



**City of Bellingham**  
**Immigration Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**  
May 18, 2021, 6:30 PM

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**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM

**Board Members**

*Present:*

Liz Darrow  
Australia Tobon  
Holly Pai  
John Baker  
Maria Isabel Cortes-Zamora  
Bridget Reeves  
Ada Rumford  
Danielle Siedlecki  
Monika Cassidy  
Marciano Sanchez Lopez

*Absent:*

Ramon Barba Torres  
Jahn Zuniga Escobar  
Katie Winkelman

*Liaison to the City Council:* Hannah Stone, President

*Spanish Interpretation:* Marcela Rey

*City Council Staff:* Nalini Margaitis

**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 Board Business [00:03]**

- Nalini Margaitis welcomed the group.
- Nalini Margaitis facilitated this meeting.
- Minutes for the April 20, 2021 meeting were approved as written.

**Announcements [4:23]**

- OPMA trainings will be sent by 5/20/2021 and must be completed for Sept 1

### **Review of the Federal Contacts Data [5:43]**

- Liz Darrow reminded that the Board is requesting a results column, so they know what happens to these cases
- Frequency of communication between CBP and BPD stood out
- On 5/11/2021, CBP was called to review a welfare check of a resident – why?
- 4/28/2021: ICE involved in non-immigrant investigation – why were they involved?
- Hannah Stone clarified that this Federal Contacts Data is compiled based on *WhatComm Dispatch*. The contact is initiated by other municipalities within Whatcom County. *WhatComm* handles 911 dispatch (BPD employees). The results, with additional information, are held with the other municipalities. The authority of COB and the Board to obtain this information is outside of the work of this Board. Ultimately, how do we reconcile filling that role of 911 dispatch, when they might not be following the policies of COB?
- Bridget followed up inquiring about an interlocal agreement (that may outline the use of a joint dispatch) – could the Board request an agreement? Yes
- Ada Rumford stated that she has seen this information online and would be sending the group the information
- Danielle Siedlecki proposed that everyone could read over the information and come back with questions for the following meeting
- Liz Darrow suggested she, or another Board member, follow-up with a public records request, adding that the Keep WA Working Act may dictate what municipalities may and may not do

### **Report from CBP (Council President, Hannah Stone) [21:50]**

- Hannah Stone reached out to CBP and ICE from the Blaine sector – their follow-up: What is the Board hoping to accomplish with a tour? Seeing certain facilities? Have someone come speak to the Board? Virtual field trip? CBP includes: Field operations (people in Blue, at the ports of entry); Border Patrol (jurisdiction is between points of entry); Air and Marine (covers air and water) – are there specific requests?
- Australia Tobon stated that the tour should include everything – tour and follow up Q/A – who is their community relations officer and what do they do? Where are they holding people before they transfer them to Tacoma? We know there are two locations in Fernadale, people from Sumas have expressed fear going outside during the pandemic
- Danielle Siedlecki stated that it would be beneficial if the group could go in person to tour the facilities, with PPE
- Liz Darrow added that the Blaine sector has jurisdiction over WA, OR & AK; Tacoma will be closing – transferring detainees to OR (HB 1019)

### **Reports from Impacted Community Members [39:16]**

- None

### **Report from Immigration Resource Center [40:02]**

- Two more organizations support the Immigration Resource Center: Whatcom Community College & NW Regional Council
- Sikh Community expressed interest to learn about: English language, education system, job assistance, affordable housing, workplace, and tenant rights
- Shared updated ordinance [45:02-53:45]
- Hannah Stone: outline the broader policy items for Council, after ordinance is passed the implementation is carried out by the Mayor and their staff, specificity provides more limitation, City would partner with other agencies to provide the services listed in the proposed ordinance, should not just be symbolic, but be impactful for the immigrant community (engage and include), will be successful if there is collective buy-in, present vision of what the Center would look like, advisory Board would present the vision to the Council & Mayor, prepare proposal that would come back to the Board, needs assessments from the Community
- Liz Darrow: intention is that the Center would be funded by the City, but run by immigrants and refugees; subcommittee will meet on 6/1
- Holly Pai: think of this ordinance as a floor – room to build, is there a way to wrap the Board into the Ordinance?
- Maria: Where : could we add “the mission, under the guidance of the immigration Board” into the ordinance?
- Australia Tobon: Do we need to specify the organizations in the ordinance at all? (Hannah added that it does not, but that is shows broader support of the community and the services offered)
- Danielle: Revisions for next meeting
- Liz: group needs to be in alignment with each other, but not with City Council
- Bridget Reeves: proposed one more review outside of the Board meeting
- John Baker: Requested group orientation
- Australia Tobon requested that the ordinance be sent out to all Board Members

### **Old/New Business [1:44:25]**

- Agenda process (Liz Darrow): pulling away from hierarchical structure – instead: everyone leads – how do we decide what is being discussed in this space?
- Hannah Stone added that Stone Garden pertains more to County than to City (the Board should approve agenda items with a request to stay more focused on City issues)
- Reminder to submit “about me” section and prepare mission & vision statement

### **Public Comment Period [1:55:24]**

**The meeting adjourned at 8:48 PM.**

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

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