia Myrick, Dorothy Foos

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Domestic Violence: Nitsa Zdsiera outlined seven domestic violence facts (statistics) in Baltimore County. She said that there are currently three programs in the county serving victims of domestic violence. She also inquired about self-defense classes offered in the county. An inquiry will be made into the police department for any such classes/courses. There was discussion about the recent Buzzfeed article scrutinizing the Baltimore County Police Department on "unfounded" rape cases which took place in Baltimore County. Nancy said that the Police Chief is taking this matter very seriously and that they will go back three years and re-investigate these cases. Both Jacqui and Frances suggested that a letter of support be sent to the Chief. The letter should also include a request for someone from the department to attend a future meeting to educate us on overall policies and procedures currently in place. **A motion to draft the letter was made by Jacqui, seconded by Frances and everyone voted in favor. Motion was passed.**

Human Trafficking: Frances Smith reported that there will be no human trafficking units within classes this fall due to redesigning of the Goucher curriculum. Spring will be a "Themes" semester with the theme, "Storytelling" and possible inclusion at the spring semester. Frances distributed a handout of the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force's "Maryland Human Trafficking Victim Identification and Services Survey – Results from Calendar Year 2014". It was also suggested to redo the 2012 report. Currently the Baltimore County Human Trafficking Task Force formation request is in discussions with the Chief of Police and Baltimore County State's Attorney. Nancy will follow-up. Meanwhile a request for a copy of Montgomery County's model will be made.

Women's Equality: Ruth reported that she and Kelly are working on a finalized plan.

Woman of the Year: Jacqui and Renee, co-chairs. Event scheduled for March 9, 2017. Need to start working on a timeline and materials soon. Renee called for a meeting in October.

Public Policy: Linda Forsyth reported that chairs are not appointed until August. Open meetings if anyone is interested in going to Annapolis, she'll look into the schedule. MLAW's conference will take place October 22, 2016 at Anne Arundel Community College, a request for legislation sent out to folks in Annapolis.

Women's Health: Sabrina Jones reported that the Family Fun Fest scheduled for September 24, 2016 has 22 vendors confirmed (3 paid). Sabrina received \$500 from the Friend's account for miscellaneous expenses. Sabrina asked for volunteers at the event, Ruth will send volunteer scheduling via Doodle.

Old Business/New Business: Linda Forsyth agreed to work on the Commission's Resource booklet. Bella made a call for volunteers at the African American Festival, Saturday, September 17th. She also asked the commissioners to think about an activity for the commission's 40th year milestone in 2017.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:29 p.m.