



City of Bellingham
Immigration Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
November 16, 2021, 6:30 PM

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM

Board Members

Present:

Liz Darrow

Maria Isabel Cortes-Zamora

Danielle Siedlecki

Holly Pai

Australia Tobon

Ada Rumford

Bridget Reeves

Jagwinder Gill

Absent:

Ramon Barba Torres

Monika Cassidy (excused)

Marciano Sanchez Lopez

Spanish Interpretation: Taos

Russian Interpretation: Alfia Logunova

Punjabi Interpretation: Piku Dhillon

City Council Legislative Staff: Nalini Margaitis

City Council Liaison: Council President, Hannah Stone

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 [0:00]

- Nalini Margaitis welcomed the group.
- Nalini Margaitis and tri-facilitators facilitated this meeting.
- Minutes for the October 19, 2021 meeting were approved as written

Review of Agenda [3:00]

Announcements: Resignation and 2 Openings on the Board [4:40]

- John Baker resigned from the Board, there are now two openings
- The Board discussed the need to diversify the IAB to represent the immigrant population of the community
- Hannah Stone shared a document identifying the different sectors each Board member represents (12 Board members, 9 sectors – the Board responded that they did not believe their sector was accurate – Stone mentioned that these were based on what information was provided on the application and were set when the Mayor confirmed the appointments
- To apply: <https://cob.org/gov/public/bc/Boards-and-Commissions-Application-Process>

Public Comment/Community Reports [40:15]

- **MB** referenced a letter written by Liisa Wale to the Mayor and Administration regarding drone surveillance at Camp 210. Deputy City Administrator, Brian Heinrich, responded to this inquiry via email with the following statement, “The City of Bellingham does not work with or respond to Customs and Border Patrol or other relevant federal agencies as it relates to immigration matters”. MB contrasted this statement to the federal contact data evaluated at the previous Board meeting, where there was evidence that the City did engage with federal agencies related too immigration matters, citing September 18, 2021 and Sept 20, 2021 correspondence, as well as data from Oct 28, 2021, confirming the continuation of such correspondence. MB added that BPD working with federal immigration violates the Keep Washington Working Act.
- Bridget Reeves responded to MB and shared communication records [44:31]
- Reeves explained that What-Comm employees are considered BPD employees, so they follow BPD policies and procedures. The next step: examine their internal procedure to see if any violations occurred in addition to the Keep Washington Working Act violation.
- Liz Darrow added that the BPD policy is in compliance with the Keep Washington Working Act and states that they do not give away information to any federal immigration agency, including CBP. Without a judicial warrant, they are in violation.
- Holly Pai added that it sounds like it is a training issue if the What-Comm employee contacted the federal immigration agency, which is in violation of BPD policy.
- **Liisa Wale** spoke in support of the Immigration Resource Center. Danielle Siedlecki shared that she will meet with the Mayor next week and provide an update during the December IAB meeting. Australia Tobon added that the Resource Center would help with environmental disaster preparation (flood, fire, earthquake, etc.) to increase civic engagement in times of emergency.
- **Maddi Parvankin** spoke about her disappointment in the make up of the Board, not properly representing the immigrant community in Bellingham, undocumented community members, Latinos, agriculture workers, etc. She is concerned that the Mayor appoints members without Board feedback. She believes it is important that Board members either have Community organizing experience or lived experience.

- **Henry** stated that he agreed with everything stated by Maddi, advocating for the Resource Center. He also added that getting rid of the sectors from the Ordinance is important to breaking down barriers in the organization.
- **Jackie Tabone** also advocated in support of the Resource Center and that Leilo be a consideration for the Board.
- **Dena Jensen** supports the ideas brought forth earlier, the importance of a resource center addressing emergencies (including unsheltered community members who are facing emergencies on a daily basis), as well as urging the Mayor to take into consideration the Board members' recommendations. Jensen also mentioned that attendees might want to know how many other participants there are.

Discussion and Approval of 2022 IAB Meeting Calendar (Nalini Margaitis) [1:09:40]

- The ordinance establishing the IAB states that the Board must meet once per month (it does not address the length of time, nor a specific date per month that the meeting would occur. The proposed calendar includes meetings for 2022, continuing with the third Tuesday of every month. The Board approved this calendar.
- Reeves requested additional quarterly meetings beyond the 12 monthly meetings.

Policy Subcommittee What-Comm (Bridget Reeves) [1:18:20]

- Alison Everback urged the Board to place public records requests for any concerns regarding the Federal Contact Data
- In communication with Sarah Chaplin Sarah Chaplin regarding the process for requesting public records in a timely manner
- Liz Darrow reminded the Board that Ordinance states that, "the Board will receive any and all information about contact with any municipality" – what are the mechanisms to obtain all of the other data?
- Reeves next steps: request the records of all What-Comm contracting law enforcement agencies policies related to keep Washington Working Act. She stated that she has made records requests, with the What-Comm County Sheriff's Department, Blaine Police Department, Sumas Police Department and Lynden Police Depart, for all of their policies related to immigration, Keep Washington Working Act, engagement with federal agencies like CBP and ICE. Once these records are obtained, the Board could make a recommendation to the Administrative Board of What-Comm to obtain a copy of the policies for each contracting law enforcement agency related to to Keep Washington Working Act To and make that standard practice and policy for the for the future, so, for instance. Reeves stated that the Board could make a recommendation to the Administrative Board of What-Comm that they require any contracting agency with What-Comm have a policy in line with the Keep Washington Working Act. Finally, follow up with the October 26 call with the ACLU and UW.

Update on Enforcement and Removal Facility (Liz Darrow) [1:28:15]

- There is an enforcement and removal facility that is an ICE detention Center in the Pacific Industrial Park in Ferndale (unmarked building in Commerce Place) – C2C has

found out that this is detention facility by people who have been detained there (calling C2C and describing the location to them). Permitting documentation confirmed that at the end of 2020, 13 new bathrooms and showers and a slop sink. Even though it has not been stated that this is a detention facility, they are detaining people there. Brenda Bentley is in charge of vigils. For more information: bentleybb65@hotmail.com

Process Subcommittee (Holly Pai) [1:35:20]

- The Process Subcommittee met on 11/2/2021 and Holly provided a report out. Items the committee was working on: new member orientation packet (welcoming new members, background of the IAB, mission, goals, procedural rules). Hoping to have a new member orientation/PPT that will live beyond this Board. Current subcommittees includes: resource center, process, and community outreach). The subcommittee wanted to have an alignment meeting – most people are available on Friday afternoon. Hopeful to have a meeting in January/February, but if the IAB has quarterly meetings, then perhaps there is no need to have an alignment meeting. Darrow asked about the City budget process to pay for the facilitator (roughly \$500-\$1000). Hannah Stone mentioned that the IAB should make a request to the Mayor or the City Council and that she would be able to track down funding for this. Pai share that the committee discussed how to respond to community inquiries (public comment/emails, etc.) The committee proposed to have a monthly community outreach liaison and created a schedule for 2022. The Board ultimately decided to create a single email where all public comment may be received and Board members will rotate on a monthly basis to respond from this email address. The email has been created and the address is: advisoryboard.publicoutreach@gmail.com

CBP Tour (Australia Tobon) [1:57:08]

- Australia Tobon shared an update regarding the CBP Tour that will occur on January 25, 2021 from 9:00AM – 11:00AM. Tobon has sent email invitations for this event.

Follow-up from City Council on January 28 Letter [1:58:57]

- Hannah Stone responded that the Mayor and City Council President will have a written response before the end of the year. Stone stated that there was not a formal request from Bellingham to Whatcom County for mutual aid for that day. Stone stated that Council was definitely not involved in this, and that they found out the same day as the public on what happened on that day.
- Darrow stated that the Board was hopeful that the Council would respond with dignity and humanity regarding the events of January 28, 2021

Federal Contact Data [2:06:30]

- Liz Darrow shared the federal contact data from Oct 26, 2021-November 10, 2021
- The Oct 26, 2021 caused concern and the Board will follow up on this
- Darrow noted that the K-9 situation is being referenced monthly lately

Old/New Business [2:09:38]

- Darrow shared that Familias Unidas por la Justicia and C2C are hosting a webinar: www.foodjustice.org
- Bridget Reeves was curious about land acknowledgement as a Board. Darrow hopes that this will be brought up during the alignment meeting or during the quarterly meeting.
- Reeves also wanted to inquire about feedback from past Board members on why they left. Stone responded that this information could be shared with the Board if there is interest.

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>