

IAMI-DADE COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN MONTHLY PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, June 25, 2025

6:30 p.m. | Bal Harbour Community Center, 18 Bal Bay Dr, Bal Harbour, FL 33154

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. by Chairwoman Michelle Abreu.

The following board members were present: Michelle Abreu (Chairwoman), Clora Adkins, Lunicel Alvarado, Yvette Ayala, Heather Paschal Binns, Mercedes Carlson, Yumanela Candelaria, Dr. Gabrielle Carey-Johnson, Milagros “Millie” Del Valle (2nd Vice Chair), Marie Souerette-Eloi (Member at Large), Elise Gerson, Katherine Leiva (Member at Large), Nadege Vilsaint, Dr. Jacqueline Peña, Yama Paillere, Gloria Martinez, Maria Santamaria, Josephine Novo, and Stephanie Daniels.

The following board members were absent: Lourdes Abadin (Vice Chairwoman), Chelsea Granell, and Dr. Sharon Kendrick-Johnson (Past Chair). A quorum was established.

Welcome Remarks and Introductions

Commissioner Steinberg delivered welcome remarks and welcomed the board to her district. Laura Morilla from the Office of Community Advocacy introduced herself.

Caroline Fenton and Daya Meshri from the University of Miami Human Rights Law Clinic introduced themselves and acknowledged their ongoing collaboration with Dr. Rose Martin on CEDAW implementation and legal review.

The husband of Board Member Mercedes Carlson also introduced himself and was recognized as present.

III. Approval of Minutes

Board Member Yvette Ayala moved to approve the May 28, 2025, meeting minutes, and Yama Paillere seconded the motion with the following amendments: correction of the name for the Young Women's Preparatory Academy (YWPA) Scholarship and inclusion of Board Member Yvette Ayala on the list of absentees for that meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Director's Report – Dr. Rose Martin

Dr. Martin provided the following updates in her official report:

- 1. Upcoming Statewide Convening of Commissions for Women and Florida Women's Hall of Fame Ceremony:** Dr. Martin announced that the **Statewide Convening of Commissions for Women** will take place on **September 29, 2025**, in Tallahassee, followed by the **Florida Women's Hall of Fame Ceremony** on **September 30, 2025**. She encouraged board members to attend both events, if possible. Dr. Martin also shared that **Mary Brickell**, Miami pioneer and namesake of the Brickell neighborhood, has been officially inducted into the **Florida Women's Hall of Fame**. The nomination was co-submitted by Dr. Martin and Nina C. Roque-Strickroot, former Director of the Commission for Women, and Mary Brickell was one of three honorees selected directly by the Governor.

2. **Local Maternal Health Fairs:** Dr. Martin provided updates on **collaborative maternal health fair planning in District 11 (Commissioner Gonzalez) and District 2 (Commissioner Bastien)**. She emphasized the alignment of these efforts with the Commission's **CEDAW recommendations**, and encouraged board participation in support of these targeted health equity initiatives.
3. **CEDAW Progress and National Recognition:** Dr. Martin shared updates on Miami-Dade's **local implementation of CEDAW** (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women), including the Commission's participation in the recent **National Convening on Local CEDAW Implementation**. The Commission's work received national acknowledgment, particularly for its emphasis on **data disaggregation and gender equity analysis** in policymaking.

V. Executive Committee Report

Second Vice Chair Milagros "Millie" Del Valle presented the Executive Committee's nominations for the 2025 Women's Hall of Fame. The following Eight women were recommended following the committee's review process: Sheriff Rosie Cordero-Stutz, Dr. Lori Hanson, Dr. Adora Obi Nweze, Barbara Baer Capitman (posthumous), Emma McAllister (posthumous), Alina Garcia, Sandra "Sandy" Sears, and Chief Digna Abello.

- Motion: Mercedes Carlson
- Second: Yvette Ayala
- Vote: Motion passed unanimously

VI. Committee Reports

A. Legislative Committee – Chair Josephine Noble

- Upcoming CEDAW presentation to the Board of County Commissioners' Health & Safety Committee has been rescheduled for July.
- Successful presentation to the Town of Miami Lakes drew strong engagement from elected officials.
- Committee emphasized the need to tailor presentations for municipal audiences using economic and workforce framing.
- Drafting continues on the 2025 CEDAW recommendations, using disaggregated data and community input.

B. Strategic Alignment Committee (formerly Goals Committee) – Chair Yama Paillere

- Only five surveys had been completed at the time of the meeting; members were urged to complete the survey.
- Data collected will support a year-end Impact Report and planning for the next board retreat.
- Committee reiterated the importance of aligning board activity with the three strategic pillars: Advocacy, Outreach, and Legislative Action.
- QR codes linking to the survey were distributed during the meeting.

C. Communications Committee

- Instagram account surpassed 4,000 followers.
- Members were reminded to repost and tag Commission content to boost visibility.
- Proposal made to relaunch the “Meet the Board” campaign, pending full member participation.
- It was noted that past campaigns stalled due to delays in photo and bio submissions.

D. Events & Fundraising Committee –Chair Lunicel Alvarado

- Multiple commissioners have requested partnerships for summer events.
- Committee affirmed its leadership role in managing upcoming event coordination.
- Committee members were asked to convene immediately after the board meeting to schedule a July planning session.
- Members were reminded of quorum requirements and the need for consistent participation.
- Upcoming events discussed:
 - Commissioner-sponsored health fairs in August

VII. Special Presentation: 2025 CEDAW Policy Recommendations

Chair Josephine Novo delivered a presentation recapping the history of CEDAW and the Commission’s annual Status of Women Report, developed in partnership with FIU. Key recommendations were presented in three focus areas:

- Violence Against Women and Girls
- Economic Mobility and Workforce Equity
- Health Access and Maternal Mortality

VIII. Special Report: Disability Resource Fair Update

Josephine Novo provided updates on the Disability Resource Fair scheduled for August 2 at the Milander Center:

- Over 20 organizations confirmed
- Diaper distribution, including specialty sizing
- Free haircuts, sensory-friendly providers, ABA robotics
- Partners include Jackson Health, UM, Neuralink, and Chariots of Love
- Commissioner Rene Garcia and Councilwoman Monica Perez confirmed as supporters
- Board members were encouraged to share flyers and assist with event logistics

Discussion:

- Some concerns were raised about event naming conventions. Novo explained the intentional use of “Disability Resource Fair” to ensure accessibility and clarity for Hialeah’s Spanish-speaking population.
- The board reaffirmed its prior approval and committed to continued support for planning and implementation.

IX. Old Business

- **South Dade Women Veterans Alliance Event Recap (June 12):** 2nd Vice Chair Millie recognized Dr. Peña, Yama Paillere, Sharon, Lourdes, and Dr. Martin for attending and supporting the event.
- **Human Trafficking Forums:** Gloria revisited the board's prior commitment to host district-based forums. Dr. Martin stated that follow-up will continue through the Events Committee since it is one of their retreat goals.

X. New Business

- Discussion was held regarding Sunshine Law restrictions on Zoom meetings.
- Members were reminded that meetings involving votes or recommendations cannot include remote participation.
- Members unable to attend in person were encouraged to request temporary removal from committee rosters to avoid delays.

XI. Announcements

Former Board Member, Dr. Lynette Long, provided an update on the statewide Women's Historical Marker Initiative. Fifteen markers are currently in progress. Continued collaboration with smaller counties and women's historians was emphasized. Dr. Long was thanked for her previous work on the Commission.

XI. Adjournment

There being no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned by Chair Michelle Abreu.