



STATE OF WASHINGTON
COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS
COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

2nd Quarter Commission Meeting
Zoom Meeting
June 6, 2020, 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order at 8:31am.

ROLL CALL

Name	Title	Organization	Present
Anita Ahumada	Commissioner	CHA	Yes
Brian Moreno	Commissioner	CHA	Yes
Candice Garza	Commissioner	CHA	Yes
Carlos Ruiz	Chair	CHA	Yes
Jessica Hernandez	Commissioner	CHA	Yes
Julieta Altamirano-Crosby	Commissioner	CHA	Yes
Keelcy Perez	Commissioner	CHA	Yes
Lili Navarrete	Commissioner	CHA	Yes
Paula Arno Martinez	Commissioner	CHA	Yes
Rodrigo Renteria	Commissioner	CHA	Yes
Tony Gallegos	Commissioner	CHA	No
STAFF			
María Sigüenza	Executive Director	CHA	Yes
Nancy Rocha Aguilar	Communications and External Relations Manager	CHA	Yes
Myra Hernandez	Operations and Special Projects Manager	CHA	Yes
GUESTS			
Alejandro Sanchez			

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

At 8:34 am Commissioner Garza motioned to add 15 minutes to items: BLM and Yakima Strikes. Commissioner Arno Martinez seconded the motion.

Commissioner Moreno asked for a point of clarification: Would the items be stretched out or within the time frame of the agenda. Commissioner Garza moved to add 30 minutes to the agenda: 15 minutes to BLM and 15 minutes to the Yakima Strikes.

8:39 AM: Commissioner Moreno motions to accept the agenda as amended. Seconded by Commissioner Garza. No discussion. All in favor. With no further discussion, the motion was unanimously approved.

Chair Ruiz asked for an explanation on understanding how the OPMA works. Commissioner Moreno briefly explained the how agenda changes/adjustments can be made through Robert's Rules.

ICE BREAKER

Chair Ruiz introduced an ice breaker and read the laws guiding the Commission. Chair Ruiz asked for Commissioner's interpretation of RCW43.115.040.

Discussion:

Commissioner Renteria said "we don't have the responsiveness in times of uncertainty."

Commissioner Ahumada said there needs to be an assessment of the needs of our community. "We are not always going to agree with Legislators but we need to make them understand."

Commissioner Altamirano-Crosby: "We need to have a serious and honest conversation about our work."

Commissioner Moreno: "There has not been suppression in terms of speaking with Legislators if we have solutions."

Chair Ruiz/Commissioner Ahumada: "The scope is as narrow as we want to make it."

Commissioner Arno Martinez: "We do have to be careful of being 'too loose' with the scope. Folks don't feel supported in going out and examining issues." She agreed that we cannot go to the Governor or the Legislature with issues but offer no solutions. There needs to be more support for commissioners.

Executive Director Sigüenza explained the role of the commission and CHA's scope of work for commissioners.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

9:02 AM: Commissioner Arno Martinez motioned to approve the meeting minutes from 2020 May Special Meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Hernandez.

Discussion:

Commissioner Ahumada questioned Item D in the May 5 Special Meeting – does not recall the call to investigate former Chair Moreno's conduct.

Discussion to change wording to "fail due to lack of motion." Change to reflect who made the motion and who seconded them.

9:08 AM: Commissioner Arno Martinez withdrew her motion

9:08 AM: Commissioner Ahumada motioned to approve the notes as amended. Seconded by Commissioner Arno Martinez.

Discussion:

Commissioner Altamirano-Crosby motioned to add into the notes the following: Her questions regarding membership to the Executive Committee and her motion for the recommendation to remove/suspend commissioners.

9:11 AM: Commissioner Perez-Woolley motioned to approved amendment of Commissioner Ahumada. Seconded by Commissioner Renteria.

9:12 AM: Without further discussion, amendments approved.

CHA BYLAWS

Chair Ruiz moved for commissioners to familiarize themselves of CHA Bylaws Chapters: 1, 2, and 3. He asked for commissioners to rate from 1-5 how much commissioners understood the Bylaws.

Discussion:

Commissioner Ahumada asked why there was a revision done without the knowledge of the commission.

Executive Director Sigüenza reminded commissioners that at 4th Quarter Commission Meeting on December 7, 2019 in Olympia, the commission approved a revision to the travel policy. The revision was voted on and approved by commissioners.

Commissioner Garza shared that once she was on-boarded she reviewed the policies and that through meeting “we would learn exponentially on the policies rather than memorizing them. Experience builds the knowledge.”

Commissioner Arno Martinez expressed needing a better understanding of Robert’s Rules.

Chair Ruiz explained the importance of understanding CHA’s Bylaws.

Commissioner Perez Woolley agreed that it was important that commissioners fully understood the bylaws.

9:29 AM: Chair Ruiz proposed to create a special Task Force that would review the current bylaws and engage with all commissioners regarding suggestions to make to the bylaws in order to “tighten them up as they contradict themselves and lack clarity.” Searching for four (4) other commissioners that would like to join.

Commissioners Perez Woolley, Navarrete, Moreno, and Garza will be part of the Task Force with Chair Ruiz.

9:32 AM: Commissioner Navarrete removed herself from the Task Force and opened it for another member to join.

9:33 AM: Commissioner Altamirano-Crosby joined the Task Force.

9:34 AM: Commissioner Arno Martinez motioned to move to the next agenda item EC Presentation. Seconded by Commissioner Moreno.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE PRESENTATION/VOTE

Commissioner Garza spoke about the conversations she had with the Arts Commission and the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs (CAPAA). Neither commission has an Executive Committee similar to non-profits. “They are structured like ours but with differences in how their internal groups were made up.”

Chair Ruiz presented proposal:

The Executive Committee made of the Chair, Two (2) Vice Chairs, and Two (2) at-large members who would be voted on by the commission.

Discussion:

Commissioner Garza initially opposed the two (2) Vice Chairs.

Chair Ruiz cited 3.2 of the bylaws: Chair appoints Vice Chair in 30 days and the Chair call on the Executive Committee. He proposed a change to that so that the new Executive Committee is not optional and that there would be two (2) Vice Chairs and two (2) at-large EC members.

Commissioner Moreno: “How do the two (2) Vice Chairs add onto the commission?”

Commissioner Perez Woolley explained “CAPAA has two (2) Vice Chairs to keep the Chair honest. The Vice Chair would give them more visibility into what the Chair does and their responsibility.” The spoke with Commissioner Sam Cho from CAPAA. It would “delegate work efficiently and streamline work.”

The Art Commission has a linear hierarchy. CAPAA has peer appointed Vice Chairs – great for building the knowledge and succession.

9:49 AM: Commissioner Renteria motions that the Executive Committee be made of the Chair, Two (2) Vice Chairs, and Two (2) at-large members who would be voted on. Seconded by Commissioner Navarrete. Without further discussion the motion carried unanimously.

Discussion:

On the structure of appointing two (2) Vice Chairs or voting them in to avoid favoritism. Commissioner Moreno abstained from voting on the EC structure approval.

10:00 AM: Chair Ruiz “I will entertain a vote to have the members of the Executive Committee to be voted on by the commission as a whole and not appointed.”

Discussion:

Commissioner Moreno suggested “we take them and formalize them and then have ED Sigüenza weigh on them and later vote to amend the bylaws.”

Executive Director Sigüenza agreed with Commissioner Moreno about her review of proposed changes to the bylaws. Current bylaws don’t state you can’t vote on EC members. An election could be held but not able to identify a Vice Chair. Selecting EC peers that could be Vice Chairs. The proposal must be in writing for both the Executive Director and Commission.

Next step: writing out the proposal and present it to Executive Director Sigüenza.

Commissioner Perez Woolley asked for clarification: “Today we will appoint an EC within the bylaws and from there the taskforce will write out new language, present it to Executive Director Sigüenza and then vote at the next meeting?”

10:11 AM: Commissioner Perez Woolley motioned to create an outline and share it to Executive Director Sigüenza before the 30 days. Seconded by Commissioner Hernandez. Without further discussion the motion was approved unanimously.

10:13 AM: Commissioner Ahumada moved to suspend the meeting until 10:35 AM. Seconded by Commissioner Arno Martinez.

10:37 AM: Commissioner Perez Woolley moved to resume the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Moreno.

10:38 AM: Chair Ruiz “would like to move forward with the appointment of the Executive Committee.”

Chair Ruiz nominated Commissioner Arno Martinez for Vice Chair appointment. Commissioner Arno Martinez accepted the nomination.

Discussion:

Clarification on what “consent by the commission means.”

Commissioner Moreno clarified that it is part of the bylaws that needs to be cleaned up.

10:40 AM: Commissioner Ahumada motioned to nominate Commissioner Arno Martinez as Vice Chair. Seconded by Commissioner Altamirano-Crosby. Without further discussion the motion was approved unanimously.

10:42 AM: Chair Ruiz puts forth a slate of 3 commissioners to be part of the EC: Commissioners Altamirano-Crosby, Perez Woolley, and Renteria.

10:44 AM: Commissioner Hernandez motions to approve recommendation of Commissioners Altamirano-Crosby, Perez Woolley, and Renteria to be part of the EC. Seconded by Commissioner Ahumada. With no further discussion the motion was approved unanimously.

Chair Ruiz: “Just to satisfy the bylaws and the EC Task Force will bring the new language.”

10:47 AM: Commissioner Renteria moved to move onto public comment and seconded by Altamirano-Crosby. Without further discussion the motion is approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments.

CHA MISSION AND ROLE/EVALUATION AND PRIORITIZATION PROCESS

10:50 AM: Chair Ruiz asking when CHA can weigh in on issues. He had a conversation with Alejandro and Keith Swenson where he gave them his thoughts on what CHA is and is not. “Keith said it is an advisory commission and not a non-profit.” Chair Ruiz said “it is unclear who is taking it up: Is it a Chair decision? Is it an EC decision? Is it a commission decision if we decide who we engage with?”

Discussion:

Commissioner Garza elaborated on the importance of social issues, what we advise, and how are we going to follow as a commission. “What should CHA be doing? What is the plan? Where do we need to be? Do I need to be writing a white paper?”

Executive Director Sigüenza explained the role of CHA in response to current events: Intersectionality of police brutality and the issues in Yakima. Stressed the identification of ways we can advise on structural changes to the state government via state agencies, Legislators, and the Governor’s office. “CHA is beholden to bring forward solutions. We have an institutional seat at the table: we identify the issues, and devise a plan on how to advise solution-based policy. It will take time, change doesn’t happen one day to the next. This is the essence of the commission.”

Commissioner Altamirano-Crosby talked about Commissioner Renteria’s email asking for a meeting about the Yakima Strikes but there was no answer. “What can we do?”

Executive Director Sigüenza had specific concern that only six (6) commissioners shared their availability. Following OPMA rules a specific agenda was requested but it was not received. “While it is staff’s role to coordinate meetings all the materials need to be in line with OPMA rules. Special Meetings need to be specific so we only talk about the topics that are on the agenda.”

Commissioner Garza reiterated “we need to present an agenda to ED Sigüenza to call for a Special Meeting.”

11:24 AM: Commissioner Moreno called a Point of Order to return to the agenda item rather than continue the conversation about Special Meetings.

PUBLIC COMMENT

11:01 AM: Senator Bob Hasegawa joined the call. Senator Hasegawa thanked the commission for the work being done. Recognition of working with Executive Director Sigüenza regarding the Office of Equity. Senator Hasegawa’s main concern was to protect the powers of the commissions and appreciated all Executive Director Sigüenza has done to collaborate with his office. He spoke of a possible Special Session in regards to the current events but still in conversations as many people are seeing the disparities that exist.

11:09 AM: Executive Director Toshiko Hasegawa of CAPAA joined the call. Executive Director Hasegawa spoke about the role of commissions as a whole to work together. “Staying true to our own communities and elevating their voices but recognize for all the collaboration that can be done.” CAPAA is always a resource for our communities.

BUDGET

11:26 AM: Executive Director Sigüenza spoke about the change of CHA’s budget in response to the pandemic.

OFM has been working with all state agencies and all agencies have gone through a 15% budget cut exercise. CHA worked with DES and its finance team to identify where we could cut the budget. 90% of CHA's budget is allotted to: staff, benefits, office space, HR & Finance support, IT, AG etc.

“We went in and cut everything to include the funds for which we have full spending autonomy on (within the parameters of the law). \$30,000 goes to travel, \$10,000 to get office supplies. All discretionary funds cut. Donation account has been a hold over since former Executive Director Iñiguez. We have met with our finance team regarding our budget cuts and spoke of the impacts: unable to travel, commissioners unable to get reimbursed for meetings that are mandated to speak of priority issues from community etc. It limits our ability to meaningfully meet mission. Exercise is done and whether if we have a cut is up in the air. Things change daily. OFM is trying to protect small agencies and a small staff of 3 they easily do the work of 4-5 others. Next meetings might be providing a 10% and a 5% cut. We have the ability to have/receive grants and donations.

Example: We have a grant from CCW to fully develop a guideline to implement P-TECH across the state. We have a grant for Census outreach.

In our RCW it says we are allowed to receive grants and donations and how they interpret that is unknown at the moment. Once funds enter the account, we are beholden to State's regulation. The agency can accept donations but individuals cannot.

The end of June marks the end of Fiscal Year 2020.

YAKIMA STRIKES

11:38 AM: Chair Ruiz asked Commissioner Renteria to speak about the strikes.

Discussion:

Commissioner Renteria: Meat processing plant employees went on strike about a month ago. Employees are demanding basic resources and feel ignored as essential workers. There are immediate issues: the pandemic, PPE, social distancing, and protection of employees. The other matter is compensation for working during the pandemic. There needs to be a better form of communication for employees to express their issues in their place of employment. They have received support from Familias Unidas, an organization from Seattle. Commissioner Renteria interviewed strikers and took notes. L&I says that if the issues are not reported then the agency cannot act. This can be problematic because farmworkers don't know about the L&I Hotline. Calling for an increase of involvement between CHA and L&I. Reactiveness for CHA to rise to the occasion. Farmworkers are striking because the industry is not rising to the occasion. “CHA is not just to bring policy but to bring perspective to the Governor's Office. As a commission we are not taking an ethical stand on what is occurring. We have much to grow as a commission and as commissioners.”

Executive Director Sigüenza: To empower L&I CHA should meet with the agency so that commissioners have an understanding of the agency before forming any recommendations. Commissioner Renteria will be spearheading the effort along with Vice Chair Arno Martinez.

Next steps: Commissioners to write up solutions. Executive Director Sigüenza and Commissioners Renteria, Altamirano-Crosby, Perez Woolley, and Vice Chair will meet with L&I.

BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT

Intersectionality between the Latinx community and other communities who are affected. Many of these issues are occurring within our state.

Discussion:

Executive Director Sigüenza will look into the group I940 that may be reforming in response to BLM. Plans on having a multi-commission meeting with CAAA, CAPAA, Women's Commission, LGBTQ Commission etc., but we need to have it written up first and present what we are doing and how we are going to further discuss with the rest of the commissions.

Commissioner Garza will take lead. Executive Director Sigüenza will connect with the Executive Director of each mentioned commissions.

Commissioner Garza to draft a press release for the commission's approval and to boost it on the appropriate channels regarding the events that are happening.

Executive Director Sigüenza: Individually we can go to protests but CHA being in the frontline is not necessarily our role.

12:27 PM: Vice Chair Arno Martinez pulse check: Do we all have the same understanding about the topics discussed and the process that needs to be followed to receive support?

EWU is a state agency and well within our purview as CHA to write a letter supporting ethnic study classes, for example. EX: OSPI can direct general guidance and local government implement the general guidance but OSPI does not have authority to mandate adoption. CHA has advisory capacity and can work the community on issues that need attention. We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity where we have the ability to be a voice, along with other commissions/agencies that intersect with us, that brings about change. Keep this on the forefront and continue with the momentum.

12:43 PM: Commissioner Altamirano-Crosby motions for break of meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Renteria. With no further discussion the motion was approved unanimously.

12:51 PM: Commissioner Hernandez motions to resume the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Garza. Without further discussion the motion carried unanimously.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Commissioner Altamirano-Crosby speaking about repatriations. "Many bodies that have yet not been returned to Mexico." Commissioner Altamirano-Crosby is working with a family to assist with reparations and will return to meet with the family. This is an issue for CHA to take on and build relations with members in the Mexican government.

Discussion:

Calls for a need to create an emergency plan for when these issues come up. In the past Commissioner Altamirano-Crosby has worked with former Senator John McCoy who is now retired. Executive Director Sigüenza and Commissioner Moreno met with the Lt. Governor's Office to discuss repatriations.

Commissioner Altamirano-Crosby asked if CHA can donate to the family to help with the costs.

Executive Director Sigüenza explained that CHA cannot donate to individuals based off accounting manual and ethics rules. CHA can donate to organizations whose missions are in line with CHA's mission. CHA cannot use official channel to promote individuals or private businesses by ethics law.

Commissioner Perez Woolley: "it's important to find a way to get to know each other to build relationships within our commission."

Commissioner Ahumada recorded a video with CIELO regarding testing for the Latinx community. An effort to keep our community safe and healthy.

Topic of Commissioner Ahumada's term expiring was brought up and there was an ask for a possibility to extend it.

Executive Director Sigüenza explained there is no extension under law. It is two (2) full terms or ten (10) years. Reappointment is not possible but we are welcome to introduce our community members at all times. "While Commissioner Ahumada will not be a commissioner, her knowledge and close work will not be lost. Committees can include community members at large."

NEXT STEPS

- Bylaws Taskforce to come back with language changes.
- Executive Committee recommendations.
- Commissioner Renteria to follow up with development on the Yakima Strikes.
- Commissioner Garza to follow up with development on WA BLM.

ADJOURNMENT

1:38 PM: Commissioner Perez Woolley motions to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Altamirano-Crosby. With no further discussion, the motion was approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 1:38 PM.