



Regular Meeting Minutes

Commission on Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

Date: Monday, **October 28, 2024**

Time: 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Location: Hybrid Tacoma Municipal Building

747 Market Street

Conference Room #243

Tacoma, WA 98402

Zoom (Click the following link to join the meeting):

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82877122622?pwd=vzPBsPX1YvQbOS5haBnEEHqdF0YVLd.1>

Meeting ID: 828 7712 2622

Passcode: 98402

Call Meeting to Order/Roll Call 5:50pm - x Chair Hugo Nicolas

x Emmanuella Shasha, Vice Chair

x Iulia Didkivska, Second Vice Chair

x Natalie Ghayoumi

x Maricres Valdez Castro

Eunice Kalembo absent

Maurice Lekea, absent

x Andy Mejia, *Youth*

Linus Nyaga, absent

Thierry Ruboneka absent

Alicia Sands, absent

x Nixon Tenga

Lydia Zepeda, excused.

Also present: Vicky McLaurin, Lisl Santkuyl (Participatory Budget Analyst), Brian Schwall (Management and Budget Analyst), Katie Johnston (Budget Officer) - left earlier.

Quorum confirmed.

Agenda Approval

Motion made to approve the agenda and seconded. Approved unanimously.

Commissioner Didkivska had volunteered at last meeting to take notes.

Commissioner Castro also volunteered to take notes at this meeting.

Statement of Purpose

We convene this meeting to advance the City of Tacoma’s mission to “reducing barriers to access and participation in Tacoma’s economic, cultural, and civic life for immigrants and refugees.” This Commission aspires to help “make the City more vibrant, inclusive, and welcoming for all.”

Land Acknowledgment

The Commission acknowledges that the meeting is being conducted on Indigenous lands of the Puyallup People, who cared for their ancestral lands before the Medicine Creek Treaty of 1854 removed native peoples to clear way for colonial settlement. It is important to this Commission as settlers here, aspiring to care for immigrants and refugees in this place and to call it home, that we acknowledge and send gratitude to the Puyallup Tribe of Indians who continue to be leaders for justice in our community today.

Approval of September 23, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Motion to accept meeting minutes made and seconded. Approved unanimously.

Public Comments

All written public comment must be submitted in writing at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting. None

Trauma-Informed Policing Proposal Discussion

Concerns raised about the delayed response from the police department regarding the proposal. Discussion on the need for trauma-informed training, especially for interactions with immigrant communities.

A letter to the city council regarding the proposal was drafted and read aloud.

Motion to approve the letter with minor corrections was made and seconded.
Letter approved unanimously.

Letter of Gratitude to Tacoma City Council

Discussion on a letter of gratitude for advocacy regarding NWIPC.
Some members expressed the need for more information before voting.
The letter will be revisited in the next meeting for further discussion.

Committee Updates

Governance committee discussed the need for a strategic plan for CIRA.
Further details on the strategic plan and additional committee work were mentioned but not elaborated on.

NWIPC Meeting Update The meeting highlighted the critical challenges faced by detainees, including lack of communication and legal representation.
Commissioners encouraged to actively engage with detainees and understand

their rights. Highlighted as significant concerns in the community, with a need for a balanced approach to funding.

Presentation from City of Tacoma

2025-26 Budget Presentation

Presentation by Deputy City Manager on Tacoma's budget process.

- Structural deficit of approximately \$24 million in the general fund, primarily due to rising costs outpacing revenue growth.
- Emphasis on community safety, homelessness, and operational effectiveness as key budget priorities.

Future Steps and Community Engagement

- Importance of community feedback in shaping budget priorities.
 - Plans to request additional funding from the state for homelessness services.
 - Discussion on how to advocate for continued support for vulnerable populations.
- Budget Figures:
- Total budget: \$4.7 billion for two years.
 - General fund: \$641 million with a structural deficit of \$24 million.

More information can be learnt from

https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city_departments/office_of_management_and_budget/2025-2026_biennial_budget_development

The participants addressed the city's budgetary constraints and the need for community advocacy to support vulnerable populations, particularly regarding homelessness and public safety. The discussion underscored the importance of personal engagement and systemic support to improve the conditions and rights of detainees while navigating the city's financial landscape.

Next meeting November 25, 2024 -

McLaurin invited commissioners to join the meeting in person next meeting and that the City would pay for pizza.

Adjourned at 7:40 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Iuliia Didkivska,
Second Vice Chair
CIRA