

# **LGBT History Project of the LGBT Center of Central PA**

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**Title:** Governor's Council for Sexual Minorities Meeting Minutes

**Date:** March 28, 1977

**Location:** LGBT-001 Joseph W. Burns Collection

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MINUTES OF THE GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL FOR  
SEXUAL MINORITIES - March 28, 1977

I. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE FLOOR

A. Policy Statement Issued by Secretary of Welfare

1. Non-discrimination statements both for Welfare's own employees and for its clients have been issued.
2. It was suggested that the statement be put in the Department's newsletter. Tony will send copies to the gay media.

B. Letters to Commission on Civil Rights

1. The American Friends Service Committee Community Relations Division asked the Commission on Civil Rights to undertake an investigation to see if there is a need for the Commission to take action on discrimination against sexual minorities. The Commission responded that it would not take action until Congress takes action and specifically put sexual orientation under its jurisdiction.

C. Press Releases Should be Inserted into the Advocate

II. REPORT/ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

A. Correction of Address/Phone List

Some corrections of the address/phone list were made. Any further corrections should be sent to Tony.

B. Annual Report

1. The Annual Report is presently being typed and will be at the printer's within the week.
2. One thousand copies have been made for the Governor, Legislators and agency heads. Some extras will be sent to groups and individuals who would be interested in the contents of the Annual Report.
3. Barry suggested having some publicity centered on a ceremonial handing of the Annual Report to the Governor. Tony will arrange for this if possible.

C. Meeting Date

The following are the meeting dates for the coming year:

1977 - March 28, 1:30 - Harrisburg  
May 4, 1:30 - Harrisburg  
June 17, 7 pm - Pittsburgh

July 28, 1:30 - Harrisburg  
September 15, 1:30 - Harrisburg  
October 28, 1:30 - Harrisburg  
December 9, 7 pm - Philadelphia

1978 - January 19, 1:30 - Harrisburg  
March 2, 1:30 - Harrisburg  
April 12, 1:30 - Harrisburg  
May 26, 1:30 - Harrisburg  
July 7, 7 pm - Erie

D. Gay Action Coalition

On May 21, 1977, there will be a demonstration in Washington, D.C. at 12 noon protesting the Supreme Court's decision which put sodomy laws back under state control.

E. Governor's Press Releases

Council members should see Bill McLaughlin if there want to be put on the mailing list for the Governor's Press Releases.

F. Nominations for Steering Committee

Nominations for the members of the Steering Committee will take place at the next Council meeting. Self-nominations are accepted. Balloting will be by mail between next meeting and the following meeting.

G. Programs

The next program will be on the problems of handicapped sexual minorities.

Everyone is reminded to please send in their program choices if they have not already done so.

H. The Attorney General

The Council has had problems with the Attorney General centering on three main areas:

1. The Attorney General's statement to the Steering Committee that the Attorney General's office would not endorse the repeal of the sodomy bill since his office might be called on to review its legality and the Attorney General did not want a conflict of interest.

2. The Attorney General's refusal to allow the Community Advocate Unit to intervene in the case of a gay male who wanted to gain custody of his child who would otherwise be put into a foster placement.
3. The Attorney General's response to the sponsorship problem the Council has had with the sodomy repeal bill.

I. Friends of the Council for Sexual Minorities

The Friends of the Council for Sexual Minorities has been set up as a separate corporation to receive money for the Council. We are presently in the process of filing articles of incorporation. The question has come up over whether the Board of Directors should consist of the entire Council or of the Steering Committee alone. The basic function of the Board is the dispersal of funds, particularly signing checks.

The Council wants to see the articles of incorporation before deciding how the Board of Directors should be set up. Randy suggested that the by-laws be drawn up with the entire Council as the Board of Directors and the Steering Committee as the Executive Committee.

This issue was tabled until until the next meeting when everybody will have a chance to read the articles of incorporation.

III. Employment Committee Report

A. Meeting with Dan Harley and Milt Berkes

1. The Employment Committee met with Dan Harley on the procedures of processing complaints through the Bureau of Affirmative Action and to ensure that all state agencies include sexual minorities in their non-discrimination clause.
2. Complaints of discrimination will be handled as regular complaints by the Bureau of Affirmative Action.
3. Milt Berkes is to be apprised of any non-compliance by state agencies.
4. Milt Berkes made it clear that anyone who would refuse to comply would be dealt with by the Governor.
5. It was agreed that there would be training of the affirmative action officers in dealing with complaints alleging discrimination on the basis of sexual or affectional preference.

B. Union Contract

The Federation of State Cultural and Educational Profession will include a clause on non-discrimination on the basis of sexual preference or orientation in its contract.

C. Civil Service

1. The Civil Service will let the Council and gay groups know of vacancies in state agencies.
2. The Civil Service will go along with publicity such as tv spots.

D. AFSCME

1. AFSCME has been asked to intervene in legislation that would affect its members and to include a non-discrimination clause in its contract.
2. There has been a positive response so far, but there has been nothing in writing. The grass roots membership were very supportive when Marilyn Hewitt presented a speech on the need to include sexual or affectional preference in the non-discrimination clause.
3. We need support and pressure from union members on AFSCME to get the non-discrimination clause included in the contract.

IV. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

A. Senate Bill 83, Printer's No. 558

1. Since the last Council meeting there has been a meeting of the State Government Committee and the bill has been favorably reported out. There were three speakers at the State Government Committee meeting who spoke out against the bill; Harry Langhorne, Jerry Brennan and a representative from NOW.
2. There was a demonstration at Senator Smith's office in Philadelphia and a demonstration in Harrisburg. The Harrisburg demonstration was successful and well covered. It received good press in Harrisburg. After the Harrisburg demonstration, everyone went inside and lobbied. There were approximately twenty to twenty-five senators reached in that lobby effort.
3. Last week SB 83 came up for second reading and was amended to make it a much tighter bill. Many of the problems that would have made it constitutionally vague were dealt with.
4. Senate Bill 83 is on calendar today for the third reading in the Senate. We now have approximately fourteen or fifteen Senators against the bill this year as opposed to approximately two last year.

5. The bill will probably pass the Senate. We hope to get it killed in the House Judiciary Committee.
6. Sam suggested mobilizing the telephone tree to call the Senators to defeat the bill. Walter suggested at least calling those who voted for recommitting the bill in order to reinforce them. It should be noted that some of those who voted for recommitment wanted to send the bill back so that it would be tightened up and made harder to challenge.

B. Repeal of Sodomy Statute, SB 531

1. This bill is the first bill proposing the repeal of the sodomy statute ever brought in Pennsylvania.
2. Barry lobbied twenty-five Senators, twelve of whom, including the lead of the Republican party agreed to sponsor the bill. On Thursday, the week before the bill was to be introduced, an article appeared in the Philadelphia Inquirer stating "three head Senators support sodomy repeal". Four Senators withdrew their sponsorship claiming that Barry had misled them, that they thought that the bill only dealt with married people. Barry had explained the bill completely to all of the Senators that he had discussed it with.

Barry talked to the Attorney General who said that he would not retract the statements that he had made about Barry. Barry then told the Attorney General that he was going to the press and he issued a press release.

Craig Lewis told Barry that the eight sponsors who remain are strong supporters of the bill. The bill has been referred to the Judiciary Committee. The bill probably will not come up for discussion in the Committee until May.

Barbara suggested letters from people to the Editorial page supporting Barry.

Because of the uncooperativeness and hostility expressed by the Attorney General, the Council passed the following resolution to be sent to the Governor:

"Resolved, that the Pennsylvania Council for Sexual Minorities is deeply distressed by the actions of Attorney General Robert P. Kane in:

- (1) Prohibiting the involvement of the Community Advocate Unit (Pittsburgh) in the matter of David and Jason Johnson.

(2) Not using the power of his office in support of the repeal of the repeal of the voluntary devial sexual intercourse statute.

(3) Making certain allegations about Council misrepresentation of such a bill.

Be it further resolved that Anthony Silvestre, Chairperson, be directed to meet with the Governor to further clarify and explicate these concerns to the Governor."

C. Human Rights Day

April 19, 1977 is Human Rights Day. Its purpose is to educate the Legislators about discrimination including discrimination against sexual minorities.

V. International Women's Year

A. There will be a state conference in Pittsburgh in June.

1. Thirty-six women are planning this conference. None of them are open lesbians.
2. The conference planners are resisting Kathy's attempts to bring out lesbian issues.
3. It will probably be necessary to demonstrate at the conference in order to make the issues of lesbians known.
4. If this Council is to represent all Pennsylvania women, lesbian women should also be represented.

Walter moved that a letter be sent from the Council to the Planning Committee of the International Women's Year Conference in Pennsylvania that the Council has received a report on the meeting and the Council thinks that a Council member should sit on the Planning Committee. This motion was passed unanimously.

The Council then adjourned into three groups to discuss the following questions:

1. The disollusion of the Community Relations Committee, the Human Relations Committee and the Liquor Control Board Committee as these committies are non-functioning.
2. A Sensitivity and Awareness Committee whose purpose would be to provide speakers, training and education.
3. Limitation of committee membership, specifically limiting council members to membership on one committee only.

4. The functioning of committees.

After a meeting for half-an-hour, the small committees of the Council reassembled. It was decided that there was not sufficient time to discuss the suggestions of these committees and that they would be put in writing and distributed along with the minutes.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 pm.

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COMMITTEE REPORT PREPARED BY DOLLY SHUSTER,  
ART DUPRAT, TOM WIESTLING, MARILYN HEWITT, KATHY  
VELNOSKY AND DAN HERZOH

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1. Dissolving the Community Relations, Human Relations and Liquor Control Board Committees. It was noted that while the Liquor Control Board Committee was a non-functioning committee, the work of the Community Relations and Human Relations Committees was actually being done in other committees.
2. Sensitivity and Awareness Committee - This sub-committee approved the title of this committee to be Speaker's Bureau. It is understood that the purpose of the Speaker's Bureau is training and education.
3. Membership of Committees. It is suggested that each Council member be limited to one committee membership as a general rule. Exceptions should be allowed if the individual proves him or herself capable of working on more than one committee. By working on a committee, it is understood that this means active participation and not mere attendance at the committee meetings.
4. The functioning of committees.

Initial discussion centered around the State Police Committee. It was decided that since there was a new head of the State Police we should try to re-establish ties with the State Police and hopefully continue the sensitivity training program if at all possible. We should also aim for a training program of the local police who come to the state police for training. It was noted by Art Duprat that this program is now being re-worked. It should be noted that it is now part of the course structure in the Bureau of Corrections to include training on sexual minorities and their problems. It was also noted that it would help if we could get such a request for training of local police from a local police department.

The main recommendations concerning the general functions of committees are as follows:

1. The committee structure should not be the only structure utilized. Although the committee structure is useful when there is need to formulate the problems that the Council wants to deal with, implementation of any action can frequently be achieved by two or three concerned individuals. It was noted that in committees the work is normally done only by two or three concerned individuals. By

permitting an alternative structure of concerned individuals working on specific projects, said projects not being under a specific committee, it is hoped that work can be done in a more efficient manner. It is suggested that people who are working on special projects rather than through the committee structure should report to the Steering Committee coordinator in charge of that particular area.

2. The suggestion in point 1 for the utilization of interest areas as opposed to a sole reliance on the committee structure requires a change in the use of the Steering Committee as coordinators. In the first year of its existence, the Council decided that the Steering Committee should have only an administrative function, not a substantive function. Since it is impossible for the Chairperson to perform all of the detailed oversight that is necessary even when there is total reliance on a committee structure, it is impossible for the Chairperson to provide the detailed oversight that is necessary in a structure which utilizes both the committee and the concerned interest group form. Therefore, this committee recommends that the Steering Committee be given the power to make substantive as well as administrative decisions. Once the Steering Committee has this power, the members of the Steering Committee should serve as coordinators over various committees and interest group projects.
3. Each committee should decide whether it is at the stage where it should continue to function as a committee or whether it has formulated the problem that it thinks the Council should deal with and can now break up into interest groups.
4. This committee recommends that steps be taken to insure that all Council members attend the Council meeting and actively participate in the activities of the Council. Unfortunately, the absence of Council members has been particularly noted among representatives of various state agencies.