

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

Public Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, July 23, 2025

Time: 6:30 PM – 8:16 PM

Location: Doral Government Center, First Floor Meeting Room

Presiding Meeting Chair: Vice Chair Lourdes Abadin

Director: Dr. Rose Martin

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Vice Chair **Lourdes Abadin**.

II. Roll Call and Attendance

The following board members were in attendance:

Lourdes Abadin, Vice Chairwoman; Lunicel Alvarado; Heather Paschal Binns; Mercedes Carlson; Milagros “Millie” Del Valle, Second Vice Chair; Marie Soeurette-Eloi, Member at Large; Elise Gerson; Dr. Sharon Kendrick-Johnson, Past Chair; Katherine Leiva, Member at Large; Nadege Vilsaint; Dr. Jacqueline Pena; Yama Paillere; Gloria Martinez; and Maria SantaMaria.

The following board members had excused absences:

Michelle Abreu, Chairwoman; Clora Adkins; Yvette Ayala; Yumanela Candelaria; Dr. Gabrielle Carey-Johnson; Chelsea Granell; Josephine Novo; and Stephanie Daniels.

III. Acknowledgment of Elected Officials and Guests

Vice Chair Lourdes Abadin formally welcomed elected officials and guests.

Vice Mayor Maureen Porras, City of Doral, delivered opening remarks and commended the board for its leadership, research, and data-informed policy advocacy, expressing continued support from the City of Doral.

Representatives present included:

- Angelica M. Ballestas, Chief of Staff to Councilman Rafael Pineyro, and interns from his office
- A representative from Mayor Christi Fraga’s Office, City of Doral
- Justin Funck, Director, Human Trafficking Unit, Office of State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle

- Dr. Glenda Perez, representing MDSARI.org
 - Belinda Leon, Program Director of Women of Tomorrow and former board member
 - Peter Espinoza, candidate for Doral City Council
 - Dr. Rosario Concha, University of Miami School of Law
 - Ibis Valdez, Office of the Mayor of Miami-Dade County
 - Representatives from:
 - The Women's Fund Miami-Dade
 - Andrea Believer Foundation
 - Cabanas Connection Foundation (including Sebastian Cabanas)
 - Miami Dade College, Media Relations Division
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IV. Special Presentation

State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle delivered a powerful and detailed presentation on the county's human trafficking response. She discussed:

- The formation of the Human Trafficking Task Force
- Establishment of the Human Trafficking Center
- Partnership strategies with community organizations and law enforcement
- Data showing decreasing arrests due to growing deterrence
- The upcoming awareness campaign for the 2026 FIFA World Cup
- Previous campaigns and impact, including the billboard program and QR code hotline

She commended the Commission for Women for their ongoing policy collaboration and encouraged board members to become part of the education and prevention strategy.

V. Public Comments

Public attendees spoke on initiatives related to, Human trafficking awareness, Immigration legal clinics, Dual-enrollment and AI education (Miami Dade College), Mental health and youth engagement (Andrea Believer Foundation), Homeless outreach, and Veterans advocacy.

VI. Approval of June Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the June 2025 meeting minutes, with the correction to include full last names under New Business, was made by Mercedes Carlson and seconded by Dr. Sharon Kendrick-Johnson.

Motion passed unanimously.

VII. Director's Report – Dr. Rose Martin

Dr. Martin presented an update on the upcoming Statewide Convening of Florida Commissions for Women, to be held September 29–30, 2025, in Tallahassee. The convening will include a variety of commissions for women across the State and a joint presence at the Florida Women's Hall of Fame ceremony, where Mary Brickell (nominated by Commission leadership) will be honored.

A motion to approve the Commission's formal partnership in print materials, including use of the Commission logo, was made by Mercedes Carlson and seconded by Milagros "Millie" Del Valle.

Motion passed unanimously.

Account balances reported:

- **Friends Account:** \$2,574.31
 - **Trust Fund Account:** \$8,565.28
(All expenditures must be approved by full board vote.)
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VIII. Committee Reports

Legislative Committee

In the absence of Chair Josephine Novo, the report was delivered by Elise Gerson.

The committee is drafting 2025 CEDAW-based policy recommendations, including proposals on:

- Procurement reforms
- Women's health and safety
- Structural economic opportunity

Events & Fundraising Committee

Chair Lunicel Alvarado reported on two upcoming initiatives:

1. Maternal Health & Family Wellness Fair – August 23, 2025, in partnership with Commissioner Roberto Gonzalez (District 11)
2. October Health Event – Tentative partnership with Commissioner Marleine Bastien (District 2), aligned with Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Luni also shared that several meetings were held with key partners including the Women's Fund, Miami-Dade County, WIC, Citrus Health, and Community Health of South Florida.

Vice Chair **Lourdes Abadin** reminded the board of quorum requirements and clarified that all members must serve on at least one committee as per bylaws, but meetings may be called **at will**.

IX. Old Business

Disability Resource Fair

An update was shared via email from Josephine Novo confirming that all logistics were finalized. The Disability Resource fair will be held at the Milander Center on August 2nd, 2025 from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM, with free parking available in the garage.

X. New Business

2025 Town Hall with Mayor Daniella Levine Cava

Hosted annually by **The Women's Fund Miami-Dade**, the upcoming Town Hall will be held **virtually on Tuesday, July 30, 2025, from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM.**

A motion to approve the Commission's **continued participation**, including **use of the logo**, was made by **Milagros "Millie" Del Valle** and seconded by **Lunicel Alvarado**.
Motion passed unanimously.

XI. Announcements

- **August is the Commission's recess month** – no board meeting will be held.
 - The next full board meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, September 24, 2025.**
 - Members interested in attending the **Statewide Convening** should register individually; a hotel block is being arranged at \$149/night.
 - Travel arrangements and attendance are voluntary.
 - Dr. Martin invited all guests to share materials or presentations with her via email to distribute to board members.
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XII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at **8:16 PM** by Vice Chair Lourdes Abadin.