

**Commission for Women
General Meeting Minutes /Virtual
August 14, 2025 / 7:00 – 8:15 p.m.**



“I raise up my voice – not so that I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard.”

Malala Yousafzai

Attendees

Arlinda Clark, Chair

Betty Romero, 1st Vice Chair

Sheena Foster, 2nd Vice Chair

Michelle Buteau Georgia Coffey Jodi Danis Mital Gajjar Janet LaValle
Elizabeth Richards Shuaa Tajammul Lindsey Turnbull

CFW Team Members

Jodi Finkelstein, Executive Director

Carmen Kaarid, Program Manager

Absent

Kathy Estrada

LaDonna King

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS / CHAIR CLARK

Linda Bergofsky – Montgomery County Commission on Aging

Kate Stein – Montgomery County Commission on Aging (Public Policy Committee)

Valued contributed during May’s forum on caregiving; Commission on Aging in process of developing budget and policy positions for next year

--Thinking about how to support caregivers at county and state level

--Developed 16 different priorities; 2 presented that had budgetary request; neither filled

--Developing budget request and policy initiatives focused on income and food security

--20K over the age of 60 in the county (about 1 in 5 available for aging services; majority are not aware of services and there are service restraints, like for housing)

--Advocate at county, state, and federal level

Commission on Aging falls under Health & Human Services

-Staff liaison and HHS staff

-Have 34 commissioners

- Have some independence
- Will send Commission on Aging proposal to Jodi for review

Mrs. Nayda Depaz – Spanish teacher, looking to learn tonight more about the community of women

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND AGENDA / CHAIR CLARK

Agenda accepted as updated

Moved up WLB as first item in committee reports

July minutes accepted as corrected (WLB theme for 2026)

Wheaton Community Safety Summit on Thursday, 4 SEP, 4:30pm-7:30pm

Sign up will be sent

Women's Equality Day, 26 AUG, 5pm-7pm

Commission for Women will sponsor the event, all invited

3. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE / CHAIR

County asked we no longer use chat function to conduct business, please see email

Can use for well wishes (e.g., Happy birthday!)

Intern Nina will stay with commission through her summer year!

Confirmed grad student, starting on 26 AUG

Re-entry program going well, received update/eval of program so far

Could do tour of corrections center

Big thank you to Chair Clark your service and leadership!

4. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT / JODI FINKELSTEIN

5. NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT AND ELECTIONS / Commissioner Buteau

Ballot in emails

Candidate speeches

Voting

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Women's Legislative Briefing / Commissioner Romero

Save the Date: 31 JAN 26

There is a breakfast at 9:30am, Commissioners are invited

MLAW signed up to be the first sponsor!

Sponsorship package available on and Evenbrite

All Commissioners should reach out their networks for sponsorship requests

Please attend WLB planning meetings

Program Planning / Open

Self-defense class on Tuesday/19 AUG; 14 people signed up

-Will ask for feedback from participants because new instructor and format

Planning out fall seminar series

Need committee chair

Budget / Chair Clark

No report

Strategic Planning and Research Evaluation Committee/ Commissioner Foster

3 strategic goals and objectives

Need to fill in target metrics and dates

Reviewed public facing strategic plan

Move to adopt strategic plan as presented on strategic goals and objectives and to post plan in an acceptable format on Commission for Women website

Motion passes

Emerging Leaders / Commissioner Gajjar

No report

Public Relations / Commissioner Turnbull

No report

SOP / Chair Clark

No report

Policy and Legislation / Commissioner Richards

County Bill 21-25, Day Care and Child Care Property Tax

- o [Recommended Enactment by County Council on 24 JUL 25](#)

Projected 2026 General Assembly Legislation

- o Stop Silencing Survivors Bill
- o Family and Law Enforcement Protection Act
- o The Monica Cooper Prerelease Act

Anticipate Lobby Day: 11 DEC 25 (Virtual)

7. **LIAISON REPORTS**

MLAW / Commissioner Foster

MLAW will sponsor WLB

Strategic planning retreat on 24 AUG

Re-new membership; CFW is renewing its organizational membership

MLAW **Conference** which will be held on Saturday, November 1, 2025 at The Meeting House in Columbia, Maryland.

Human Trafficking Prevention (HTP) / Executive Director, Jodi Finkelstein

Training with bus operators, goal is 100%

Working with Vice unit on education on what is a legitimate license; doing a commercial

Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) / Commissioner King

No report

Maryland Commission for Women/Executive Director, Jodi Finkelstein

No report

Choose Respect / Commissioner Gajjar

Back to school fair tablings to advertise the event

Community Health Initiative / Commissioner LaValle

Next meeting is in September

Save the Date: 8 SEP, 5-7pm at Suburban Hospital (also a virtual option)

CFW Scholarship /Commissioner Foster

No report

8. AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORT(S)

By-Laws / Chair Clark

No Report

9. NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT AND ELECTIONS / Commissioner Buteau

Election Results

Chair

Commissioner Sheena Foster -11 votes

1st Vice Chair

Commissioner Betty Romero – 11 votes

2nd Vice Chair

Commissioner Janet LaVelle -11

Commissioner Mital Gajjar -0

Secretary

Commissioner Shuaa Tajammul -11 votes

Member at Large

Commissioner Mital Gajjar – 10 votes

Commissioner Janet LaValle -1 vote

Big thanks to Commissioner Buteau for running the elections!

Next year's elections will be in-person because of the by-laws change

10. OLD BUSINESS

Thank you to everyone that supported National Night Out!

11. NEW BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tonight is Chair Clark's last commission meeting; will do turnover with Commissioner Foster

12. Meeting Adjourned – 8:15 pm