

## Michigan Women's Commission Meeting Minutes

May 20, 2020

Virtual Public Meeting held on Microsoft Teams

### Attendance

Chair, Chris Etienne; Vice Chair, Muna Jondy; Commissioner JoAnn Chavez, Commissioner Whitney Gravelle, Commissioner Kelli Saunders, Commissioner Catherine Hendrian, Commissioner Deidre Bounds, Commissioner Cathleen Knauf, Commissioner Meg Derrer, Commissioner Alisha Meneely, Commissioner Dr. Geneva Williams, Commissioner Charity Dean, Commissioner Barbara Land, Executive Director Cheryl Bergman, Chief Strategy Officer Shannon Garrett

Commissioner Hon. Krista Haroutunian and Commissioner Renee Haley were excused.

### Minutes

1. The meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm.
2. The roll call was taken and a quorum was present.
3. Commissioner Krista Haroutunian announced her resignation from the MWC
4. Welcome and introduction of Zaneta Adams, Director, Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency by Cheryl Bergman, Executive Director, MWC
5. Guest speaker Zaneta Adams, Director, Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA)
  - a. Adams announced that the Agency was able to appoint a Women Veterans & Special Populations Coordinator, Erica Hoover, effective January 2020. Special populations include women, Native American, homeless and Vietnam veteran, LGBTQ+, communities, to name a few.
  - b. Adams announced that the Agency has disbanded the advisory board and created Women's Veterans Coalition. The purpose of the coalition is to take a more active approach, observing trends and facilitating change. They had their first official meeting this year, and have done virtual check-ins.
  - c. Adams announced the "She is a Veteran" video campaign will launch on June 12 (also Women's Veterans Recognition Day). The first video feature will be rolled out on June 12, and one will continue to be released every month for the next 12 months.
  - d. Adams announced that they are also working on research to build training modules for veteran service officers and service organizations to understand best practices when working with veterans and military trauma.
  - e. Adams announced that the Agency recently rolled out the "Check on My Vet" initiative, which allows veterans to have access to resources. If you know a veteran or are a veteran, you can register to receive a call on their website and can get a call back for connection to resources. This will serve as another mechanism to reach out to those who are isolated.
  - f. Adams announced that the Agency has held several coffee hours. In the past,

they have covered topics such as debt management and education benefits. On June 11 at noon, they will hold one for Women Veterans. The link will be available on their Facebook page.

- g. Commissioner Knauf asked how MWC commissioners could share all the work of the Agency with their own communities.
    - i. Adams shared that it is being distributed widely through the veteran's office and local counties. She also stated that individuals can always visit the website michiganveterans.com or call 1-800-MICH-VET.
    - ii. Adams also stated that they are working to access county veteran grant funds to assist veterans who have been displaced from their homes and need food vouchers.
  - h. Commissioner Bounds asked about the charge of the coalition and the outcomes they were hoping to achieve.
    - i. Adams shared that the major charge is to identify veterans and get them to participate. That way they can more adequately assess their needs, educate them, and match them with resources.
  - i. Millennial Advisory Committee Member Di'Ane Townsel asked about plans for the Agency for the aftermath of Covid-19
    - i. Adams replied that they are working through different methodologies, including re-entry and phased plans but no specific plans have been decided at this time.
6. Introduction of Kim Trent, Deputy Director of Prosperity, Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) by Cheryl Bergman, Executive Director, MWC
7. Kim Trent, Deputy Director of Prosperity, LEO
- a. Trent stated that LEO is framing issues of poverty with ALICE (Assess Limited Income Constrained and Employed), a term from United Way. LEO established a task force that is using a multi-department strategy, with 19 departments including the MWC, to address poverty across a variety of domains. The task force is being led by Jeff Donofrio, Director of LEO and Robert Gordon, Director Dept. of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
  - b. Trent stated that there are four work streams and the MWC is represented on two of them –
    - i. Safe and secure – focused on housing and food security, crime prevention, and making sure the safety net is adequate for the work that needs to be done
    - ii. Strong beginnings – focused on childhood poverty, at-risk youth, child care, and childhood trauma
      - 1. Shannon Garrett, Chief Strategy Officer, MWC is working with this group
    - iii. Removing barriers – identifying policies in state government that are impeding the population to get out of poverty
    - iv. Proving opportunities – develop long-term goals and strategies that will lead to better paying jobs, access to higher education and youth

employment (in accordance with the Governor's 60 by 30 initiative)

1. Cheryl Bergman, Executive Director, MWC is working with this group.
  - c. The task force is planning to have an agenda to Governor Whitmer by the end of the year
  - d. Commissioner Williams commented with thanks and on the potential success for this multi department approach.
  - e. Commissioner Jondy commented providing thanks for the work and their involvement to minimize redundancy and reinforce collaboration.
  - f. Commissioner Dean also commented with thanks for Trent's work and this strategy.
8. Approval of Agenda took place at 3:40
9. Executive Director's Report
- a. Executive Director Cheryl Bergman reminded commissioners to register for their state of MI email for communication purposes
  - b. Bergman expressed cuts to the state budget due to the pandemic. Starting Friday, May 22, 2020 to the end of July, Shannon Garret will be on furlough on Fridays. If you need to get in contact with someone on Fridays, it would be best to contact Director Bergman.
  - c. Bergman congratulated Commissioner Gravelle on her op-ed in the Detroit News, which discusses missing and murdered indigenous women. It can be found here - <https://bit.ly/3bOkogn>
  - d. Bergman thanked Commissioner Bounds for her help with social media efforts.
10. Chief Strategy Officer's Report
- a. Chief Strategy Officer Shannon Garrett announced that the MWC was contacted by disability rights advocates who participated in MWC's Gender Equity Conversations requesting help in getting an Executive Order from Governor Whitmer. The MWC played a small role in helping to facilitate an EO to affirm anti-discrimination policies and ensure medical resources were being distributed equitably. The EO reaffirms that it is unlawful to conduct medical decision-making based on social stigma or stereotypes regarding age, color, criminal history, disability, ethnicity, familial status, gender identity, height, homelessness, immigration status, incarceration status, marital status, mental illness, national origin, poverty, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, substance abuse disorder, use of government 3 resources, veteran status, or weight. It was issued on April 29<sup>th</sup>, and can be found here - <https://bit.ly/2Zp1Ssq>
  - b. Garrett announced that she is working to get the MWC's social media presence more active. Facebook account is currently MWC's primary platform. MWC will be back up on Twitter very soon and will also set up new Instagram and Linked In accounts.
  - c. Garrett announced that MWC will be updating the website over the next month,

and asked Commissioners to send bio updates and other edits to Garrett by June 1.

- d. Garrett announced that they are formalizing a volunteer internship program.
  - i. Due to current and foreseeable future budget constraints, the MWC is looking for people who would like to work with the Commission either through academic credit or an outside scholarship or fellowship program that will compensate them for their time.
  - ii. MWC currently has three student volunteers and will add 2-3 more.
  - iii. If students are interested, they should send their resume and cover letter to Garrett by Tuesday, May 26, for consideration.
  - iv. Projects that interns will assist with include continuing to compile a list of stakeholders working on women's issues or women-led businesses. The survey link to include organizations can be found here - <https://bit.ly/3cOXcQl>. They will also be working on legislation tracking, which can be found here - <https://bit.ly/3cOTcQ3>.

#### 11. Old Business

- a. None

#### 12. Approval of minutes of January 20, 2020 meeting

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

#### 13. New Business

- a. Garrett recapped the work completed at the strategic planning meeting that took place on March 9, 2020, with nine commissioners present. Before the shutdown, the MWC was able to hold Gender Equity Conversations in six regions – Grand Traverse, Detroit, Oakland County, Kent County, Genesee County and Washtenaw County. (Plans for several additional conversations throughout March and April were cancelled due to the pandemic.) The MWC was able to track overwhelmingly common themes across the conversations and were discussed and considered at the strategic planning meeting, as laid out in the proposed new priorities Director Bergman will discuss. In addition, addressing implicit bias in policymaking and outcomes was an overarching theme across conversations and issue topics. During the strategic planning meeting, Commissioners also discussed roles and responsibilities, including digging into specific policy issues moving forward.
  - i. Garrett shared that Commissioners participating in the strategic planning meeting committed the MWC to:
    - 1. Centralize marginalized communities and lift up those who are the most impacted,
    - 2. Actively attempt to understand what a true equitable solution would look like, and
    - 3. Develop both short-term and long-term goals within each new committee.
  - ii. It was decided by consensus that the MWC would dissolve all existing committees. In the case of the Millennial Advisory Committee, it was decided that this committee would also dissolve and the MWC Chair will appoint current members of the Millennial Advisory Committee to one of the new committees to be discussed below.
  - iii. Garrett also reminded the Commissioners that the MWC Chair has the power to appoint individuals from outside the Commission to any MWC

committee, which could be a good way to bring more stakeholders into the work of the MWC.

- b. Commissioner Derrer stated that the Implicit Bias committee grew out of the Gender Equity Conversations, and it would serve as more of an advisory or oversight committee to ensure that all MWC committees are working to minimize implicit bias, and to have an overarching body that would hold the MWC accountable for this. Based on discussion at the strategic planning meeting, it was decided that the Commission will engage in a tailored implicit bias workshop to facilitate a shared language, and for experiential learning and tools.
  - i. Commissioner Meneely stated that she has researched and reached out to several organizations for this implicit bias workshop, and that the Commission will likely engage facilitation internally from experts in the Michigan Department of Civil Rights. The goal is for Commissioners to hold this workshop in person, ideally attaching it to the already scheduled Commission meeting in either August or October 2020. Meneely expressed her hope that the workshop will not only provide Commissioners with personal knowledge, but also provide useful practical skills to carry forward in the work of the MWC.
  - ii. Millennial Advisory Committee Member Harley Paulsen stated that she thinks this should be a continuous training. She also suggested that some self-learning, through readings and videos, could be useful to complete before the Commission next meets in person.
  - iii. Commissioner Hendrian stated that Harvard has an implicit training test (Implicit Attitudes Test; IAT), that is free and can be completed to facilitate self-learning of your own implicit biases.
- c. Consensus on New MWC Priorities
  - i. Bergman laid out the proposed new priorities and committees coming out of the strategic planning meeting:
    1. Unlocking Opportunities - Defined as initiatives that remove barriers to work. Examples include affordable/accessible childcare, expanded paid parental leave, paid caregiver leave, earned paid sick time, affordable housing
    2. Financial Freedom - Defined as actions to close gaps and increase access to income. Examples include pay equity, salary transparency, access to education/training for higher-paying jobs, micro-loans/business incentives for women-owned businesses, living wage.
    3. Visible Authentic Leadership - Defined as ways to have more women serving in publicly visible leadership roles across sectors, and leading with their authentic, whole selves. Examples include increasing the number of women serving in CEO/executive leadership, on corporate boards, on foundation boards, in all levels of elected government.

- d. Commissioners noted that there was overlap between some of the themes in each priority
    - i. It was decided that multiple committees could be working on a similar theme (i.e., education could be in under Unlocking Opportunities and Financial Freedom), but that each committee would try to tackle the theme from a different angle.
  - e. A question was posed about whether there would be a cap on committee members
    - i. Garrett responded that this is up to the committees themselves
  - f. Commissioner Bounds asked about whether the Gender Equity Conversations would continue on a virtual platform.
    - i. Executive Director Bergman responded that because the Governor wanted to be a part of those conversations, and is currently not able to, they will be put on hold for the time being.
  - g. The Commission approved the new MWC Committees by consensus.
  - h. Sub-committee assignments
    - i. Executive Director Bergman asked that each Commissioner send her their first and second committee choices from the three identified policy committees, as well as let her know if they are interested in serving on the implicit bias committee.
14. Commissioner Reports
- a. Ex Officio and Liaison Reports
    - i. Commissioner Saunders reported that there was a decision to postpone the Women’s Veterans 5K to 2021 due to the pandemic.
    - ii. Commissioner Knauf reported that right before Covid-19 stay-at-home orders, they were able to complete the Save Action Project Training in Berrien County. She also reported that she and Commissioner Wheeler-Derrer were meant to complete the Power Over Predators Training, but that was cancelled due to Covid-19. However, they decided to provide that training online for free.
15. Ex Officio and Liaison Reports
- a. Liaison Alisande Shrewsbury – Department of Education
    - i. Shrewsbury stated that the Michigan Department of Education is working with the school districts, teachers, students and families to provide resources for transition learning. This information can be found on the Michigan Department of Education’s website. She also stated that the Department is working to ensure access and equity around internet connectivity that would carry forward to the post-pandemic. Lastly, she stated that the Department is working to leverage federal funds coming to the state to enhance social-emotional wellbeing for students, teachers and families.
  - b. Liaison Erika Hoover – Department of Veteran Affairs
    - i. Hoover stated she was excited for the partnership between the Department of Veteran Affairs and the Commission, and for the novel

ways that the newly outlined committees and work can also include veterans.

16. Chair Etienne announced that this is her last meeting on MWC, as her term expires July 15, 2020.

- a. Commissioners reflected on their appreciation for her leadership, best wishes for her future endeavors and recognition that they are grateful for what Chair Etienne has done to make a difference in the lives of Michigan women.

17. Public Comments

- a. None

18. Chair Etienne ended the meeting at 4:39 pm.

*Signature*

Respectfully submitted by Chair Etienne