

ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

MINUTES

TUESDAY, MAY 13, 2025

CITY HALL

301 KING ST., RM. 2000

7 PM

ATTENDANCE: Lexi White; Maxanne “Maxie” Witkin; T. Nicole Hutchinson; Kendra Green (1 absence); Krystle Bransky; Allison Heiser, Yvette Jiang (1 absence), Jennifer Beatty, Elisabeth Palmer Johnson (1 absence), and Nichelle Johnson Billups (1 absence)

VIRTUAL: Shelly Brown (2 absences)

ABSENT: Kafi Joseph (2 absences)

STAFF:

Debra Evans

LaTanya Chinagorom

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Diana Maurer, Chair, LGBTQ+ Task Force, Erika Callaway-Kleiner, LGBTQ+ Task Force and Sexual Assault Center (SAC), Phillip Caldwell, DCHS Center for Adult Services, and Chelsea Eickert, DCHS, Youth Development and Children and Youth Community Plan.

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Chair White welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Thanks were extended to those who supported and attended Women’s History Month at City Hall.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Maurer, Ms. Callaway-Kleiner and Mr. Caldwell introduced themselves to the Commission.

APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 11 AND APRIL 8, 2025, MINUTES

Commissioner Witkin moved that the Commission approve the March 11, 2025, meeting minutes as circulated. It was seconded by Commissioner Heiser. All were in favor.

PRESENTATION BY THE LGBTQ+ TASK FORCE

The LGBTQ+ Task Force began in 2007. This Task Force provided LGBTQ+ services and safety, as well as Alexandria events. This year will be the 8th annual Pride Day on June 28th and 3 years here in Market Square. Many non-profits will be at the event. The main focus is doing training with services providers on how to start services. They are currently teaching the Alexandria Police Department. The training helps organizations learn to provide better service. T-shirts available at the DVP/SAC office on N. Pitt St.

Action Items: Will include the Commission for Women on the mailing list and any organization the Commissioners are part of; they can give their presentation. Their quarterly Task Force meetings are held on the third Thursday of every third month. The next one is July 2025. They are also able to answer questions and do research. They will survey the peer advocates to see if they have interest in becoming a youth Commissioner for the Commission for Women.

PRESENTATION FROM PHIL CALDWELL FROM DCHS – CENTER FOR ADULT SERVICES

Same Day Access (SDA) began May 5, 2025. The Department merged the children and adult SDA services. Schools and detention center whether they are a resident or not. Routine access points are state hospitals and emergency services. Alexandrians who have a crisis in another jurisdiction, the person returns to Alexandria to receive treatment.

The Center for Adult Services (CAS) provides the following services: MAT treatment (methadone); WEWC at the Redella Community Center, 4850 Mark Center Drive; job skills development, life skills training and is a network for people to receive what they need. They also provide care coordination, case management, Primary Care Physicians, TRAILS, first episode psychosis program, those who struggle with the substance abuse and mental health and provide wraparound services (24/7 program). They partner with Arlington on Adult Detox Services and more.

There are no exclusionary rules on who CAS serves and they have Intersectionality and Culturally Competent Services. CAS relies on partners Coding Task Force, APD, Fire Dept. outreach more, and Linguistic Services, Latin American BH conference, Child Welfare and Child and Family Behavioral Health Services.

E-BOARD ELECTIONS

Commissioner Palmer Johnson announced that two positions for the Executive Board have been filled. Nominations from the floor for the 2nd Vice Chair was Commissioner Allison Heiser, seconded by Commissioner Witkin. Commissioner Heiser accepted. None opposed. It was not necessary for an election. The new officers are Chair Lexi White, First Vice Chair Yvette Jiang, and Second Vice Chair Allison Heiser.

During the past year there was a lot of collective work on the onboarding handbook, rolled out the 50th Anniversary, recognized former Commissioners. The Commission has a growing media presence. The launch of the Linked In page is upcoming. The Commission received support from City Council on a recommitment to repro health care and a resolution from the decision on Dobbs. The Commission is now in the discovery phase on how to track progress that was made that can help inform policy and advocacy going forward.

SUBCOMMITTEE AND LIAISON ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PILLARS FOR DISCOVERY PHASE FOR STATUS REPORT

In the discovery phase, there is one pillar open to be covered by another subcommittee.

A framework that will be shared by the now Second Vice Chair Heiser. Data from 2024 showed indicators where girls were outperforming boys in every subject. Since Covid, girls are currently not excelling in math and social studies, which can be indicators. The Commission will investigate this trend.

Can be indicator by indicator or as a whole. **Action Item: The Commission will decide where the decisions can be made and look at the standards of learning. Action Item: Second Vice Chair Heiser proposed that all the Commission work with their own subcommittees to begin that discovery phase for their key pillars and if anyone has questions to ask her. Action Item: Commissioners were asked if someone would like to take on the Economic Security and Vulnerability pillar.**

There was a negative, racist comment that was posted on the Black Maternal Health Week post. The proclamation post had the most engagement. It was proposed to put up the reproduction of a draft notion for International day of action for women's health (May 28th). The focus is on reproductive freedom.

June 2025 – The Commission will post something for Pride and International Women in Engineering Day.

Reverend Dr. Commissioner Brown will be working at Stanfield. She will be featured for International Women in Engineering Day for the June article, which is due June 23.

Action Item: Commissioners will meet at the Carpenter Shelter May 29th 7:30 p.m. Bring friends and family to serve dinner.

Events Coordination - Farmer's Market Tabling: Commissioner Greene has the flyer for tabling. She needs responses on Linked In. She will get the flyer approved from DCHS Communications.

Member Engagement & Volunteer Coordination - The Commission still needs to fill the youth seat. The Commission will continue efforts to search for a youth member.

Commissioners Stowe and Hunter had to resign from the Commission due to capacity issues.

Human Rights Commission - The Human Rights Commission met on April 15. The guest speaker was Mayor Aliyah Gaskins. The Commission decided to focus on three goals for the commission, which are as follows: 1) To ensure equal protection for all residents; 2) Protect government and workplace diversity initiatives; and 3) Educate the public on civil rights and anti-discrimination laws. The next meeting will be May 20 – The Legal Aid Justice Center will train the Commission on immigration rights. The meeting will take place in City Hall, room to be determined. Refreshments will be served. All are invited to join. **Action Item: Commissioners are asked to provide questions for Mayor Gaskins.** The next meeting will be their 50th anniversary, all were encouraged to attend.

Chair White spoke with Michael Schuster, Chair of the Commission for Aging. There is currently a vacancy for the Commission for Women liaison for that Commission. They meet at 4 p.m. monthly. It was asked if anyone wants to volunteer. There were no takers at the moment.

Action Item: Anyone interested in filling the position of liaison to the Commission for Aging must fill out an application and get approved by City Council.

DASH – First Vice Chair Jiang asked if anyone has input on whether DASH should keep printed copies of the riders guide or keep them online. Currently, data showed that 98% of Alexandrians have internet access. Having QR codes was suggested.

Police Review Board – It was suggested that the Commission for Women liaise to the Police Review Board and the Public Health Advisory Board. It was recommended to liaise with both. The City Council voted against an ordinance that would have a non-voting Commission. They closed the ordinance on this Board. Meetings are still open to the public. The City Council appointed two Council Members to work on this and make recommendations. **Action Item: Commissioner Palmer Johnson volunteered to sit on the Police Review Board. Action Item: Commissioner Palmer Johnson will be meeting with the Vice Mayor.**

Rainbow Crosswalk - The Human Rights Commission is working with Del Ray business association, but there is a cost concern.

Upcoming Awareness Months:

- Asian Heritage Awareness Month & Mental Health Awareness Month - May
- May 10th, 2025, City of Alexandria Eco-Festival, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. at Brenman Park, 4800 Brenman Park Drive
- Black Maternal Health Week-April 11th- April 18th
- Community Cook Out – Booth Park 1 – May 14th
- Pride Day- June 28th

SUBCOMMITTEE BREAKOUT TIME

Subcommittees met after the adjournment of the meeting.

NEXT STEPS AND ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

UPCOMING COMMISSION MEETING DATE FOR 2025:

- June 10
 - August Retreat (TBD)
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