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Governor

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, November 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 Webex videoconference call.

**1. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

A. Chair Chaney called the meeting to order at 9:33 am.

B. Commissioners Present (phone): Chair D. Edward Chaney, Vice Chair Myisha Williams, C. Hasaan Azam, C. Yerania De Luca, C. E. Mercedes Krause, C. Jose Melendrez, C. Kathleen Taylor, and C. Angelica Villarta.

C. Commissioners Absent: C. Amy Shaw

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

E. Public Attendance: Deputy Director Marcel Schaerer, Sydney Banks, Nicholas Dunkle, Jeanette Belz, Lea Cartwright, Janet Serial

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

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

**A. Approval of October 19, 2020 meeting minutes (for discussion and possible action)**

C. Williams moved to approve the minutes with added corrections. C. Taylor seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

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

### **1. Education**

C. Melendrez said there was a proposition to put more accountability in place for the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) and working toward removing it from the Nevada Constitution. It will not happen, the NSHE will stay as it is. We are one of the few states that has one governing system for community colleges, colleges, and research institutions. It has been brought up several times but has not changed and will remain as it is.

C. Krause said she had a special meeting last week for mental health services that are available through the school district. She encourages people to see what is available in their networks as we go into the second round—it's giving a different energy. Before we had the Governor's announcement last week, educators were bracing to being a hybrid model. They weren't really sure how it would look because we were not at the 5% threshold but at 11%, which was an issue the union had. Cases are going up and it has been a scary time for teachers and parents who are not comfortable with their kids going back. She said the School Board Trustees meeting received a presentation on the planned transition to a hybrid instructional model. With consideration to the recent Stay at Home 2.0 order and the rise in cases, the school board did not take action. The board acknowledged the difficulty of transitioning to a hybrid model at a time when the data indicates concerning trends of positive cases. Trustees are concerned about the mental health and academic crisis of distance education and stressed the need for additional support. C. Krause said if you are a parent or community member that is concerned about distance education, you can contact your local school board trustee and let them know that you are focused on improving distance education and give your opinion on going back to school or now. In other parts of Nevada, they were doing the hybrid model but are now doing the distance education due to the Stay at Home order. We will wait for the decision in December. We don't know what's going to happen.

### **2. Health**

C. Melendrez said the number of COVID cases are on the rise, and that in El Paso, they are bringing in mobile freezer units for all the bodies. The health experts are really concerned about the possible rise of cases over the holidays. Our own Governor tested positive for COVID-19. Just this morning, Caleb Cage, who is the Director of the COVID-19 taskforce, put out a stern warning and raised concerns that some elected officials are not doing their part to support the taskforce. If those counties don't get in alignment, there may be another shutdown in specific counties. Our numbers in Nevada don't look as drastic as other states, but if you look at the numbers in terms of percentages, we are as high as anyone else. There are several campaigns to educate people about COVID-19, such as the #OneCommunity campaign. They are making commercials and billboards on wearing face masks, contact tracing, and vaccination. Another company is close on getting vaccination approval, but we are still a long way from normal. The biggest problem will be the distribution of the vaccine. The frontline workers will be the first ones to get it, then the ones who are most vulnerable. Other organizations are also working on it, such as the Latino Research Center at University of Nevada, Reno, and other Nevada Coalition to End Domestic and Sexual Violence, American Lung Association, Nevada Cancer Coalition, and the American Childhood Lead Prevention program.

C. Villarta said that the Nevada Day Health Care Center is offering free COVID testing to the public. It is an oral rinse test and you get the results back in 48 hours. There is no referral required and it

takes 60 seconds to collect. They partner with Lucid Laboratories. Also, there is an NHPI (Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander) household survey, almost like a census. They are collecting data to better understand the needs of the community and help policy makers. C. Azam wanted to bring up mental health. In the last 10 months, we've been stuck at home, and people have canceled their vacations. Now that the weather is getting cold, there's very little you can do. He urged everyone to do some research on mental health and focus on yourself and family to prevent anyone from falling into depression, especially children. C. Chaney said we need to show compassion and support to the people we represent.

### 3. Housing

C. Taylor attended a webinar on October 15th sponsored by the Opportunity Alliance of Northern Nevada as part of their Policy and Advocacy series. It was a housing forum that featured Christine Hess, Executive Director of the Nevada Housing Coalition and Shannon Chambers, Nevada Labor Commissioner and part of the Nevada housing mediation. They gave an overall discussion of the housing crisis and related advocacy and policy in Nevada. Some Nevada residents have been served notices despite the CDC moratorium. Governor Sisolak's moratorium order expired, and he did not extend it because of the CDC federal eviction moratorium that expires December 31st. Nevada Attorney General Aaron Ford said unfortunately, it falls into the courts with landlords serving their tenants evictions. He did state there are resources available with his office and the CDC moratorium protects any tenant financially impacted by the pandemic. You can fill out a declaration form and give it to your landlord. The court process will require mediation before the eviction process is completed, so there are protections that legislators have put into place. We will see what happens after December 31<sup>st</sup>. C. Chaney asked for clarification about the moratorium. C. Taylor said from a state perspective, it expired in October, but the federal moratorium is December 31<sup>st</sup>. Some landlords have served eviction notices because the state moratorium expired, so we are in a gray area now. However, because of the federal moratorium, it does give tenants protection from actually being evicted, but landlords can work in that gray area to serve eviction notices. Tenants can access those resources to go to mediation and set up a payment plan with the landlord as a way of meeting in the middle.

### 4. Workforce Development

C. De Luca said she worked with several high school students as they take advantage of waivers with universities. There are so many opportunities for them to really challenge the college entrance exams and shine outside of testing. Part of that work is we do self-care and help those students implement practices to stay afloat at this time. She attended a meeting for the Farm Worker Law Project. This is out of Nevada Legal Services, and they are working with agriculture and farm workers in Nevada. This is a small project but they are identifying the number of farm workers in Nevada and some of the social injustices they are facing. They have certain legal protections under the farmworkers law but the contractual requirements not being met by their employers. She is learning what issues they are facing so we can help create awareness and advocate for this group.

C. Taylor attended the Small Business Roundtable discussion organized by the Department of Business and Industry (B&I) on October 12<sup>th</sup>. The highlight was the PETS (Pandemic Emergency Technical Support) grant program and allocated \$19 million in coronavirus relief fund to provide operational support to small business, non-profit organizations, arts and culture organization, and local chambers of commerce that were impacted by COVID-19. The Nevada State Treasurer Zach Conine and GOED (Governor's Office of Economic Development) representative was there to

provide an overview. The grant application no longer available. C. Taylor mentioned the Nevada Labor Survey sponsored by GOED, NNDA (Northern Nevada Development Authority), Latin Chamber of Commerce, LVGEA (Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance), Western Nevada Development District, and NNRDA (Northern Nevada Regional Development Authority). It was released on November 4<sup>th</sup>, and it is a labor supply certification study to address workforce needs to help figure out what types of training programs could be created to assist the labor force in Nevada. C. Taylor said the survey was easy and thorough—there were questions that were geared towards people who prefer to work remotely and those who prefer a traditional work environment.

C. Williams attended a virtual grand opening of the Employ NV Business Hub. It's a new facility and equipped with conference spaces and technology for small businesses and start-ups, plus space for industry and networking events. The goal of Employ NV is to help employers access no cost solutions offered through publicly funded workforce development that they can use for recruiting, hiring, training, talent development, access to financial assistance, and more. The Employ NV Business Hub is coordinated by Workforce Connections, B&I, LVGEA, Vegas Chamber, and the Library district.

## 5. Economic & Business Development

C. Villarta said she met with several independently-owned adult home health care facilities. A lot of these organizations didn't know that they had been given Nevada approved COVID-19 waiver request. If they are a Medicaid or Medicare services organization, they can keep their doors open, even during the disaster. One facility shut down and laid off 18 employees. If they had known about this waiver, then that would have never happened. It is called the 1135 waiver, this goes from now until the end of disaster emergency declaration. Aside from PPP, EIDL, and PETS grant, the Federal Reserve has created the Main Street Lending program. It provides additional lending for small to mid-size businesses for new facilities, expanded workforce, etc. and can be accessed at <http://federalreserve.gov>. The SBA (Small Business Administration) is still hosting virtual conferences and Minority Business Development Agencies that are helping business owners become minority certified. For Native American businesses, the Department of the Interior is starting a protégé mentorship program. The SBDC (Small Business Development Center) in conjunction with the SBA are still doing COVID-19 workshops from Sept 29-March 31, 2021. Their workshops help businesses navigate through COVID-19, different ways to use their resources, grow or expand through business planning, and financial accounting and analysis.

C. Williams attended the Community Benefits Oversight Committee Meeting of the Las Vegas Stadium Authority on October 29<sup>th</sup>, related to opportunities for diverse businesses in operations and concessions. She encouraged other commissioners to attend or send entrepreneurs who are interested in doing business with the stadium. It's a great place to interact directly with decisionmakers that are managing the selection of those vendors. Both Levy Restaurants and ASM Global provided updates on their current activities. One mentioned by ASM Global is the upcoming pitch event, where entrepreneurs are being invited for now in the virtual capacity to pitch their products and services to the stadium. It's a good place to get information if they want to get involved. There's a general Authority Board meeting coming up on December 9<sup>th</sup>, you can visit [lasvegasstadiumauthority.com](http://lasvegasstadiumauthority.com) for upcoming meeting information.

## 6. Legislative

C. Williams made a connection with one of the Assemblypersons and are willing to entertain any BDRs the Commission would like to submit. She invites all commissioners to send ideas for the

upcoming legislative session. Many times BDRs come from other subcommittees, and this subcommittee is responsible for making sure they get in front of folks to start the proper conversation. The Legislative Subcommittee is not as effective on its own unless the other subcommittees push forward some ideas. It is better to start now because once session starts, everything moves really fast and it's hard to get on people's calendars. C. Chaney said there is a lot of prework that is being done and there are also a lot of positions available—they can go the state legislature page for job openings. They are looking for people to work during session.

## 7. Community Liaison

C. Azam said the Reno airport is trying to police mask wearing at a different level. There were communications sent to law enforcement from the CEO suggesting that to be more vigilant for folks who are not wearing masks. C. Azam has been meeting virtually with Sheriff Balaam on a monthly basis, and he has been very good about communicating trying to manage issues rising from COVID. They are seeing a lot more overdoses, people affected by mental health and going into depression, and substance abuse at a different level. It's a big worry in law enforcement right now. There are internal programs that he has implemented for staff and inmates. He sees Sheriff Balaam everywhere in the community, and he is doing a great job updating the community. He said the Northern Nevada Muslim community and other minority groups wanted to show numbers and had a mini parade for early voting.

C. Krause wanted to highlight the Get Out The Native Vote work. It is a national initiative from the National Congress of the American Indian and the Native Organizers Alliance. They had tribal events on a good portion of the 27 communities in Nevada, and there were so many first-time voters.

C. Krause wanted to emphasize the status of tribes as sovereign nations, and that nation-to-nation relationship. When it comes to voting, it's really the states' responsibility for ensuring equity in voting in tribal communities. The Nevada Native Vote Project is looking to make sure there are more tribal polling places.

C. Villarta said on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, LVMPD (Las Vegas Metro Police Department) hosted a banquet called "Unite for Heroism" to fundraise for their community programs. There's a list of different programs at [lvmpdfoundation.org](http://lvmpdfoundation.org). That's a way to get engaged with community development. The Sheriff was having quarterly meetings with the APPI community, and that was a great way for them to know what was going on in our communities, what we were facing, and those are the types of programs that the foundation supports.

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

- a. The Annual Report to the Governor is coming up, and she will have that ready for approval at the January meeting. Please submit any subcommittee reports by December 1<sup>st</sup>.
- b. Following up with the PETS grant, the application period is over. Businesses will be notified either way whether they will receive the grant or not. If there are businesses that are located in Henderson, the City of Henderson recovery grant round 3 opened today and now includes home based businesses.
- c. The Culinary Academy is partnering with the Just One Project, and families can order 40 lbs. of essential food items. You can pick them up or can get it delivered if you are high-risk.
- d. Shop Small Nevada is November 30<sup>th</sup>, and we want to encourage everyone to support our local businesses as much as possible. The Small Business Saturday is the Saturday after Thanksgiving.
- e. Upcoming events – The Nevada Minority Health and Equity Coalition is hosting a COVID-19 webinar on African-Americans on November 23<sup>rd</sup> and a Legislative 101 session, which is a

training for people who want to learn more about the state legislative process. The LVGEA Outlook event is December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

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

None

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

None

#### **6. ADJOURNMENT**

- Meeting adjourned at 11:17 am
- Next Meeting: Monday, January 25, 2021 at 9:30 am