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STATE OF MICHIGAN  
OFFICE OF GLOBAL MICHIGAN  
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Michigan LGBTQ+ Commission Public Meeting  
Friday, May 10th, 2024, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Grand Valley State University - Consumers Energy John G Russell Leadership Building  
120 Front Ave SW, Grand Rapids, MI 48506

**LGBTQ+ Commission Meeting Agenda**

- I. Call to Order.....Chair, Raúl Hernández-Guzmán
- II. Land Acknowledgement.....Commissioner, Laurie Bechhofer
- III. Roll Call / Determination of Quorum .....Secretary, Audra Wilson
- IV. Approval of Agenda.....Vice Chair, Brandon Shamoun
- V. Opening Remarks .....Executive Director and Chief Equity Officer, Poppy Hernandez
- VI. Office of Global Michigan Update.....Commissions Administrative Manager, Mika Mcaskill
- VII. Commission Chairperson’s Report ..... Chair, Raúl Hernández-Guzmán
- VIII. Treasurer Report..... Treasurer, Dr. Renee McLaughlin
- IX. Strategic Initiative Group Updates
  - Legislative Advocacy..... Commissioners Erin Knott and Anthony Williams
  - Community Engagement..... Commissioners Brandon Shamoun and Al Gray
  - Strategic Operations..... Commissioners Laurie Bechhoffer and Lacey Mandoka
- X. New Business ..... Chair Raúl Hernández-Guzmán
  - 2024 Pride Month and LGBTQ+ Heritage Month Events
  - 2024 Listening Sessions
  - LGBTQ+ Signature Event
- XI. Public Comments.....
- XII. Announcements .....
- XIII. Adjournment .....



**Meeting Minutes**  
**May 10th, 2024 | 10:00 AM (EST)**  
**Grand Valley State University - Consumers Energy John G Russell Leadership Building**  
120 Front Ave SW, Grand Rapids, MI 48506

**ATTENDANCE**

Commissioners Present:

- Raúl Hernández-Guzmán, Chair
- Brandon Shamoun, Vice Chair
- Audra Wilson, Secretary
- Dr. Renee McLaughin, Treasurer
- Al Gray
- Anthony Williams
- Bishop Bonnie A. Perry
- Diane Kreger
- Erin Knott
- Lacey Mandoka
- Laurie Bechhofer

Commissioners Absent

- Angela Gabridge
- Dani Woods
- Kevin Nguyen
- Dr. Tonya Griffith

Office of Global Michigan (OGM) Staff Present:

- Mika Mcaskill, Commissions Administrative Manager (OGM)
- Laura Betts, Refugee Policy, and Data Analyst (OGM)

Community Partners Present:

- Jessie Bernal Ph.D., Vice President for Inclusion & Equity/ Chief of Staff to the President for Grand Valley State University & Board Chair of The Hispanic Latino Commission (HLCOM)

Virtual Attendance - Office of Global Michigan (OGM) Staff & Community Partners:

- N/A

## **I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Chair and Administrator Raúl Hernández-Guzmán at 10:01 AM EST, with a Land Acknowledgement by Commissioner Laurie Bechhofer.

## **II. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Commissioner Laurie Bechhofer proceeded to read the land acknowledgement from Grand Valley State University:

“Today, we would like to recognize the People of the Three Fires: the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Bodawademi peoples on whose land we are gathered on today. The Three Fires People are Indigenous to this land which means that this is their ancestral territory. Every university in this country was built on Indigenous land. We conduct land acknowledgments as a reminder of the histories, teachings, traditions, and the first people who originated here and who tend to Mshkiikii (land/earth) always.

We conduct these acknowledgments to be good visitors, as these were always done before colonial contact. To continue to be good visitors, we have the responsibility to learn about the history of settler colonialism and its impact on Indigenous people.”

## **III. ROLL CALL & DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

The roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared by Commissioner Audra Wilson. Quorum was confirmed by Chair and Administrator Raúl Hernández-Guzmán.

## **IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Agenda was distributed to Commissioners prior to the meeting for review. Motion request made by Vice Chair Brandon Shamoun to approve the agenda, motion made by Commissioner Bishop Bonnie Perry, and seconded by Commissioner Dr. Renee McLaughlin. The Commission approved the meeting agenda of May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024, as presented. *Motion carries unanimously.*

## **V. OPENING REMARKS**

Executive Director (ED) of the Office of Global Michigan & Chief Equity & Inclusion Officer for the Governor’s Office, Poppy Sias Hernandez; welcomed the commission to its second open public meeting. ED Poppy Hernandez discussed the importance of strategic planning and creating momentum with our local communities by celebrating the intersectionality of our identities with good energy and the right mindset.

## **VI. OFFICE OF GLOBAL MICHIGAN UPDATE**

Commissions Administrative Manager, Mika Mcaskill proceeded to provide updates for the Office of Global Michigan, reviewing the following items:

- Global Michigan’s Mission and Involvement.
- Language Access Plan Update.
- Digital Literacy and Equity Initiatives.
- Special Recognition: Ben Cabanaw, OGM’s Deputy Director and MI State Refugee Coordinator, appointed as the President of the State Coordinators of Refugee Resettlement (SCORR).
- Refugee Services Updates.
- The Michigan Immigrant and Refugee Council (MIARC) hosting its signature event: “The Statewide Immigrant and Refugee Education Summit”.
- All Commissions Convening on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024 with commissioners from BLAC, LGBTQ+, MAPAAC, CMEAA, MIARC, and HLCOM.
- Advocacy Days for HLCOM, MAPAAC, and CMEAA.

## **VII. COMMISSION CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT**

Commission Chair Raúl Hernández-Guzmán, welcomed the Commission, reminding the Commission of the importance of following Robert’s Rules of Order and setting meeting rules of engagement. Chair proceeded to provide an administrative report, highlighting general administrative updates and milestones, including:

- Commissions Support on Advocacy Days for CMEEA, HLCOM, MAPAAC, MIARC’s signature event, and the “All Commissions Convening”.
- Community engagement efforts to support the work of LGBTQ+ Commissioners, including attending the:
  - “HEAL Sexual Health Conference” with Commissioner Laurie Bechhofer
  - “Together in Pride Fundraising: with Commissioners Audra Wilson and Lacey Mandoka
  - “Celebrating Joy: An Art Gallery Installation” with Commissioner Angela Gabridge and Diane Kreger
- Partnership with other state-level LGBTQ+ Commissions to create a nationwide coalition that supports LGBTQ+ Communities.
- Presentation at Virtual Panel “Dismantling Barriers to Career Advancement for Latinos” hosted by the Michigan Career Development Association (MichCDA).



## **VIII. TREASURER REPORT**

Treasurer Dr. Renee McLaughlin reported that the Commission had used approximately 30% of the allocated budget, leaving 70% in the budget until the end of the 2023-2024 fiscal year. Commission Chair Raúl Hernández-Guzmán, mentioned the Commission will request for a healthier budget for the next year. Chair put forward a motion to acknowledge the Treasurers report, seconded by Bishop Bonnie Perry. *Motion carries unanimously.*

## **IX. STRATEGIC INITIATIVE GROUP (SIG) UPDATES**

Advocacy SIG – Commissioner Anthony Williams Report:

- Emphasis on the collaboration needed with Equality Michigan.
- Emphasis on the need to explore new partnerships with other grassroots non-profit organizations and community leaders for future Advocacy Days.
- Commission’s need for strategic collaboration and determining legislative priorities.
- Commission’s need to determine community needs.

Community Engagement SIG- Commissioners Brandon Shamoun and Al Gray Report:

- Commissioners acting as ambassadors at 2024 Pride Events.
- Importance of creating a state-wide list of Pride events and determining Commission’s participation in events.
- Review of marketing materials needed for events.

Operations SIG – Commissioners Laurie Bechhofer and Lacey Mandoka

- Draft review of the new “Community Need Assessment Survey”.
- Both commissioners shared their experience and main take aways from the “All Convening” event, including the need to share best practices with other commissioners serving in Operations SIGs at other Commissions from MIARC, BLAC, CMEAA, and MAPAAC.

## **X. NEW BUSINESS**

### 2024 Pride Events

Commission Chair Raúl Hernández-Guzmán, reviewed events, dates, and locations for 2024 Pride Events, highlighting the importance of the Commissions participation at key events hosted in main cities including Motor City Pride in Detroit, Grand Rapids Pride, and Lansing Pride.

Motion made by Chair Raúl Hernández-Guzmán and seconded by Commissioner Brandon Shamoun to create a list of a state-wide Pride events, determining commissioner's participation, and determining potential partnerships with local organizations. The Commission approved the 2024 pride events plan on May 10th, 2024. *Motion carries unanimously.*

#### Listening Sessions

Commission Chair Raúl Hernández-Guzmán, shared with the rest of the Commission, the participation of Commissioners Audra Wilson and Lacey Mandoka in the "Listening Session Training", clarifying that the focus on the training was to learn the role of a facilitator to better serve our LGBTQ+ community through impactful listening sessions. Chair, shared the next step was to train other commissioners interested in facilitating community listening sessions.

#### Signature Event

Commission Chair Raúl Hernández-Guzmán, shared with the Commission that other Ethic Commissions have established signature events as opportunities to connect and better serve the communities they represent.

Commission Chair discussed the need to attract and retain talent in Michigan, which aligns with the Office of Global Michigan mission on "Advancing equity and inclusion initiatives throughout the state, while strengthening connections between communities by ensuring state programs and opportunities are accessible, inclusive, and positioned to have the best possible impact". Commission Chair expanded this idea, by highlighting some potential collaboration with Universities, Corporations, Non-Profit Organizations, and potentially bringing guest speakers to connect with LGBTQ+ college students, young professionals, and returning Michiganders to help them navigate the current job market conditions. Chair, presented the idea of this signature event as an opportunity to professional development, professional networking, and a way to creating a more welcoming and inclusive community for the LGBTQ+ professional and workforce community.

Commissioner/Treasurer Dr. Renee McLaughlin shared that the Philadelphia Transgender Health Conference it's a great paradigm for public-private partnership, and the success of such conference.

Commissioner/Vice Chair Brandon Shamoun shared that the Detroit Regional LGBTQ Chamber might be a great partner associated with this kind of effort.

Chair Raúl Hernández-Guzmán, suggested for the Commission to establish an ad-hoc committee to help with the logistics and unite efforts.

Motion was made by Chair Raúl Hernández-Guzmán to create a signature event and forming an ad-hoc committee to lead the efforts on hosting this annual event serving the LGBTQ+ Community focusing on “Professional and Workforce Development”, with a tentative target date in the Spring of 2025. The motion was seconded by Commissioner/Treasurer Dr. Renee McLaughlin. On May 10th, 2024.

The Commission approved the creation of a signature event and an ad-hoc committee to oversee this LGBTQ+ signature event focused on “Professional and Workforce Development for the LGBTQ+ Community”. *Motion carries unanimously.*

## **XI. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chair Raúl Hernández-Guzmán opened the floor for public comments, stating the following: “Public Comments are limited to 3 minutes. Public Comments will be received but will not be acted upon by the Commission. They will respond if requested via email within 2-3 business days”.

No public comments were received. Chair Raúl Hernández-Guzmán, then opened the floor for commissioners’ announcements.

## **XII. COMMISSIONERS’ ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Commissioner Dr. Renee McLaughlin:

- Asked the Commission to keep the Upper Peninsula in mind, when thinking about Michigan and LGBTQ+ challenges. Commissioner McLaughlin shared the excitement of having the Commission visiting the upper peninsula in the near future.

Commissioner Laurie Bechhofer:

- Provided an overview of the BMM Pride Summit 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event, hosted by Grand Valley State University.

Commissioner Anthony Williams:

- Shared his collaboration with 18 different LGBTQ+ coalitions and organizations across the state.

- Shared the news of Corktown Health named as a 2024 Healthcare Equity Leader by Human Rights Campaign. The recognition was given for providing equitable services to the community, creating a diverse and equitable employment opportunity, and advocating for LGBTQ+ community.

Commissioner/ Vice Chair Brandon Shamoun

- Share some upcoming events:
  - o Pride Awards Gala by the LGBTQ+ Chamber of Commerce in Detroit.
  - o Ruth Ellis Center in Highland Park hosting the Catfight for the Crown Fundraising Event at the Fillmore Theater in Detroit.
  - o Hotter Than July, the second oldest in the country Black Pride.

### **XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Commission Chair Raúl Hernández-Guzmán, requested a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion made by Commissioner Brandon Shamoun and seconded by Commissioner Diane Kreger. The Commission adjourned. *Motion carries unanimously.*

Meeting adjourned at 11:36 AM.

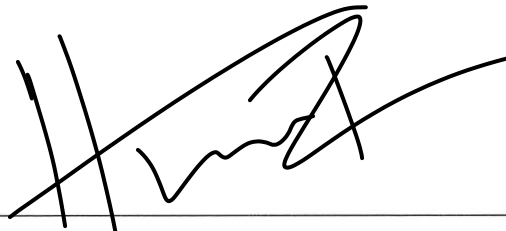
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Audra Wilson

Commission Secretary

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Raúl Hernández-Guzmán

Commission Chair