



**Michigan Women's Commission Public Meeting Minutes**  
**Detroit, MI**  
**Tuesday, September 19, 2023**  
**1:00 PM-3:00 PM**

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call
  - Commissioners Present: Chair Geneva Williams, Vice Chair Sue Townsel, Danielle Atkinson, Charity Dean, Tamara Faber, Karin Hopman, Muna Jondy, Tracy Joshua, Faye Nelson, Vivian Pickard
  - Commissioners Absent: Lisa Cawley, Katie Horvath, Sabala Mandava, Misti Rice, Kelli Saunders
  - Staff Present: Chief Executive Officer Cheryl Bergman, Chief Strategy Officer Shannon Garrett, AmeriCorps VISTA Anna Rose Benson
  - Guests Present: Stacie Clayton and Erika Wallace of Wayne State University
  
- II. MWC Chair Remarks
  - Chair Williams expressed her gratitude for being appointed as Chair of the Michigan Women's Commission and congratulated her fellow commissioners on their reappointments.
  - Williams reported that the night before the public meeting, Dr. Sonia Hassan hosted the Commission and others for a conversation about maternal mortality in Michigan. This issue is also the focus of the Commission's Bipartisan Legislative Women's Council. The hope is that these conversations create policy and legislative change.
  
- III. Approval of Agenda
  - Commissioner Pickard moved; Commissioner Joshua seconded. Agenda was approved by consent.
  
- IV. Approval of Minutes of April 18, 2023, Meeting
  - Commissioner Joshua moved; Commissioner Nelson seconded. Minutes were approved by consent.

- V. Guest Speakers: Erika Wallace, Athletic Director, and Stacie Clayton, Director of Community Affairs, Wayne State University
- Chair Williams invited Commissioner Atkinson to make comments as a member of the Wayne State University (WSU) Board of Governors. Commissioner Atkinson expressed gratitude to WSU and to the guest speakers for bringing their unique voices and perspectives to WSU leadership.
  - Chair Williams introduced Stacie Clayton, Director of Community Affairs for WSU. Clayton welcomed the commission to WSU and expressed her gratitude on behalf of President Dr. Espy, the first woman to serve as WSU's president. Clayton reported that Dr. Espy recently welcomed one of the largest incoming undergraduate classes in its history.
  - Clayton introduced Erika Wallace, Athletic Director for WSU. Wallace shared her background as a student athlete and her story of how she became the first female Athletic Director for WSU. Wallace shared that 20% of current NCAA athletic directors are female and 8% are females in minority groups, meaning there are 15 total across the country. Wallace emphasized the importance of the trailblazers that paved the way for women's sports and later in executive roles in college sports. Wallace also introduced Dr. Candice Turner, Deputy Athletic Director for WSU.
- VI. Report on Unlocking Opportunities Committee: CSO Garrett for Commissioner Kelli Saunders
- CSO Garrett reminded Commissioners that the Unlocking Opportunities Committee focuses on removing barriers to work for women and has prioritized attention to paid leave, caregiving, and child care. Work on the issue of paid leave is being shared with the Financial Freedom Committee and more will be presented in that report. The committee continues to look at policies and proposals around caregiving, especially around elder care and care for other family members, with more to come as the legislature resumes session.
  - Garrett reported that the committee continues to monitor child care as an issue, with the MI Tri-Share Child Care Program as currently the primary focus of the committee. Garrett shared that Tri-Share was piloted by the commission, has become a permanent ongoing program for the state, and will soon transition to a new home. Governor Whitmer signed an executive order earlier this summer creating a new department called the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP). Garrett report that major focus is on that transition and ensuring a successful handoff to the new department.
- VII. Report on Visible Authentic Leadership Committee: Commissioner Vivian Pickard
- Commissioner Pickard reminded commissioners that the Visible Authentic Leadership (VAL) Committee focuses on increasing the number of women serving in publicly visible leadership roles.
  - Pickard shared that as part of that work, VAL is pursuing opportunities to help inspire more women into public service. One opportunity is to partner with the nonpartisan nonprofit Vote Run Lead, which is bringing its RUN/51 national training to Detroit on November 17-19. The committee is exploring ways to support the effort, including videos or speaking roles for Michigan elected leaders and a possible reception for attendees.

- Pickard shared that another opportunity the committee is exploring is a potential mentorship/internship program with the Girls Scouts. The VAL committee is pursuing conversations with the Girl Scouts of Southeast Michigan about possibly developing and piloting an internship program with a focus on women in government.
- Pickard confirmed that work continues with the commission's Bipartisan Legislative Women's Council, and the next meeting will likely be a virtual meeting with the women legislators in December.
- Pickard reported because of capacity, the commission is not currently seeking out resources for the ongoing Boards and Commissions Appointments Database project. The committee had been pursuing the idea of creating a database that would match interested women with open positions on boards and commissions around the state, but the project has been put on hold while commission staff focuses on more immediate needs.

#### VIII. Report on Financial Freedom Committee: Commissioner Faye Nelson

- Commissioner Nelson reviewed the topics the committee is focused on, including women in registered apprenticeships, paid leave, FARE grant work, domestic violence and menopause research and protocol.
- Nelson reported that 22,000 Michiganders are in registered apprenticeship programs and only 2,000 of those individuals are women. The majority of those women are apprenticeships that yield lower incomes, such as child care, hospitality, and retail. The financial freedom committee will focus on how to inform and engage women in apprenticeship programs that yield higher wages, such as software engineering, information technology, and skilled trades. Nelson shared that Gov. Whitmer recently announced paid leave as a policy priority. Gov. Whitmer's office has reached out to the commission to support the effort and the committee is looking at ways to express that support.
- Nelson reported that the committee is looking for additional funding sources to continue the FARE work to create a comprehensive resource page on the commission's website.
- Nelson reported that the committee is exploring trainings on domestic violence and menopause in the workplace for State of Michigan managers, with the potential for creating protocols to address these issues.
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#### IX. Report on Committee on Implicit Bias Awareness: CSO Garrett for Commissioner Sabala Mandava

- CSO Garrett reminded commissioners that the Committee on Implicit Bias Awareness is an internal oversight committee to ensure that the Commission prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion in its work, and to share learning opportunities with the public when possible.
- Garrett reported that the commission held two 21-Day Racial Equity Challenge cohorts hosted by Vice Chair Townsel and Commissioner Jondy. As of May, 415 participants have taken the challenge with the commission, including 104 across the three rounds of the challenge in FY23. MWC did not hold a challenge in this last quarter of FY23 and will not hold a challenge in FY24 Q1 because of staffing capacity with Tri-Share transition and holidays.

- Commissioner Jondy shared that the maternal mortality conversation the previous night talked about implicit bias training requirements for the medical field. Jondy suggested the commission consider inviting someone to help the commission better understand bias and systemic racism in health care as we consider policies and laws needed to improve maternal mortality rates.

X. Chief Executives Officer's Report: CEO Cheryl Bergman

- CEO Bergman expanded on an earlier report that the MI Tri-Share Child Care program will be moving to the new MiLEAP Department and reported that commission staff are actively preparing the program for the transition. Bergman reminded commissioners that the commission was asked to pilot Tri-Share in 2021, and that Tri-Share evenly splits the cost of child care between the employer, the employee, and the State of Michigan. The commission began with three regions in the state and Tri-Share is now available in 59 counties with 13 facilitator hubs covering the 13 regions. Bergman shared that by moving MI Tri-Share to MiLEAP, Gov. Whitmer is showing her commitment to the program.
- Bergman also reported that the commission worked with various stakeholders to create a five-year plan for Tri-Share, which includes establishing a central administrative partner for the program. The commission is taking steps to develop a request for proposals to serve as that central administrative partner. Once in place, the partner can take over back-end administration, alleviating the burden from employers, child care providers, and facilitator hubs, while also freeing up the hubs to focus on recruiting more employers to participate and helping participating families to find child care.
- Bergman thanked Commissioner Nelson, Michigan Director of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, for supporting Tri-Share with foundation dollars, and Commissioner Atkinson, Founding Director of Mothering Justice, for participating as the facilitator hub for the City of Detroit.
- Bergman reported that Commissioner Misti Rice was elected Chair of the National Association of Women's Commissions. Bergman expressed interest in using this opportunity to connect with women commissions around the country and exchange best practices.
- Bergman emphasized the importance of Gov. Whitmer's prioritization of paid leave and affirmed that the commission will support the Governor's efforts to craft a successful policy that works for both employees and employers.
- Bergman reported that the commission is working with a PhD student doing her dissertation on menopause in the workplace and the economic impact it has on employers. In partnership with the commission and the State of Michigan's Office of the State Employer, the student will create and distribute a survey to State of Michigan employees identified as women between the ages of 40 and 60. The quantifiable results will help inform any potential future manager trainings or state protocols.

XI. Chief Strategy Officer's Report: CSO Shannon Garrett

- CSO Garrett shared that commissioner bios have been updated on the commission's website. She requested that commissioners continue to share any necessary edits or updates as needed.

- Garrett reported that the commission has deleted its Twitter/X account because of the lack of engagement and spontaneous changes to the platform. The commission remains on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.
- Garrett requested that commissioners actively follow the commission on social media and amplify posts on their own channels and pages. Commissioners have a wide and diverse reach, and sharing the commission's posts helps to spread the word about important resources and opportunities.
- Garrett shared that the commission's Women's Equality Day release of the Women Governors Roundtable video was a huge success. Commissioners Williams and Mandava sat down with five current governors to discuss why women's leadership is vital. The conversation included Gov. Whitmer, plus the governors of Maine, Massachusetts, Kansas, and New Mexico. Garrett thanked AmeriCorps VISTA Anna Rose Benson for editing the final video and for incredible social media marketing materials. The video is on the commission's YouTube channel and will continue to be occasionally used on social media.
- Garrett reported that for Mental Health Awareness Month in May, the commission worked with the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity to present two webinars: one on Menopause in the Workplace and another on Domestic Violence in the Workplace. Both webinars were recorded and are on the commission's YouTube channel.
- Garrett stated that October is Domestic Violence Awareness month and that the commission is working with the Attorney General's Office to host a webinar on Michigan's new Address Confidentiality Program for survivors. Details will be shared with commissioners and on social media.
- Garrett followed up on Commissioner Pickard's report about the Vote Run Lead RUN/51 training in Detroit in November. Vote Run Lead is a national nonprofit that trains barrier-breaking women to run for elected office and the goal of Run/51 is to turn state legislatures to women majorities. Garrett disclosed that she is a cofounder and on the board of the organization. The commission is exploring the possibility of hosting a reception with the commission's Women's Council to bring together the state legislators and women who are considering elected offices around the state and across the country.
- Garrett noted that in May, CEO Bergman and AmeriCorps VISTA Benson helped coordinate a meet and greet with Gov. Whitmer and women who have worked for the state of Michigan for 30 years or more.
- Garrett reported that the fourth quarter newsletter was sent in August, featuring an article written by Benson about her tour of the Vocational Village at the Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility, which provides job training for justice-involved women.
- Garrett noted that the newsletter also included a link to Commissioner Hopman's op-ed on fostering inclusive workspaces for women with disabilities as a part of the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Garrett shared that the commission continues to look for op-ed opportunities to share commissioner expertise.

## XII. Old Business

- Proposed Future Public Meeting Dates
  - April 16, 2024 (FY24)

- October 22, 2024 (FY25)
- April 15, 2025 (FY25)
  - Commissioner Joshua volunteered Battle Creek as the location for the October 22, 2024, public meeting.
  - Commissioner Joshua moved; Commissioner Nelson seconded. Proposed future public meeting dates were approved by consent.

#### XIII. New Business

- Chair Williams invited Vice Chair Sue Townsel to make comments.
  - Vice Chair Townsel expressed her gratitude for her appointment as Vice Chair and thanked Commissioner staff and commissioners for their ongoing commitment.
- Committee Chair Terms
  - Two-year terms to begin Oct. 1, 2023, end Sept. 30, 2025
    - Chair Williams announced that the commission is moving to two-year terms for committee chairs, beginning on October 1.
    - Williams said that commission will keep same committees, but commissioners should let her know if interested in starting any new committees.

#### XIV. Next Meeting

- April 16, 2024
  - Ann Arbor – exact location to be determined

#### XV. Ex Officio and Liaison Reports

- None

#### XVI. Public Comment (Public comments are limited to five minutes per person.)

- Soummer Crawford and Cynthia Douglas, of the Wayne County Women’s Commission, shared their new areas of focus, including health and wellness, senior jewels, and workforce development. Crawford and Douglas expressed their alignment to the Michigan Women’s Commission’s initiatives.
- Dr. Orletta Caldwell, of the MI Council of Women in Tech, expressed her support on behalf of the council to the commission’s mentorship initiative. Women in Tech teaches young girls about the technology field as young as 2<sup>nd</sup> grade to encourage them to pursue a technology career when they are older.
- Dana Dew and Kelly Cobble Dick, of Girl Scouts of Southeast Michigan, expressed their eagerness to create a mentorship model with the commission and their plans to collaborate with Commissioner Pickard.
- KaRie Jorah, of the Wayne State University Commission on the Status of Women & College of Education, announced her new appointment and shared her support for the commission.
- Liz Bell and Katie Dukes, of EducationNC, a North Carolina nonprofit publication, shared that they are on a road trip to various states to learn about policy surrounding early childhood and

bring back research to implement in North Carolina. They are currently in Michigan to better understand the MI Tri-Share Child Care project and other child care developments at the state level.

XVII. Meeting Adjourned

- Meeting adjourned by consent.