

MAYOR'S LGBTQ+ ADVISORY BOARD



A NEW DAY.

Mayor's LGBTQ+ Advisory Board Meeting

Friday, April 3, 2026, 12:30 PM to 2:00 PM

Main Library | 303 N Laura St | First Floor Lounge

Meeting Minutes – April 3, 2026

Advisory Board Members Present: Dan, Jim, Manny, Marie, Jake, Mason, Derrick, Cindy

Present online: Jessica

Excused Absences: Amy, Karissa Wade

Staff: Tereese Goodloe, Jimmy Midyette

1. **Call to order / Welcome & Introduction:** Cindy Watson, Board Chair called the meeting to order at 12:40pm, welcomed all. Jimmy Midyette was present as the staff from COJ in light of Kara's absence. Cindy noted that a quorum of the Advisory Board membership was present in the meeting.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Cindy offered the March 6, 2026 minutes for review.
 - Minutes were moved by: Manny, second by: Jim
 - All approved.
3. **Guest Speaker:**
 - *Dr. Parvez Ahmed – declined*
 - *Issis Alvarez, JASMYN, INC. Board Chair and new Ashley Coleman, CEO*
 - Issis introduced JASMYN's new CEO, Ashley Coleman, and they spoke of the range of programs and services for young people and their peers, in this next generation of JASMYN's history. The focus is to meet the human needs of young people and provide 3rd space for Gen Z and Gen Alpha. The organization has been responding to attacks in funding and young people are also being targeted by federal and state policies. Erin Bigalke stated the 15th Annual Strides for Pride 5K will be held on April 26 at RAM. This event has been voted Folio Weekly's Best 5K.
 - LGBTQ+ Advisory Board members asked if there were challenges to the young people and organization in this current political environment. Issis responded that regulatory compliance was challenging due to federal Executive Orders (EO) and was having an impact on their federal HUD funding being passed through the city. The city housing office (CHCD) is enforcing the federal EO banning "gender

Chair: Cindy Watson | **Vice-Chair:** Jessica Sabin | **Secretary:** Karissa Wade-Davis | **Members:** Jacob Eleazer, Amy Glassman, Mason Manion, Jim Piggott, Manuel Andrade, Daniel Merkan, Derrick Scott III, & S. Marie Hester
Disabled Services Division (904) 255-5466

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ideology” over the federal Fair Housing Act. Issis stated they have had much conversation and support from their city partners in the CHCD. After several questions and discussion about ways this board could help, Mason offered a resolution for this Advisory Board to gather more information to clarify the COJ response to federal Executive Orders on LGBTQ+ issues, including how the city is managing compliance with orders and how this is impacting city funding and services for LGBTQ+ people. Derrick provided the second. A suggestion was made in discussion to invite Travis Jeffrey, Chief of the city housing and community development (CHCD) to our next meeting to gather more information. The motion passed with majority approved and one abstaining from the vote (Dan). The Health, Wellness, and Public Safety subcommittee, and the Legislation, Education, and Policy subcommittees will take up this motion at their meetings.

4. Old Business/New Business:

- Subcommittee Reports:
 - *Arts, Culture, Entertainment and Recreation Committee – Manny Andrade, Chair* – Manny gave updates on the Pulse Memorial scheduled for June 12. He asked the board to consider name badges for members to be identified when attending public events, like the Pulse Memorial. The subcommittee is exploring options for name badges and ways to fund this purchase. They plan to meet 1 hour prior to the next full Advisory Board meeting.
 - *Health Wellness and Public Safety – Jake Eleazer, Chair* – Jake announced that this committee is meeting immediately following the April board meeting.
 - *Legislation Education and Policy – Mason Manion, Chair* – Mason announced that anyone on this Advisory Board is welcome to attend a monthly Community Town Hall held on the 3rd Thursday each month at 6:00pm, location TBD. Recently the group offered de-escalation training for community members with JASMYN and EQFL.
- Annual LGBTQ+ Pride Month Ceremony Event update – Jimmy Midyette offered to get more information from the Mayor’s office about the annual COJ Pride Month ceremony and this Advisory Board’s roll in planning and participation. The event is likely to be held in late June (26th), but the date is not set yet.

5. Chair Report: Cindy Watson – The chair reported that the state law SB1134 was passed this legislative session but has not yet been signed by the governor. This is the anti-DEI law targeting city officials. The chair noted that our community is powerful and over the last 30 years we have successfully changed anti-LGBTQ+ laws and community attitudes. Some powerful factions hate these changes and want to change things back; the backlash against us is significant. But the

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backlash and hatred is not comprehensive and it is not global. We should take heart in continuing to stand up for our LGBTQ+ Community.

6. Public comment:

- By Speaker Card
 - Janet Allen, Community Foundation – asked if there is a mechanism for making contributions specifically to support the work of the Mayor's LGBTQ+ Advisory Board. Other Advisory Boards can provide examples for events, etc.
 - Ron Episcopo – stated he is offering to produce an art exhibit featuring the LGBTQ+ community and our history for display either in June or October. He will return with more details.
 - James Eady – spoke about the planning for the Pulse Memorial on June 12 and is asking members of this Advisory Board to attend and read names of those killed in the Pulse massacre.

7. Announcements / Calendar of Events:

- Dan Merkan announced that Dining Out for Life, a fundraiser for NFAN's Food Pantry, will be Thursday, April 16, and many local restaurants are participating. Find the list at Dining Out for Life/ Jacksonville.
- Jimmy Midyette announced that the JHRC is hosting the annual Affordable Housing Expo on April 11, registration is on the JHRC website.
- Jimmy announced the Jax Ready event on April 17-18 to promote city resources for hurricane season and other emergency operations. Flyer was disbursed.
- JASMYN is holding a community welcome meeting with Ashley Coleman on April 9 at the JASMYN Campus at 6:00pm.

8. Adjourn – Manny moved to adjourn the meeting; The chair meeting adjourned at 1:50pm.

Meeting notes by: Cindy Watson