

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 19th, 2025 | 6:00 PM

Stephen P. Clark Government Center, 18th Floor, Conference Room 18-4

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at **6:05 PM** by Chairwoman **Michelle Abreu**.

II. Roll Call

Roll call was conducted by **Dr. Rose Martin**, Director & Staff Liaison.

Present: Chair Michelle Abreu, 1st Vice Chair Lourdes Abadin, Clora Adkins, Lunicel Alvarado, Yvette Ayala, Heather Paschal Binns, Mercedes Carlson, Dr. Gabrielle Carey-Johnson, 2nd Vice Chair Milagros “Millie” Del Valle, Member at Large Marie Soeurette-Eloi, Elise Gerson, Member at Large Katherine Leiva, Nadege Vilsaint, Dr. Jacqueline Peña, Yama Paillere, Gloria Martinez, Josephine Novo, Stephanie Espinosa, and Stephanie Daniels.

Excused Absent: Yumanela Candelaria, Dr. Sharon Kendrick-Johnson, Chelsea Granell, and Maria SantaMaria.

A quorum was established.

III. Welcome & Opening Remarks

Chairwoman Abreu welcomed members, reflected on the progress of the past two years, and expressed appreciation for the board’s continued service and community engagement.

IV. Approval of October Meeting Minutes

- Motion to approve the October meeting minutes by **Lourdes Abadin**.
 - Second by **Mercedes Carlson**.
 - Motion passed unanimously.
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V. Reasonable Opportunity for the Public to Be Heard

Public comments were provided by:

Dr. Shirley Plantin, Director of the Community Relations Board; Assistant County Attorney Shanika Graves; Laura Morilla, Director of the Office of Community Advocacy; and Gabriel Paez, Community Relations Board Member and LGBTQIA Director. Speakers offered updates on their respective boards, shared current initiatives, and expressed support for the Commission for Women.

VI. Board Discussion: Term Limits and Appointment Clarification

Members engaged in an extended Q&A with Assistant County Attorney Graves regarding:

- 8-year term limit language in the CFW ordinance
- Holdover practices
- Waiver processes for members exceeding 8 years
- Commissioner appointment cycles
- Differences between ordinance text, general board ordinance, and countywide practice
- The need to refer to appointment dates rather than the clerk's report when calculating true term length

Clarifications were provided that:

- Members may continue serving as holdovers until the appointing commissioner takes action.
 - Commissioners may request waivers to reappoint individuals past 8 years.
 - The Clerk's report reflected commissioner terms rather than actual member appointment dates.
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VII. Elections

All elections were conducted in accordance with the bylaws, including written and signed ballots where required. All nominees delivered statements.

Chair

Nominees: Lourdes Abadin and Stephanie Daniels

Outcome: **Stephanie Daniels** was elected Chairwoman.

First Vice Chair

Nominees: Josephine Novo, Lunicel Alvarado, and Yama Paillere

All nominees provided remarks.

Outcome: **Yama Paillere** was elected First Vice Chair.

Second Vice Chair

Nominees: Milagros “Millie” Del Valle, Lunicel Alvarado, and Josephine Novo

Outcome: **Josephine Novo** was elected Second Vice Chair.

Members-at-Large (Two Seats)

Nominees: Dr. Gabrielle Carey-Johnson, Marie Soeurette Eloi, Milagros “Millie” Del Valle, Katherine Leiva, and Lunicel Alvarado

Outcome: The top two vote-getters were **Dr. Gabrielle Carey-Johnson** and **Katherine Leiva**, elected as Members-at-Large.

VIII. New Business

Nominations for the **37th Annual In the Company of Women Awards** are open and will close on **December 12, 2025**.

Robert Thompson from the Commission on Ethics will attend the **January 28, 2026** meeting to present and answer questions regarding nonprofit and ethics matters.

Retreat planning continued, with the City of South Miami offering space. Potential dates discussed included **January 10, January 11, January 25**, and **February 1**. A **Doodle poll** will be circulated to finalize the retreat date, and the new Executive Board will meet in person to plan the retreat agenda.

IX. Certificate of Appreciation

A Certificate of Appreciation from the Mayor and the Board of County Commissioners was presented to **Outgoing Chairwoman Michelle Abreu** in recognition of her dedicated service. Chairwoman Abreu offered closing reflections and affirmed her support as Past Chair.

X. Announcements

There will be **no December meeting** due to the holiday recess.
The newly elected Executive Board will meet in person prior to the retreat.

XI. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at **7:25 PM**.

Respectfully submitted,
Dr. Rose Martin
Director & Staff Liaison
Miami-Dade County Commission for Women