

Michigan Women's Commission Meeting Minutes for November 12, 2019

Capitol Tower

110 W. Michigan Ave. Suite 800
Lansing, MI 48909
1:00pm

Attendance

Chair Chris Etienne, Vice Chair Muna Jondy, Commissioner JoAnn Chavez, Commissioner Charity Dean, Commissioner Meg Wheeler Derrer, Commissioner Whitney Gravelle, Commissioner Renee Haley, Commissioner Krista Haroutunian, Commissioner Cathleen Knauf, Commissioner Barbara Land, Commissioner Alisha Meneely, Commissioner Kelli Saunders, Commissioner Dr. Geneva Williams, Executive Director Cheryl Bergman and Department Specialist Jackie Debusschere were in attendance.

Commissioner Catherine Hendrian and Commissioner Deidre Lambert-Bounds 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. The meeting was opened by Mary Engelman, acting director of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights (MDCR).
 - a. Engelman welcomed everyone to the meeting and shared her praise for the new women's commissioners and the new director. She welcomed Executive Director Bergman to the civil rights department and said she is looking forward to working together.
4. It was motioned to approve the agenda. It was unanimously passed.
5. Executive Director's Report
 - a. Executive Director Bergman thanked the commissioners for traveling to Lansing today and welcomed the new commissioners. She said she is excited to work with everyone on giving women in our state the tools they need to succeed.
 - b. Executive Director Bergman shared each committee's initiatives and successes in the past two years. She said the commission has done impactful work.
 - c. Executive Director Bergman said the women's commission is now involved in gender equity discussions. Two sessions have been held so far in Genessee County and Kent County. She said there is another event tomorrow and another will be in the eastern area of Michigan, and Governor Whitmer is participating in these discussions. In Genessee and Kent counties, the top priorities are

economic security and economic empowerment such as pay equity, access to capital, affordable childcare as well as paid sick and maternity leave. Executive Director Bergman said each county is doing follow up conversations.

- d. Executive Director Bergman said we are lucky that Governor Whitmer supports us. She said that she passed an executive directive addressing pay equity in state government, and just last week she signed a domestic violence bill to help protect survivors of domestic violence. She said the Governor has also elevated the asset requirements for those in need, adding that when women thrive in our state, everyone thrives. She also said 2/3 of Governor Whitmer's executive office staff and members of her cabinet are women, and two are in attendance today - Scottie Barton and Ghida Dagher.
6. Report by the special committee regarding Women in Business (STEM, Resources, Boards, Leadership)
 - a. Commissioner Land said that in the last year, we have focused on women in business and on corporate boards as well as promoting science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) opportunities for women and girls. She said the commission decided to focus on a group that is not typically being served – girls in 0-5-year-old age bracket. She said they are trying to avoid the typical gender role by promoting gender neutral activities that breed familiarity and interest in STEM. Commissioner Land said that we created some bookmarks to create awareness about STEM for 0-5-year-olds and they have been distributed across the state, including MiSTEM Network. She said there are also some here today to take home.
 - b. Commissioner Land said we have also been focused on the FIRST Robotics Championship at TCF Arena (formerly Cobo Hall) that sees thousands of people coming to compete in the robotics championship. She said we ran a great social media campaign and we had considerable interest in our activities.
 - c. Commissioner Wheeler-Derrer said we have done some work on the women on boards space to identify companies in Michigan that have identified 20% or more women on corporate boards while encouraging companies without women on their boards to add women when their next appointment comes around. She said our next step is to put together a resolution. She said they will be making recommendations to Executive Director Bergman as well as contacting our own representatives and business leaders who will support this resolution. She said we are certain the Governor will be supportive of this as well. Commissioner Wheeler-Derrer said once the resolution is passed, we will identify a call to action. She said we will be gathering these resources and partnering with those providing these programs in the future. She said the committee is excited to determine the next steps to re-energize our committee.

- d. Chair Etienne asked if we are maintaining our relationship with Deloitte. Commissioner Wheeler-Derrer said they are going to be partnering with them. Commissioner Chavez said the real value is the connectivity that these board ready programs bring as most women don't have the social network to get placed onto boards. Commissioner Chavez is currently in the program with Deloitte, and she said once you complete your board-ready resume, Deloitte distributes it to every public company in the state of Michigan.
7. Report of Committee on Women Veterans
 - a. Commissioner Haley said she is finally excited to have the voice of the state. She said she has been on this committee for years and hasn't seen traction. She said because of our committee, there is a coalition being formed with veterans' associations in the state.
 - b. Commissioner Haley said one of the top two issues in our state are women veterans who won't self-identify as a veteran. She said this year the Women Veterans 5K really showed the female veterans we support them.
 - c. Commissioner Haley said that the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency's (MVAA) "She Is A Veteran" campaign is launching in March.
 - d. Commissioner Saunders said that we had 135 people participate in the Women Veterans 5K here in Lansing in June. She said it was a fun run/walk. Commissioner Saunders said we are moving forward with another one in June 2020 and they are in the beginning planning stages. She said they should have more info in January. She said we were able to contribute to three very deserving organizations as a result of the last run.
 - e. Commissioner Haley said that all funds raised from the 5K went back to female veterans' groups in the state. She said one was an outdoor adventure group that built comradery. Two have been held and two more will be held next year.
 - f. Commissioner Wheeler-Derrer said these adventure groups are free to female veterans.
 - g. Commissioner Saunders said we could not have done the 5K without the MVAA, Director Zaneta Adams and Erika Hoover, MVAA's liaison to the women's commission.
 - h. Commissioner Haley shared that we have a women veterans group on Facebook called "Michigan Women Veterans Forum". She said there are 200 women in this group. She asked everyone to please share this group so their voices are heard, adding that only female veterans are allowed in this group. She said as a female veteran herself, she knows trust is a big thing and they won't speak unless they feel trusted.
 8. Report of Committee on Human Trafficking/Sexual Assault
 - a. Commissioner Knauf asked to have Elizabeth Thompson stand up. She said she used to be a part of the commission and was the one who brought the human trafficking initiative to our attention. She said prior to this, no one had heard about human trafficking.
 - b. Commissioner Knauf said Commissioner Haroutunian shared there is a further need for info on human trafficking in the legal community. Commissioner Knauf said she is thankful they are reaching out to learn more. Commissioner Knauf said Commissioner Gravelle shared info on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and said they will be looking

into this.

- c. Commissioner Knauf said there is a newly formed group - Kent County Area Human Trafficking Coalition. She said they are looking into illicit massage parlors in the Grand Rapids area and performing extensive research and obtaining statistics.
 - d. Commissioner Knauf shared that Harley Paulsen (Millennial Advisory Committee) said U of M is working on a pilot project for human trafficking.
 - e. Commissioner Knauf said we also explored tackling sexual assault on campus and said the human trafficking and sexual assault committee is questioning pursuing this due to the level of work it would require.
 - f. Commissioner Knauf said the SW Michigan Human Trafficking Task Force has been busy. She said that one of the things they are planning to do in Berrien county is an e-memorial. She said this would have a symbol to denote a victim of sex trafficking, labor trafficking or both. She said it would list the victim's name (if provided) or maybe their street name as well as date of their death. It would be a place to pay respects and a way to collect data and would apply to victims across the United States. She said it is a big project that would look like a waterfall and a name/data on that person would be projected on the water.
 - g. Commissioner Knauf said the task force made a brochure and suggested the women's commission do something similar to pass out in January for Human Trafficking Month. She also said she appreciates the Attorney General and the Governor for helping women in need.
9. Report on the Millennial Advisory Committee
- a. Megan Blue shared that the Millennial Advisory Committee (MAC) has been determining an issue to take on. She said they decided to tackle women's health to work together and determine what the health community is working on. They found there's a lot of work being done specifically for women but is more so around maternal care. There are a lot of women that aren't having babies so what else needs to be addressed. She said we discussed being a better advocate for yourself in the exam room before your visit and during, as well as how practitioners can be better at treating women and how symptoms and care levels differ from women. She said the committee had an extensive committee meeting in August for a plan of action and they are currently developing a post card as well as a potential storytelling campaign to bring women's experience in health care to light. She said there are more issues beyond reproductive health. She said we are also looking to see if we can best be advocates for campus sexual assault.
10. Old Business
- a. 2020 Meeting Dates - January 14 in Lansing, April 21, August 4, October 6.
 - i. Two conflicts with January, one conflict in August
 - ii. Executive Director Bergman suggested January 21
 - 1. All approved January 21 meeting
 - iii. Commissioner Dean has conflict with August 4
 - 1. Monday, August 10th proposed
 - iv. January 21, April 21, August 10, October 6
 - 1. Motion to approve meeting dates for 2020. It was unanimously passed.

11. Approval of minutes of August 6, 2019 meeting

- a. Commissioner Knauf said letter C under human trafficking – it wasn't Sturgis, it was from Berrien County Bike Bash – under F, Theresa not Teresa.
- b. It was motioned to approve the minutes with these changes. It was unanimously passed.

12. New Business

- a. N/A

13. Commissioner Reports

- a. Commissioner Williams said she is impressed by the accomplishments and activities of the group and was curious how our accomplishments are communicated to the public and how our accomplishments are rewarded.
 - i. Chair Etienne said our subcommittees do this in different ways. She said we have relied on social media and direct people to our website. She said she is open to ways on how the women's commission can gain more traction.
- b. Executive Director Bergman said she spoke to Commissioner Lambert-Bounds about our social media and said she has graciously offered to put together a plan for our social media. She said the person in the new job opening for the women's commission will be responsible for managing the social media profile. She said we need to get aggressive on social media.
- c. Commissioner Chavez said we should do an annual report.
 - i. Executive Director Bergman said by statute, we must provide a report.
- d. Commissioner Saunders said Michigan Department of Civil Rights (MDCR) communications team helped us with the women veterans 5K and our former director did interviews and radio.
 - i. Executive Director Bergman said MDCR's communications team as well as the Governor's team will be helpful.
- e. Chair Etienne said to share our successes within our personal networks as well as with our liaisons in each state department.
- f. Commissioner Chavez asked if we do a strategic planning cycle/meeting.
 - i. Chair Etienne said we do that within our subcommittees. Executive Director Bergman said we will do that in January.
- g. Commissioner Wheeler-Derrer asked if Executive Director Bergman could send out the last strategic report and annual report to everyone.
 - i. Executive Director Bergman said yes.
- h. Commissioner Jondy asked what the process is for subcommittees to ask for support for their initiatives.
 - i. Chair Etienne said when the reports come out at meetings, that is the time when other commissioners can offer their support.
- i. Commissioner Haley said self-initiative is welcomed as well as sharing within your own communities.
 - i. Chair Etienne said commissioner contact information was handed out today.
- j. Commissioner Knauf said there were times in the past the human trafficking group would do video conferencing in between meetings to

talk.

- i. Chair Etienne said our subcommittees do meet in between meetings.
- k. Commissioner Haley said we want our liaisons to be involved as well. She said if anyone has ideas for us to let us know, we want to hear your voice.
- l. Chair Etienne introduced Elizabeth Thompson to report on State Advisory Council on Aging. She said the new commissioners may not know that the executive director representing the women's commission is an ex-officio member on the state advisory council on aging. She said there are more women elders, we do live longer. She said the council advises the state of aging issues through their report to the state commission on services to the aging. This commission distributes federal dollars to the advisory groups. She said part of the federal mandate is to look at issues that are of importance to aging Michiganians. She said they are charged with doing research and producing a report. She said the 2019 report has just been issued. She has some copies available today. She said this past year, they were tasked to look at direct care workforce, elder abuse prevention and transportation. One of the governor's concerns is to raise wages for direct care workers. She said that you can make more money in a fast food job with better benefits than working in direct care. She said please share this report with your communities and to think about issues that are important to elders and bring them to the women's commission or to her directly. She said next year's report is on consequences of social isolation for elders.
 - i. Alexis Horton of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) suggested to Elizabeth Thompson to tap into recreation programs with DNR for seniors.
 - ii. Chair Etienne said in Emmett County they have the Friendship Center friendship centers ~~(like a senior centers)~~ and they offer but she was not aware that they were offering more physical activity-based items like golf and exercise classes. She said she thinks this is important.

14.Ex Officio and Liaison Reports

- a. Karen McCloski (MVAA) – Director Adams and other staff are doing listening sessions around the state. Michigan Women Veterans Coalition is meeting for the first time tomorrow. November 21st is a day to recognize women veteran friendly employers. She said there are openings in the veteran friendly schools' program. She said listening sessions are for our director to meet with veterans and hear what issues they have, what's on their mind as well as getting a feel on issues for both women veterans and other veterans as well, including access to care, transportation, etc.
- b. Michelle Lange – Department of Technology, Management and Budget (DTMB) - Director Foster is working on a diversity and inclusion committee and 80 staff members volunteered to participate. She said we are in the process of creating workgroups to narrow focus as well as creating an advisory committee through application process and we have instituted harassment training for staff.
- c. Alexis Horton (DNR) – she is the diversity, equity and inclusion officer for DNR. She said we just got our diversity and equity and inclusion

Executive Office; raising the asset limits required for families to get the help they need from the state for food and heat assistance; and increasing the number of Michigan workers eligible for overtime pay. The Governor thanked the MWC for their work on gender equity conversations around the state that she is attending. The Governor said she will use the outcomes of these conversations to inform her agenda to lift up Michigan Women. She said that when women thrive in our state, communities and families thrive.

17.Meeting Ended at 3:00 pm.

Signature

Respectfully submitted by Chair Chris Etienne