



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

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM

Board Members

Present:

Danielle Siedlecki
Homero Israel Jose Garrido
Liz Darrow
Holly Pai
Ada Rumford
Monika Cassidy
Alfredo Juarez
Sierra Green (Alternate)
Bridget Reeves

Absent:

Maria Isabel Cortes-Zamora
Australia Tobon
Tarnjot "TJ" Brar
Jagwinder Gill

Russian Interpretation: Alfia Logunova

Spanish Interpretation: Martha Sabalsa

City Council Legislative 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 New Board Member Introduction [0:08]

- Nalini Margaitis welcomed the group.
- Nalini Margaitis and tri-facilitators facilitated this meeting.
- Minutes for the February 15, 2022 meeting were approved as written

Announcements [4:10]

- Monika Cassidy provided information on organizations accepting donations on behalf of Ukraine's refugee crisis:

- **Magdalena's Creperie** in Fairhaven
(1200 10th St Ste 103, Bellingham, WA 98225)
10AM-2PM on Tuesday and Wednesday
Items: bacteria ointment, pain medication, bandages, electronics, phones (not, clothes and shoes)
- **Ukrainian Association of Washington State**
(https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=QNBZXQRSPYYB4)
- **American School of Warsaw Foundation Inc**
<https://go.rallyup.com/aswforukraine>
- **The Red Cross**
- Ada Rumford added that there is a large Ukrainian and Russian population in the area and that it affects the immigrant community
- Danielle Siedlecki added that it would be helpful to gain feedback from Ukrainian and Russian community members as to how to advise the City and suggested to make contact with Steven Shetterly (World Relief)
- Holly Pai added that she has been in contact with Steven Shetterly and that World Relief deals specifically with those classified by the USDS as refugees resettled in the US (World Relief can't assist other groups). Pai added that it is not the role of the IAB to collect donations, instead the role of the Board is to advise the City and the Mayor on policies that affect the people of Whatcom County. Pai also added that she hopes that this will spur action toward the Immigrant Resource Center.

Co-Facilitator Vote [20:35]

- Sierra Green acknowledged that there is a lack of engagement on the Board, often leaving the engagement up to the co-facilitators, and suggested that the facilitator role be on a rotational basis
- Holly Pai expressed that the Board is not ready for this, due to the low engagement of certain Board members and is worried that the Board might fall apart & suggested to wait a couple of months in case the meetings return in person
- Bridget Reeves suggested that some of the lack of engagement might be due to the virtual environment and that the engagement could increase as Boards return in person
- Ada Rumford added that the once per month meeting affects the disengagement
- The Board agreed to revisit this at a later date

Public Comment and Community Reports [32:30]

- Topics included: the Board's accountability to the public, Keep Washington Working Act, the importance of the Immigrant Resource Center (timeline and next steps)
- A discussion on the Board email response rotation scheduled followed. The Board suggested that each Board member reply from their personal email once the email is forwarded from immigrationboard@cob.org.

Immigrant Resource Center [51:42]

- Danielle Siedlecki reached out to Council President a couple of times and received one response to the first email
- Liz Darrow stated that Council President Stone replied stating that the IAB proposal is still under consideration by the Mayor and his team and that if the IRC subcommittee has not received a response from the Mayor and his team, that President Stone would be able to follow-up with them. Darrow replied indicating that she has not received a response and that was the last of the communication.
- Holly Pai reminded the public that the Board is not the hold up on the IRC and urged the public to contact the City Council and the Mayor on the subject
- Homero added that the IRC doesn't have to be something created from scratch, instead the Board could look at what other cities have done and piggyback off of that
- Liz Darrow suggested that the Board reviews the proposal during the next meeting for those Board members who have not yet viewed the IRC proposal, adding that the Board does have good allies for IRCs in San Antonio, Seattle, and Denver
- Sierra Green suggested to improve the onboarding process of the IAB and requested that the Board review all of the sub-committee opportunities
- Holly Pai added that the Process Subcommittee meets with new board members
- Liz Darrow stated that the current sub-committees include: Process, IRC, and Outreach
- Ada Rumford added that she has been in communication with Janice Keller, Communication Director of the City and that Keller is on board with increased language access on city publications. The City of Bellingham suggests: Spanish, Punjabi, Russian, Vietnamese, and English
- Darrow suggested that the FAQ portion of the website gets updates

Process Subcommittee [1:09:04]

- Liz Darrow added language on accountability to the public into the proposed amended IAB ordinance incorporating the suggested language from Krystal Rodriguez (timeframes and matrix), removing the co-facilitator section, and the intersectionality of other Boards with the IAB (e.g. community safety))
- Sierra Green shared an updated version of the Board recruitment scoring matrix (updates included: connection to impacted community, ensuring the Board is held accountable for diversity (race/ethnicity/age/etc.)
- Holly Pai explained how the matrix would assist the IAB makeup
- Ada Rumford added that she would like to see more country representation (CIA and USDS defined regions)
- Nalini Margaitis suggested the Board could include language on the frequency of Board meetings – Bridget Reeves inquired if there is a budget to include interpreters for additional meetings (this is pending Finance Dept approval). The Board decided to add "at minimum" into the ordinance
- Darrow reported that Stone is currently updating the ordinance as well
- Lelo Juarez drew attention to the data section regarding the outcome of immigration interactions between BDP and federal immigration agents

- Action Item
 - Liz Darrow moved to proceed forward with the ordinance draft as written
 - MOTION CARRIED 7-0, 5 absent members

Statement on revoking Title 42 [1:43:37]

- Liz Darrow shared that Title 42 is the policy that keeps refugees out (enacted under Trump), Biden revoked and then was sued (SCOTUS will hear this in April)
- Darrow added that an increased sentiment around European conflict from the Board is a problem if the Board does not also address the refugee crisis in other parts of the world (e.g. Haiti, Somalia, Palestine, Yemen, Syria, etc.)
- Holly's proposal: recommend a statement in support of revoking Title 42
- Monika Cassidy shared that the reason Ukraine was brought up was being she is personally involved in it and wanted to share this information with the community
- Bridget Reeves offered to help Liz and Holly in drafting the statement

Federal Contact Data [1:54:33]

- Observations included: increased HSI activity, language interpretation, officer Renick's name is all over the data (former BPD Officer)
- Bridget Reeves added that the Board has two options: address each item individually with the city police, or address the policy in place at the police department. Reeves stated that she would be interested to continue this work on a committee.

The meeting adjourned at 8:34 PM

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

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