



STATE OF INDIANA

**INDIANA COMMISSION ON
HISPANIC/LATINO AFFAIRS**
Mitchell E Daniels, Jr., Governor

ICHLA

**Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs
Commission Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 31, 2012
3:00pm – 4:30pm
Conference Center Room 2
Indiana Government Center South
Indianapolis, IN**

Commissioners Present:

Richard Espinosa, Senate Lay Member, Fort Wayne (Vice-Chair)
Freddie Thon, House Lay Member, South Bend
Tina Little, Designee, Dept of Correction
Rep. Rebecca Kubacki
Gerardo Gonzalez, House Lay Member, Bloomington
Jesusa Rivera, House Lay Member, South Bend
Christian Gallo, Senate Lay Member, Lafayette (Chair)
Virginia Hernandez, Designee, Civil Rights Commission
Guadalupe 'Herb' Hernandez, Senate Lay member, Fort Wayne (Treasurer)
Teresa Velez, Designee, Family and Social Services Administration
Senator Frank Mrvan
Lenee Reedus, Designee, Dept of Education

Commissioners Not Present:

Pedro Ledo, Senate Lay Member, Ft. Wayne
Charlie Garcia, House Lay Member, Indianapolis
Alfredo Gonzalez, Governor Appointee, Indianapolis
Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon
Senator Greg Walker

Visitors:

Staff Present:

Danny Lopez, Executive Director

Opening

Vice-chairman Richard Espinosa called the meeting to order at 3:08 p.m.

He noted the lack of quorum, with eight members in attendance at the start of the meeting. Other commissioners were running late and quorum was anticipated.

Executive Director's Report

Lopez began with the financials and the budget narrative. Lopez said that the commission is currently about 7% under budget and recommended that \$13,000 be set aside for the remaining month of the fiscal year. Espinosa asked whether funds would need to be obligated by June 15. Lopez said that the 8th would be the final day to get expenditure requests in. Commissioner Freddie Thon asked about the printing line in the budget. Lopez said that currently, supplies and printing are generally absorbed by the Indiana Civil Rights Commission at which Lopez serves a dual role. Thon said that he would like to continue to have material printed and it should be reflected in the budget, and Lopez said that budgeting for those expenses could happen if the commission desired it.

Treasurer Herb Hernandez said he would like to discuss the 2013 fiscal year budget. He asked Lopez to go through line-by-line and note differences from this year's budget. Lopez said that, essentially, the budget process would be the same, the dollar amount would be the same as 2012, and the only slight difference would be the allocation for travel and per diems. Hernandez asked for clarification as to whether or not per diems would still be paid out for commissioners attending meetings via conference call in the future, and Lopez said it would. Unused mileage dollars, however, would be available for the commission to re-obligate for other initiatives.

Thon asked if HEA 1003 disallowed commissioners from attending meetings, and Hernandez said that commissioners could still attend in person and all other open door law points would have to be met.

Hernandez then asked about phone usage, and Lopez said that much of those expenses have been absorbed by ICRC. Lopez said that he had had a conversation with the ICRC budget team, and an amount would need to be set aside for that as well as computer services for fiscal year 2013.

With respect to commission activity for the month, Lopez said that this was a busy time and noted a handful of specific things.

First, he said that the commission had met with Dr. Magdalena Herdoiza-Estevez, with whom the commission had worked in the past, to discuss the possibility of helping expand her program and best practices throughout the state.

Second, the commission had conducted a webinar in conjunction with the Indiana Association of Child Care Resources and Referrals to connect with Latino-owned child care providers from around the state.

Third, the commission discussed the possibility of an agreement with Purdue-Calumet on a project for which they had received a grant from Lumina aimed at enhancing Latino college attainment. At first, the group was denied the grant. Later, they were granted the funds because they were able to expand their geographic reach. Finding a way to engage the group will be an important task for the commission for the coming month.

Fourth, Lopez and Chairman Christian Gallo met with leadership at Area V Agency in Logansport to expand the existing micro-financing project with them. New leadership in that agency has led to a renewed push to grow the program and identify new participants.

Finally, Lopez said that he and Governor Daniels had taped a handful of video and radio PSAs, in both English and Spanish, to be distributed throughout the state. The PSAs focus on parental engagement in education. Representative Rebecca Kubacki asked if commissioners could set up local events through which to talk to local Latinos, pulling in the other commissioners.

Approval of Minutes

With quorum, all pending minutes were unanimously approved.

Approval of Financials

With the establishment of quorum, the most recent financial spreadsheet was approved unanimously.

Business Subcommittee Report

Hernandez said that gathering new members for this subcommittee had been a challenge, and while an attempt had been made to connect across the commission, nothing new had materialized. Still, he said that he continues to attend the CANI loan committee meetings and the micro-lending program continues to operate, albeit slowly, in Fort Wayne.

Lopez clarified that the loans, allocated to CANI in 2011, had already revolved once. Kubacki asked if e-verify provisions might affect loan applicants, and Lopez said that while employment might be affected, the principles of the applying businesses would all be legal residents or citizens in order to qualify.

Lopez said that, in reference to the ongoing activities of the subcommittees, that he had met with Jonathan Plucker of the IU Center for Evaluation and Education Policy about the need for a comprehensive surveying process to better understand the true needs of the community and make sensible recommendations to the legislature. He said that the reality of the statewide events of the commission is that only activists and self-proclaimed leaders show up, while the people from whom most information is really needed are not really represented. While there is always concern, Lopez said, with doing surveys and issuing reports and the often resulting inaction, he said he felt it would be important to allow the Center to help conduct focused groups with real Latino families at the grassroots level. The subcommittees would have a critical role in driving the focus of the research.

Kubacki asked what “real families,” as mentioned by Lopez, means. Lopez said that the people in the communities who need to most help and who benefit most from the recommendations made. He said that those engaging families in these discussions are from the local communities being worked in. Kubacki suggested that, should this move forward, churches be used to recruit participants.

Hernandez and Espinosa suggested that a handful of cities be selected and targeted and spoke about the impacts of the studies, including determining challenges and garnering key information that can be turned into a series of initiatives and recommendations. Lopez reiterated that one of the major functions of the commission is supposed to be to make some substantial recommendations to the legislature.

Senator Frank Mrvan asked whether people from communities call the commission asking for help with specific problems. Lopez said that sometimes that’s the case, but given that the commission is not a community organization, it does not truly serve that function. Mrvan said that would give an indication of real community-level problems.

Kubacki said that she was concerned that nothing would get accomplished because studies often don’t lead to real action. Commissioner Gerardo Gonzalez noted that the initiatives in the strategic plan, while valuable, are making only a very small impact and the commission would be better serve to identify important key issues for the statewide community. Lopez said that one consideration is the lack of resources and manpower for the agency to be programming. In the end, the commission would be making an assumption that working at the local level is the role of the commission, something Lopez said he did not consider to be true.

Commissioners then reviewed and approved, unanimously, the 2011-2012 Annual Report to be submitted to the Governor and the General Assembly.

Finally, the commission began looking at potential partnerships for the coming year. Thon raised concerns about being a granting agency, and Lopez said that funding opportunities were only the byproduct of active and engaging partnerships.

The commission approved funding levels for the budget for the coming year, though not specific allocations that will be discussed during the June meeting. Hernandez said that he would like to fund a continuation of the diabetes research partnership with IUPUI’s BiCCHEC in the current fiscal year. The motion was made and funding in the current fiscal year to continue the initiative was approved unanimously.

Election of Officers

Commissioners considered keeping the same executive board through December of 2012, with new elections happening in January. Thon made a motion to keep the board in place until that time, and it was seconded and approved unanimously. Gallo will remain chairman, Espinosa vice-chairman, and Hernandez treasurer.

Legislative Review

Lopez said that HEA requires, as was discussed at two previous meetings, that bylaws be amended to authorize commissioners to attend and vote in meetings electronically beginning January 1, 2013. Still, one third (7 commissioners) of the commission would need to be physically present at each meeting, every commissioner would have to attend at least one meeting physically per year, and all other open-door law policies would have to be followed. Gallo suggested one formatting change, and as amended the amendment to the bylaws was passed unanimously. Lopez said he would be sending revisions out prior to the next meeting.

Adjournment

At 4:41pm, the meeting was adjourned by the Chair.