



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
LANSING

SUSAN CORBIN
DIRECTOR



Michigan LGBTQ+ Commission Public Meeting

August 08th 2025 | 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

451 Columbia Ave, Suite C
Holland, MI 4942

Proposed Meeting Agenda

- I. Call to Order.....Administrative Chair, Raúl Hernández-Guzmán
- II. Welcome Remarks.....AC Raúl Hernández-Guzmán & Executive Director, Out on the Lake Shore Jennifer Evans
- III. Land Acknowledgement..... Commissioner, Laurie Bechhofer
- IV. Roll Call & Determination of Quorum Secretary, Audra Wilson
- V. Approval of Agenda & Past Meeting Minutes.....Vice Chair, Brandon Shamoun
- VI. Office of Global Michigan Updates.....Commissions Administrative Manager, Mika Mcaskill
- VII. Commission Administrative Report.....Administrative Chair, Raúl Hernández-Guzmán
- VIII. Treasurer’s Report..... Vice Chair, Brandon Shamoun
- IX. Strategic Initiative Groups (SIGs) Updates
 - Strategic Operations..... Commissioners Laurie Bechhofer & Lacey Mandoka
 - Community Engagement..... Commissioners Angela Gabridge, Diane Kreger & Al Gray
 - Legislative Advocacy..... Commissioners Erin Knott and Anthony Williams
- X. Old & New Business Administrative Chair Raúl Hernández-Guzmán
 - Old Business: Signature Event Update / Bylaws
 - New Business: Programming Budget Allocation FY25/ Sponsorship Review Committee
- XI. Featured Presentations by Out on the Lake Shore, Jennifer Evans- Executive Director
- XII. Public Comments.....
- XIII. Commissioners’ Announcements.....
- XIV. Adjournment.....



MEETING MINUTES
August 08th 2025 | 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM
451 Columbia Ave, Suite C
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ATTENDANCE

Commissioners Present:

- Al Gray
- Anthony Williams
- Audra Wilson, Secretary
- Brandon Shamoun, Vice Chair
- Diane Kreger
- Angela Gabridge
- Erin Knott
- Kevin Nguyen
- Lacey Mandoka
- Laurie Bechhofer
- Raúl Hernández-Guzmán, Administrative Chair

Commissioners Not Present:

- Bishop Bonnie A. Perry
- Dani Woods
- Dr. Renee McLaughlin, Treasurer
- Dr. Tonya Griffith, Trustee

In-Person Attendance - Office of Global Michigan (OGM) Staff: & State of Michigan Staff

- Mika Mcaskill, Commissions Administrative Manager (OGM)
- Alexis Dye, BLAC Council Administrator
- Poppy Sias-Hernandez, Director (OGM)

Community Partners Present (In-Person & Virtual):

- Jennifer Evans, Executive Director (OOTL)

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Administrative Chair Raúl Hernández-Guzmán at 10:04 AM EST.

II. WELCOME REMARKS

Administrative Chair Raúl Hernández-Guzmán officially welcomed the commission to its third open public meeting of 2025. He thanked the event's sponsors: Out on the Lakeshore, Holland, and Saugatuck Area, Office of Global Michigan

Out on the Lakeshore Executive Director Jennifer Evans welcomed the commission.

III. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Commissioner Laurie Bechhofer proceeded to read the LGBTQ+ Commission of Michigan land acknowledgement.

IV. ROLL CALL & DETERMINATION OF QUORUM

Secretary Audra Wilson conducted the roll call, confirming a quorum of 14 with 4 absent. Administrative Chair Raúl Hernández-Guzmán verified the quorum.

V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA & MEETING MINUTES

The agenda and past meeting minutes were distributed to Commissioners prior to the meeting for review. Vice Chair Brandon Shamoun requested a motion to approve both the agenda and meeting minutes. Commissioner Anthony Williams moved to approve, with Commissioner Kevin Nguyen seconding the motion. The Commission unanimously approved the agenda for the August 08th, 2025 meeting, along with the minutes from the Open Public Meetings held on November 8, 2024, as presented. *Motion carries unanimously.*

VI. OFFICE OF GLOBAL MICHIGAN (OGM) UPDATE

Mika Mcaskill, Commissions Administrative Manager, provided updates from the Office of Global Michigan, covering the following key points:

- **Effort Updates.** Shared statistics on Michigan's Office of Global Michigan efforts.
- **The Michigan Youth Leadership Council (MLYC).** Shared this as a one-year program designed to empower youth from immigrant and refugee communities across Michigan to become leaders. This comprehensive program combines theory, practical application, and mentorship to equip youth with the skills and experience needed to further their professional and educational interests, drive positive change in their communities, and become effective leaders in their desired field. Extended an invitation to share information to anyone interested, and to connect them with OGM.

VII. COMMISSION CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Commission Administrative Chair Raúl Hernández-Guzmán, provided an overview of key milestones.

General Administrative Updates:

- **Website Updates:** Our website now includes all 2025 Open Public Meeting information, ensuring compliance with the Open Meetings Act. It has also been updated with the meeting minutes from all 2024 Open Public Meetings.
- **Sponsorship Request Form:** A new sponsorship request form is now available on the LGBTQ+ Commission’s website, reaffirming the Commission’s commitment to uplifting Michigan’s LGBTQ+ Community Centers across the state.

Events:

- **LGBTQ+ Listening Sessions.** The first LGBTQ+ Newcomers Listening Session of 2025 took place on February 21st. Special thanks to the Ad-Hoc Committee that oversaw the planning and implementation of this session—Commissioners Laurie Bechhofer and Diane Kregge. The session fostered meaningful conversations about the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ newcomers in Michigan.
The second listening session of the year was scheduled for Friday, March 21st, in Bay City, following the Open Public Meeting. Its focus was “Identity, Safety, and Well-Being of the LGBTQ+ Community.”
The third session is scheduled for April 10th in Ann Arbor, with a focus on LGBTQ+ Youth.
- **LGBTQ+ Community Mixer.** On the same day, March 21st, the LGBTQ+ Commission planned a Community Mixer at the Delta College Planetarium.
- **2025 HEAL Sexual Health Conference.** On Saturday, March 22nd, Administrative Chair Raúl Hernández-Guzmán was invited to participate as an expert guest speaker for the Advocacy Panel Discussion hosted by Michigan State University. The panel explores how to protect narratives, safeguard hard-won gains, and prevent setbacks in sexual health policies. Experts will offer strategies for resilience, self-care, and navigating uncertainty, equipping attendees to continue the fight for sexual health equity.
- **Supporting Prosperity Commissions:** Administrative Chair Raúl Hernández-Guzmán highlighted the LGBTQ+ Commission’s involvement in community events supporting other prosperity commissions, including:
 - MAPAAC Vietnamese Lunar New Year Celebration (January 18)
 - MAPAAC Korematsu Day (January 30)
 - AGOA Panel Discussion (February 22)
 - BLAC Council Meeting (March 6)

Projects:

- **LGBTQ+ Commission Signature Event:** The LGBTQ+ Commission is planning to host its first signature event on October 3rd, focused on Advocacy Coalition Building. Planning is ongoing, and more details will be shared closer to the event date.

VIII. TREASURER’S REPORT

In the absence of Treasurer Dr. Renee McLaughlin, Vice Chair Brandon Shamoun reported that the Commission has utilized 14.87% of its allocated FY25 budget to cover Commissioners’ travel expenses. He also shared that 85.13%

of the FY2025–2026 budget remains available to support travel expenses for Commissioners from October 2024 through September 2025.

IX. STRATEGIC INITIATIVE GROUPS (SIGs) UPDATES

Commission Administrative Chair Raúl Hernández-Guzmán, invited the leaders of each Strategic Initiative Group (SIG) to provide updates.

Advocacy SIG Updates

Leaders: Erin Knott and Anthony Williams

Advocacy SIG Leader Erin Knott shared the following updates:

- **Advocacy Day:** The Commission is partnering with Equality Michigan for *Advocacy Day*, taking place on May 14th at the Capitol in Lansing, MI. Erin encouraged everyone to register and review event logistics, noting that training will be provided to help constituents effectively engage with legislators. She emphasized that this year's Advocacy Day will center on the Transgender and Non-Binary community, highlighting key policies, resolutions, and legislation related to protections, education, healthcare, and workforce inclusion.
- **Collaborations with Organizations:** Erin encouraged continued collaboration between community organizations and the Commission. She reminded attendees of Michigan's civil rights laws, which safeguard LGBTQ+ individuals and organizations from harmful policies and discriminatory practices.
- **Supporting Our Community:** Erin shared that the Commission is exploring opportunities to advance proclamations, resolutions, and strategic collaborations with key stakeholders to support and protect the LGBTQ+ community, particularly during these challenging times.

Engagement SIG Updates

Leaders: Angela Gabridge and Al Gray.

Engagement SIG member Diane Kreger reviewed some of the work done by this group. Key initiatives include:

- **Listening Session:** Diane highlighted the recent LGBTQ+ Listening Session, which centered on understanding the unique challenges, needs, and aspirations of Michigan's newcomer communities who also identify as part of the LGBTQ+ population.
- **Community Engagement:** The Engagement Special Interest Group (SIG) has outlined its community-building priorities for 2025, with a focus on fostering intentional partnerships with LGBTQ+ Community Centers and their Executive Directors across the state. These collaborations will support Pride celebrations and other key community events throughout the year.

Operations SIG Updates

Leaders: Dr. Renee McLaughlin and Lacey Mandoka

In the absence of Operations SIG Leader and Commissioner Dr. Renee McLaughlin, Commissioner Laurie Bechhofer provided updates on the group's continued efforts to advance the Commission's mission. Highlights include:

- **Community Survey:** Laurie highlighted the Commission's success in engaging the community and collecting meaningful feedback through the statewide community survey.
- **Listening Sessions:** Laurie acknowledged the extensive efforts behind the scenes to develop inclusive and accessible guidelines for Listening Sessions. These efforts ensure that sessions are offered in a hybrid format, allowing participation both in-person and virtually.
- **Sponsorship Form:** Laurie introduced the newly developed Sponsorship Request Form, created by members of the Operations Special Interest Group (SIG). This form is designed to allow LGBTQ+ Community Centers to request sponsorships for initiatives and programming that align with the Commission's mission and vision.

X. OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

Administrative Chair Raúl Hernández-Guzmán proceeded to review the Commission's old and new business.

OLD BUSINESS

Signature Event Update

Date: Friday, October 3rd

Tentative Location: Wayne State University – Detroit, MI

New Theme: LGBTQ+ Advocacy Coalition Building Conference

Proposal: The Commission is organizing a statewide LGBTQ+ Advocacy Coalition Building Conference to convene Michigan's leading LGBTQ+ advocates, community organizers, influencers, and allies. The purpose of this event is to foster collaboration, share innovative strategies, and build a unified coalition to strengthen advocacy efforts that support and protect LGBTQ+ communities across Michigan.

Objective: To create a dynamic and inclusive space where participants can exchange ideas, identify shared goals, and develop actionable solutions that address the evolving needs and rights of LGBTQ+ individuals statewide.

Target Audience: This event is intended for leaders and stakeholders in LGBTQ+ advocacy, including representatives from LGBTQ+ organizations, public health, education, social services, and government. State legislators, public officials, and allies committed to advancing equity and inclusion are also encouraged to attend.

Call to Action: Attendees will be invited to connect with the Commission for volunteer opportunities and to engage in ongoing efforts that uplift and empower Michigan's LGBTQ+ communities.

NEW BUSINESS

Sponsorship Review Committee. Administrative Chair Raúl Hernández-Guzmán proposed to form an ad-hoc sponsorship review committee to oversee the applications for sponsorships from community organizations. He followed by a motion to move forward with the proposed Ad-Hoc Committee members:

- Angela Gabridge, appointed commissioner and MiGen Network Executive Director.
- Dr. Renee McLaughling, appointed commissioner and Cigna Health National Executive
- Anthony Williams, appointed commissioners and Corktown Health's President & CEO
- Laurie Bechhofer, appointed commissioner and Michigan Department of Education Representative

Motion made by Secretary Audra Wilson, and seconded by Commissioner Diane Kreger, to approve the proposed ad-hoc committee creation and select proposed commissioners. The Commission voted and approved the ad-hoc committee and commissioners as proposed. *Motion carries unanimously.*

Budget Allocation. Administrative Chair Raúl Hernández-Guzmán shared the proposed budget allocation for the FY25, followed by a motion to move forward with the following:

- Advocacy Day: \$5,500
- Listening Sessions & Community Mixers: \$7,000
- Pride Events: \$10,000
- Commissioners' Professional Development: \$7,500
- Community Impact Initiatives- including Signature Event, Sponsorships, Youth Scholarship, and other events: \$45,000

Motion made by Commissioner Anthony Williams, and seconded by Secretary Audra Wilson, to approve the proposed budget allocation for FY25. The Commission voted and approved the budget allocation as proposed. *Motion carries unanimously.*

XI. PRESENTATIONS

Jennifer Evans, Executive Director at Out on the Lakeshore, provided updates on strategic initiatives, emphasizing increased community engagement and collaboration with local partners for upcoming Pride events. She also discussed progress in financial planning and highlighted upcoming community mixers.

XII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Administrative Chair Hernández-Guzmán, opened the floor for public comments.

COMMENTS:

- **Kath Trouble from Chosen Family of Michigan expresses concerns about the Commission's disconnection from existing advocacy efforts and the process for sponsorship opportunities.**
- **Jeffrey from Stock Pride and Blanca Hinojosa from South Haven Pride share their experiences and the impact of their events on their communities.**

XIII. COMMISSIONERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

Administrative Chair Hernández-Guzmán, opened the floor for commissioners' announcements.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Raul Invited people to unite and collaborate with the commission, and to understand that we are informed of their comments.**

- **XIV. ADJOURNMENT**

Commission Administrative Chair Raúl Hernández-Guzmán, invited Vice Chair Brandon Shamoun to adjourn the meeting.

Motion was made by Secretary Audra Wilson and seconded by Commissioner and Executive Secretary Anthony Williams. The Commission adjourned. *Motion carries unanimously.*

Meeting adjourned at 11:22 A.M.

Raul Hernandez Guzman

11/13/2025

X *Audra Wilson* 11/13/2025 _____

Signature & Date

Audra Wilson - Secretary

X _____

Signature & Date

Raúl Hernández-Guzmán - Administrative Chair