# Minutes

**Joint Municipal Action Committee**

June 12, 2020 – 8:00 a.m.

Virtual Zoom Meeting

# CALL TO ORDER

The Joint Municipal Action Committee Meeting was called to order at 8:03 a.m. by Chair, Andrea Smith.

# ROLL CALL - JMAC COMMITTEE

Andrea Smith, JMAC Chair/Commissioner, Metro Parks Tacoma

Andrea Cobb, JMAC Vice-Chair/ Board Member, Tacoma Public Schools

Elizabeth Bonbright, Board Member, Tacoma Public Schools

Tim Reid, Commissioner, Metro Parks Tacoma

Marty Campbell, Council Member, Pierce County

Keith Blocker, Deputy Mayor, City of Tacoma  
Kristina Walker, Council Member, City of Tacoma  
Deanna Keller, Commissioner, Port of Tacoma

# GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE

Shon Sylvia, Executive Director, Metro Parks Tacoma

Joe Brady, Chief Strategy Officer, Metro Parks Tacoma

Anita Gallagher, Assistant to the City Manager/Policy Development, City of Tacoma

Chrisy Vindivich, Office Manager, Community and Economic Development, City of Tacoma

Evette Mason, Government Affairs Manager, Port of Tacoma

# Catherine Ushka, Council Member, City of Tacoma

# Ken Farmer, Pierce County Office of Disaster Recovery

# Sally Perkins, Vibrant Schools Representative

# Jeff Robinson, Director, Pierce County Community and Economic Development

# Felicia Medlin, City of Tacoma

# APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Marty Campbell moved that the minutes of the February 14, 2020 be approved; Elizabeth Bonbright seconded the motion. Motion carried.

# APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Elizabeth Bonbright moved that the agenda be approved; Marty Campbell seconded the motion. Motion carried.

# AGENDA ITEM

# How will we recover together?

**Andrea Smith -** I thought it was appropriate for JMAC to start meeting again because we're in our flat curve, and we now need to figure out how to all become whole again, not just monetarily but how to get our economy started again as well as how to reopen things. My thought was the greater question is how should policymakers influence the recovery, and how can we do it with an anti-racist equity and diversity focus? We have all those challenges in front of us, and how do we help our staff collectively start working through this. We also have on the phone Dr. Ken Farmer who is now at Pierce County, and he is helping Executive Dammeier work on the recovery for Pierce County. I invited him to join us so that he could listen to the discussion as well as add Pierce County’s take on it. This group meets monthly and it’s attended by Tacoma Public Schools, City of Tacoma, Pierce County, Port of Tacoma, Metro Parks Tacoma and the Puyallup Tribe. We try to look at things from a high-level, and how can we collaborate with each other so that not everybody is on their own doing something that might conflict with other people in our jurisdictions in our County.

**Kristina Walker –** I wanted to make sure that we also mentioned the resolutions that our organizations have done with a commitment to equity in the recovery because I think that's such a good place to start. It's very broad language, but it commits us all to doing it. I think that if folks don't have that, maybe we should send that out. The City of Tacoma passed a resolution committing ourselves to equity in COVID-19 recovery acknowledging that communities of color are more impacted by both the health impacts of COVID and the economic impact.

**Andrea Smith –** All the CEO’s have signed on to a letter also indicating that, but we have not had a Park District meeting since that letter has been finalized and forwarded.

**Elizabeth Bonbright –** At Tacoma Public Schools, we've put out a statement and its part of our mission as well as our work daily on racial justice and equity: *Every Student, Every Day*. We are continuing to have those conversations.

**Kristina Walker -** I think if we start with those statements as a central point of our conversion, I think that frames the work. This group is such a great place for so many of the recovery conversations to start because it doesn’t work if we’re not pulling together. I agree with you that this is the place to have those conversations, and this is a real opportunity to refocus. So many things have changed, and so many things are different right now, and what a great opportunity for us to dig in and change those policies that we've had for a long time and known we've needed to change.

**Andrea Smith –** One of the things that's important to the Park District is, we have basically been left out of any recovery money. The City has been specifically earmarked, the County has been specifically earmarked, so there are COVID expenses that we have undertaken that we have no way of a receiving any reimbursement for. We have applied to Pierce County; we have applied to the State. We have been advised to also apply other places but now, as many of you know, our budget hole is $13 million dollars and only 22% of our staff is currently working. That’s because approximately 50% of our revenues are earned. We know we're not eligible to have those monies replaced which is why all our staff are laid off. We still have been racking up expenses, such as the cleaning, the getting ready to recover, and the training. Those are impacts to our bottom line, and they partially hinder our being able to reopen.

**Tim Reid -** We have policy. That policy results in action, and to do the action we need the funding to help with the action. It’s all tied together, so that's why we're bringing that part up now because we need the funding to put the policies into action.

**Keith Blocker -** I don't think I understand the struggles that Metro Parks are facing, and I want to be a supporter of Metro Parks, recognizing that the work that you do is very significant in terms of quality of life we all are trying to achieve in the City of Tacoma. I don't think waiting for the money should be the basis to establish strong policies. We could get to the point of putting down policies and making the commitment, recognizing that at some point, we all will recover. We don't have to put dollar amounts on policies, but we can most certainly establish policies around making sure that we are focused on being more anti-racist and particularly not just anti-racist, but being intentional about not being anti-black and pushing against anti-blackness in our communities. Now is a good time to establish those policies, get the language down and be intentional about that, recognizing that we will recover. When we recover, we could start looking at budgets and putting dollar amounts in place, but right now is a good time to figure out how we could better work together as institutions and be more intentional about addressing equity issues and disparities in our community.

**Tim Reid -** I wasn't indicating that policy should be tied to funding, but it’s the action part down the road. The policies should be immediate.

**Marty Campbell -** What I've heard so far is, we want to know what is the equity and anti-racism that is imbedded in this program and a request of local government regarding funding questions. Perhaps Dr. Ken Farmer can chime in with his perspective?

**Dr. Farmer –** I came in a little less than four weeks ago as the Director of the Office of Disaster Recovery for the County Executive. I’m obviously working a lot with the Department of Emergency Management and Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department and many others across most of the public and private sector. I wrote in my blog that moving to Phase 2 means freedom for a lot, and that freedom comes with some expectation and responsibility. It was in part by people who were out, they were responsible with masks and social distancing. That kind of thing is even more important now and moving forward as we have more personal interaction. Continuing to do so in our businesses and in our social services, continuing for employees and clients to practice those safe measures is going to be more important to allow us to move forward. All of us are in positions to model and influence that. As we look to recovery and resilience and moving forward, we've learned a bunch of things over the last two or three months. We’ve learned how to do a lot of things differently. Some organizations probably learned how to do things even better. The virtual outreach has increased access, availability, service and so forth to some organizations to some people. I think that for all of us, as we look at moving forward and recovery, it's important to say “how do we take the good parts of what we've learned and done, during this COVID-19 experience and apply them to whatever the new normal looks”.I think a bunch of social organizations and service organizations are going to end up not going back to physical meetings and physical service only. In the future, they are probably going to be looking at physical and virtual, because they've expanded their outreach through the virtual. During this period, instead of people coming to us where a service is delivered, we're going out and delivering it in smaller groups. Another broad area of recovery and moving forward is how we sustain the good parts of this. I think that County government has tried to reach out to all its peer-groups to see where the needs are and to solicit ideas and proposals for the CARES funding. I know that Roxanne Miles with the County Parks has done some collaboration with Metro Parks. I think those opportunities remain. I'm beginning to look at what are the kinds of things where we can use some of the CARES opportunities dollars to not only respond to the critical present need but that will also leave us better as we go into future years.

**Marty Campbell -** What I didn't hear is a commitment to anti-racism, transparency, and equity. What are the core values that are driving that part?

**Dr. Farmer -** I personally am committed to that, and I think we organizationally are committed to that.

**Elizabeth Bonbright -** One of the responsibilities for JMAC is for us to work together as local entities here in Pierce County to not just recover, but I think more restructure. How can we look at the inequities that we created over time and the structures that have been allowed to exist, in the name of equity, that have gotten us to where we are today, and where we need to start developing, calling out and establishing anti-racist policies that also support all our families, children, businesses and everyone involved? I'm hoping that as we build the plan, that each one of our organizations brings to the table significant commitment as well as recommendations on how we can all do that together and hopefully suggestions that we can, in a friendly way, share with each other. I think that's the spirit with which we’re here today.

**Dr. Farmer -** I certainly agree, and while I didn't use the word restructure right in a couple of the examples that I gave; I was referring to that idea of restructuring. When I said, you know many organizations have learned during these past few months when they have not been able to meet physically, and I've not been able to deliver their services physically, they've learned how to do new and different ways virtually, and by going out to where the need is and doing things in much smaller groups. And I said I think we need to be thinking about how we sustain that going forward, not just going back to the way we used to do it, very much in line with what you refer to as restructuring.

**Andrea Smith -** Joe Brady, can you share from the survey that that Metro Parks did? It was an extensive 62 question survey that was sent to 55,000 emails, and we got over 4,000 respondents. *(Documents were emailed to meeting attendees on 06/16/20.)*

**Joe Brady -** The survey was focused around asking what it is going to take for you to return to the Park system and the Park District. Not only from a PPE stand point or from a group size perspective, but also kind of the activities that you were looking for. It was surprising for us. It's valuable information that's in there, and we're going to use that data to help move the Park District forward. Folks want to see Metro Parks’ employees obviously wearing PPE, and they also want to see other people wearing PPE.They want to see people limiting group sizes, especially large public group sizes. They also are helping us define some of our tough policy questions and activation questions that we’re posing to ourselves, given the financial difficulties that the Park system is in. There's not a lot of interest to return to outdoor public pools and playgrounds, so those are not opening this summer. We're trying to balance both the fiscal realities that the District is in and that Tacoma is in to give the best set of experiences and services that we can to the public, while at the same time recognizing that we can't get back to the way we used to be. The letter that was drafted by our executive director and signed on by a lot of other CEOs here in town, is this document that talks about anti-racism, and how we can move forward, and it I think it is the gateway for us at a staff level in the organization's to be held accountable to doing this work daily. I think that bears some witness in terms of having and sharing our wide-level view, and I think it is also the gateway for us to not only think about what would recovery and restructuring look like, but how do we budget for it for next year, and how do we move forward and rebuild with that lens in the forefront.

**Kristina Walker -** Andrea can you share that letter with the group? I think that because it includes all the leadership from our organization, would be a great place for us to start the conversation, as it makes some of the things that were talking around become more tangible.

**Andrea Smith -** Joe will share it when he sends that the survey to Chrisy, and she will be able to forward out to everybody.

**Kristina Walker -** I feel like there's a little bit of a disconnect right now between the work that's being done there and the work that we're doing. I think we're all headed in the same direction, but I think some work to connect the two is important right now if we're going to make a change in policy.

**Elizabeth Bonbright -** Tacoma Public Schools is grappling with some major decisions about starting school again in September and how that's going to look. You may have heard that the Superintendent of Public Instruction released a 54-page planning guide for Districts on how to reopen. One of the things that he did say was that school will reopen physically, and it is going to look different in every District depending on what the situation is. We’re grappling with this, and we have a very short time to turn around and talk about how this is going to work. It's going to impact absolutely everyone at every other agency.We may implement an altered schedule where kids go half day or every other day. Whatever the model, it's going to impact parent’s ability to go back to work, and it's going to impact our before and after school needs. How we all make those decisions, which is why JMAC has become so important to all of us, we are coordinating our efforts and learning what families need and making sure that we are all approaching our organizations’ deliberations in a holistic manner so that we don't inadvertently cause additional strain on our families and on the businesses in our community.

**Jeff Robinson -** I think that the continued discussion about how we coordinate resources so that we're not being repetitive is critical, and that there needs to be continuing dialogue along all levels, such as PPE assistance to businesses, rental assistance, assistance to businesses with grants and loans, direct outreach to neighborhoods of color and particularly black-owned businesses now. There's a lot of studies that are coming out stating that it’s not only our families of color and people of color, particularly the African American community being impacted health wise, but the number of business failures and displacements of households is much higher. I think that for us to be able to approach all those issues together, we need to work together as organizations. I think then as part of that to make sure that we're doing enough outreach to the community so we don't sit in our offices and try to determine what we believe is best for our communities, but to reach out to them and hear from them about what it is they're needing and the pinch that they're feeling.

**Kristina Walker -** One of the things I think that many of us are doing at each of our organizations is some sort of outreach, either with our budget process, some strategic planning, or other feedback from the community. I think that's such a vital part of this, and that there may be some commitments we can make in doing that work recognizing the challenges with COVID-19 and reaching out to the community in an authentic way, and not just sending out the email or the online option. I wonder if there's some space here in this group to talk about how we're doing the work or doing some sharing between our organizations. I think that's such an important part as we move through recovery, resiliency, empowering a rebuild or the restructuring piece. I want to highlight that community piece is so important.

**Andrea Smith –** That survey went out for Metro Parks, to 55,000 emails, went to our advisory groups. I personally got like three different emails depending upon which lists I'm on for the District. I'm not sure about the depth and the diversity that it entailed, but I do know that information was requested and captured.

**Keith Blocker -** This is this is an opportunity for us to not do the same work repeatedly. Generally speaking, we serve the same population. Everybody is doing surveys. I think this is a time where we stop that, and we gather data by the same residence, the same communities we serve, and we can figure out ways that we could be strategic and utilize that data to be moreeffective and more efficient.If staff can come together to figure out how we could put together a survey to gather the same data that goes out to the same people, I think we would be more effective and efficient**.** The next step must be how we do community outreach as institutions and connect with the same people that we’re trying to get information from. That's one way that we could gather data, and we could share that information with all the institutions that that we partner with.

**Elizabeth Bonbright -** I think that we are all talking to the same families for different reasons. I'm not sure if one monster survey is the answer, but I do think it's a beginning. I also think that as we’re out talking with our constituents that, when appropriate, it would be optimal to include the overlapping driving questions that each of our organizations want to know the answers to.

**Andrea Cobb -** We had lots of conversations during responding to this outbreak and we’ve have a lot of engagement with you all around data throughout the years especially around our high school graduation rate. I think that summative assessment scores are a big piece of how we keep tabs on how our kids are doing. I just want to remind the group that we didn't take those tests this year, and I've already heard in other education circles, rumors about just depending on how different states start, we may not have those assessments this year for the 2020-21 school year. So, sitting down having to figure out an instructional model without a lot of the regular signals that we have used in the past to keep tabs on how kids are doing academically and from a social and emotional health standpoint, a lot of those signals are going to be off or are going to need to be recalibrated. The way that we engage with partners around not just graduation and academic achievement, but other mental health and social-emotional data, I think some of that thinking is going to need to change. One of the data points that I'm very concerned about (and have been since I came on the Tacoma School Board) is discipline disparities. Even the context around student discipline and engagement has shifted these last couple of months, due to distance learning. I think from the Tacoma Public Schools perspective this is going to be a long marathon of a restructuring and rethinking what we've done in the past.

**Anita Gallagher –**The City of Tacoma has hosted several Town Hall meetings on various topics of interest to community, and those went well with quite a bit of community engagement. I would offer that if any in this group were interested in partnering on outreach for efficiency sake and to demonstrate a united front and well-coordinated local government, this might be an option.

**Tim Reid -** We all have different missions for serving the public, but we all serve the same public, the same people in the community. I think if we get to a point where we’re on the same page with policies and action to those policies, and we get questions from the public, they get the same answer no matter if they ask the school District, or the Park District or the City, it's a coordinated effort. And because we are restructuring each entity, there are some things that when we restructure, our core mission is not changed but delivery could be changed. We’re trying to serve the public in the same matter in the unified manner. I feel that we need to coordinate all the stuff we can coordinate and have the same answers when the public asks us or the actions we take.

**Kristina Walker -** I think we need to pull together something tangible here as a group of policymakers, and I like the idea of putting together a town hall or something to get that information out to the public. I think that that's important, particularly right now, that we're putting things out to the public, so we should show that we're all working together and have some tangible policy positions moving through this time.

**Elizabeth Bonbright -** We have a good example of how we did his within the County, when COVID started, and we were informed that we were going to be feeding the children, school District presidents across the County got together and with the County executive ended up coming up with a plan and putting together a map so families would know exactly where to go to get their food. I think that's a good example of what you're talking about. What I love about this conversation is it's not the one off. I think it's an opportunity for all of us to help each other get the message out about the work we're doing and how it impacts them. I also agree that we've got to move from talk to practicality and implementing something tangible.

**Andrea Smith -** I do know that that staff have been collaborating with each other, so are there any kind of frequently asked questions that we are all getting that we want to make sure, it's kind of like a joint policy statement that that everybody can put on their websites, there can be a press release, basically noting that this is all the same for all of us. Would that be something that's important?

**Kristina Walker -** I'm wondering if we feel some tension between dealing with the current COVID-19 crisis, the recovery pieces of the actual COVID, and then the rest of the work that we're doing which is policy changing and addressing inequalities and putting forward work and changes that are anti-racist.

**Shon Sylvia -** We can look at what policy statements would help up best do our job and the letter, then frame those two together so that you all have that.

**Elizabeth Bonbright -** I also think that we need to have short-term goals and long-term goals because short-term goals, addressing some of the COVID issues with the anti-racist mindset, absolutely, but whatever we’re building is a new society, and it's a different way of thinking. It will take time and strong leadership to move the mental and emotional framework of our society today. I think that we can expect immediate results, but we can put out those messages and those anti-racist policies that respect that pathway forward and provide an opportunity for people to learn. I think one thing we can do is put money towards promoting some opportunities for the community to learn anti-racist behaviors. I think maybe we, as a community, start training, with policy leadership first.

**Deanna Keller -** I think we're past the words, the surveys, and things like that. We need to be doers, to show our communities we’re struggling a little bit. At the Port of Tacoma, we’re trying to figure out what our role is in this, and we knowthat our role is economic developmentand not only creating those high paying jobs that help people get out of their homeless situations and get them into affordable housing, and so on**.**

**Dr. Farmer -** Talking about the intersection of these two crises that we’re dealing with, COVID and racism and equality and equity. We’re using CARES dollars hiring more case investigators and contact tracing people to deal with that workload and the anticipated future workload. And talking with them a few days ago, as I'm sure some of you have seen, that for example many Hawaii and another Pacific Islanders have about a 4x case rate in COVID-19 compared to the white Caucasian population. The LatinX have about almost a 3x case rate. The African American population has about a 2x case rate. So, as they are hiring these additional people to be case investigators and contact tracers and data analysts, they are deliberately targeting to try to hire some people from those representative of the more affected communities. That's not only to help with communication but with understanding and with the analysis of, okay let's get into why is your community more impacted and what are the things that we can do to mitigate that. So, this is a good example as to how these two crises intersect, and we can use one to help the other.

**Elizabeth Bonbright -** I worry about Metro Parks’ budget deficits and the fact that they have open space that they're not getting the rent from. If there are available resources to help our partner organization stay afloat financially, and it’s a mutually beneficial opportunity for the contract tracers to be in the community, I support looking at that.

**Tim Reid -** What are our action plans now?

**Andrea Smith -** I think part of our action plan is that the staff are going to continue to work in coordination, they will be working on a united statement of how we are looking at our policies for anti-racist language and/or actions, and as well as release the joint statement that all the CEOs have signed out to the public, and make that more widely available. And I think that statement will include that we all we are working on rebuilding together. We are looking at each other to assist each other that it's about a community rebuild, and not just one entity.

For our next meeting in July, I would like to bring the CEO’s in, rather than the August meeting. Washington State is going to come out with their economic forecast on June 17th, so I would like for that meeting to be about the economic forecast and how is it going to affect us for 2020, as well as influence the budgeting for on the next biennium starting in 2021.

**Tim Reid –** Could we also add a review of the actions we've taken resulting from this meeting, and where we're at?

**Kristina Walker -** One of the things that may be being overused, but I think it's worth restating, is that we're not going back to normal. We're not trying to get us back to where we were. We're taking this opportunity to reset. We’re acknowledging that we know that there have been disproportionate impacts. We don't need to survey a thousand times to realize some of these things. As elected officials, we know that we're starting in a place of systematic racism and inequities. I love the idea of having more community conversations and bringing the community along and include some anti-racism training. I absolutely think that should happen, but I think that we need to show as elected officials that we’re there and we're ready to move forward.

**Andrea Smith -** As soon as the minutes are finalized, they can be disseminated to all elected not just the JMAC people, earlier than the minutes are normally released.

**Elizabeth Bonbright -** I think that it's incumbent upon each of us, as representatives for our organizations, to take the messages back to our colleagues on our various commissions’ boards.

**Marty Campbell -** Every Monday, the County Council gets together and reviews funding recommendations for the CARES act funding**.** What would the other organizations want us at Pierce County to know far as how we're allocating $158 million?

**Elizabeth Bonbright -** I've been hearing that $2 million of that $158 million from the County that's available to go out to help support childcare issues, and I appreciate that. I think vouchers that help the families to get accessible child care and support for the child care providers too is fantastic. I would encourage the County to think more aggressively about how to help bolster the childcare system before school starts, also for summer programs which would include Metro Parks programs.

**Joe Brady -** We’veworked with their Finance staff to help parse out what we think will be FEMA applicable and those that might not be. I think one of the questions that would be worthwhile from a policy standpoint would be around the several recommendations that the County has gotten around reimbursement as we deal with unemployment as a COVID related expense. I know that several jurisdictions have submitted a similar request. That makes up about half of our request to the County, so I think it's important to remember that that the sooner that Metro or other jurisdictions get cash flow back into the system, the faster we can get back out on the streets offering services. The FEMA option is a viable one, and it's an important one for us to pay attention to. Unfortunately, it's a pretty long escalator ride, so any kind of answer on the unemployment one will help us. And then where we go down in Olympia after that. I know the Pierce Transit and others are also asking those questions as well.

**Marty Campbell -** I do know from the first round of funding, we got a roadmap through expenditures of what they considered reimbursable for the County as I would assume what we would then see is reimbursable for other governments. There was a lot of money for, if you had to secure a site, if you have to provide extra security around that site because it wasn't being used, changes you have to make to be more socially distancing, Plexiglas going in, or just any remodeling or anything like that that you had to do, the County has deemed that as reimbursable. So, when this hit, what did you have to do to accommodate it. What expenses did you suddenly incur? I think looking through a lot of that is something that the team heading this up has already showed that, that is what they will reimburse.

**Elizabeth Bonbright -** Maybe our first JMAC impact collective agreement is to apply the philosophies that we put forth today to that funding as it's coming out, making sure that we're addressing the inequities that currently exist, higher impact on the specific populations of communities of color, that the money that is going out is reaching the families that have been impacted most.

**Kristina Walker -** Knowing that the Pierce County Council is meeting every Monday on that, we’ll make sure we get information to you. I share people's comments about making sure that were supporting both equitable impacts of those dollars, and then also supporting our economic justice as well and making sure that we're getting people back to work.

**Andrea Smith -** Our next meeting is July 10, and discussion will be about the state economic forecast; how it'll affect us going forward; with also a report out about actions that have been taken since today’s meeting, about how we are not going back to normal and resetting/rebuilding our future.

# SETTING OF NEXT MEETING AGENDA

July 10, 2020

* Review WA State Economic Forecast and impacts on our agencies
* Report back on actions taken since June JMAC meeting
* Ask CEO’s to attend instead of the August/Quarterly Meeting

# DISCUSSION OF MUTUAL INTERESTS AND CONCERNS/FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

No items were discussed.

# FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Sound Transit apprenticeships (get representatives from schools to attend this meeting)

Economic Development Board Presentation (Bruce Kendall)

Advanced Metering (Tacoma Public Utilities)

Tacoma Creates (City of Tacoma and Arts Non-Profit Organization)

Economic Development Strategies and Revenue Sources (Puyallup Tribe of Indians)

Whole Child Initiative Follow-up (Tacoma School District)

Child Dependency – Foster Care – Remann Hall (Connie Ladenburg w/TJ Bohl)

Community Workforce (Benefits) Agreement (Metro Parks Tacoma)

Address Poverty from a Governmental Standpoint

IDEA

Workforce Development

South Sound 911/Emergency Management

Continue Mental Health Conversation

Youth Mental Health Issues: Trafficking, Housing/Shelters, Gangs, Drugs, etc.

Economic Development Growth and Impacts

Trades, Apprenticeships, and Regional Partnerships (Tacoma School District, Bates, City of Tacoma)

# NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Friday, July 10, 2020 at 8:00 a.m. via virtual Zoom Meeting.

# ADJOURNMENT

Chair Andrea Smith adjourned the meeting at 9:26 a.m.