

MINUTES
LGBTQIA+ COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING FEBRUARY 18, 2026

Present: Chair, Brianna Bloom Skowera, Vice Chair Dolly Haddad, Commissioners Angela Crow, Derek Cartagena, Beth Shapiro, Katherine Marrotte, Tamara Anika Dane, Lisa Loomis-Davern, Cayes Jarda, Shanay Fulton, and Laura Timmons.

Members of the Public: Steven Kovach, and Haley Stafford.

1. **Call to Order By Chairperson.** Vice Chair Haddad called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

MOTION: Brianna Skowera made a motion to amend the agenda to add Item 4(C)(III) Transgender Day of Visibility at Wesleyan. Motion was seconded by Angela Crow. Motion was approved unanimously. Shanay Fulton and Laura Timmons were absent for the vote.

2. **Approval of the Minutes for the January 21, 2026 Regular Meeting of the LGBTQIA+ Commission.**

MOTION: Derek Cartagena made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 21, 2026 Regular Meeting. Motion was seconded by Katherine Marrotte. Motion was approved unanimously, with Beth Shapiro abstaining, and Laura Timmons absent for the vote.

3. **Public Session on Agenda Items.** None.

4. **New Business.**

- A. **Approval of Grand Marshal Nominations.**

MOTION: Brianna Skowera made a motion to have 2 grand marshals at PrideFEST 2026. Motion was seconded by Cayes Jarda. Motion was approved unanimously.

MOTION: Angela Crow made a motion to table the selection of grand marshals for PrideFEST 2026, so that the Commission can engage in ranked voting of the nominees to be selected at a special meeting called for that purpose. Motion was seconded by Tamara Anika Dane. Motion was approved unanimously.

- B. **Senior Center Collaborations (Commissioner Cartagena).** Derek Cartagena explained that the senior center is looking to partner with Middletown Pride year round.

- C. **Submitted Applications for Proposed Events.**

- I. Application to be a Vendor for West Hartford Pride, June 27, 2026 (Commissioner Skowera). Brianna Skowera raised this opportunity for commissioners to attend on behalf of Middletown Pride. If commissioners are interested, they will contact Brianna Skowera.

- II. Trans Lifeline 5k Fundraiser, March 29, 2026 from 9 am to 12 pm, at Wesleyan University Indoor Track, cost \$80 for ASL interpreters. (Commissioner Loomis-Davern).

MOTION: Angela Crow made a motion to table the event until a future meeting. Motion was seconded by Katherine Marrotte. Motion was approved unanimously.

- III. Transgender Day of Visibility Event at Wesleyan, sponsorship, cost \$0 (Commissioner Skowera).

MOTION: Katherine Marrotte made a motion to approve sponsorship of the event as proposed. Motion was seconded by Derek Cartagena. Motion was approved unanimously.

D. Yearly Events.

- I. Pride Month (June). Dolly Haddad sent out sponsorship emails to previous sponsors. Angela Crow stated that Catnip Junkies are not available for the Pride March. Katherine Marrotte has been creating social and display graphics.
- II. Non-Binary People's Day.
- III. LGBTQ+ History Month (October).
- IV. National Coming Out Day (October).
- V. Transgender Day of Remembrance (November).
- VI. Transgender Day of Visibility (March).
- VII. Community Dinner.

5. Old Business.

A. Middletown PrideFEST 2026

- I. PrideFEST 2026 Roles and Responsibilities (Commissioner Skowera). Brianna Skowera stated that major contracts are processed, space is reserved, showmobile is reserved, and Brianna Skowera and the Chamber are meeting on a weekly basis.

B. Middletown Pride Community Events Program

(Total approved spending for FY 2025-2026: \$18,555.)

- I. Gayme Night monthly, from 6-9 pm at Back Again Board Games, cost including gratuity is \$880 for 30-39 people, \$1,100 for 40-46 people (Commissioners Haddad and Marrotte).

Katherine Marrotte stated that there was a good showing with 54 people and was a fun evening.

- II. Recap of Crush the Comments, January 29, 2026, from 6 – 9 pm, at the Russell Library, cost \$0 (Commissioner Skowera).

Brianna Skowera stated that about 10 people showed up and was a great event.

C. Middletown Pride Grant Program (Commissioner Skowera).

- I. Q+ Grant Program. No updates.
- II. Peer Pride Grant Program. No updates.
- III. LGBTQIA+ Peer Support Grant Program at St. Vincent DePaul. No updates.

D. Middletown Pride Scholarship Program Update (Commissioner Shapiro). Beth Shapiro stated that applications are live and is updated on the website. The subcommittee is working on scheduling a date to review the applications.

E. Taking Pride on Main Street Initiative Update (Commissioner Skowera). Brianna Skowera is creating a raffle with the goal to encourage all supportive businesses whether located on Main Street or not to be able to participate.

F. Policy Review: Personnel Policy Updates (Commissioner Skowera). Brianna Skowera informed the Commission that there has been no movement to date and it is with the Mayor's Office.

6. Adjournment.

MOTION: Laura Timmons made a motion to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Katherine Marrotte. Motion was approved unanimously and the meeting adjourned.