



City of Bellingham Immigration Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

July 20, 2021, 6:30 PM

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
Ada Rumford
Danielle Siedlecki
Monika Cassidy
Marciano Sanchez Lopez

Absent:

Ramon Barba Torres
Jahn Zuniga Escobar
Bridget Reeves
Katie Winkelman

Liaison to the City Council: Hannah Stone, President

Spanish Interpretation: Martha Sabalsa

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 [00:05]

- Nalini Margaitis welcomed the group.
- Nalini Margaitis facilitated this meeting.
- Minutes for the June 15, 2021 meeting were approved as written.

Reports from Impacted Community Members [2:43]

- Moved to Old/New Business (see 2:17:148)

Announcements [10:40]

- Liz Darrow shared comments from a community member relating to public comment and impacted community members – worried that the concerns they bring are never addressed
- Hannah Stone shared the Mayor's reappointments of Ada Rumford and Liz Darrow to two year terms (leaving one Board position open)

Co-facilitator vote [15:34]

- Panelists unable to participate in the voting feature, so the votes will be accepted via email to immigrationboard@cob.org by 5PM on July 23rd.

Review of Federal Contacts Data [25:22]

- The following items stood out to Australia: Translation, missing children, driving infraction and DUIs
- John Baker wanted clarification on the federal contacts data process
- Holly Pai explained that this is communication between the local dispatch and federal agencies & don't want to see cooperation and communication about non-federal issues between the two agencies (citing e.g. #23 where Lynden PD asked CBP if they had someone to interpret for them – inappropriate)
- Ada Rumford reminded the Board that WhatComm controls 911 calls – there are interlocal agreements (911 is largely paid for by the COB), ask for a change to the interlocal
- Liz Darrow added that it is prohibited by state law for CBP to ask for interpretation assistance and stated that it was on the Board to follow up individually with the reference numbers to see what happened
- Danielle spoke about making suggestions to WhatComm (to not make calls to the border, to make a policy suggestion, etc.) – Liz agreed (because all municipalities must follow state law), making the line of communication between CBP and WhatComm illegal (follow up to ensure this is outside of state law)
- Holly Pai wants to know if this federal contact data is being shared with the Mayor and the City Council (Hannah did not believe that it was)

Work Plan for 2021-2022 (John Baker) [52:24]

- John Baker proposed that the group would have a workshop to look over the work plan for the upcoming year and at the end of year, evaluate what the group has achieved throughout the year.

Orientation for New Board Members (John Baker) [102:15]

- John Baker proposed to have an orientation for new board members – he stated that the language level needed for comprehension of the OPMA trainings was one of a post-graduate level and is requesting something less intimidating for new board members.

Outreach Campaign (Ada Rumford) [1:07:30]

- Ada Rumford proposed an outreach campaign whereby effort is made to make the immigrant community of Bellingham aware of the Board and to notify the community that the Board would like their involvement (specifically: identify areas with high immigrant populations – community centers, etc). Part two would include a flyer that is distributed among these community centers that encourages people to get involved with the IAB – the flyer would be written in multiple languages.
- Maria Isabel Cortes-Zamora and Monika Cassidy expressed interest to serve on the subcommittee

Proposition of New Work Group (Ada Rumford and Holly Pai) [1:28:41]

- Proposal by Ada Rumford and Holly Pai request the City to publish all City documents in multiple languages and Holly wanted to know if it is necessary to draft an ordinance or write a letter to the City. This subcommittee would pull together some numbers to present to City Council for budget approval.
- Liz Darrow added that the Whatcom County Council has interpretation services via headphones for multiple languages.
- Maria Isabel Cortes-Zamora proposed creating a needs-based survey to distribute to local communities in order to understand what the community is looking for from the IAB.
- Hannah Stone suggested the school district as a resource.

Subcommittee Reports [1:48:03]

- **Immigrant Resource Center (Danielle Siedlecki)**
- Danielle wanted to know the Council/Administration feedback.
- Hannah responded that the Administration and Council are on Board, but have some questions regarding what this would look like and what the Board was asking for. As a result, it was suggested that the Mayor join several IAB meetings or schedule a meeting with Board members to discuss this further. Hannah suggested that a small group meet directly with the Mayor and then provide a report out to the Board.
- **Process Subcommittee (Holly Pai):**
- Continued discussion on how to increase community involvement as a Board with a big portion being the public comment period.
- Suggestion that a Board members rotate to respond to public comments
- Subcommittee would like to return to in-person meetings (Hannah added that this is possible as long as meetings are open to the public/are in a public space)
- The subcommittee also suggested conducting quarterly meetings with the Mayor – to ensure federal contact data information is getting to the Mayor and City Council
- The subcommittee discussed creating a new board member packet (and ask that John Baker consider joining this subcommittee)
- Finally, the subcommittee discussed Board members who have not been present (Hannah suggested that an alternate be selected for the Board member who has missed the last five meetings).

- Holly Pai added that the IAB should not necessarily be covered by the OPMA, as it is merely advisory (Hannah added that the City Attorney has requested the Board comply with the OPMA).

Old/New Business [2:17:48]

- Impacted community member shared a story with the Board about a victory they experienced. (When they were 15 years old, BPD pulled them over and requested their SSN, CBP was called in, and they were detained – most recently this person received a settlement in the amount of roughly \$100,000 from the COB). Overall, this experience took quite a long time to settle – after a racist experience occurred, questioning a minor about their SSN. The organization does not want to hurt the budget of Bellingham, but the organization wishes to see some policy changes down the line.

Public Comment Period [2:24:02]

The meeting adjourned at 9:09 PM

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

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