

# Michigan Women's Commission Meeting Minutes for August 6, 2019

Atheneum Suite Hotel  
1000 Brush Street  
Detroit, MI 48226

## Attendance

Chair Etienne, Commissioner Kelli Saunders, Commissioner Catherine Hendrian, Commissioner Deidre Lambert-Bounds, Commissioner Nicole DeMarco, Commissioner Cathleen Knauf, Commissioner Meg Wheeler-Derrer, Commissioner Alisha Meneely, Commissioner Mary Templeton, Commissioner Krista Haroutunian, Executive Director Mary Engelman and Department Specialist Jackie Debusschere were in attendance.

Commissioner Renee Haley, Commissioner Barbara Land and Commissioner Jan Peabody Doty were excused.

## Minutes

1. The meeting was called to order at 1:01 pm.
2. The roll call was taken and a quorum was present.
3. It was motioned to approve the agenda. It was unanimously passed.
4. Executive Director's Report
  - a. Executive Director Engelman will be meeting with Michigan Veteran's Affairs Agency Director Zaneta Adams to discuss partnerships in the coming weeks. She will also be meeting with Suzanne Fisher from the Department of Natural Resources regarding a partnership for an exhibit next year about the 100-year anniversary of women's suffrage.
  - b. Executive Director Engelman met with the Deputy Director of Secretary of State (SOS) Heaster Wheeler regarding our STEM bookmarks and how we can distribute them. They also discussed a possible pilot program to collaborate on.
  - c. Executive Director Engelman will be meeting with Mary Kramer with the International Women's Foundation to discuss the women's commission involvement in the conference in Detroit next year.
5. Chair Etienne introduced speaker Angela Povilaitis, staff attorney from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Division of Victim Services.
  - a. Povilaitis shared her work history as a prosecutor focused on child-related cases. She was also the lead prosecutor on the Larry Nassar case as well.
  - b. Povilaitis shares her board meets 10 times per year and is made up of judges, prosecutors and various appointees and is housed in MDHHS but is an independent board. She said the Division of

Victims Services encompasses many roles in state government.

- c. Povilaitis shared that her division implemented MiVan (Michigan Victim Advocacy Network), the Safe Response program and a statewide Sexual Assault hotline.
- d. Povilaitis said campus sexual assault is a problem in Michigan and across the United States. She asked the women's commission to consider that there are a vast number of victims beyond the campus sexual assault world.
- e. Povilaitis said as a board and a division, their initiatives have focused on campus sexual assault. She said they staffed and planned four campus sexual assault summits and they are anticipating this will continue this year. The summit is a one-day event that brings in national experts to discuss best practices and how we can respond to preventing campus sexual assault.
- f. Povilaitis shared that there is a campus sexual assault workbook as well as a roadmap for prevention booklet available statewide. She said the consortium workgroup came up with the framework for a pilot program to inform victims of their rights regarding Title IX.
- g. Povilaitis said there are prevention grants available through the state. She said 2.5 million dollars has been administered so far and the grants focus on how to best address prevention issues on college campuses. She added that a Campus Sexual Assault Coordinator has been hired as well and will be expanding prevention into high schools in the future as well as the role of affirmative consent in prevention.
- h. Commissioner Meneely asked if the program has been launched.
  - i. Povilaitis said they have the framework and funding for that program, but they are trying to be mindful and have a buy in for everyone involved. She said they haven't identified a pilot program yet, but in the meantime, they will implement trainings.
- i. Commissioner Knauf asked if the hotline has increased the amount of people reporting.
  - i. Povilaitis said it has increased and she will send us materials to put on our website. She said when there's newsworthy cases of assault it creates an uptick in reporting.
- j. Commissioner Lambert-Bounds asked what percentage of the calls that came in during the Kavanaugh hearings were able to be referred to services.
  - i. Povilaitis said it is victim-driven and sometimes there are repeat callers who only want to talk to a certain person. She said that many are delayed disclosures and they're trying to process it and now the hotline provides them an outlet to reach out. She said she doesn't have statistics, but the hotline operator can put them on hold and call a local service provider and can soft hand off the victim to a local service. She said it is thoughtfully and mindfully done.



- b. Sargent Stephanie Shannon with MWVE shared that her organization empowers veterans and their families in the eight dimensions of wellness. She is an author of "Battling the Storm Within", a book about her life as a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) survivor due to military sexual trauma. Shannon wanted to create a place for women veterans to heal from support when she started MWVE.
  - c. Shannon started MWVE in 2015 primarily in the southeast region area (Oakland County and Genesee County). She said her background is in social work.
  - d. Shannon said that on Saturday November 16 in Southfield, MWVE is hosting their fourth conference titled "A Community Conversation". She said it a panel-led conference that will discussing diversity inclusion, the suicide epidemic and military sexual trauma as well as offering peer support groups and programs such as equine therapy program for veterans to heal. Shannon said all their programs are open to the public.
  - e. Shannon shared that 22 women veterans commit suicide each day.
  - f. Shannon said that MWVE's Dirt Therapy program is a veteran's agri-business. She said they have beekeeping programming as well as teaching the basics of gardening and cultivating the land. She said the program is in Flint and is a partnership with St. Luke's New Life Center. She said they service over 3,000 people a month in the north Flint community.
  - g. Shannon said the mission of MWVE is to provide a solution and a safe place for women veterans.
8. Commissioner Saunders, Chair Etienne and Executive Director Engelman presented the organizations checks from our Women Veterans 5K race to the representatives in attendance from MWVE and WINC.
9. Report by the special committee regarding Women in Business (STEM, Resources, Boards, Leadership)
- a. Commissioner Lambert-Bounds said the committee has completed most of their to do list for the year. She said that letters were sent to those public companies in Michigan that have achieved 20% or more women on their corporate boards. She said a press release was sent out recognizing the companies that achieved the minimum 20%. She suggested potentially inviting representatives from these companies to our January meeting to recognize them. She said they also discussed to get a resolution passed and Executive Director Engelman will work with the Governor's office to get the ball rolling.
  - b. Commissioner Lambert-Bounds said they were looking at board-ready programs and possibly inviting representatives from these programs to a future meeting to increase awareness on what we are doing. She said we also will continue to support organizations that have women on board programs.
  - c. Commissioner Lambert-Bounds shared that we distributed STEM

bookmarks that encourage parents to get their children into STEM to SOS, First Robotics, MiSTEM Network. In addition, she said we will create a letter or note that accompanies the bookmarks so we can distribute them to parents or educators as well as local libraries and childcare organizations.

- d. Commissioner Lambert-Bounds said the committee needs to brainstorm some other efforts we can support statewide.
- e. Chair Etienne congratulated the committee on achieving their goals for the year.

#### 10. Report of Committee on Women Veterans

- a. Commissioner Saunders provided an overview of the Women Veterans 5K that was held in June in Lansing. Commissioner Saunders thanked Erika Hoover for all her support. She said our goal was to have a combined 100 runners and walkers, we surpassed that and had at least 135 participants and 30 volunteers to come support the race. She said Erika Hoover and Executive Director Mary Engelman did tons of media interviews to promote the race. She said our title sponsor was Meijer and shared they provided food for the day in addition to their sponsorship. Commissioner Saunders also thanked Commissioner Hendrian for securing Consumers Energy and Commissioner Templeton for securing Public Sectors Consultant as sponsors as well.
- b. Commissioner Saunders said MVAA Director Zaneta Adams and Congresswoman Elissa Slotkin joined us at the race. She added every registration fee we received was given back to three organizations (MWVE, WINC for All Women Veterans and Moxie Wild). She said at the race, we held an expo with ten organizations that provide services to veterans.
- c. Commissioner Saunders thanked Michelle Coss from DNR and Laura Beal from Fresh Strategies who helped tremendously with the race. She asked to do a proclamation or recognition at a future meeting for all their help.
- d. Commissioner Saunders offered future recommendations for next year's race, including continued partnership with the MVAA. She recommended we do this annually.
- e. Commissioner Saunders thanked the commissioners for sharing with their networks and promoting the race.
- f. Chair Etienne motioned to vote on a tribute to Michelle Coss and Laura Beal.
  - i. Motion to tribute – unanimously passed.
- g. Chair Etienne also mentioned our private Facebook group, Michigan Women Veterans Forum, went from 166 members in May to 193 in August. She said last year we did outdoor adventure activities in the summer. Unfortunately, this summer we couldn't schedule any but next summer we will resume activities.

#### 11. Report of Committee on Human Trafficking/Sexual Assault

- a. Commissioner Knauf shared she ran into a man named Ken Ken who was wearing our glasses from FIRST Robotics Championship. She said it was a testament to the reach we had from the robotics championship we attended in April.
- b. Commissioner Knauf said the Kent County Human Trafficking Task Force is trying to get a resolution for regulations on illicit massage parlors. She also said there are trying to get funding to start a safe

home like Sanctum House.

- c. Commissioner Knauf shared the SW Michigan Human Trafficking Task Force their Planting Hope fundraisers. She also shared that the Berrien County Bike Bash raised awareness about human trafficking.
- d. Commissioner Knauf said they are reorganizing the task force. She said she is stepping down but will remain on the board. She said it will be committee driven moving forward. She said August 16<sup>th</sup> is her last official meeting with the task force.
- e. Commissioner Knauf said she did a podcast about truths and myths of human trafficking titled "Mighty Parenting Podcast #75 – Human Trafficking Happens Everywhere – Protect Your Teenager".
- f. Theresa Flores will be in Berrien County on September 26<sup>th</sup>, she is a survivor of human/sex trafficking in the Detroit area from age 15-17. She goes around the country talking about her experience.
- g. SW Michigan Human Trafficking Task Force gave out their first scholarship for \$500 to Andriana Enix who will be attending Grand Valley State University. Enix completed a senior service project that brought awareness to middle school students about human trafficking.
- h. Commissioner Knauf said Povilaitis will get back to us about how the commission can best support victims of sexual assault, adding the best way we could do this now is to put info on our website.
- i. Executive Director Engelman added we were instrumental in the design and creation of the booklets Povilaitis talked about.

#### 12. Report of Millennial Advisory Committee

- a. Commissioner Hendrian said they are working on empowering women to advocate for themselves in health care. She said their strategy focuses on millennial women health concerns to make sure they are heard and advocated for. She said the big outcome is that women's needs are addressed and advocated for at the moment of care with both solutions for patients and providers.
- b. Commissioner Hendrian said they plan to build a community of millennial women to reach an audience, develop communication assets for both millennial women and health care professionals to inform them of available resources and what advocacy looks like, and perform a roadshow to engage state-level health care professional associations and organizations as well as engage the local community digitally and physically to raise awareness and build advocacy.
- c. Commissioner Hendrian introduced the newest member of millennial advisory committee, Dana Mohammad (not present) and then introduced the other members in attendance (Megan Blue, Amber Hall, Di'Ane Townsel and Harley Paulsen).
- d. Commissioner Lambert-Bounds added that millennial advisory committee members Di'Ane Townsel and Amber Hall were amazing additions to the women in business committee during their committee meeting earlier.

#### 13. Old Business

- a. N/A

#### 14. Approval of minutes of May 7, 2019 meeting

- a. It was motioned to approve the minutes. It was unanimously passed.

#### 15. New Business

- a. 2020 Meeting Schedule –
  - i. Discussion was held among commissioners for different locations

in the fall.

- ii. Chair Etienne asked if we should we keep the meeting in Lansing in January.
  - 1. Commissioner Derrer said we should do it somewhere central in January due to bad weather.
  - 2. Everyone in agreement to keep meeting in Lansing in January.
  - 3. Executive Director Engelman suggested maybe touring the Capitol while we are there in January.
- iii. Commissioner Saunders said the Edward Lowe Foundation has a retreat center in Cassopolis with beautiful property set back in the woods. She said they offered to house us for our meeting for May or August meeting.
- iv. Chair Etienne suggested we go with the April meeting date suggested instead of May date.
- v. Commissioner Templeton has a conflict with the January 21<sup>st</sup> date.
- vi. Chair Etienne suggested January 14, April 21, August 4, October 6 – locations and dates to be finalized in October.

#### 16. Commissioner Reports

- a. N/A

#### 17. Ex Officio and Liaison Reports

- a. Linda Jones, a participant in She Is a Veteran campaign, said she is excited to hear what we are doing for women veterans. She is a survivor of sexual assault in the military and is now feeling she has a voice.
- b. Erika Hoover shared updates on the She Is a Veteran outreach campaign to get women veterans to identify as such and receive their benefits. She said she is hoping to launch in January 2020.
- c. Jaclyn Merchant from the department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) said her department now has an environmental justice public advocate, Regina Strong. She said the goal of the office is to provide space for residents to bring concerns regarding environmental justice.
- d. Alexis Horton with the DNR said the department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has put together a team for strategic plan to look at Michigan's health score card and assessment. She suggested maybe the millennial group could inquire about that.
- e. Ron Robinson from the Attorney General's office shared he is excited for October meeting on Mackinac Island.

#### 18. Public Comments. Public Comments are limited to 5 minutes per person

- a. N/A

#### 19. Meeting Ended at 2:28 pm.

*Signature*

Respectfully submitted by Chair Chris Etienne.