

MAYOR'S LGBTQ+ ADVISORY BOARD



A NEW DAY.

Mayor's LGBTQ+ Advisory Board Meeting

Friday, March 6, 2026, 12:30 PM to 2:00 PM

Main Library | 303 N Laura St | Multipurpose Conference Rm

Meeting Notes/Minutes:

Advisory Board Members Present: Jessica, Amy, Karissa Wade, Dan, Manny, Jim, and Cindy

Excused absences: Mason, Jake, Derrick, Marie

1. **Call to order / Welcome & Introduction:** Cindy Watson, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:40PM. The staff are working through some technical difficulties to open the meeting on Teams.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** The February 6, 2026, minutes were offered for approval. Manny moved the approval of the minutes, Dan offered the second. The minutes were unanimously approved.
3. **Guest Speaker:**
 - *James Eddy – Community Convenor of the Pulse Commemoration.* The 10th anniversary of the mass shooting at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando is this June and a local committee is organizing a commemoration ceremony, including speakers who spoke at the rally held on June 12, 2016. The event will take place on June 12, 2026, at 6:00pm at the Willowbranch Park. The mayor has been asked to speak, along with additional elected officials. Manny Andrade will read the names of those killed – most of whom were Hispanic. A suggestion was made to include an ASL interpreter in the planning. James also noted that he has been active in the LGBTQ community for 27 years, first as a volunteer for the Holiday Helpers group who hosted a Holiday gift party for children affected by HIV/AIDS beginning in the late 1990's. James also organized a LGBTQ+ adult space called Rainbow House, and then ran for city council, which led him to get involved in local politics. As a longtime LGBTQ leader, James encouraged the Advisory Board to make sure the mayor stays on top of what's happening in the community.

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4. Old Business/New Business:

- Subcommittee Reports:
 - *Arts, Culture, Entertainment and Recreation Committee – Manny Andrade, Chair* – Manny reported that he is attending the Pulse Commemoration committee to keep the Advisory Board up to date on the event in June. The committee is also monitoring vandalism toward LGBTQ spaces and will encourage visibility of the Advisory Board during Pride month.
 - *Health Wellness and Public Safety – Jake Eleazer, Chair* – Dan spoke on issues the committee is monitoring, including ongoing assaults on the legal rights of the trans community and the loss of a leader in the local community by suicide this past month. Dan also reported on the state changes to the ADAP program, where the Florida Department of Health has made a decision to eliminate the ADAP premium plus program at the previous eligibility levels. The program enabled people with HIV who were at 400% or less of the federal poverty rates to pay for insurance and lifesaving HIV medications. The loss of this assistance will impact at least 500 people in the Jacksonville area. The committee discussed the need to inform the mayor's office, specifically the Health Officer, about the impact of this decision. Stephen Dare from Garrett Dennis' office encouraged the board to submit concerns and suggestions to the mayor's office through Mr. Dennis or other staff in the mayor's office. There is the opportunity for this board to gather information on the situation and make recommendations for action.
 - *Legislation Education and Policy – Mason Manion, Chair* – Amy spoke about the priorities of this committee, especially her desire to provide workshops for LGBTQ young people on civic engagement. The chair suggested we reach out to the Mayor's Youth Council staff to explore possible collaborations. It was also noted that the Community group, Jax Allies, led by Tina Wirth, is developing a community calendar that we could possibly tap into.
- Annual LGBTQ+ Pride Month Ceremony Event update - Kara Tucker – tabled until April Meeting.

5. Chair Report: Cindy Watson - tabled

6. Public comment:

- Austin spoke for JASMYN, reminding all that the annual Strides for Pride 5K will be held on April 26 at 8:00 am at Riverside Arts Market location. Registration for the race and vendor tables is now open. This event draws over 2000 people annually to celebrate the LGBTQ community and raise dollars for youth programs at JASMYN.

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7. Announcements / Calendar of Events:

- The mayor's office will hold a celebration and report on the status of the Mayor's Transition teams at Jacksonville Public Library on March 3th, 9:00 -11:30 AM. A recommendation from the Mayor's Community and Constituent Outreach Committee was to form the Mayor's LGBTQ+ Advisory Board!
- March 14 – Justin Bell is heading up the annual AIDS Walk at A. Philip Randolph Park at 10:00 AM
- March 14 – The LGBTQ+ Chamber of Commerce, led by David Vandygriff, will host an awards celebration at the Riverside Club.
- June 20 – Equality Florida will hold a benefit at Fishweir Brewing for adults 18+

8. **Adjourn** – meeting adjourned at 1:50PM following a motion to adjourn by Manny.

Notes submitted by Cindy.