



STATE OF INDIANA

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

ICHLA

**Indiana Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs
Commission Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 28, 2011
3:00pm – 4:30pm
Conference Center Room 18
Indiana Government Center South
Indianapolis, IN**

Commissioners Present:

Richard Espinosa, Senate Lay Member, Fort Wayne (Vice-Chair)
Guadalupe 'Herb' Hernandez, Senate Lay member, Fort Wayne (Treasurer)
Alfredo Gonzalez, Governor Appointee, Indianapolis
Freddie Thon, House Lay Member, South Bend
Virginia Hernandez, Designee, Civil Rights Commission
Shanida Sharp-Byrnes, Designee, Dept of Education
Pedro Ledo, Senate Lay Member, Ft. Wayne
Christian Gallo, Senate Lay Member, Lafayette (Chair)

Commissioners Not Present:

Tina Little, Designee, Dept of Correction
Ralph Flores, House Lay Member, Munster
Michelle Stein-Ordóñez, Designee, Family and Social Services Administration
Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon
Pat Rios, House Lay Member, Indianapolis
Rep. Rich McClain
Senator Greg Walker
Lisa Kusiak, House Lay Member, Munster
Senator Frank Mrvan

Visitors:

Mary Gardner, Indiana Department of Education

Staff Present:

Danny Lopez, Executive Director

Opening

Chairman Christian Gallo called the meeting to order at 3:15 p.m.

He noted the lack of quorum, with eight members in attendance at the start of the meeting.

Commissioners were asked to introduce themselves for the benefit of the guest in attendance.

Mary Gardner, Indiana Department of Education, introduced herself as a guest in attendance.

Commissioner Freddie Thon suggested that Commissioner Michelle Stein-Ordoñez had excused herself prior to the February meeting, something he said should be reflected in the minutes. Commissioners reminded him that excused and unexcused absences were not being kept, only the total number of absences by each commissioner to ensure compliance with the code and bylaws.

Approval of Minutes

With no quorum, the minutes from previous meetings could not be approved.

Approval of Financials

Commissioner Herb Hernandez said that because the new fiscal year begins on July 1, Department of Workforce Development budget staff would likely be asking for a budget from the commission in the coming months. Additionally, he noted that funds yet to be obligated would likely not be accessible after mid-June, in accordance with the State's budgetary process. As a result, having quorum in order to approve a plan for the remaining months of the year would be critical to ensuring that all available funds be spent in a responsible way.

Executive Director Lopez said that no unapproved expenses had been paid out during the month of March. Lopez had detailed all possible expenses for commissioner review in the newest draft of the Strategic Plan for the remainder of the year, but without quorum the plan would not be voted upon or, consequently, acted upon. A copy of the draft plan had been sent in mid-March to all commissioners via email, and copies were available at the meeting. Lopez reiterated that it would be impossible to establish a true direction for the commission without commissioner engagement, and that the role of the commissioners was in part to help identify and establish fruitful collaborations with their colleagues and contacts throughout the state.

With no quorum, no financial reports could be approved.

Chairman's Report

Gallo said that there had been several clear instances of civil rights violations in Tippecanoe County in the month of March, including people being pulled over or being held by police without cause. Prosecutors had generally refused to press charges due to lack of information or evidence, and the individuals had been released. Still, he said, there is confusion in Tippecanoe concerning rights and responsibilities of both law enforcement and lay individuals.

Gallo also stressed the importance of attending monthly meetings of the commission and asked that commissioners make a more concerted effort to attend.

Executive Director's Report

Lopez stated again that commissioners should provide suggestions as to individuals in their areas that would be suitable to serve on newly-constructed subcommittees. Participation had waned as several subcommittee chair people had left the commission, and a new direction was needed in order to spark some substance from them. He said he would send an email to commissioners, asking for their input on the matter.

Lopez also discussed some of the trips throughout the state he had made, some on his own and some facilitated by commissioners. He noted that he had attending several meetings in South Bend, and he would be following up in the coming month. Additionally, he said that he had been in Northwest Indiana in March for a series of meetings and media engagements facilitated by Commissioner Ralph Flores, conversations that had yielded one of the major funding projects in the draft strategic plan.

Finally, Lopez asked commissioners for input concerning the next version of the Strategy Summit held last year. He asked for new ideas, what issues should be discussed, and during what month the commission should hold the event.

Unfinished Business

Hernandez then brought up one potential organization with which partnership by the commission could be established. He provided a breakdown of the Paths To Quality early education initiative, a service of the Early Childhood Alliance in Ft. Wayne that has a proven record of demonstrating school readiness strategies for young children. He said that an opportunity exists for the commission to actively participate in the program and that suitable accountability for funds provided would be essential. Further, he said that this initiative could be included in the current draft of the Strategic Plan or built into the next iteration for the coming year's budget. Lopez said that he had heard positive things about the program and would be happy to work with commissioners and program leaders to develop a pilot project.

Business Subcommittee report

No report.

Civil Rights Subcommittee report

Gallo said that had nothing new, aside from what had been reported in the Chairman's report.

Education Subcommittee report

Commissioner Shanida Sharp-Byrnes said that it would be a good idea to provide constituents with a breakdown of what education legislation had passed during session, and Lopez said he would work with her on it following the legislative session.

Health Subcommittee report

No report.

Guest Presentation

Ms. Gardner discussed some of the challenges facing ENL teachers and schools with high ENL populations in the state. She said she had attended the meeting to observe what the commission is focused on with respect to this topic. Hernandez asked her if these challenges are most pertinent to rural areas or urban ones, and she said that many rural areas in Indiana simply don't have capacity to provide services to students.

Gardner promised to stay engaged with commission business through Shapr-Byrnes, and Lopez promised to keep her abreast of commission plans for the coming months.

Adjournment

At 4:27pm, the meeting was adjourned by the Chair.