



Special Meeting Minutes Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

Date: November 21st, 2022

Time: 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Location: Hybrid Tacoma Municipal Building
747 Market Street
Conference Room #243 and #220-A (Interpretation Room)
Tacoma, WA 98402
Zoom (Click the following link to join the meeting):

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/91791840410?pwd=d3lyYW44Tm8wT1NrNIU4ekRsWERnQT09>

Meeting ID: 967 9184 0410

Passcode: 264285

Real-time Spanish translation will be available during the meeting.

- I. Call Meeting to Order** – Chair Emani Donaldson called the meeting to order at 5:51 PM (Time Stamp: 11:57)
- II. Statement of Purpose** – Vice Alma Villegas
- III. Land Acknowledgment** – Lydia Zepeda
- IV. Consent Agenda** (Time Stamp: 15:49) –Chair Donaldson
 - a. Approval of November 2022 Meeting Agenda (Aye/Nay Votes) Motion made by Commissioner Villegas, seconded by Commissioner Nicholas. The ayes have it and the November 21 agenda is approved.
 - b. Approval of October 2022 Meeting Minutes (Aye/Nay Votes) Amendments from Commissioner Ghayoumi.
Motion made by Commissioner Nicholas and seconded by Commissioner Villegas to review in December. They ayes have it, and the November minutes will be reviewed and approved in December.

Commissioners

Emani Donaldson
Natalie Ghayoumi
Stacy Kowalski
Samantha Le
Maurice Lekea
Hieu Nguyen

Hugo Nicolas
Thierry Ruboneka
Maricress Valdez-Castro
Alma Villegas
Leena Vo
Lydia Zepeda

V. Record of Attendance and Excusal of Absences Chair Donaldson

(Time Stamp: 18:36)–

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emani Donaldson (Vice-Chair) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thierry Ruboneka |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Natalie Ghayoumi | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maricres Valdez Castro |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stacy Kowalski | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alma Villegas (left early) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Samantha Le (absent) | <input type="checkbox"/> Leena Vo (absent) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maurice Lekea (left early) | <input type="checkbox"/> Lydia Zepeda (excused) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hieu Nguyen (late arrival) | <input type="checkbox"/> Alternate (Vacant) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hugo Nicolas | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Position (Vacant) |

Guests: Councilmember Rumbaugh, Bucoda Warren (City Manager’s Office), Mac Acabado (City Budget Office)

VI. Public Comment (Time Stamp: 19:54)

Renee Meschi: Would like to bring attention to growing refugee community from Ukraine. Washington is within top four states in the nation to receive Ukrainian refugees. 1,284 Ukrainian Refugees have applied for sponsorship with “U4U” program in Tacoma and Pierce County. However, there could be more refugees because a lot of people do not have permanent addresses and are moving between counties. Currently, Tacoma is lacking coordinated municipal response; we need more language services in Ukrainian. The number of Ukrainian immigrants has reached the threshold to have designated services under “Safe Harbor” statues (when the number of refugees has reached 5% of population or 1000 immigrants). Safe Harbor mandates that public agencies offer resources in that language. Ukrainian Refugees need in-language support, and trauma informed resources.

Chris Paredes: Speaking today to share a resource called the Tacoma Latino Family Resource Guide; highlights opportunities offered by Latino community throughout Tacoma. The guide contains information about activities, festivals, resources, information on how to access ESL classes, etc. Hoping to share to uplift Latino communities and share resources.

Discussion on Public Comment: (Time Stamp, 23:34)

Commissioner Ghayoumi, RE Ukraine Refugees: Can documents related to trauma informed resources be sent to CIRA Commissioners so we can discuss how we can have them translated to Ukrainian?

Commissioner Villegas:

RE Ukrainian Refugees: City is in process with Language Access Plan; could Council or OEHR staff possibly address what is being done to address the issue? Is there a particular ask of CIRA and how they can help?

CM Rumbaugh: Here to listen to concerns and understands the specific ask to be on language access in Ukrainian. Are there specific target areas of services that need to be translated? For example: vaccine info, social services. We would like to make sure the highest need it met first.

Renee Meschi: Language Access is an easy to reach priority; but there are other needs. Safe Harbor statues require that “Vital and Essential” information are translated. 0

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Commissioner Valdez Castro – have we made connection with the Slavic Center to help coordinate services for Ukrainian translation or other services?

VII. Commission Affairs (Time Stamp, 40:26)

Proclamation on Iranian Women’s rights, Human Rights (Commissioner Ghayoumi)

(Time Stamp: 40:35)

- Proclamation draft sent to the City with minor edits made. City Council will accept the Proclamation on behalf of CIRA at the November 22, 2022, meeting.
- Commissioners encouraged to attend City Council meeting and provide public comment.

Commissioner Spotlights Process Discussion

(Time Stamp, 43:53)

- We often don’t have time for the “get to know you” activity – so we discussed having a commissioner spotlight so individual members can brief CIRA on who they are, and what they are working on in their/the community. It is particularly valuable to understand what ties CIRA members have to immigrant and refugee committees.
- To streamline and prepare for the spotlight, can the spotlighted commissioner possibly submit talking points or presentation in advance of meeting?
 - o Governance Committee can provide a framework of questions to help commissioners prepare.
- The concept of commissioner spotlights will help all CIRA members stay apprised to calendars/activities, and our work outside of CIRA so we can support one another in advocacy work.

Committee Updates and Overviews (Time Stamp, 48:07)

Community Safety Committee

(Time Stamp, 48:27)

- Commissioner Valdez Castro provided recap of October Safety Committee meeting, as presented in approved October CIRA minutes.
- CIRA Liaison: in preparing for joint meeting with CPAC, HRC, CIRA, and TPD in the first quarter of 2023, TPD is requesting questions and inquired be submitted in advance. CIRA Safety Committee is working on drafts of questions; the questions will be ready to review in our December meeting. CBC Liaisons will compile questions from all commissions and send them on the TPD.

Governance (of CIRA) Committee

(Time Stamp, 57:47)

- Discussed restructuring agenda to maximize time and give time to community. We moved Public Comment to the top of the meeting & reformatted the get to know your activity; and how we can discuss other items that are happening globally.

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- Request that notes from committees are sent in advance of CIRA meeting, so discussion time is more concise.
- December and January meeting will focus on our annual plans; will discuss budgeting and project ideas.

b. Community Presentation –

Working Families Tax Credit Presentation - Perla Gamboa

(Time Stamp, 1:00:28)

- Tax Credit is for all families that are of low-to-moderate incomes and based on number of children.
- Applications are open in February 2023; it's an outcome of 10 years of advocacy!
- Who qualifies: if you filed for taxes (joint or individual), have SNN or ITIN (family can have mixed immigration status and apply for tax credit), qualify for federal Earned Income Tax Credit.; live in state for 6 months.
- Applications are available on <http://workingfamiliescredit.wa.gov>. Online applications are available in Spanish and English and in 11 different languages in paper applications.
- In January Working Families will start media campaign. Let them know if you see TV ads.
- Outreach Advisory Committee is forming and looking for people with lived experience; a stipend will be provided.
- Offering grants for community outreach with community organizations to get the message out.
- Working Family Tax Credit is not a onetime thing.
- Working Families Tax Credit is not a one-time credit; it is ongoing.

Presentation included as an attachment.

Questions about presentation:

Question: How do people qualify, and if what if they are new to the State of Washington?

Answer: Requirement thresholds are established by how people file their federal taxes. To qualify, people only need to be resident for six months; you can qualify if you are unhoused.

Questions: Is outreach going to be available in several languages?

Answer: Yes, outreach materials is available in 17 languages.

c. City Staff Updates – Staff Liaison Raeshawna (Time Stamp, 1:20:07)

- Annual Report to the Community Safety and Vitality Committee (Date Change)
 - Presentation is going to be scheduled 1/12 or 1/26
- First quarter CIRA, Community Police Advisory Committee, Human Rights Commission, and Tacoma Area Commission on Disabilities convening with TPD update and request
 - Going ahead with scheduling the joint meeting for the first quarter of 2023.

Budget Presentation (Time Stamp: 1:24:54)

Presenters: Lisa Woods Director of OEHR, Mia Navarro Assistant Director of OEHR, and Mac Acadabo from Budget Office)

- 2022 has been a budget preparation year; COT Budget is approved in a biennium.
- Budget is being adopted and presented by City Council tomorrow (November 22nd)

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- CIRA can work with OEHR at any time to make suggestions to the budget; CIRA can access funds within OEHR.
- CBC's themselves do not carry budget authority, however, in the 2023-2024, OEHR has \$37k a year for CIRA. Bulk of those dollars are for interpretation and outreach and engagement. Other \$ can go toward foo

Questions regarding Budget Presentation:

(Time Stamp, 1:35:00)

Question: Can OEHR provide a breakdown of how the funds have been used for the last 3 years? Would like to include pre-pandemic years as a comparison.

Answer: We can get that information to you, but we don't have it prepared and on hand.

Question: Are there line items for CIRA Budget?

Answer: CIRA can work with OEHR to make sure their requests are met.

Question: How does CIRA approve budget?

Answer: OEHR is the actual owner, but CIRA can submit requests to OEHR, and we will submit it to Council.

Question: What if don't use a certain amount of money? Is it use it or lose it?

Answer: It depends, however, if OEHR underspend funds might get it might get reappropriated.

Reappropriation period starts in the first quarter of the following year. Toward the end of 3rd quarter, we take another assessment to decide what funds go.

Comments & Discussion:

Questions about budget stemmed from where they money would come from for traveling to Welcoming Interactive. Funds could come from other areas in OEHR's budget, and not just form the CIRA 2023-2024 budget.

- Members of CIRA would need to decide in January if they would like to send representatives to go to the Welcoming Interactive in April.

Re Welcoming Week Events: CIRA did decide that event planning is not within the scope of CIRA because it can take away from the advocacy work.

Interest in learning more about the budget; particularly deadlines for when we can ask for additional sums.

Events and Recognition Committee – CIRA can bring them in to establish what Welcoming Week can look like, and they Events & Recognition Committee will take on most of the planning.

d. Items to Consider for Next Meeting: (Time Stamp, 1:53:58)

- Governance has a lot to consider with the annual plan; will bring those proposals to next meeting,
- Request for follow up from TPD liaison. Can an officer attend the Community Safety Committee, and not just CIRA as a whole?

e. Adjourn - Meeting was adjourned at 7:27 PM

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Attachment 1 – Working Families Tax Credit Presentation
Attachment 2 – OEHR & Budget Office Presentation

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