



**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION
JANUARY 11, 2022 – 3:30 P.M.**

The Mental Health Commission met in a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, January 11, 2022 at 3:33 p.m. via teleconference pursuant to Government Code § 54953, which allows the continuation to hold meetings without gathering in a room in an effort to minimize the spread and mitigate the effects of COVID-19 (Corona Virus Disease of 2019).

CALL TO ORDER Chair Henderson called the meeting to order at 3:33 p.m.

ROLL CALL Roll call was taken by JPA Administrator/Clerk Olmos.

PRESENT: Anne Henderson, Chair
Wray Ryback, Vice-Chair
Carolyn Cockrell, GB Member Liaison
Clarence D. Cernal
Twila L. Stephens
Joan M. Reyes
Toni L. Watson

ABSENT: Isabella A. Chavez
Nichole Perry
Alfonso "Al" Villanueva
David J. Weldon (Approved Leave of Absence from 1/2022 – 04/2022)

STAFF: Jesse H. Duff, Interim Executive Director
Rimmi Hundal, Director of MHSA and Ethnic Services
Ken Riomales, Chief Information Officer
Gamaliel Polanco, Wellness Center Manager
Mica Olmos, JPA Administrator/Clerk

REGULAR BUSINESS

I. APPROVAL TO IMPLEMENT TELECONFERENCING REQUIREMENTS DURING A PROCLAIMED STATE OF EMERGENCY UNDER AB 361 (GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54953)

Commissioner Cernal moved, and Vice-Chair Ryback seconded, to ask the interim executive director, or designee, to perform all actions necessary to implement the Brown Act provisions regarding teleconferencing in compliance with Government Code § 54953.

Chair Henderson opened the meeting for public comment; and there was no public comment.

There being no comment, the motion was carried by the following vote: AYES: Board Member Liaison Cockrell; Commissioners Cernal, Reyes, Stephens, Watson; Vice-Chair Ryback; and Chair Henderson. NOES: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Commissioners Chavez, Perry, Villanueva, and Weldon.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE DECEMBER 15, 2021 GOVERNING BOARD AND MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION REGULAR JOINT MEETING

Commissioner Watson moved, and Commissioner Reyes seconded, to approve the Minutes of the December 15, 2021 Regular Joint Meeting of the Governing Board and the Mental Health Commission.

Chair Henderson opened the meeting for public comment; and there was no public comment.

There being no comment, the motion was carried by the following vote: AYES: Board Member Liaison Cockrell; Commissioners Cernal, Reyes, Stephens, Watson; Vice-Chair Ryback; and Chair Henderson. NOES: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Commissioners Chavez, Perry, Villanueva, and Weldon.

III. CONSIDERATION OF A LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST FROM MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION MEMBER DAVID J. WELDON BEGINNING JANUARY 2022

Vice-Chair Ryback moved, and Commissioner Stephens seconded, to approve a Leave of Absence request from Commissioner Weldon from Tri-City's Mental Health Commission beginning January 2022 through March 2022.

Chair Henderson opened the meeting for public comment; and there was no public comment.

There being no comment, the motion was carried by the following vote: AYES: Board Member Liaison Cockrell; Commissioners Cernal, Reyes, Stephens, Watson; Vice-Chair Ryback; and Chair Henderson. NOES: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Commissioners Chavez, Perry, Villanueva, and Weldon.

IV. DISCUSSION REGARDING THE ROLE OF THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION IN THE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESS OF TRI-CITY'S NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Interim Executive Director Duff reported that Tri-City is currently conducting a recruitment for a permanent Executive Director; that the Governing Board has approved a contract with the recruiting firm Wendi Brown Creative Partners; that they are starting the recruitment process in approximately two weeks; that Tri-City would like the Mental Health Commission (MHC) to participate in the selection process for the Executive Director; and recommended that the MHC form AdHoc Committee and discuss how they envisioned to be involved in the selection and recruitment process.

Discussion ensued regarding the recruitment timeframe of approximately 4 months; about the typical way of the MHC to interact with the recruiting firm through an AdHoc Committee; about roles the Mental Health Commission could perform during the executive director recruitment process; and about what the selection process might look like.

Governing Board Liaison Cockrell indicated that she will be participating in the selection process as a Governing Board Member; therefore, she would not participate in the AdHoc Committee which will allow an opportunity for somebody else to participate. Commissioners Cernal, Reyes, and Watson, Vice-Chair Ryback, and Chair Henderson volunteered to be members of the AdHoc Committee.

Chair Henderson opened the meeting for public comment; and there was no public comment.

There being no further discussion, Vice-Chair Ryback moved, and Commissioner Reyes seconded, to form an AdHoc Committee made up by Commissioners Cernal, Reyes, and Watson, Vice-Chair Ryback, and Chair Henderson to participate in the selection process of Tri-City's new Executive Director. The motion was carried by the following vote: AYES: Board Member Liaison Cockrell; Commissioners Cernal, Reyes, Stephens, Watson; Vice-Chair Ryback; and Chair Henderson. NOES: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Commissioners Chavez, Perry, Villanueva, and Weldon.

V. PRESENTATION - TRI-CITY'S WELLNESS CENTER OPERATIONS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Director of MHSa and Ethnic Services Hundal stated that most people have been asking if Tri-City's Wellness Center has been open during COVID-19 or not; however, it has never closed; that the Manager of the Wellness Center was in attendance to provide a presentation about how we quickly pivoted and continue to provide the services virtually, so it would be a seamless transition for our community.

Gamaliel Polanco, Wellness Center Manager, stated that he has worked for Tri-City for approximately 12 years and during the majority of this time, he has been overseeing the Wellness Center. He then reported that during the last 22 months Tri-City's Wellness Center never closed; and explained that it historically served as a learning institution by providing internships to MSW (Master of Social Work) students and volunteer opportunities; and as a community hub where community events and meetings are held such as school district, churches, and 501c(3) organizations meetings. He then discussed the services provided which focus on prevention rather than treatment such as support groups for all ages including mentoring, recreational activities, peer support assessment and linkage, resource development, and self advocacy; education and vocational services, which include educational and career planning, developing job search skills, ESL classes, adult literacy classes, GED preparation classes, computer classes, and weekly employment workshops; family wellbeing, including parenting classes and anger management; Transitional Age Youth activities such as workshops, ILS classes, study space, homework assistance, and recreational activities; and that all services are facilitated by 20 staff members, including an employment coordinator, clinicians, peer advocates, maintenance staff, and social work interns. He noted that currently there are limited in-person meetings due to COVID-19 restrictions and the temperature self-screenings, social distancing, and masks are continued to be required to be on site; however, the Wellness Center continues to provide services virtually through a telehealth platform, including most events to keep the community safe, but still fulfilling Tri-City's mission; and pointed out that instead of having individuals come to the Wellness Center in person, it became a full-on call center, where wellness checks were being performed, and reported that staff made over 20,000 calls to approximately 2,500 individuals in Fiscal Year 2020-21, averaging about 1200 calls in December 2021 alone. Lastly, he stated that staff is looking forward to being able to keep folks safe and serve the community in a first class manner as we continue to fulfill the mission of Tri-City.

Director of MHSA and Ethnic Services Hundal added that during the pandemic, a staff member was hired at the Wellness Center to provide education about the importance of COVID-19 vaccines, about how to take care of yourself, and helping persons make their vaccination appointments; and that in partnership with the community navigators, the Wellness Center made available PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) for those community members who cannot purchase it.

Commissioner Reyes reported that the Assistance League of Pomona website indicates that there are 3,500 homeless students, and inquired if they have access to the computer lab at the Wellness Center. Wellness Center Manager Polanco replied in the affirmative, noting that currently only a maximum of three persons can be at the lab at any given time due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Commissioner Cernal inquired how Tri-City promotes the services that it provides to our community. Wellness Center Manager Polanco indicated that through community navigators since they attended a lot of meetings when we were in person, through phone calls, emails, social media platforms, and through literature. Director of MHSA and Ethnic Services Hundal added that also through a List-Serve distribution, any meetings we attend, and through the local law enforcement.

Commissioner Cernal further inquired about the age demographics of those visiting the Wellness Center. Wellness Center Manager Polanco replied that it provides services to all ages ranging 0-100, noting that there are 'mommy and me' groups, zero to five; kids groups, seven to 12; teen groups, 13 to 15; TAY groups, 18 to 25; adults 26 to 59; and senior groups; and also pointed out that staff is responsive to the needs of the community focusing on filling a gap, rather than duplicating services that are currently available through other community organizations.

Commissioner Reyes inquired if staff had considered a PSA -public service announcement. Director of MHSA and Ethnic Services Hundal replied that it had been done in the past, and it was time to revisit it again.

VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Interim Executive Director Duff stated that he had discussed earlier the executive director recruitment process and the anticipated timeline, adding that staff is also working with the recruiting firm WBCP on putting details to the schedule process.

Discussion ensued regarding the executive director qualifications being established by WIC 5607, which also discusses the required standards of training and experience required by the State Department of Health Care Services for the Executive Director position; and that the characteristics that the Governing Board and the Mental Health Commission are looking for in an executive director, will be added to those requirements.

COMMISSION ITEMS AND REPORTS

Vice-Chair Ryback spoke about the continued decrease of public attendance at the Commission meetings, and inquired what can be done to increase public involvement.

Interim Executive Director Duff recommended that Commissioners invite folks or stakeholders that they are aware of in the community, to come and participate, since they are out and about in the community and they probably know folks that are having interest in mental health.

Vice-Chair Ryback inquired if staff informs all of our current clients about the meetings and provide them the meeting link to participate. JPA Administrator/Clerk Olmos stated that the agenda is distributed to a list of key community stakeholders, the Board, the Commission and it is also posted on Tri-City's website; that she does not have access to client information since it is confidential information; however, anyone wishing to participate has access by visiting Tri-City's website, that the link is on the agenda and in the calendar, and it is also available on social media.

Commissioner Stephens stated that in addition to all of that, we also have the MHSA housing residential services coordinators, such as herself, who routinely make that information available and try help people understand what it is about, how they may be involved, and how they could have an impact on mental health services in the area, noting that they talk about this with MHSA residents and the individuals who are in the low income of those communities.

Commissioner Watson stated that she volunteers at the Wellness Center and she announces what the Commission meetings are to the support groups that she facilitates, noting that the agenda of any public meetings are also available on the counter at the Wellness Center, with the information about the date, time, and how to connect.

Discussion ensued regarding the decrease in public involvement across all meetings, including stakeholder process, which appears to be as the result of 'zoom fatigue'. Strategies were discussed to advertise Tri-City meetings and events, such as continuing to advertise at the local libraries, city halls, and senior centers, social media platforms, and by word of mouth.

Commissioner Reyes reported that the Board of Supervisors will be voting on the proposed plans to house Los Angeles County's most serious juvenile offenders at detention facilities in La Verne. She then announced that in July the number 988, will be used as an alternative to 911 to provide crisis response for behavioral health emergencies. Lastly, she discussed the LA Times Article 'How to talk to your child about mental health' to help prevent suicides.


Commissioner Watson inquired when we will revisit the in-person meetings. Interim Executive Director Duff indicated that it is his understanding that OSHA is going to provide new meeting guidance and we would act accordingly; however, with the virus that is raging right now, it does not look very promising. JPA Administrator/Clerk Olmos added that Tri-City has to follow current OSHA distance requirements, which is being six-feet apart, and we do not have the space capability to accommodate staff, the public and the Commissioners at the same time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

At 4:39 p.m., on consensus of the Mental Health Commission its Regular Meeting of January 11, 2022 was adjourned. The next Regular Meeting of the Mental Health Commission will be held on **Tuesday, February 8, 2022 at 3:30 p.m.** via teleconference due to the COVID-19 pandemic, pursuant to Government Code § 54953.


Micaela P. Olmos, JPA Administrator/Clerk