

MINUTES
LGBTQIA+ COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING JANUARY 21, 2026

Present: Chair, Brianna Bloom Skowera, Vice Chair Dolly Haddad, Commissioners Angela Crow, Katherine Marrotte, Lisa Loomis-Davern, Cayes Jarda, Shanay Fulton, and Laura Timmons.

Members of the Public: Haley Stafford, Anika Dane

1. **Call to Order By Chairperson.** Chair Skowera called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. **Approval of the Minutes for the December 17, 2025 Regular Meeting of the LGBTQIA+ Commission.**

MOTION: Dolly Haddad made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 17, 2025 Regular Meeting. Motion was seconded by Angela Crow. Motion was approved unanimously. Laura Timmons was absent for the vote.

3. **Public Session on Agenda Items.** None.
4. **New Business.**

A. Submitted Applications for Proposed Events.

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

MOTION: Katherine Marrotte made a motion to approve the event as proposed. Motion was seconded by Lisa Loomis-Davern. Motion was approved unanimously. Laura Timmons was absent for the vote.

B. Yearly Events.

- I. Pride Month (June).
- 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). Discussion between commissioners regarding ideas for an event, including an indoor/outdoor 5k run/walk on behalf of trans lifeline. Potentially having the event at Wesleyan on their indoor track.

VII. Community Dinner.

5. **Old Business.**

A. Middletown PrideFEST 2026

I. **PrideFEST 2026 Roles and Responsibilities (Commissioner Skowera).**

Brianna Skowera informed the commission that she will not be able to serve as organizer for Middletown PrideFEST after PrideFEST 2026. Brianna provided an update on the footprint of PrideFEST, permits, parking agreements, ASL interpreters, DJ, photography and videography, which vendors have been secured. Dolly Haddad asked Haley Stafford to provide her with information regarding PrideFEST 2025 and sponsor information. Katherine Marrotte provided an update on all of the work she is doing regarding social media graphics and graphic updates. Shanay Fulton updated the commission regarding the Rally.

Brianna Skowera informed the commission to provide nominations for Grand Marshal's by February 9, 2026 for the February meeting. Haley Stafford has activated the application links, and will update to the website shortly.

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).

Dolly Haddad stated that Gayme Night went well, over 37 people attended. The most new people we have ever had attended. Next one is on February 16, 2026.

- II. Recap of First Day Queer Hike, January 1, 2026 from 1 – 2:30 pm, at Wadsworth Falls State Park, 721 Wadsworth Street, Middletown, CT, cost \$0 (Commissioner Loomis-Davern).

Lisa Loomis-Davern stated that 17 people showed up for the hike, and it was very cold, but really great. About half of the people who attended was from Middletown, ages ranged from 8 – 70+. Two people asked if there will be more hikes, so Lisa Loomis-Davern may be planning more hikes in the future.

C. Middletown Pride Grant Program (Commissioner Skowera).

- I. Q+ Grant Program.

Brianna Skowera updated the Commission on the fact that some dates are shifting for the next two months, because some of the events are not well attended. Also, we may need

to reduce our financial obligations if the new dates do not increase attendance.

II. Peer Pride Grant Program. No updates.

III. LGBTQIA+ Peer Support Grant Program at St. Vincent DePaul. Program is working well, and St. Vincent DePaul is very grateful that the Commission has provided these resources to them.

D. Middletown Pride Scholarship Program Update (Commissioner Shapiro). No updates.

E. Taking Pride on Main Street Initiative Update (Commissioner Skowera). Brianna Skowera and Shanay Fulton are meeting with the Chamber to figure out a way to incentivize downtown businesses to participate in PrideFEST and in the commissions activities, generally.

F. USA Pride and Interpride Memberships Update (Commissioner Timmons). Laura Timmons has decided to not pursue further.

G. Policy Review: Personnel Policy Updates (Commissioner Skowera). Brianna Skowera informed the Commission that there has been no movement to date.

6. Adjournment.

MOTION: Dolly Haddad made a motion to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Cayes Jarda. Motion was approved unanimously and the meeting adjourned.