



City of Bellingham
Immigration Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
February 15, 2022, 6:30 PM

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM

Board Members

Present:

Danielle Siedlecki
Liz Darrow
Holly Pai
Ada Rumford
Monika Cassidy
Alfredo Juarez
Sierra Green (Alternate)
Homero Israel Jose Garrido
Tarnjot "TJ" Brar
Jagwinder Gill
Bridget Reeves

Absent:

Maria Isabel Cortes-Zamora
Australia Tobon

Russian Interpretation: Alfia Logunova

City Council Legislative Staff: Nalini Margaitis

City Council Liaison: Council President, Hannah Stone

City Administrator: Brian Heinrich

Mayor of Bellingham: Seth Fleetwood

There is an audio/ video recording of this meeting. Times in brackets [] indicate the start time on the recording for each section. See <https://cob.org/gov/public/bc/immigration-advisory-board-materials> to listen to the recording.

Welcome, and New Board Member Introduction [0:32]

- Ada Rumford welcomed the group.
- Nalini Margaitis and tri-facilitators facilitated this meeting.
- Minutes for the January 18, 2022 meeting were approved as written

New Board member Introduction [4:23]

- Homero Israel Jose Garrido introduced himself to the Board

Community Reports [5:05] and Public Comment [20:19]

- Lelo Juarez shared that on January 19, 2022, a community member (Antonio Mendoza) was waiting for a ride to pick him up for work. Instead of his ride, ICE showed up and picked him up. He did not know where he was for four to five days. He was deported on January 28, 2022. Liz Darrow added that Antonio's family contacted C2C and C2C was able to provide notice to the Board. There is no way to locate a person until they become a member in Tacoma. Darrow is asking for more transparency. Antonio worked at El Agave and C2C was able to communicate with his mother and brother in Mexico. Mendoza was deported to the middle of the country and had to find his own way back to his coastal hometown. COVID outbreaks in the Northwest detention center are very high right now and makes it difficult to get attorneys into the facility.
- Darrow mentioned that the UW Center on Human Rights expressed interest to present to the Board and will present during next month's meeting
- Monika Cassidy asked what happened to the community member's family who died in the flood.
- **Jackie Tabone** asked how can the Board draft policy legislation to hold the private detention centers responsible.
- **Maddi Parvankin** inquired how the IAB can draft policy recommendations and take steps forward to promote transparency. Mayorkas Memo specifically stated that only high-profile criminals should be targeted by ICE, not people who are just workers. There has been ongoing conversation on the Board about equity on the Board and hopes that the Board will shift leadership to include more immigrants of color and to shift the balance of power.
- Lelo stated that the IAB should focus on the resource center so that families have a place to go to get help
- Jagwinder What can the IAB do to keep things under control?
- **MB** suggested that the Board might want to revote on Leadership roles with the new members present, and added that Sierra and Lelo would make good facilitators. What kind of policy recommendations can the Board come up with to promote transparency and accountability of detention centers? MB also supports the resource center.
- Tarnjot agreed that the Board should proceed with the resource center, and encourages the community members to join the meetings and provide valuable input
- **Dena Jensen** followed up on the letter that was sent to Council regarding the January 28th sweep. Jensen recalled that CM Stone had shared that BPD did not call for mutual aid. Jensen also recalled that in a presentation made by Mark Gardner based on responses from Claudia Murphy, it indicated that Chief Simon did make a request for mutual aid. Jensen requests that this needs to be clarified and get to the bottom of an accountability issue that is impacting immigrants in the community.
- Mayor **Seth Fleetwood** asked Deputy Administrator **Brian Heinrich** about the specifics of what is being referred to. Heinrich clarified that there are occasions where BPD will

request information from federal law enforcement – those items are not immigration related, that is prohibited by state law and city policy.

- Darrow and Pai articulated that even though the purpose of the call is not immigration related, immigration status can come up
- Mayor Fleetwood responded that he would like to resolve the concern that ICE and the BPD is actively engaged in illegal involvement. From the BPD involvement, it is limited and what they do is authorized. Fleetwood expressed that he is happy to help.
- Pai added that people will be reluctant to call BPD if they are calling in mutual aid, and expressed that she would like people to feel comfortable to call BPD when they need help
- **Dana** emphasized the importance of an immigration resource center , asked the Mayor if he is in support of an immigrant resource center and also asked why he has not been able to attend previous Board meetings.
- **Jenn Gonzalez** stated that some topics are not being addressed – there is not a lot of transparency between ICE and what is being shared by the Mayor to the IAB and that lack of communication leads to a mistrust. Gonzalez added that immigration issues should be more of a priority for the Mayor and the City.
- **Tessa** spoke in solidarity of other speaker’s comments and supports more transparency from ICE
- **Henry Bennett** directed a question to Mayor Fleetwood – asked if the Mayor saw the letter regarding the events that took place on January 28, 2021. Bennett also spoke in support of the immigration resource center.
- Response:
Mayor Fleetwood responded that a response to the January 28 letter will be coming forward. Hannah Stone added that there is currently a draft response that will be delivered to the Board. Mayor Fleetwood also noted that Chief Simon did evoke mutual aid and that’s why the Sheriff showed up. Fleetwood responded that he was asked to attend, and this was the evening that he could do so and that he is glad to come again if it is helpful. Fleetwood stated that there was a meeting in November regarding the Immigration Resource Center – hoping that this would be county wide or regional – convening another meeting with the same group to see where it’s been refined and talk about how the Board and City might be able to bring in partners: Fleetwood is prepared to engage in that regard. Mayor Fleetwood requested that Brian Heinrich add an item related to the Immigration Resource Center to his schedule.
- Liz Darrow added: how is it acceptable to occupy a community in that manner? What should the City expect of its government in terms of safety and accountability?
- To comment directly to the Board, please email: immigrationboard@cob.org

Process Subcommittee Report (Holly Pai, Liz Darrow, Sierra Green) [52:36]

- Holly Pai presented an update on the process subcommittee – updates were drafted to the ordinance to reflect the suggestions proposed by the Riveters Collective (increasing

Board equity by amending the selection process for Board members, including a scoring matrix).

- Proposed amendment includes: *the city shall provide the entire board with copies of any board applications within five business days of receipt, when a vacancy does come up the board would meet as a group, or as a subcommittee look at the composition of the board and review applicant files and make a recommendation to the city within 14 days, the Board should have a two thirds affirmative vote on the recommendation to the Mayor, the Mayor does have the ultimate decision making authority here, but the process subcommittees hoping that the Mayor will rely and depend on our expertise here when appointing new Members to the board. Communication between the city and the board during this process should be conducted with at least a combination of at least four city and board representatives and thoroughly documented.*
- Liz Darrow presented a portion of the ordinance related to data, adding an outcomes section (outcome to the interaction)
- Sierra Green shared a board recruitment scoring matrix (see meeting for screen share of matrix). Rows included: race/ethnicity, age, gender identity, community connections
- A conversation followed regarding disclosing immigration status on the application – suggestions included how long one has been in the country
- Mayor Fleetwood added that if there is a need to amend the current sector representation, he would welcome the change and that the matrix would help determine if the Board composition is right. Fleetwood looks forward to reviewing it and having a conversation about it when it comes forward in front of Council.

Q&A with Mayor Fleetwood [1:33:20]

- Mayor Seth Fleetwood responded to the questions prepared by the Board. To view the Q & A, watch sections **1:33:20 – 1:50:02** of the IAB meeting (<https://cob.org/gov/public/bc/immigration-advisory-board/immigration-advisory-board-materials>)

Mayor Q&A Follow-Up [1:50:13]

- Holly Pai followed up on the Mayor's invitation for the Board to collaborate with the City
- Mayor Fleetwood added that a group (Mayor, Deputy Director, Senior Analyst, and Council President) would meet and then bring it back and share it at a meeting, at some point it might involve a workgroup with this Board and the City
- Sierra Green: How to better the relationship between the Board, City Council and the Mayor?
- Fleetwood suggested arranging lunches with a smaller group of Board members (Sierra Green will move forward to schedule these meetings)
- Liz Darrow asked the Mayor to provide an example of a current Board or Commission that is functional and has good communication with the Mayor's Office. Mayor Fleetwood provided an example of the Transportation Board and the Greenways Advisory Board (staffed by a person from a relative department, from the parks

department, the Parks Director will provide recommendations to the Board and then make recommendations to Council and Mayor and then they are acted on), this also occurs to the Lake Whatcom Board. The IAB is staffed by the Council Office – with other Board’s the recommendation of the Board is brought to the Mayor’s attention by the staff person that staffs the Board.

Federal Contact Data [2:10:45]

- The Board identified incidents that were of concern on the Federal Contact data (specifically, the items listed for 2/2/2022 regarding the incident reports)
- Brian Heinrich will follow up with what happens with the transfer between the agencies.
- Bridget Reeves had previously placed a FOIA request. Deputy Chief Almer stated that the Board would need to file a public records request to obtain further data.
- Deputy Director Heinrich and Holly Pai discussed local PD contacting federal agencies – Pai stated that this should not be happening.
- Darrow added that municipalities cannot provide information to federal immigration that could not get without a warrant
- Hannah Stone added that a distinction had been made between civil immigration enforcement and criminal matter (HSI vs CBP)

The meeting adjourned at 8:57 PM

Recordings of this meeting with additional details of discussion is posted at:

<https://cob.org/gov/public/bc/immigration-advisory-board-materials>