



**MINUTES OF THE BOARD
20 FEBRUARY 2009**

–
Riffe Center Room East B, 77 South High Street, Columbus

Attendance

Commissioners - Present

Michael G. Florez
Andres E. Gonzalez
Humberto Gonzalez
Richard Romero
Mary Santiago
V. Anthony Simms-Howell
Baldemar Velasquez
Lupe Williams

Commissioners - Absent

Blanche Aviles Casey

Staff - Present

Ezra C. Escudero
Florentina Staigers
Lilleana Cavanaugh

Call to Order

Chair Romero called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Chair Romero took the swearing of Andres Gonzalez, as the new Board Member of the Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs; congratulated and welcomed him to the Board. Round of applause.

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Commissioner Simms-Howell pointed out, for the benefit of the public, that there are two vacant positions on the board.

Chair Romero expressed that they are monitoring closely the appointment of the two new members.

Call of the Roll

Chair Romero asked Vice Chair Mary Santiago to call the roll in the absence of Commissioner Florez.

There were five commissioners present. Three Board members will arrive later and there will be quorum.

Chair's Commentary

Chair Romero expressed that this meeting is before their retreat, which will be very helpful as the Commission moves forward. He expressed also that the Commission has done a lot of work under the new budget approved by the Governor. That the Commission is trying to work with all the various communities through the State of Ohio and that finally have a Board Member from Cleveland, one of the largest Hispanic communities in the State of Ohio, Commissioner Andres Gonzalez. He informed also that the Commission has done a great job informing the communities about the Commission goals and purposes and that OLANet is keeping the communities informed and connected with each other. He informed that as per request of Commissioner Baldemar Velasquez they have added another committee to deal with immigration issues and keep track of Hispanics in Ohio regarding their status in their communities. He expressed that they will dedicate a lot of time at the retreat to this issue.

Chair Romero informed that he made the decision to add new energy to each of the committees, as follow:

Education

Chair - Comm. Andres Gonzalez

Vice Chair - Comm. Blanche Aviles Casey

Economic Development/Workforce Development

Chair - Comm. Humberto Gonzalez

Vice Chair- Comm. Anthony Simms-Howell

Diversity

Chair - Comm. Mary Santiago

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Immigration and Status of Hispanics in Ohio

Chair - Comm. Baldemar Velasquez

Vice Chair - Comm. Lupe Williams

Chair Romero informed that there is a quorum now with the arrival of the other Board members and they will go to the approval of the minutes.

Director Escudero suggested the postponement of the approval of the minutes as a courtesy for the new board member.

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Directors' Reports

Director Escudero distributed copies and presented the 2008 November report. Director Escudero explained that his report now includes the Community Liaison and the Policy Liaison reports. Attached as **Exhibit A**.

Commissioner Simms-Howell expressed that he likes very much the report and the new title for the report. He expressed also that the report must go out the Governor and the Legislators, since these are very good reports that show what the Commission is doing.

Director Escudero distributed copies and presented the December 2008 Directors' Report. Attached as **Exhibit B**.

Commissioner Simms-Howell expressed that the Commission has survived for all these years because it represents the Hispanic/Latino people that has no representation in the Legislature. That the Commission is a junior body that advice the Governor and the Legislators and represents so many races. That we have not reached that level of inclusiveness but eventually one day we would.

Director Escudero explained that in March he would have a new proposal to present to the Board regarding the new contractors for OLANet.

Chair Romero expressed that a reporter contacted him regarding OLANet about being able to navigate the programs and not able to contact Olanet. The Chair likes in the future we can make it easier for people to access OLANet and maybe even secure Ohio Latino Affairs.Org or something to that effect, because it is easier to go to that location. He wants to see a survey that shows if the community finds it easy to find information on the commission and find it easy to navigate through OLANet.

Director Escudero informed that these reports would be posted on the website by noon on Monday.

Commissioner Simms-Howell asked the Director about the budget cuts and if the office has been preparing to avoid cutting certain things.

Director Escudero answered Commissioner Simms-Howell explaining what he had been doing and that he had been working with the members of the Executive Committee to discuss what they were going to look at cutting. The core operation of the office has been intact. Victims of cuts have been few but meaningful. They have been able to eliminate components of programs.

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Nothing has been interrupted. Working with his team, they have been talking about creative ways that will have the Organizations Development Center activities moving forward, even without having an Organization Development Liaison in place. A number of programs due focus on capacity building, so we are still able to fulfill our mandates, to show some clear results for strategic initiatives and diversity, development and education. Some of the things we have not been able to do, we have been able to manage the message across the State effectively.

Director Escudero presented the January 2009 Report.

He asked Florentina Staigers the Public Policy Liaison to present her report and share her experience in meetings with legislators.

Commissioner Romero expressed that he is very pleased with the report and thanked them for their hard work and dedication.

Director Escudero informed that they have contracted the services of professional author, journalist and community member, Ana Maria Quevedo, to put together a series of profiles to answer the questions: How does the Latino community make Ohio a better place? What is the positive impact of key individuals and key organizations? How do they enrich the fabric of everyday life in Ohio? He expressed that there is no shortage of bad news, that we start talking about the positive contributions. He explained that first two articles are the first in a series of a dozen different articles, all over the state, covering different issues and different contributions of the Latino community to the wealth and health of life in the State of Ohio. He explained that what he is presenting today is a draft, the text is 99% complete and they have the right to modify the test. These articles will be fully translated into Spanish with native level proficiency by the author of the articles. Since the articles are missing the photographs, a photographer will be contracted for this purpose. Mariana Quevedo a graduate in photojournalism from Ohio University will be the photographer to take the photos to complete the articles. He informed that he exploring the idea of working with Latino media around the State, who will publish their own news good stories and maintains contact with each other and they can re-print their profiles in our website.

Director Escudero handed out a one-page document that reflects what the Commission is and what it does. This document was prepared in advanced the meeting the Governor this evening, which is the first session of the retreat. He expressed that he is proud of his team and the efforts they have done to put this work together.

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Motion 1 - 02-2009 - To accept the November 2008, December 2008 and January 2009 Directors' Reports. Presented by Commissioner Simms-Howell. Seconded by Commissioner Santiago.

Before approving the motion on the table, Commissioner Velasquez asked about the study of the Latino population in Ohio. (?)

Director Escudero explained that the study has been put on hold due to the budget cuts. That it is a project for later if the Commission gets the funds in the next budget.

Chair Romero explained that this would be part of the work for the newly created committee chaired by Commissioner Velasquez.

After discussion, **Motion 1 - 02-2009** was carried.

Commissioner Simms-Howell expressed that now that there is quorum, they should go back to the approval of the minutes.

Motion 2 - 02-2009 - To approve the Minutes for August 2008, November 2008 and December 2008. Presented by Commissioner Simms-Howell. Seconded by Commissioner Velasquez. Motion carried.

Committee Reports

Executive

Chair Romero informed that he met with Director Escudero and Commissioners Florez and Santiago, and with the consultant and talked about the retreat. He asked Board members if they received the packet of information mailed to them, so they will have time to get a sense on what they were going to do over the weekend. He thanked Commissioners Florez and Santiago for laying out the outline on how the retreat was going to take place.

Finance

Due to the absence of Commissioner Aviles Casey because of a family emergency, Chair Romero asked Director Escudero to present the Financial Report. Director Escudero presented the Financial Report. Attached as **Exhibit C**.

Motion 3 - 21-2009 - To accept the Financial Report. Presented by Commissioner Simms-Howell. Seconded by Commissioner Gonzalez. Motion carried.

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Ohio's Emerging Diversity

Commissioner Santiago informed that there is no new report, except the report included in the packet of information.

Chair Romero introduced the new Chair of the Education Committee, Commissioner Andres E. Gonzalez.

Workforce & Economic Development

No report

Education

Commissioner Andres E. Gonzalez expressed that he is honor to be a Commissioner for the Ohio Commission on Hispanic/Latino Affairs and being asked to be the Education Committee Chair. He expressed that education has been one of his passions. That he will be able to assist in moving forward the Latino agenda on education. He informed that they will be meeting with the Superintendent of the Department of Education soon and he will be able to provide more information further.

Commissioner Simms-Howell expressed that he will be watching Commissioner Andres Gonzalez, since childhood education is one of his passions right now and that he has been involved for the past years with the Cincinnati Public Schools.

Chair Romero expressed that he expect great things from Commissioner Andres Gonzalez.

Commissioner Simms-Howell reported that the Major Leagues Baseball is presenting their civil rights game in June 19-21. It is a very big event in Memphis, Tennessee. He informed that he is a member of the steering committee.

Chair Romero expressed that for the interest of the agenda, Commissioner Simms-Howell will be able to give more details of this event under the section of commissioners' reports.

OLD BUSINESS

Director Escudero referred that at the August or September meeting they presented a sample on Poll Workers Policy for Office Employees. The draft of this document is on the yellow packets and is submitted for review,

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consideration and hopefully approval by the Board. This policy is mirrored from a sister Commission in State government here in Ohio.

Motion 4 - 02-2009 - To approve the Poll Worker Policy for Office Employees as submitted. Presented by Commissioner Florez. Seconded by Commissioner Santiago. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Director Escudero informed that regarding about the budget defense he has no detailed information at this time. Some changes in the budget process and the impact of the federal expending packets that came out on State budgets pushed things back. The legislature will be dealing with the budget until June 30. The Governor has recommended the amount of \$570,000.00 for the Commission's next budget. As informed before, there will be no mini grants, no new organization liaison. The Commission will continue with core operations, Project Open for another year at fifty percent funding levels, upgrade and enhance OLANet, opportunity to have some seed money for economic impact study, semi-annual Agenda Latina town hall meetings every six months, have resources for the office and for eight to ten board meetings per year.

Director Escudero informed the Board that with the level of funding recommended for the Commission, they still would be very effective and successful in continuing to promote the mandates and helping to move the community issues forward.

Director Escudero answered the question from Commissioners Santiago and Gonzalez regarding having a Roster of the Board members with their geographical locations, which is part of the packet they present to legislators.

Florentina Staigers informed the Board that Senate Bill 35 was re-introduced in February and gave a report.

Chair Romero suggested that in the future the Commission should be more proactive making sure that we are dealing not only with the legislators that are proposing the bill but working with the leaders both in the majority and the minority on both the House and the Senate.

Commissioner Florez informed that he spoke with **Ed ??** _____ Legal Counsel from the Hamilton County Sheriff's office about this particular legislation and he told him that he would talk to the Sheriff and get back to him concerning the Sheriff's position on this issue. His first reaction was that the county jail is already crowded and they are not getting any money from the federal government. He believes that his reaction means they will not enforce this.

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Commissioner Velasquez expressed his appreciation for the good job done regarding this issue.

Director Escudero updated the board regarding next month meeting in Chicago. This time the meeting is co-hosted by the United States Hispanic Leadership Institute and the Ohio Latino Affairs Commission. Our Commission came together with our sister agency in Kansas, Indiana, Washington State and Utah and talked about being together at someone's else meeting covering other topics and that they will benefit to cover some other topics, maintaining an ongoing dialogue with each other, learning about best practices from other Latino commissions around the country, improve our reporting, operations practices as an agency. Once a year we come together with other dozen Latino Affairs' commissions around the country to discuss common issues, explore common ground, acquire best practices information and share ideas with each other.

Director Escudero informed that the host graciously would provide the venue and the airfare.

Chair Romero expressed that this is the third opportunity for him to look at other commissions and that he discovered that we are different from the national organizations like Image, NCLR, Naleo because we have in the way we are structure as a State commission, the ear to the ground. Many of these national organizations want us to give them the real pulse of what is happening in the community. He expressed also that this commission has been a model to other commissions and that is an honor for the commission to continue being a role model to these commissions.

Director Escudero informed that the dates for the meeting are March 18, 19 and 20 in Chicago. He expressed that is anyone is interested in being involved, can contact him directly to talk about it.

Director Escudero informed that a survey was sent to the twelve participating commissions in order to prepare an agenda. The agenda will be included in his next report.

Public Commentary

Motion 5 - 02-2009

To accept public commentary. Presented by Commissioner Santiago. Seconded by Commissioner Simms-Howell. Motion carried.

Public introduced themselves.

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Announcements

Commission Simms-Howell informed that he was in a meeting at the Cincinnati Public Schools and was impressed with the lunch program for pre-schoolers. He informed that LULAC is having their convention in Cincinnati in 2011.

Commissioner Santiago informed that the Hispanic Leadership Conference in Lorain is on April 24 and 25. She also informed that the International Festival, in the last week of June will be in charge of the Puerto Rican community this year. At the next meeting, she will provide more details.

Chair Romero informed that he has some data given to him by Matt Colopy from the Governor's office about Latinos in Ohio. Director Escudero clarified that the information is from the Dept. of Development based on the Census Bureau.

Commissioner Andres E. Gonzalez reported that on March 25 from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. there would be a Workforce Development Open House in one of the Latino grassroots organizations in the Cleveland area. It is the first time that they are coordinating it with the Hispanic Business Association.

Commissioner Williams reported that they have been organizing "vigilias" (vigils) for immigrants. She also reported that she have been in contact with the Mexican Consulate regarding the issue of the "tarjeta".

Commissioner Velasquez explained that is a card to draw money, like an ATM, that has no charge to cash a check and has a charge of \$3.00 per card.

He informed that in December he visited American Electric Power in Columbus. They gathered around 6,000 signed postcards of supporters of FLOC around the country to ask the CEO of American Electric Power to meet with FLOC. ????

Director Escudero announced that there would be three Agenda Latina instead of eight. April 10 in Columbus; April 11, Cincinnati-Dayton area, and the Mega Event together with the Lorain Leadership Conference in April 24-25.

He announced also that the Legislative Visit Day is scheduled for Tuesday, May 19. and the regular scheduled Board meeting is on Wednesday, May 20.

Adjournment

Motion 6 - 02-2009 - To adjourn the meeting. Presented by Commissioner

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_____. Seconded by Commissioner Andres E. Gonzalez. Motion carried.

Chair Romero adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Richard Romero, Chair

Michael G. Florez, Secretary

ADDENDUM TO MINUTES

November 18, 2008

MOTIONS CARRIED

Motion #1 - 02-2009	To accept the November 2008, December 2008 and January 2009 Directors' Reports.
Motion #2 - 02-2009	To approve the minutes for August, November and December, 2008.
Motion #3 - 02-2009	To accept the Financial Report.
Motion #4 - 02-2009	To approve the Poll Worker Policy for Office Employees.
Motion #5 - 02-2009	To accept public commentary.
Motion #6 - 02-2009	To adjourn the meeting.