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STATE OF NEVADA

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Director



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR  
COMMISSION ON MINORITY AFFAIRS**

**Meeting Minutes**

A meeting of the Commission on Minority Affairs was held on Monday, May 16, 2020. Pursuant to public notice and the Governor's suspension of the statute that requires public meetings to have a physical location, this meeting was conducted by a Zoom videoconference call.

**1. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

A. Chair Chaney called the meeting to order at 9:36 am.

B. Commissioners Present (phone): Chair D. Edward Chaney, Vice Chair Myisha Williams, C. Hasaan Azam, C. Janelle Conine, C. E. Mercedes Krause, C. Jose Melendrez, and C. Kathleen Taylor.

C. Commissioners Absent: C. Amy Shaw, C. Adleen Stidhum

D. Staff Present: Emily Ku, Management Analyst for the Commission on Minority Affairs

E. Public Attendance: Janet Serial, Deputy Director Marcel Schaerer

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**3. COMMISSION BUSINESS DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION BY THE COMMISSION**

**A. Approval of the March 16, 2020 meeting minutes (for discussion and possible action)**

C. Melendrez moved to approve the minutes. C. Krause seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**B. Subcommittee Updates (for discussion and possible action)**

1. Education

C. Krause said it's been difficult because she didn't know that when school closed, that was going to be the last time she would see her students. she has been video conferencing with her students

once a week. Because they are young, it is difficult to hold a Google classroom. She is working with a new Native American non-profit supporting college students but right now pivoting to work on bringing supplies to the Navajo nation for Dr. Michelle Tom and her efforts. The Navajo nation is the third hardest hit community that still don't have running water in a lot of places and is a food desert. The CCSD fall school year is still up in the air, and there are talks about having a blended learning situation so we can keep our classroom sizes down. We don't know what that's going to look like. If you go to the CCSD website, you can watch the school board meetings online. It is still very difficult with the digital divide--some students already have the technology and wi-fi and then there are those who don't. A majority of students at her school did not have their own tablets, but her school worked really hard and collaborated to get technology to their students, but the wi-fi is still an issue. Everyone is planning for all the scenarios when school starts again. The Nevada Department of Education actually has a task force put together and put out a call for 100 teachers across the state who have knowledge with digital learning, because it's not something everyone has. Everyone is working together and is expected to put a digital learning guide for teachers out by mid-June. There have been a lot of Google classrooms for teachers to learn how to use them and other digital resources, so there's a lot of work in the background in anticipation for next year. She commended the administrators and state superintendent for working very hard and communicating with educators. In Southern Nevada, the RPDP (Regional Professional Development Program) department put together learning packets that went home for the food distribution sites. C. Azam said kudos to all the teachers who are doing a fantastic job. He is seeing with his kids what it takes to teach and how difficult it is. C. Chaney echoed the sentiment and noted that the digital divide and Internet connectivity is an issue.

## 2. Health

C. Taylor said as of yesterday, the NV Health Response reported 6,857 positive COVID-19 cases and the death toll is 350. The majority of those cases are in Clark County, and there's also a push for increased testing. We are moving into Phase I, and the state has released industry-specific guidance for businesses and are permitted to open at 50% capacity. The guidance outlines different industries that have been permitted to open, recommended best practices, and mandated guidelines for employees, sanitizing, and social distancing. There are also recommendations on how to handle a confirmed case. On April 1, she attended a webinar on the health and equity outcomes entitled, "On the Path to Equity: Building Capacity to Measure Health Outcomes in Community Development." It covered a framework to connect community-based work and individual health outcomes to advocate for cross-sector partnerships to improve health outcomes. There was a call to action with cross-sector partners to try to collaborate with grassroots organizations within the community. On April 16, she attended an online conference that discussed black maternal health during COVID-19. Congresswoman Alma Adams hosted the annual symposium to address the disparities and explore solutions for greater access to quality care for mothers. Special guests included Senators Kamala Harris and Cory Booker. Lastly, on April 21, she attended a virtual meeting with the Nevada Faith and Health Coalition, facilitated by Pastor Ronald Thomas of Reconciliation Apostolic Ministries. Staff from Congressman Horsford's and Lee's office provided information about health and resources related to the COVID-19 pandemic. C. Azam asked about COVID-19 data by race and who has been most affected. C. Taylor said a few weeks ago, the Southern Nevada Health District

released data by race, at least in cases where they can capture that data. Also from a national perspective, there are a few reports that look into this. M. A. Ku said that is correct, only SNHD has released data and there is no statewide data available. There is an overrepresentation of Asians in COVID-19 deaths in Southern Nevada. C. Melendrez said that a large part of it is due to our service industry, and that a disproportionate number of minorities are working in places where there is greater exposure. He mentioned that a lot of undocumented workers are not eligible for federal assistance. There's a lot of areas where the COVID-19 is having a negative impact. The Nevada Minority Health and Equity Coalition is working on a series of data sheets, including a webinar that will focus on national impact as well as on Nevada's diverse communities. It will be an ongoing series. C. Chaney has a list of COVID-19 testing sites for dissemination. C. Krause mentioned that the Vegas Community Pantry run by Battle Born Progress has food drop-offs and they don't ask any intrusive questions.

### 3. Housing

C. Taylor said on April 9<sup>th</sup>, she attended a webinar sponsored by the Nevada Housing Coalition entitled, "Nevada Housing Needs and the Federal Government Pandemic Package." Speakers included U.S. Senator Cortez Masto, Nevada Treasurer Zach Conine, Tamara Thomas from HUD, and Steve Aichroth, Administrator for the Nevada Housing Division. Topics addressed were the Pandemic Response bill: overview and housing for Nevada, the state of Nevada and COVID-19 relative to housing, HUD distribution of first phase of funding and updates, and distribution of aid in Nevada and updates as it relates to housing. Also, housing in Nevada was discussed by key stakeholders, including executives from Nevada Hand, Reno Housing Authority, and the Nevada Homeless Alliance. M. A. Ku said there are housing resources for families who cannot pay their mortgage. The Nevada Hardest Hit Fund (NAHAC), relaunched their unemployment mortgage assistance. It can help families pay their mortgage up to \$3,000 a month for 3 months. There are very limited funds, so those who qualify should apply immediately. C. Chaney wanted to express kudos to the Attorney General's office and the Governor for how they dealt with the eviction moratorium. That has really helped the people of Nevada, especially those which we represent. It really gave people a cushion and not have to decide between rent and groceries.

### 4. Workforce Development

C. Azam said from the airline side of the things, the CARES Act has allowed a majority of the airlines to keep 100% employees on payroll until the end of September and airports have to keep 90% employees until the end of the year. Even though we have seen a 95% decline in passenger traffic, airlines must offer a level of service to their hubs. The question is what will happen to airlines after October 1 and airports after January 1. M. A. Ku said that DETR (Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation) is now accepting applications for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance for people who are self-employed, gig workers, 1099 employees, and anyone else who were not eligible for traditional unemployment. That went live on Saturday, and she heard from several sole proprietors that they were able to file online.

### 5. Economic & Business Development

M. A. Ku said that Clark County released a Small Business Reopening Guide, and they've translated that into multiple languages: Spanish, Mandarin, Korean, Tagalog, Thai, and Vietnamese. They also have free public health flyers in English and Spanish. Business and Industry is fielding a lot of calls from small business owners about the SBA (Small Business Administration) loan programs. Right

now, the SBA is still accepting PPP (Payroll Protection Program) applications. The EIDL (Economic Injury Disaster Loan) program is currently on hold and only agricultural businesses can apply. They have a backlog of 3 million loan applications. She has been spending a lot of time keeping up with the changing rules and regulations of the loan programs, and the SBA just released the PPP forgiveness application. C. Chaney said we have to encourage business owners in our communities to apply and put pride to the side. Some businesses won't be able to reopen, so let's be cognizant of that.

#### 6. Legislative

C. Chaney said we need think about BDRs in the next month or two as we prepare for session in February and who we are going to collaborate with to have our issues on the table. He encourages us to being that process.

#### 7. Community Liaison

C. Azam is part of the Sheriff Balaam's outreach committee and he has been providing updates on what is going on. He was able to keep all the inmates safe. With the shelter in place order, the crime did spike a little bit. M. A. Ku said in the South, Clark County Undersheriff Kevin McMahill said he hasn't seen an increase in hate crimes towards Asians that's been reported in other cities. She also spoke to Asian Chamber President Sonny Vinuya and to his knowledge, he hasn't heard of any Asian businesses being vandalized. C. Chaney said we need to be in concert with our Governor and follow the health and safety protocols and the decisions that the cabinet and task force is making. Now that we're opening up, the Governor has asked us to wear face masks and social distance. We have to continue to educate and encourage people to do the right thing.

#### **C. Management Analyst update (for discussion and possible action)**

- a. For Commission applications, we have Commissioner Conine who is term-limited. Her term will ending June 30<sup>th</sup>. We will be looking for a new Commissioner, hopefully someone in the North. We will be releasing the application soon. It will be open until filled and please distribute widely. C. Conine appreciated being on such a great Commission and to be with people who have a passion for others.
- b. Revising the Strategic Plan – Commissioners agreed to hold off on revising the Strategic Plan because there is so much unknown at this time. C. Taylor asked if the new normal would be more digital, and would we integrate those elements? She said we may need to look at that side of the table as well.

#### **4. NEW BUSINESS**

None

#### **5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Janet Serial, Reno-Sparks NAACP would like to make two comments. She said 95% of black businesses are sole proprietors, and some of the issues that need to be addressed are how to designate funding through the PPP and new Congressional funding for communities of color. How do we ensure that these sole proprietors get funding so they can stay alive? The churches are doing a really great job conforming to the COVID-19 virus, but our churches are businesses too and we need to make some provisions for

getting information to the churches. We talked about legislative initiatives, but we also need to look at policy changes that are not necessarily driven. I'd like the Commission to explore it can be a venue for doing that. C. Chaney said they have been disseminating information in the South, and two testing sites here are connected to churches. What we need to do is how do we make sure we work with groups like the NAACP to get the same information out North.

## **6. ADJOURNMENT**

- Meeting adjourned at 10:38 am
- Next Meeting: Monday, June 15, 2020 at 9:30 am