

Bylaws of Charleston LGBTQ Working Group

Adopted June 29, 2020 | Effective July 1, 2020

ARTICLE 1: NAME

The name of this advisory group shall be known as the Charleston LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) Working Group.

ARTICLE 2: PURPOSE

The Charleston LGBTQ Working Group, established in May 2019, shall work directly with the Mayor to offer recommendations and help develop LGBTQ+ related policies in the Capital City.

ARTICLE 3: MISSION

The Working Group recognizes all voices and perspectives must be considered to make lasting, equitable change and remains committed to maintaining a welcoming, safe and inclusive environment. Members shall make a concerted effort to think creatively about issues, consider the interconnected nature of social categorization [race, color, religion, ancestry, sex, age, disability, marital status, military status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, income status, etc.], encourage cross-community, cross-sector and cross-issue collaboration and establish opportunities throughout the City for LGBTQ+ individuals. The Working Group will continually strive to ensure the LGBTQ+ community's voices are heard and ensure both the unique needs and experiences of the community are reflected in the recommendations provided to the Mayor.

ARTICLE 4: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Number: The Working Group shall consist of no fewer than 12 members and no more than 18, including liaisons and officers. A vacancy shall not prevent the Working Group from conducting business.

Section 2. Composition: When possible, the Working Group shall include representation from the business, healthcare, education, military, faith-based and policy/advocacy communities and include individuals without regard to race, color, religion, ancestry, sex, age, disability, marital status, military status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and income status.

Section 3. Appointments: Initial members of the Working Group were appointed by the Mayor. At the end of the first year, and prior to the adoption of bylaws, all members were asked if they wanted to continue to serve one (1) additional year.

Future members and/or members to fill vacancies of the Working Group shall be appointed by the Mayor, with consideration given to the recommendations of the Working Group.

Section 4. Recommendations: Any Working Group member or any person who has attended at least three (3) regular meetings within the past year may submit a recommendation [to fill a vacancy] in writing to the officers noted in Article 4. Officers and Liaisons shall review recommendations on a rolling basis and submit recommendations to the Mayor through the City Executive liaison when vacancies occur or in anticipation of new vacancies.

Section 5. Removal: Automatic removal results at the end of a term, except in the case of the past Chair, who will continue to serve in an advisory capacity for a period of time noted in Article 3, Section 6.

Section 6. Term: Working Group members shall serve for a one (1) year term and no more than two (2) consecutive terms. Liaison roles are not subject to term rules. The past Chair shall continue to serve, in an advisory capacity, for a minimum of three (3) months and a maximum of six (6) months past the conclusion of his / her / their term. A term shall run from July 1 to June 30.

Section 7. Compensation: All members of the Working Group shall serve without compensation.

Section 8. Voting: Each member, except the current Chair and past Chair in his / her / their advisory capacity, shall be entitled to one vote on each matter submitted to a vote of the Working Group. Proxy voting is not permitted.

ARTICLE 5: OFFICERS

The officers of the Working Group shall consist of a Chair, Vice-Chair, and Recording Secretary. Liaisons, noted in Article 5, shall not serve in any officer capacity. Officers will be selected by majority vote.

Section 1. Chair: The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Working Group and is responsible for calling meetings.

Section 2. Vice-Chair: In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair shall preside and call meetings.

Section 3. Recording Secretary: The Recording Secretary shall supervise and present minutes at each meeting, coordinate the agenda, maintain a current list of all Working Group members, and keep attendance records.

Section 4. Officer Selection: Election of officers shall be conducted as the first order of business during the first meeting of the current term. The outgoing Chair shall lead the initial part of the meeting.

Nominations, including self-nominations, must be submitted to the Recording Secretary at the start of the meeting, in writing or orally at the meeting.

Any voting-eligible member or any person(s) who has attended at least three (3) regular meetings within the past year may submit nominations. All nominees must be voting-eligible Working Group members.

Voting shall be by secret ballot, voice roll call or electronic vote.

Candidates receiving the largest number of votes shall be seated in the respective officer position at the time of vote. Following Officer Selection, the newly elected Chair shall lead the remainder of the meeting.

ARTICLE 6: LIAISONS

The liaisons of the Working Group shall consist of a City Executive (Mayor's Office), Police, and City Council liaison. Liaisons shall serve at the discretion of the Mayor. Additional liaisons may be added, or current liaisons removed, at the discretion of the Mayor.

Section 1. City Executive Liaison: The City Executive Liaison shall serve as a resource and connect LGBTQ+ individuals to City departments and other groups within the community, elevate LGBTQ-related concerns to the City

Executive (Mayor) and members of the Administration, and maintain open lines of communication between the Working Group and the Administration.

Section 2. Police Liaison: The Police Liaison shall serve as the direct point of contact within the Charleston Police Department--strengthening the relationship between LGBTQ+ individuals and the Department through open dialogue, fostering positive relationships and addressing safety concerns within the LGBTQ+ community.

Section 3. City Council Liaison: The City Council liaison shall serve as the direct point of contact within Charleston City Council—providing information to Council regarding issues affecting LGBTQ+ individuals, recommending action [as appropriate], maintaining open lines of communication and advocating on behalf of the LGBTQ+ community.

ARTICLE 7: AREAS OF FOCUS

The Working Group will focus efforts on policy, education, medical/health, business, faith-based, youth/gay-straight alliance (GSA), and military/veteran. Task forces may be appointed as needed to accomplish specific short-term objectives.

ARTICLE 8: MEETINGS

Section 1. Regular Meetings: The Working Group shall hold a minimum of 6 regular meetings annually. Meetings shall be open to all Working Group members and any interested community members. Regular meetings, for the following year, shall be set at a regular meeting at the end of the current calendar year.

Section 2. Special Meetings: The Working Group may call special meetings to address matters that cannot wait until the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Section 3. Notice of Meeting: All meetings shall be noticed in a manner consistent with the Open Government Meetings Act. Notice of meetings will be made through email to the Working Group and through the City Clerk's Office for the general public. Further noticing of any meetings shall be at the discretion of the Working Group.

Section 4. Quorum: A quorum, for the purpose of holding a meeting, shall consist of not less than a simple majority.

Section 5. Meeting Format: Meetings may take place in-person or virtually through video conference.

Section 6. Public Comment: Opportunity shall be provided for the general public to offer comment during regularly scheduled meetings.

ARTICLE 9: DECORUM AT MEETINGS

Section 1. Member Conduct: All members shall conduct themselves in a professional manner.

Section 2. Disruptions: Should any individual(s) become disruptive during a meeting, the presiding officer may immediately declare the individual(s) out of order, and shall order the person(s) to cease and desist or immediately leave the meeting. If the person(s) continue to cause the meeting to be delayed or stopped by any disruptive or argumentative action, the presiding officer shall recess the meeting until such person(s) leave the meeting.

ARTICLE 10: AMENDMENTS

Amendments to these bylaws may be proposed in writing at any time and shall be considered for vote at the next scheduled Working Group meeting. In order for a proposed amendment to take effect, a simple majority voting in favor of the change is required.