

# **ALEXANDRIA COMMISSION FOR WOMEN**

## **MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2025**

**VIRTUAL**

**7 PM**

**ATTENDANCE:** Yvette Jiang; Vanita Datta; Elisabeth Palmer Johnson; T. Nicole Hutchinson; Shelley Brown; Kafi Joseph; Hope Nelson; Annette Maldonado; Nichelle Johnson Billups; Krystle Bransky; Eva Bastianon, and Caroline Schofield

**ABSENT:** Jennifer Beatty

### **STAFF:**

Debra Evans

### **MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

None.

### **WELCOME NEW COMMISSIONERS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First Vice Chair Jiang welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. to include welcoming the Commission's newest member Youth Commissioner, Caroline Schofield.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments.

### **APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER 2025 MINUTES**

One correction was made to October 2025 minutes. The minutes were approved as amended.

### **ELECTION**

An email was forwarded to the Commission by Ms. Evans on November 3, 2025. One candidate was submitted for Chair and one for Vice Chair. A call for nominations from the floor was made. Commissioners who wish to nominate a person must confer with the person (who must agree) before nominating them. Nominations will be held in December 2025. The nominations process is a three-month process (October, November and December). The requirement for those nominated for office is that they must have attended at least 75% of the meetings that were held during their tenure. It was suggested the new chair create a bylaws committee immediately. The bios for the two new members that joined were requested for voting purposes. Everyone who is a member may nominate themselves at the December 2025 meeting. **Action Item: Commissioner Joseph will send a copy of the bylaws to Commissioner Bastianon (they are also on the website.) Action Item: Commissioner Palmer Johnson will bring ballots to the December meeting.**

## OTHER TOPICS TO DISCUSS

*Scottish Parade* – Commissioner Bastianon spoke on Commissioner Beatty's behalf. Commissioner Beatty sent two quotes for a 72-inch x 32-inch banner (\$128 from Affordable Signs). The color and language match the Commission's pamphlet. The quote from Banana Banner is \$190.80.

Legal has approved the banner. The Commission must determine which banner to purchase, how to pay for the banner, and a release form for the Parade must be signed by November 15<sup>th</sup>. Signing the release form is at the discretion of the Commission on how to sign it. City will not sign the waiver because the parade is outside of the enabled legislation of the Commission for Women.

The first motion was made to approve the Affordable Signs banner by First Vice Chair Jiang; seconded by Commissioner Bastianon. All were in favor. After further discussions, a motion was made to move forward with the banner by Commissioner Rev. Dr. Brown. It was seconded by Commissioner Dr. Palmer Johnson: one opposed. Next was a motion for one banner exclusively (w/parade style with sleeve on the back for a long dowel or side grommets) by Commissioner Rev. Dr. Brown to include voting via chat as well. Eight Commissioners were in favor of the side grommet banner: one opposed. Commissioners Joseph and Bastianon (officially) motioned, in this order, to see if: 1) the City will fund the Commission; 2) to see if DCHS can fund the Commission; 3) from there decide those who will contribute to purchase the banner; one opposed.

It was noted not to make the method of contributing a default method to covering expenses.

**Action Item: Ms. Evans will ask if the Commission has discretionary funds.**

**Action Item: Ms. Evans emailed the waiver to the Commission. She will also keep the Commission's banner in her storage closet in her program's office.**

*Carpenter's Shelter* – Thursday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, is the next date to volunteer at the Shelter. Commissioner Dr. Palmer Johnson made a motion to move this event to a later date. All were in favor. None opposed.

*Health Coalition Events* – 6:30 p.m. – 8 p.m., Wednesday, November 5<sup>th</sup> at Patrick Henry. Commissioner Maldonado and Commissioner Dr. Palmer Johnson plan to attend.

*Social Media Transition Updates* – Commissioner Maldonado met with former Second Vice Chair Allison Heiser and all the accounts have been transitioned to her. Action Item: Commissioner Maldonado will bring to the December meeting suggestions on creating awareness of the Commission. She will also meet with each Commissioner one on one to discuss social media and send the handles to Ms. Evans who will send them to the Commissioners. Commissioner Schofield will also assist with Instagram.

*Volunteer Alexandria and Discovery Guide* – There are two volunteers to assist with the Discovery Guide. They will identify gaps. The Discovery Guide is the Commission is using to

update the Status of Women's Report. They are going through retreat information so that they know exactly what to do for the update.

*City Budget Letter Update* – Commissioner Datta provided the status of the budget letter, which has been sent to the Commission for comments. The letter outlined the Status of Women's Report, requested a \$6,500 budget for strategic outreach and topics that were important to the Commission. Edits were made. A motion was made to approve **Action Item: The letter will be submitted this same evening, November 3<sup>rd</sup>.**

Meeting with Mayor Alia Gaskins – Commissioner Datta, member of the Advocacy Subcommittee, met with the Mayor. The discussion was about what the Commission could do to obtain funding and that it is critical to amplify the Commission. She thanked her for all the work that was done for Alexandria.

First Vice Chair Jiang met with the Mayor as well. She asked about the letter for the FY27 budget. Through the City Attorney's Office, it was explained that the Commission cannot fund raise or solicit funds. Any items and money must be received through City Council. A motion was made by Commissioner Datta to forward the letter with First Vice Chair Jiang's signature and current Commissioners' names. Commissioner Joseph seconded. The motion was approved. **Action Item: The new chair of the Commission for Women (after elections in December) will send out a letter to City Council on the direction of the Commission.**

*Bios* – Submit bios.

Commissioners were invited to volunteer to be paired with a council member or join a subcommittee they can choose.

Commissioner Joseph requested time on the December agenda to go back to the Commission's handbook for the exact language in regards to funds.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT OUT**

*Advocacy Subcommittee* – Commissioner Datta met with Alyssa Coffey Bachelor from the Fairfax Subcommittee. On November 18th, the Fairfax County Government center will gather women across the county. They're sending out invitations to roundtables. Delegate Shin, Delegate Watts, Delegate Clear. They will discuss what women are facing. Commissioners were encouraged to attend to advocate for housing, education, health and preparing for the new administration.

*Volunteer Subcommittee* – The subcommittee is looking to keep members informed on a quarterly basis by providing information and reminding everyone in a fun and engaging way on policies and different elements of what each subcommittee is working on. **Action Item: First Vice Chair Jiang will schedule the volunteer subcommittee for a 10-minute meeting with the E-board.**

*Community Outreach Subcommittee* – Commissioner Bastianon shared that they are working with the health coalition and will attend the health meeting along with Commissioner Maldonado and Commissioner Dr. Palmer Johnson.

## **LIAISON REPORT OUT / COUNCILMEMBER PAIRING REPORT OUT**

*Human Rights Commission* – Met at City Hall on Tuesday, October 21<sup>st</sup>. They had three guest speakers from Alexandria City Public Schools, Alexandria Health Department and the Indivisible Do Something Alexandria group. They will have a poster to be posted in Alexandria to support immigrant families. The health department provided a report from Sean Curry and Christopher Harris presented from the school board. The school needs to increase trans restrooms; they currently have one that is in a secluded area. There are issues with homophobia as well. The Human Rights Commission will look into these issues. Commissioner Dr. Palmer Johnson was unable to give her liaison report at the meeting.

*DASH BUS* – A DASH rodeo took place in October. This was the first year that DASH opened to the public to weigh in as judges. It was a state-level competition event and a success.

Commissioner Joseph asked if there is a standard format for communicating with Councilmembers. There is not a standard format. However, it was recommended to summarize takeaways. It was expressed that they standardize the reports given to Councilmembers from the Commission for Women which will allow them to have the same information. **Action Item: This topic is tabled for the next meeting.**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 5:56 p.m.

## **NEXT MEETING**

The December 9, 2025, meeting will be in person.