

Gender Equity Commission
Meeting Minutes
June 4, 2026
Staffer: Talia O'Brien

- ☐ Roll Call:
 - ☐ Nikkole Terney
 - ☐ Devon Taliaferro
 - ☐ Julian McClain
 - ☐ Rachel Shepherd
 - ☐ Audra Mitchell

- ☐ Approval of April Minutes
 - **Motioned:** Julian McClain
 - **Seconded:** Devon Taliaferro
 - **April minutes were approved. Commissioner Shepherd abstained.**

- ☐ Approval of May Minutes
 - **Motioned:** Audra Mitchell
 - **Seconded:** Julian McClain
 - **May minutes were approved. Commissioner Shepherd abstained.**

- ☐ Public Comment: *No Public Comment.*
 - Staff noted receipt of an email to the Commission's general account requesting that meeting practices align with the City's Vision Zero initiative, specifically, that members participating by phone while driving use a hands-free or voice-only option.

- ☐ Report of Special Committees:
 - 5 Year Action Plan
 - ☐ *Summary:*
 - ☐ As of the meeting date, only 3 departments had responded to the survey (EMS, Finance, and Animal Care and Control). The list of city employees the survey was sent to was shared with commissioners yesterday via email. GEC staffer will do direct 1-1 outreach to the outstanding departments. Commissioner Taliaferro advised on city staff members to send to based on recent staffing changes.

- GEC staffer will send Commissioner Taliaferro a written email outlining the specific information needed from HR/Payroll to compile the demographics report.
- Unfinished Business:
 - **Internal Policy: Pregnancy Loss Leave**
 - Still waiting on LGBTQIA+ Commission feedback
 - *Summary:* Shared a first draft of the policy revisions at April's GEC meeting and shared it with the LGBTQIA+ & GEC working group at their first meeting on 4/21. Both commissions discussed the potential overlap with the Paid Sick Days Act and the possibility of trying to update both policies at the same time to ensure both are aligned and offer consistent protections.
 - Outstanding questions remain:
 - Structure of policy: Whether the leave should be structured as additional PTO or as an eligible use category within employees' existing PTO bank.
 - Number of days: The current policy provides 3 days. The GEC Commission previously discussed expanding to 5 days. A final determination on the appropriate number of days is still needed.
 - Per-Event vs. Annual Pool: Whether each qualifying event (e.g., reproductive loss, an endometriosis flare) triggers its own allotment of days, or whether there is a single annual pool of days that employees draw from, consecutively or non-consecutively.
 - Next steps:
 - LGBTQIA+ Commission will provide the GEC Commission feedback on the policy language. Staffers will then compile both commissions' edits into one consolidated draft.
 - The consolidated draft will be brought back to the Gender Equity Commission for final review.
 - Once language is finalized by both commissions, a meeting with HR, Commissioner Taliaferro and Staffer O'Brien will be scheduled to assess viability, determine day limits, and evaluate budgetary and administrative impacts. HR's feedback will be shared with both the Gender Equity and LGBTQIA+ Commissions to determine where to go from there.

- **Free Menstrual Products and Contraceptives in All City Owned Facilities with Restrooms**

- *Summary:* Summer intern, Hannah, joined the team mid-May. She is developing a matrix based on cities that offer this program/similar programs. The matrix features city, population, program details (what products are offered and where), funding source (operating, grants, donations, other), startup costs, annual cost (maintenance), stocking method, and relevant links (general info, news articles, legislation, budgets).
- Hannah is also starting to pull resources together for an ‘education campaign’ that will help commissioners with getting buy-in from elected officials when the time comes. These resources include relevant studies that speak to ‘period poverty’ statistics, what the PA state government is doing to address menstruation in schools, menstrual equity legislation, as well as similar statistics for contraceptive products.
 - Commissioner Mitchell offered to share a contact for a commercial restroom supplier that may be able to help with this research, and a legislative tracking resource for related bills.
- Collaboration with the LGBTQIA+ Commission on single stall restrooms will be pursued in parallel with the menstrual and contraceptive products initiative.

- **GEC Website & Bylaws**

- *Summary:*
 - Page-by-page website review with the proposed edits:
 - Homepage:
 - Add graphic/GEC seal
 - Remove GEC News from homepage since the news is from 2021/2022.
 - Remove ‘About Gender Equity Commission’ and move that information to the homepage.
 - Could edit the paragraph on the homepage to be combined with language from the ‘about the GEC’ paragraph on the ‘about the GEC’ page
 - About the GEC page:

- Delete and consolidate to homepage
- Move mission and vision to homepage
- Move interested in serving link to bottom of homepage and/or to the 'commission members' and/or 'connect with us' page(s)
- Review of Mission and Vision statements:
 - Commissioner Mitchell proposed updating the current statements as they miss the how and the why as currently written. Equity and equality shouldn't be interchanged, and it should use proactive language. She volunteered to prepare an initial draft revision for the group's collaborative review; a separate vote will be needed before any revised mission/vision is formally adopted.
- Commission Members page:
 - Add Current Commissioners names
 - Verify whether the existing commissioner recruitment/application link still works (it currently routes to a login page that isn't useful to the public); relocate staff contact name/email here (modeled on the LGBTQIA+ Commission's "Who's Listening" section) rather than on the Monthly Public Meetings page.
- Monthly Public Meetings page:
 - Change title to 'Commission Meetings'
 - Clarify that meetings can be watched live via YouTube and the city cable channel/website, not only as recordings after the fact.
 - Direct people to past meeting recordings through the YouTube archive section with links.
 - Add Meeting minutes and agendas to this page
 - Edit Public Comment Form:
 - Add the following optional fields:
 - Name
 - Email/contact information
 - Pittsburgh resident? (y/n)
 - Demographics (write-in, gender/sex/pronouns)

- Follow up requested? (y/n)
 - Preferred follow-up method? (Public discussion at meeting or private outreach)
- Reports and Policy Recommendations page:
 - Could consolidate with workforce equity page info, since this initiative is no longer advanced individually, but part of the intersectional action plan
 - Bump the 5-year action plan to the top since it is the item we're working on now
 - Make less wordy, add more info on process, timeline, expected outcomes
 - Consolidate report links into easily digestible format while keeping some of the text info for each related effort
- Gender Equity Resources page:
 - Move the 'Gender Equity Reports and Initiatives' section to the top, and rename to 'Gender Equity Resources'
 - Update list, remove outdated resources and add new resources and put local resources first
 - Move 'GEC Supports AAPI Communities', 'Gendering the pandemic', and 'Educating ourselves about gender' to the reports and policy recommendations page
- Connect with us' page:
 - Keep the general contact box for visitors who don't want to navigate the rest of the site
 - Review the existing "action request" process document (used when outside parties want the Commission to participate in an event or panel) for continued accuracy
 - Update the listed mission-area language to match current city code and any revised mission/vision statement.
- GEC Bylaws
 - This effort should be pursued in conjunction with the website update, potentially including the establishment of commission chair positions and committee structures. Draft bylaws can be put together and circulated for commissioner review in the near future.

- ☐ **Motion to authorize staff to move forward with implementing the website edits discussed:** Julian McClain
 - ☐ **Seconded:** Nikkole Terney
 - ☐ **Motion approved**

- ☐ **New Business:**
 - No new business was discussed.

- ☐ **Announcements:**
 - Julian McClain:
 - ☐ Pittsburgh Pride Parade is scheduled for June 7, 11am-5pm. Commissioner McClain is helping to coordinate Pride on behalf of the LGBTQIA+ Commission. Gender Equity Commissioners are invited to attend and can sign up via the doodle poll.
 - ☐ Pittsburgh Pirates are hosting a Pride Night on June 11 and are specifically seeking participation from city commissioners. Julian noted that he would follow-up event details with commissioners via email.
 - Devon Taliaferro: Department of Human Resources & Civil Service and the Bureau of Fire will host a Career Showcase on Saturday, June 13, 1-4pm at the Pittsburgh Police and Fire Training Academy on Washington Boulevard. The event will include live demonstrations, equipment/apparatus displays, and food trucks. The firefighter recruit position is not currently open (expected to open around spring 2027); the event is intended to raise awareness of the career path and support recruitment of a more diverse applicant pool, the Bureau currently has roughly 7 female firefighters out of a workforce of 700–800. Minimum age to apply is 18. A flyer is available on request for anyone who would like to share it with their networks.
 - Audra Mitchell: PAAR and rape crisis centers statewide are holding a rally in Harrisburg on Monday, July 8 at 2pm, calling for a state budget increase for rape crisis centers. Last year's state budget impasse left rape crisis centers unpaid for four months; some smaller/rural centers are still repaying loans taken out during that period, and another impasse could force some centers to close. Registration information and a QR code are available via PAAR's website and social media. The Commission discussed the possibility of submitting letters of support if members are unable to attend in person; templates will be provided, and it was noted that support could come from individual commissioners and/or be elevated through the Mayor's office.

- Rachel Shepherd:
 - New statewide unemployment compensation protections now allow survivors of domestic violence who left or lost a job due to a DV situation to fast-track unemployment benefits at no cost to the employer. The employer is not required to learn the reason for the claim (if not already known) and cannot dispute the benefit. The process involves a fact-finding review (not a formal hearing), with survivors given 120 days to provide flexible supporting documentation; the process is confidential.
- Adjourned
 - **Motion:** Devon Taliaferro
 - **Seconded:** Julian McClain
 - **Meeting is adjourned.**