



Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs

Meeting Minutes

January 8, 2024

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Zoom Virtual Meeting

Commissioners Present:

Lee Blinder, Chair
Kijana West, Vice Chair
Joan Bryan
Josie Caballero
August Clayton
Mickey Dhir
Kurt Doan
Debb Dunn
Nicole Hollywood

Tina Jones
Asher Kennedy
Stephen Martin
Paula Neira
Wendy Novak
M Pease
Mark Ridderhoff
Sarah Stern
Joe Toolan

Commissioners Absent:

Nicholas Augustine
Anthony Fox
Jabari Lyles

GOCI Staff Present:

Jeremy Browning, Director, Maryland Commission on LGBTQ Affairs, GOCI

Guests Present:

Delegate Lily Qi
Kate Thompson, Ethics Commission
Krystal Quinlan, Office of Attorney General

- I. Call to Order: Meeting was called to Order by Chair Blinder at 6:02 PM. Housekeeping and meeting guidelines were read by Vice Chair West.
- II. Roll Call: Chair Blinder completed the roll call and asked commissioners to share their pronouns, home county, and affiliations.
- III. Guest Speakers:
 - A. Delegate Lily Qi welcomed new commissioners and thanked all members for their service. Additionally, Delegate Qi expressed desire for the Commission to

- be more visible and encouraged commissioners to be engaged during the legislative session.
- B. Kate Thompson, Staff Counsel from the Ethics Commission shared rules for commissioners, including potential conflicts of interest, issues that could arise during the session, financial disclosures, and offered herself as a resource for commissioners.
 - C. Krystal Quinlan, Assistant Attorney General from the Office of the Attorney General representing the Maryland Commission on LGBTQIA+ Affairs shared roles as legal counsel for the Commission.
- IV. Opening Remarks: Chair Blinder acknowledged the accomplishments and expressed gratitude for the service of past Chair, Commissioner Toolan, and past Vice Chair, Commissioner Dunn. Chair Blinder honored the life of Meghan Riley Lewis, acknowledged the violence our LGBTQIA+ communities face, and the importance of centering joy in our work.
- V. Opening Remarks: Vice Chair West shared her background, experience, and thanked commissioners for trusting her to serve as Vice Chair.
- VI. Administrative updates were provided by Director Browning. Updates included:
- A. 2023 Financial Disclosures: Commissioners were reminded to complete financial disclosures.
 - B. Commissioner Manuals were shared at the in-person onboarding meeting and digital version is available online. Physical copies will be distributed when next time commissioners are available to meet in person.
 - C. Resource Collection Form is available and commissioners are encouraged to share within their networks.
 - D. Commission Calendar is available online and commissioners were asked to help keep updated with LGBTQIA+ days of significance and events around the state.
 - E. Martin Luther King Jr. Day - January 15th: Day of Service opportunity shared with commissioners.
 - F. Next Commission Meeting: March 11, 2024.
- VII. Approval of November 13, 2023 meeting minutes. Vice Chair West made a motion to approve the previous meeting minutes and was seconded by Commissioner Ridderhoff. A vote was called by Chair Blinder and motion carried with one abstention from Commissioner Martin.
- VIII. Old Business:
- A. Director Browning provided an update on the progress of the 2023 Annual Report and requested feedback from commissioners by January 21, 2024 with a goal to publish the report by the end of January.
- IX. New Business:
- A. 2024 Legislative Session:
 - 1. January 10 2024 to April 8, 2024.
 - 2. A guided Statehouse Tour will be held February 2nd with exact timing to be determined.

3. 2024 Legislative Policy Priorities: Director Browning and Chair Blinder shared the MGA website as a resource for commissioners to track bills and sign up for testimony during the session.
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- B. 2024 Strategic Plan: Director Browning provided an overview and background of the 2024 Strategic Plan. Commissioner Jones made a motion to adopt the 2024 Strategic Plan as drafted and was seconded by commissioner Dunn. A discussion followed and it was determined that the motion should be amended to allow typographical errors to be corrected. Commissioner Jones made a motion to amend the motion to allow for typographical errors to be corrected and was seconded by Vice Chair West. A vote was called by Chair Blinder on motion to amend the original motion which carried with one abstention from Commissioner Martin. A vote was called by Chair Blinder for the amended motion to adopt the 2024 Strategic Plan and allow for typographical errors to be corrected which carried with one abstention from Commissioner Martin.
 - C. Bylaws updates: Director Browning provided background information on the Bylaws and the need for amendments to correct inconsistent language. Commissioners were requested to provide feedback on Bylaws and indicate their desire to serve on the Bylaws review workgroup to Chair Blinder and/or Director Browning.
 - D. Indigenous Inclusion: A discussion was held on how the Commission can be intentional to be inclusive to queer, trans, and Two Spirit indigenous community members. The Land Acknowledgement from the on-boarding event was discussed and the opportunity for the Commission to address the legacy of harm, colonization, forced removal from lands, and call out acts of violence. Additionally, the Land Acknowledgement from the Washington State Commission on LGBTQ Affairs was shared. On-going discussions are needed for indigenous inclusion and Land Acknowledgement for the Commission.
 - E. Director Pay Equity: Director Browning left the Zoom meeting for this portion of the meeting. Chair Blinder shared that Larry Walker, Executive Director of GOCL, shared that Director Browning's pay is not commensurate with other GOCL directors and the Commission has the opportunity to support pay equity. Commissioner Neira made a motion to support pay equity for Director Browning and was seconded by Commissioner Hollywood. Discussion followed about the root cause of how this happened, concerns of discrimination, and the need to investigate further. Further discussion revealed concerns that the original motion is not actionable and should be voted down and provide a consensus statement instead. Chair Blinder called a vote on the motion for procedural reasons and the motion voted down, all unfavorable and abstentions from commissioners Clayton, Doan, Kennedy, Martin, and Toolan who do support pay equity for the Director, but were not present for the procedural vote .

1. Consensus Statement: The Commission supports pay equity for Director Browning and an investigation into the cause of the pay inequity.
 2. The Policy Committee was assigned to address this matter and develop a recommended motion for the March meeting.
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- X. Open forum for general remarks or comments: Time constraints did not allow for comments.
 - XI. Closing Remarks: Time constraints did not allow for Chair to make closing remarks.
 - XII. Adjournment: Chair Blinder adjourned the meeting at 8:26pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Director, Jeremy Browning