

# Michigan Women's Commission Meeting Minutes for May 7, 2019

## City Hall

270 S. River Avenue, Holland, MI 49423

1:00pm

## Attendance

Chair Chris Etienne, Vice Chair Kathleen Vogelsang, Commissioner Alisha Meneely, Commissioner Barbara Land, Commissioner Catherine Hendrian, Commissioner Cathleen Knauf, Commissioner Deidre Lambert-Bounds, Commissioner Jan Peabody Doty, Commissioner Joanne Dawley, Commissioner Kelli Saunders, Commissioner Mary Templeton, Commissioner Meg Wheeler Derrer, Commissioner Nicole DeMarco, Executive Director Mary Engelman and Department Specialist Jackie Debusschere were in attendance.

Commissioner Krista Haroutunian and Commissioner Renee Haley were excused.

## Minutes

1. The meeting was called to order at 1:00 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. Chair Etienne introduced Melissa Roessing, Director of Food Security & Stabilization with Community Action House. Roessing said in the city of Holland, 49% of people are living below the poverty line or fall into the Asset Limited Income Constrained by Employed (ALICE) group. She said Community Action House has a kitchen, food pantry and monthly distribution to those in need. They also go into the community to reach those that are experiencing homelessness. She said they launched a program called Refresh on Tuesday mornings at First Methodist Church to provide showers to those who need them and are about to expand. She said they also provide an address for those who don't have a permanent residence to utilize mail service. She said one of the demographics they frequently see are single family households with the woman as the head of the household. She said that affordable housing is also a huge issue.
  - a. Commissioner Knauf asked her to elaborate on Refresh and the showering facilities as well as ALICE. Roessing went into detail on the Refresh facilities (private showers, they provide soap, etc.) and explained more about ALICE, which is an acronym that represents the growing number of individuals and families who are working but are unable to afford the basic necessities of housing, food, child care, health care, and transportation. (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed.)
  - b. Vice Chair Vogelsang asked if Community Action House is doing

anything beyond the day to day to try and make a larger change. Roessing said they are working with some groups to assist with the information they have to make a lasting change.

- c. Executive Director Engelman said the commission has been in communication with a legislator regarding the wage gap. She said we are talking with the governor's office as we know this is a real issue.
  - d. Chair Etienne asked if Community Action House is a 501(c3). Roessing said yes and they have been active in the community for fifty years.
5. Chair Etienne introduced Nicole Hamberg from the Holland Police Department. Hamberg said she has been in law enforcement for twenty years and is now a part of the community policing unit. She said most of the issues that women experience in Holland are domestic violence related. In 2018, there were 527 assault complaints and 317 of those were domestic violence. From her experience, she said most of the domestic violence cases involved women as victims. She also said many cases are not reported to the department. She said in the last two years, there were two homicides related to domestic violence. She said women are unwilling to disclose information because they don't want to get someone in trouble.
- a. Commissioner Knauf asked if there are any instances of human or labor trafficking in Holland. Hamberg said she has not handled any herself and added the detective bureau would handle those if they arose.
  - b. Commissioner Meneely asked if the cases that turn into family disputes, what happens to those cases. Hamberg said that if there isn't enough evidence to charge with a crime, they put as much information in a report which is closed out but remains in the system.
  - c. Executive Director Engelman asked if she has seen an increase in opioid cases. Hamberg said it's a variety of alcohol and narcotics which usually involve overdoses.
  - d. Chair Etienne asked if there's a domestic violence shelter in the area. Hamberg said they use Center for Women in Transition, but they also refer people to Holland Family Ministries.
  - e. Commissioner Lambert-Bounds asked how the city of Holland's crime compares to other area. Hamberg said she wasn't sure of exact numbers, but she knows homicides are very low.
  - f. Commissioner Doty asked if the Holland Police Department has jurisdiction over Hope College and if they receive any sexual assault complaints from them. Hamberg said she works with the campus safety department and advised they take reports and forward them on to the police if need be. She said if anything is criminal, they will automatically forward it on to the Holland Police Department. Commissioner Doty asked if there's a sexual assault awareness program at Hope College. Hamberg said yes and that she works closely with the campus to assist those who have been assaulted.

- g. Commissioner Knauf asked if there are any conversation regarding illicit massage parlors since there are three in the community. Hamberg said she was not aware of that, but she would be happy to find out. Commissioner Knauf asked if there is any talk about eliminating these from the community. Hamberg said she was not sure.
- 6. Chair Etienne introduced Beth Larsen, Executive Director of Resilience: Advocates for Ending Violence. Larsen said they have been serving Allegan county since the late 1970's by providing a 24-hour emergency response shelter that holds up to nine families. She said they are almost always full. She said they have served more than 1600 adults and 200 children through their programs, 97% of those served were women. She said they reached out to more than 6,200 adults and youth in the community through prevention programming. She said they are currently looking at bringing a high-risk team model to the county. This national model would identify high risk cases and safety planning and accountability for perpetrators. She said this is an epidemic for women. She said 80% of women that are homeless in the community are homeless due to domestic violence.
  - a. Commissioner Meneely asked what the average time is for a family to stay in the shelter. Larsen said it's usually around 30 days if there is a safety plan in place. Commissioner Meneely asked to elaborate on what being safe meant. Larsen said there are a variety of factors involved in defining if they have a safe place to go, usually a family member or a program that can assist.
  - b. Commissioner Dawley asked if Resilience is the only program of its kind in the area. Larsen said they are the only domestic and sexual violence organization in Ottawa county. She said they serve Allegan county but also work with Sylvia's Place. They do non-residential trauma therapy services and support groups and Sylvia's Place does the emergency shelter. She said they provide as many services as they can, adding that if they are full and there are safety concerns for a family, they will work with partner communities to get them into a safe environment.
  - c. Commissioner Derrer asked if any of the clients are victims of human trafficking. Larsen said there are but many times they do not identify as victims of human trafficking. She said we really must ask the right questions to assess for labor and human trafficking, adding that it is a small percentage, but they have seen it.
  - d. Commissioner Land asked how they are funded. Larsen said they are funded through the division of victim services – Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) as well as Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding. She said they raise 30% through local community businesses and individuals as well as local and state grants. She said their operating budget is 2.6 million annually.
  - e. Chair Etienne asked if they see a lot of victims returning to their abuser. Larsen said yes, and they see the highest recidivism in the

first six months. She said they also see a lot of substances and mental health issues as they are used as control tactics from the abuser.

- f. Executive Director Engelman asked if they track race with their victims. Larsen said yes.
- g. Commissioner Doty asked the average age of victims. Larsen said 18-26 years old. She said they saw over 100 children with the average children being age 6, and the children are 60% boys and 40% girls.
- h. Commissioner Knauf asked if they have a protocol questionnaire for those, they suspect of being trafficked. Larsen said yes.

#### 7. Executive Director's Report

- a. Executive Director Engelman said she is working with Representative Warren regarding women on boards. She said they are looking at partnering with TED to receive data about the number of women making different levels of income compared to men in the same field.
- b. Executive Director Engelman said she met with the appointment's director in Governor Whitmer's office. She said there are five commissioners whose terms are up in July and she will be reaching out to each commissioner to determine next steps.
- c. Executive Director Engelman met with Jennifer Flood, legislative director to Governor Whitmer and she said she was impressed with our Millennial Advisory Committee. She is also working with Jennifer Flood on a business initiative to create a strategic roundtable with the governor for female CEO's in Michigan.
- d. Executive Director Engelman is working on setting up a meeting with MDHHS for the Millennial Advisory Committee.
- e. Executive Director Engelman added that each committee has been very busy. She said we have two vendors for the expo with our women veterans 5K – Michigan Department of Treasury Unclaimed Property and MI-4 Mid Michigan Marines.
  - i. Commissioner Lambert-Bounds said she reached out to Commissioner Haley about Quicken Loans/Pistons free program. Executive Director Engelman said she would reach out to Commissioner Haley. Chair Etienne said she would check the women veterans Facebook group to see if it was shared there.

#### 8. Report by the special committee regarding Women in Business (STEM, Resources, Boards, Leadership)

- a. Commissioner Templeton said they have been focusing on recognizing Michigan companies that are meeting inclusion standards with women on boards. She said there is a letter for those that have 20% or more women on boards and a letter for those under the 20% threshold. Commissioner Templeton thanked those who helped craft the letter. She said the next step is to pull the list from 2020 Women on Boards website and

send out a press release.

- b. Executive Director Engelman asked for copies of the letter. Department Specialist Debusschere said copies were given out to the subcommittee.
  - c. Chair Etienne asked about the distribution list for the press release. Department Specialist Debusschere said it is distributed by the communications director in Civil Rights through her channels statewide.
  - d. Commissioner Templeton asked for Department Specialist Debusschere to send the letters out to the commission as well as send the press release out once it is distributed.
  - e. Commissioner Templeton said the women in STEM subcommittee worked on creating STEM bookmarks to increase awareness for different ages. She said Megan Schrauben from MiSTEM Network spoke to the subcommittee today to brainstorm ways to get our initial resource out to the community (STEM bookmarks). Meg has volunteered to distribute bookmarks to MiSTEM Network and Michigan Department of Education, Great Start/Head Start and libraries. She said there are four age groups/bookmarks.
  - f. Commissioner Templeton asked Department Specialist Debusschere to bring the bookmarks at our next meeting. Department Specialist Debusschere said she brought extras and will distribute to the commissioners and offered to send some via mail as well.
  - g. Commissioner Templeton said we participated in the FIRST Robotics Championship. She thanked those that attended and said it garnered a lot of interest in what we do. She thanked Consumers Energy for partnering with us and allowing us to use their booth.
  - h. Commissioner Doty said she sits on the school board in her community and she said next year they will be focusing on STEM in K-2. Commissioner Knauf said in St. Joseph they received a grant and built a STEM building for the community.
  - i. Chair Etienne asked Commissioner Land to share her experience at FIRST Robotics. Commissioner Land said a lot of other companies that were there were very interested in learning about the women's commission and what we do. She said all the commissioners have the goodies we handed out at their seat. She said there were teams around the world at the event.
  - j. Commissioner Land thanked Department Specialist Debusschere and Executive Director Engelman for organizing. She also thanked Department Specialist Debusschere for designing the STEM bookmarks.
9. Report of Committee on Women Veterans
- a. Commissioner Saunders said we have been meeting via conference call weekly about our inaugural Women Veterans 5K Run/Walk in downtown Lansing. She said we have great partners, including Erika Hoover who is here from the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency and they are

partnering with us to put on the event. She said we are looking for sponsors. She said we are looking to cover the run costs so that all the donations can go to three charities in our state to invest in the women veteran community. She asked commissioners to share with their networks and support the race.

- b. Executive Director Engelman said we are also hosting an expo during the event for vendors to set up information booths that are veteran friendly. She said we have two right now and will be pushing for more.
  - c. Commissioner Saunders said we put in a request for Governor Whitmer to join us at the race. She wants to run 10, 5K's by the end of the year and this would be a great one for her to participate in. She said we will also invite the Lieutenant Governor.
  - d. Chair Etienne said we are looking for \$5,000 in sponsorships to cover expenses.
  - e. Commissioner Saunders said \$5,000 would cover costs but ideally, she would like to raise \$10,000.
  - f. Commissioner Saunders also said they need volunteers for the race. She also encouraged commissioners to run/walk the race.
  - g. Commissioner Knauf asked what the three charities. Commissioner Saunders said WINC For All Women Veterans, Michigan Womens Veterans Empowerment and Moxie Wild.
  - h. Commissioner Lambert-Bounds asked if she could get the race information electronically and asked where the expo is. Commissioner Saunders said inside the Lansing Center and said an email would go out with more information.
10. Chair Etienne said the women veterans Facebook group is up to 166 members. She said there is a steady influx of members joining.
11. Report of Committee on Human Trafficking/Sexual Assault
- a. Commissioner Knauf shared that Commissioner Doty attended a meeting with speaker Theresa Flores who is a survivor of sex trafficking in Michigan. She said one of the bills on human trafficking in Michigan is named after her. She said Commissioner Doty visited a new house in Pontiac for survivors and said it takes \$30,000 a year per survivor to get them back on their feet.
  - b. Commissioner Knauf said Commissioner Meneely spoke to the attorney in the Nassar case and said there may be some funding to help us become stronger. Debi Cain or one of her staff members may come to our August commission meeting. She also said she is working with someone on the Fix App. She said kids are accessing it, but it is for kids 17 and up. Commissioner Meneely added that the National Center for Child Exploitation is getting legislators to introduce a resolution for a rating system for apps.
  - c. Commissioner Knauf said there is a fundraiser, Planting Hope, being held at Lemon Creek Winery. She said the SW Michigan Human Trafficking Task Force is also hosting a Biker Bash on June 1st at Berrien County Fairgrounds and their KidStrong event on June 13<sup>th</sup>.
  - d. Commissioner Knauf said Berrien county is asking each township, village or suburb to make a resolution opposing human trafficking.
12. Old Business
- a. None
13. Approval of minutes of January 23, 2019 meeting
- a. It was motioned to approve the minutes. It was unanimously passed.

#### 14.New Business

- a. N/A

#### 15.Commissioner Reports

- a. Commissioner Hendrian said the Millennial Advisory Committee is focusing on healthcare from patients and providers to empower women to advocate for themselves in medical care. She said they are narrowing their scope to obesity and infant mortality in urban areas and maternal health care. She said they are planning to meet with MDHHS and then will select an issue and develop a plan.
- b. Commissioner Hendrian said Brooke Noonan is no longer on the committee and we will be interviewing soon to fill her place.
- c. Commissioner Doty said to reach out to local health departments to get information in addition to for-profit healthcare systems.
- d. Executive Director Engelman said we reached out to the Detroit Public Health Department to get information.

#### 16.Ex Officio and Liaison Reports

- a. Erika Hoover from the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA) said to please come to the 5K and thanked us for supporting the race. She said there is a She Is A Veteran nomination form in your packets and said to please distribute to your networks.
- b. Ron Robinson from the Attorney General's office spoke to Executive Director Engelman about possibility to get Attorney General Nessel to speak to our group in August with human trafficking unit as well as discuss the LGBTQ community and initiatives. Chair Etienne said we would love to have her attend in August. Department Specialist Debusschere will send Ron the information.
- c. Commissioner Knauf asked if the human trafficking task force is still going. Robinson said he would look into it.
- d. Keri Lardie from the Michigan Civil Service Commission introduced herself and said she is looking forward to supporting us.
- e. Sally Marsh from the Secretary of State office said today is the first day Michigan voters have new rights at the voting booth. She said you can register to vote on the same day you vote and request an absentee ballot for any reason.
- f. Tari Muniz from the Aging and Adult Services Agency said May is Older Americans month, adding that May 15<sup>th</sup> is Older Michiganians' Day at the Capitol.
- g. Alexis Horton from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is the new equity and inclusion officer and is excited to partner with the 5K and our women's resource groups in our divisions. She said the wildlife division is starting a women's resource group in their state facilities.
- h. Destinie Shipman from Department of Corrections (DOC) said Director Washington is working on our first female vocational village for our institution, sharing that there are two villages in our male prisons and a groundbreaking to occur in the women's Huron Valley prison. She suggested we invite Director Washington to speak at a future meeting about this. She also asked what the best method is to share the veterans Facebook group with veteran parolees, adding that she saw in a prior meeting minutes that Commissioner Haley approved it. Commissioner Derrer asked if the vocational village was able to be toured. Shipman said it is being built but we have male vocational village we can tour to see what it would look like. Shipman said the

female one will be in Huron / Ypsilanti and she will share information with Department Specialist Debusschere regarding a future tour possibly in 2020.

- i. Courtney Pendleton from Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) introduced herself as Director Hawks executive assistant and said she is excited to be here and help. She said she is new to LARA this year.
  - j. Michelle Lange, Chief of Staff for Department of Technology, Management and Budget (DTMB)'s Director Tricia Foster is new to the role and said one of the areas she is doing some work in is diversity and inclusion.
  - k. Jaclyn Merchant from the department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) introduced herself and said she's glad to be here.
17. Public Comments. Public Comments are limited to 5 minutes per person.
- a. Karen Prince is a resident of Holland and said this is the first time she has attended a women's commission meeting. She said the information she has learned about our committees is great and asked if we have a committee interested in supporting women that are LGBTQ in the state of Michigan. Chair Etienne said she would be happy to give it some consideration. Commissioner Knauf said the human trafficking initiative does take it into consideration as they are trafficked at a higher instance than other groups because they're more vulnerable. Executive Director Engelman said we are housed in the Michigan Department of Civil Rights (MDCR) and said we did an interpretive statement on the LGBTQ being supported by the Elliot Larsen Civil Rights Act (ELCRA). Prince said her understanding is that one can be fired from your job and denied housing based on your sexual orientation or gender identity. Executive Director Engelman said that is illegal and to please send them to MDCR.
  - b. Esther Fifelski said she has seen a trend with low income women having issues with tenant-landlord and finding housing by landlords by moving people to month to month and then increasing the rent. She said it is legal, but it is seriously impacting women and the elderly.
18. Meeting Ended at 2:42 pm.

*Signature*

Respectfully submitted by Chair Chris Etienne