Bylaws of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+) Affairs Commission

City of Columbus

Adopted 4.28.26

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ARTICLE I – Scope of Bylaws, Purpose, and Authority

Section 1. Scope of Bylaws

The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Affairs Commission ("LGBTQ+" or "Commission"), constituted pursuant to Chapter 179 of the Columbus City Codes, adopts these Bylaws (the "Bylaws") in accordance with Columbus City Codes §179.03 and §121.02 to outline the procedures by which the Commission will conduct its work.

Section 2. Certification and Publication of Bylaws

Upon adoption by a two-thirds (2/3) supermajority vote of the members appointed to and serving on the Commission, a copy of these Bylaws shall be certified and attested to by the Chairperson. The certified copy shall be submitted by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion Support Staff ("ODISS") for filing with the City Clerk and publication in the City Bulletin within twenty (20) calendar days thereafter in accordance with Columbus City Codes §121.05. These Bylaws shall become effective on the tenth day following publication in the City Bulletin.

A copy of these Bylaws shall be maintained by the ODISS on behalf of the Commission and by the Columbus City Clerk.

Section 3. Amendments

The Commission may amend these Bylaws by a two-thirds (2/3) supermajority vote of the members appointed to and serving on the Commission. All Commission members must receive a copy of any proposed Bylaw amendment(s) at least seven (7) business days prior to a vote on the proposed amendments. Proposed amendment(s) shall be distributed to all members in the same manner as regular meeting materials.

Amendments adopted pursuant to the foregoing procedures shall be effective on the tenth calendar day after promulgation by publication in the City Bulletin in accordance with Columbus City Codes §121.05.

Section 4. Purpose and Authority

The purpose of the Commission is to discharge the duties and functions designated to the Commission by Chapter 179 of the Columbus City Codes, and as provided for by ordinance of Council. The LGBTQ+ Affairs Commission serves to advise Council and the Mayor on LGBTQ+ matters and recommend legislation, policies, programs, procedures, and administrative actions that advance social, economic, and political equality for the LGBTQ+ community. The Commission is authorized and empowered to make, adopt, and amend its own rules, regulations, and/or procedures for the conduct of its meetings and proceedings in accordance with these Bylaws and Columbus City Codes §179.03 and §121.05.

Section 5. Definitions

Terms not otherwise defined in these Bylaws shall have the meaning prescribed in Chapter 179 of the Columbus City Codes.

ARTICLE II – Members

Section 1. Appointments and Terms

The Commission shall consist of thirteen (13) volunteer members as outlined in §179.02(a) of the Columbus City Codes. The Commission will include individuals who reside in Columbus and are representative of the diverse communities within the City of Columbus.

Initial Commission members shall be appointed for staggered terms. Five (5) members shall be appointed to a term not exceeding three (3) years. Four (4) members shall be appointed to a term not exceeding two (2) years. Four (4) members shall be appointed to a term not exceeding one (1) year. Thereafter, each member shall be appointed for a term of three (3) years. Members may be reappointed by the original appointing authority to a new three (3) year term not more than once. In the event of a vacancy, the original appointing authority shall appoint a new member to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term.

For the initial Commission, one (1) member shall be jointly appointed by City Council and the Mayor, such member serving as Chair of the Commission for their initial three (3) year term. The Commission shall select a Vice-Chair by majority vote. Thereafter, the Commission will nominate and vote to select its own Chair and Vice-Chair for a two (2) year term. No member shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms as Chair or Vice-Chair. After the terms of the initial Chair and Vice Chair, a term shall commence as of January 1 of the year following the preceding October vote to select the incoming Chair or Vice Chair. In the event of a vacancy, a vote to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term shall be held at the next regular meeting.

A Commission member who, for any reason, seeks to voluntarily resign from the Commission shall do so by submitting a written letter of resignation to the Chair. The Chair of the Commission shall send notification to the ODISS requesting replacement of the member by the appropriate appointing authority as provided for in Columbus City Codes §179.02. Any member appointed to a seat that has been vacated prior to the expiration of the term for the vacant seat shall be appointed to serve out the remainder of the unexpired term.

No commissioner shall receive any form of compensation for voluntary service on the Commission.

Section 2. Removal of a Commission Member

Commission members shall be disqualified from service for inefficiency, neglect of duty, malfeasance, or misconduct in office, in accordance with Section 61 of the Columbus City Charter. Removal of a Commission member shall take place at a regular meeting of the Commission and is subject to two-thirds (2/3) supermajority vote of the members appointed to and serving on the Commission.

The member subject to removal shall have the right to a hearing in front of the Commission. If supermajority vote recommends removal, such vote shall be referred to the Mayor and Council for final determination.

ARTICLE III – Organization and Officers

Section 1. Officers

The Commission shall have a Chair and Vice-Chair. Selection of Chair and Vice Chair by majority vote shall take place at the regular Commission meeting in October in the year the Chair or Vice Chair term will end. Nominations will be taken from the floor.

Section 2. Chair

City Council and the Mayor shall jointly appoint one of the Commission members to serve as the Chair of the initial Commission. Thereafter, the Commission shall elect from its membership a Chair whose role it will be to preside over meetings of the Commission. The Chair shall prepare the agenda, call meetings to order, announce the business of the Commission, recognize persons who are entitled to speak, and authenticate by signature decisions of the Commission, among other duties. If the Chair no longer wants to serve in that capacity, notice shall be submitted to the Vice Chair and ODISS.

Section 3. Vice-Chair

The Commission shall elect from its membership a Vice-Chair.

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall assume the role of Chair. The Vice-Chair shall assume duties as determined through cooperative agreement with the Chair.

Section 4. Committees

The Commission may, by majority vote, establish one or more committees in furtherance of its duties. A committee shall consist of five (5) members. For each committee established by the Commission, the Chair shall appoint or remove a committee Chair.

Committees may include non-Commission members, but the number of non-Commission members serving on any committee shall not be greater than the number of Commission members serving on any committee.

The following are considered to be Standing Committees:

Executive Committee – to include the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Commission and the Chairs of all Standing Committees, as well as the Administrative Coordinator and City Council representative, both who shall be non-voting members. The Executive Committee serves to drive the work of the Commission forward and includes presenting findings and recommendations to City leadership, including City Council and the Mayor's Office, setting agendas for regular and special meetings, overseeing other committees, and serving as the primary liaison for key stakeholders.

Community Engagement, Communications, and Outreach Committee – this committee serves to build awareness of the Commission, foster a sense of community, interact with community members throughout Columbus through a strategic community and media engagement plan created by the committee.

Advocacy and Policy Committee – this committee serves to review, evaluate, and research local, state, and federal policies that affect LGBTQ+ communities in Columbus and make specific recommendations to City Council and the Mayor's Office regarding City policy related to LGBTQ+ matters.

Health and Social Services Committee – this committee serves to enhance the awareness of issues related to public health, housing, education, human services, and overall well-being of LGBTQ+ communities and make specific recommendations to City Council and the Mayor's Office. This committee will work closely with the advocacy and policy committee.

ARTICLE IV – Duties of Members and Standards of Conduct

Section 1. Attendance

The Commission is a public body that shall meet at least four (4) times annually. As a public body, Commission members are required to attend, in person, in order to be considered present for purposes of constituting a quorum and to vote. Should virtual attendance be authorized by an act of the General Assembly, by order of the Governor or Mayor, by ordinance of City Council, or by amendment or wavier of provisions of the City Charter, then the Commission may perform its duties in accordance with any virtual attendance requirements that may be provided.

Section 2. Absenteeism

Commission members are expected to attend the regular meetings of the Commission. A Commission member who, due to a medical concern , family emergency, work or school conflict , jury duty, or religious observance will be unable to attend a meeting shall notify the ODISS, when practicable, at least seventy-two (72) hours in advance of a scheduled meeting. The ODISS shall notify the Chair of any such communications from members of the Commission.

No commissioner shall miss more than three (3) meetings in any calendar year.

Section 3. Conflict of Interest / Appearance of Impropriety

Each Commission member has a duty to disclose potential and actual conflicts of interest. A Commission member with a potential or actual conflict of interest must recuse themselves from hearing or participating in discussion, deliberations, and votes on the matter. A Commission member with a potential or actual conflict of interest shall notify the Chair and the ODISS as soon as practicable.

Each Commission member shall act in such a manner as to avoid any appearance of impropriety.

Section 4. Conduct

While discharging their duties, all Commission members shall act in a manner that is consistent with the obligations expressed in the City's Oath of Office / Pledge of Ethics document that was sworn/affirmed to and signed by each Commission member.

Section 5. Representation

No Commission member shall speak on behalf of the Commission except as directed by the Chair or by a majority vote of the Commission members present and constituting quorum at a regular or special meeting. This shall not restrict persons from expressing themselves, in any context and on any issue, as long as it is clearly expressed that the Commission member is doing so in an individual capacity and not speaking for the Commission.

A violation of Section 2, 3, 4, or 5 of this Article may result in remedial action being taken by the Commission, to include removal.

ARTICLE V – Office of Diversity and Inclusion Personnel / City Council Advisor / Mayor

Section 1. ODI Support

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion shall provide support staff to the Commission to the extent practical and necessary in relation to:

1. Planning programs, budgets, priorities
2. Retaining public records and responding to public records requests
3. Issuing public meeting notices
4. Confirming quorum for meetings
5. Taking minutes at Commission meetings
6. Prepare, at the direction of the Commission Chair, the agenda for meetings
7. Receive correspondence on behalf of the Commission
8. Conduct orientation for new Commission members, to include providing a copy of these Bylaws and any other onboarding documents
9. Other duties as assigned pertaining to the work of the Commission

Section 2. City Council Support

Council President may appoint an employee of Council to facilitate communications with the Commission, liaise between the Commission and Council, and otherwise assist the Commission as needed.

Section 3. Mayor

The Mayor, or the Mayor's designee, shall serve as an *ex officio*, non-voting member of the Commission.

Section 4. City Council

The Council President shall appoint a member of Council to serve as an *ex officio*, non-voting member of the Commission.

ARTICLE VI – Legal Counsel

The Commission shall be represented by counsel from the City Attorney's Office. Upon notification by the Commission that legal counsel is required, the ODISS shall contact the City Attorney's Office to coordinate the assistance needed. The City Attorney or designee may be in attendance at Commission meetings as necessary and if called upon to provide legal guidance.

ARTICLE VII – Meetings

Section 1. Procedural Rules

Meetings of the Commission shall be open to the public. Generally, regular meetings shall be conducted in accordance with these Bylaws. Where the Bylaws are silent, Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised may be consulted.

Section 2. Quorum / Official Action

All meetings convened for official action must have a quorum present to conduct business. If a quorum is not present, or not maintained, the Commission members who are present may discuss matters of general concern, but official action requiring a vote may not be taken and must be deferred to a future meeting.

Seven (7) members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum. Unless a greater number is otherwise required by these Bylaws, a majority vote of the Commission members constituting a quorum shall constitute official action of the Commission.

Unless a roll call vote is directed by the Chair, a majority voice vote in the affirmative shall constitute official action.

Section 3. Order of Business

The order of business for the Commission shall be at the discretion of the Chair. However, the agenda for each regular meeting shall include:

A. Attendance to establish quorum
B. Approval of the minutes from the last meeting
C. Presentation of any reports from committee chairs or other persons
D. Discussion of matters of old business, if any
E. Discussion of matters of new business, if any
F. Any miscellaneous matters
G. Adjourn the meeting

Section 4. Special and Emergency Meetings

As necessary, the Commission may call a special or emergency meeting. Proper public notice and an agenda for such meeting shall be issued in accordance with Ohio's Open Meetings laws.

ARTICLE VIII — Adoption, Certification, and Publication of Rules and Regulations

Section 1. Adoption of Rules and Regulations

The Commission has the authority to promulgate Rules and Regulations, in accordance with §121.05, to carry out its duties as provided for in Chapter 179 of the Columbus City Codes.

Rules and Regulations may be adopted by a two-thirds (2/3) supermajority vote of the members appointed to and serving on the Commission. All Commission members must receive a copy of any proposed Rule/Regulation at least seven (7) business days prior to a vote on the proposed Rule/Regulation. The text of any proposed Rules/Regulation shall be distributed to all members in the same manner as regular meeting materials.

Section 2. Certification and Publication of Rules and Regulations

Immediately upon adoption of any Rule/Regulation, a copy shall be certified and attested to by the Chair. The certified copy shall be submitted to the ODISS for filing with the City Clerk and publication in the City Bulletin within twenty (20) calendar days thereafter in accordance with Columbus City Codes §121.05. Rules and Regulations shall become effective on the tenth day following publication in the City Bulletin.

A copy of all adopted Rules and Regulations shall be maintained by the ODISS on behalf of the Commission and by the Columbus City Clerk.

Section 3. Amendment or Repeal

The Commission may amend or repeal a rule or regulation by a two-thirds (2/3) supermajority vote of the members appointed to and serving on the Commission. All Commission members must receive a copy of any proposed amendment or repeal at least seven (7) business days prior to a vote. A proposed amendment or repeal shall be distributed to all members in the same manner as regular meeting materials.

An amendment or repeal adopted pursuant to the foregoing procedure shall be effective on the tenth calendar day after promulgation by publication in the City Bulletin in accordance with Columbus City Codes §121.05.

CERTIFICATION:

I, Jasmine Roberts-Crews, Chair of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+) Affairs Commission, hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and exact copy of the Bylaws of this Commission, as adopted by the Commission on the 28th day of April, 2026.

Printed name: Jasmine Roberts-Crews

Signature: ____________________________

Date of signature: ______________________