

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
GATEWAY CITIES COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Gateway Cities Council of Governments
16401 Paramount Blvd.
Paramount, California
May 6, 2020**

Zoom Conference

GCCOG President Diane DuBois called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM.

PRESENT: President Diane DuBois, City of Lakewood
 Immediate Past President Fernando Dutra, City of Whittier
 Member Joe Angel Zamora, City of Santa Fe Springs
 Member Naresh Solanki, City of Cerritos
 Member John Lewis, City of La Mirada
 2nd Vice President Cinde MacGugan Cassidy, City of Avalon
 1st Vice President Maria Davila, City of South Gate
 Member Raymond Dunton, City of Bellflower
 Member Herlinda Chico, Office of Supervisor Janice Hahn
 Member Oralia Rebollo, City of Commerce
 Member Alex Saab, City of Downey
 Member Karina Macias, City of Huntington Park
 Member Edward H. J. Wilson, City of Signal Hill
 Member Roberto Uranga, City of Long Beach

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Thaddeus McCormack, City Manager - City of Lakewood; Nancy Pfeffer, Stephanie Cadena, Joel Arevalos, Ivy Tsai, Norm Emerson – Gateway Cities COG staff, Sharon Weissman – Metro Board Deputy to Robert Garcia, Tyler Curley – City of Long Beach Mayor’s office, Nina Turner – Port of Long Beach, Asia Powell – California Public Utilities Commission, Member of the public, Andres Molina, Government Relations Manager – WSP.

Roll call was taken by GCCOG Office Assistant Joel Arevalos.

Chair DuBois made a request for an amendment to the agenda, to add a funding request for LA County Supervisors concerning COVID-19. Ivy Tsai, COG Counsel, indicated the item arose after the posting of the agenda. A vote is required to add the item.

Member Alex Saab made a motion to approve adding the item to the agenda. It was seconded by Member Joe Angel Zamora. GCCOG staff Arevalos performed a roll call and it was approved unanimously.

Chair DuBois went on to the Consent Calendar. Member Raymond Dunton made a motion to approve the consent calendar. It was seconded by Member Alex Saab. GCCOG staff Arevalos performed a roll call and the consent calendar was approved unanimously.

There were no public comments

Under Matters from the Executive Director, Director Pfeffer said she is pleased to report that the COG received news that we will be getting a grant for climate-related work from the Bay Area Council. This is the first time that the COG will be getting funding from a private nonprofit agency. The project is for an urban tree mapping and strategy development for 4 of our cities, specifically Lynwood, Montebello, Paramount and Vernon. These four were chosen on a first-come first-serve basis. There are other cities that expressed interest in this project so the COG is seeking additional funding sources to be able to do this work for them. The grant amount is for \$200,000. Director Pfeffer thanked COG staff Stephanie Cadena for her work in writing the grant.

Director Pfeffer is reaching out to all Board members to schedule half-hour Zoom coffee chats. She thanked those that have already signed up and is looking forward to meeting with the rest of the Board individually.

With regard to COVID-19, Pfeffer let the Board know that the COG staff is regularly updating a chart that shows all the cumulative cases that have been documented in the Gateway Cities. Director Pfeffer shared the chart via email to all members. COG staff will continue to update this data regularly. She included that when cities or Members have a strategy or response they would like to share about virus, such as the example shared via email from the City of Whittier, the COG staff is happy to share additional examples from other cities.

Member Dunton commented that in lieu of confusion with the Zoom meeting with this many people, instead of a roll call vote the Board may want to approve items by asking for any objections. COG counsel clarified that she was referring the Brown Act, which requires teleconference meetings to conduct a roll call.

Chair DuBois moved to reports from Committees.

Gilbert Saldate, COG Homelessness Program Manager began his report, first reminding the Board that the last time he provided a report was in March 2020 with an update on Homelessness Innovation funds. Saldate is continuing to work with LAHSA and the homelessness initiative to move forward with a faith-based effort, to educate and engage faith-based entities on homelessness and resources, and how these groups can become eligible to engage with LAHSA funding opportunities. While there have been meeting postponements due to COVID-19, this work is continuing to move forward. Saldate reported that the previously planned Housing Tour tentatively scheduled for May 2020 has had to be postponed due to COVID-19. He is looking into potential future dates as well as remote teleconferencing options for this event. Another event being planned is a

Homeless Summit with Dr. Marbut from the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. Dr. Marbut had planned to visit in June and Saldate is coordinating with Marbut to move things forward. This is a great opportunity for us to hear from the federal homeless czar and talk about funding for cities and what efforts will be taking place in the future.

Saldate moved on to trainings, and said the first was on mental health in March 2020. Follow-up trainings were scheduled for April 2020, however they had to be postponed due to COVID-19. Saldate made the ask that they be done via Zoom conferencing, however, this remote training is not allowed. Many cities participated in the past training and they are eager to continue with more. It is still unclear when trainings will be allowed to resume. Saldate will keep the Board updated with new information. Saldate also reported that he presented to the City of Cudahy's City Council on May 5, 2022 with the presentation that he gave the COG Board in March 2020, regarding increases in homelessness and assistance and resources being provided.

Saldate continued that the County notified the COG and cities about Project Roomkey, which provides state funding for resources for homelessness individuals, targeting those that are 65 and older with underlying physical health conditions and who may be at risk from COVID-19. There is also additional funding for Hygiene Washing stations, which is \$128,000 added to the COG's contract. Saldate organized a meeting via Zoom on April 9th for cities to inform how cities are able to provide an invoice to the COG who would then invoice it to the County for the cities' reimbursement.

In November 2019, the County approved the development of a framework for moving funding to COGs to create plans for working with cities or regionally to increase permanent supportive housing and to increase County services to persons experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. In December 2019, the COG was notified of having received a little over \$2 million in innovation funds. It was agreed that the COG would utilize the COG's Homelessness Technical Advisory Committee as a working group to bring cities together. The first meeting was held on January 15, 2020. All cities were invited via email and phone. The group's goal was to reduce the number of persons experiencing homelessness in the Gateway Cities region, and city leads within the LCA's could conduct outreach for their respective areas of the region. Part of the set-aside money would be to assist cities with pilot projects involving predevelopment, development, acquisition, rehabilitation, preservation, multi-family residential, live-work, housing rental and affordable to extremely-low, very low-income households and also including accessory dwelling units. Saldate noted that these strategies and activities were identified by the State as priorities for permanent local housing allocation funding programs, such as SB 2.

At the April 15, 2020 TAC meeting, it was agreed to go forward with funding for 4 project activities, besides the pilot project. The first is for coordinating regionwide collaboration on employment housing projects, utilizing the expertise of housing boards and workforce

development boards. The second is for development of a regional homeless plan and city-specific homeless plans. The last time there was a homeless action plan was in 2011.

The third project is to have a Homeless Liaison between the cities of Bell, Maywood, Cudahy and Commerce. The liaison would work with all four cities, with Bell taking the lead in the hiring. The liaison would educate cities departments on homelessness and help cities assist in connecting homeless individuals to services. The fourth project is led by the Montebello and Commerce Fire Departments outreach team, known as MCAT, to have firemen, clinicians, case managers and a housing navigator to work in the cities of Commerce, Montebello and the riverbeds of Pico Rivera to assist high utilizers of emergency services and work with them intensively to move forward into housing supportive services.

All of these categories of projects, with the pilot project and administrative costs, add up to \$2,057,035. These projects are before the Board for approval. Member Oralia Rebollo asked if there have been any initiatives, discussion or grants for RV relocations. Saldate responded that the issue with RVs was mentioned, particularly along the border of Montebello and Commerce. Member Rebollo said people don't want to leave RVs, as for many individuals these are their homes. Commerce has had discussions on finding locations for people to park their RVs for certain number of months. Saldate responded that this kind of idea has been discussed, and emphasized that many people living in RVs do not consider themselves to be homeless. Safe parking is something that many counties are doing. Saldate expressed interest in having a larger discussion with cities on this issue, and this could be a good regionwide project idea. Chair DuBois asked to clarify if there is funding for a project like this. Saldate responded that there is the pilot project funding set aside for innovative ideas such as the one brought up by Member Rebollo. Chair DuBois asked what would be needed to move forward on this kind of project idea. Saldate responded that a concept proposal would be needed, with information on costs, and the proposal could be brought to the Homelessness TAC. If the cities all agree, the project can be submitted to the County for funding. Chair DuBois stated she would like to see a concept proposal for this kind of idea.

Member Joe Angel Zamora asked for clarification on the first project related to housing and employment. Saldate said that project is targeting homeless individuals who have lower acuity scores. Member Zamora stated the importance of carving out a job that specifically meets their needs. He explained his experience previously working with the Salvation Army to assist homeless individuals with clothing, job interviews, resume writing, and more. He also expressed the need for adding technology education and skills as most jobs now require some use of technology. He noted there may be available incentive programs for employers to hire individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Saldate agreed, and said that workforce investment boards have programs that help line people up with jobs that are appropriate. Director Pfeffer clarified that the \$2 million funding has already been granted to the COG. The County has asked the COG to develop a work plan for this funding, which Saldate has done working with

the TAC and the Committee on Homelessness, and this workplan is in the agenda for the Board's consideration of approval. Chair DuBois asked if there is a timeline. Saldate responded that with approval, the COG staff will be forwarding the projects to the county. The County has given the COG 90 days to submit the project, which starts after approval by the Board. Chair DuBois asked if the COG loses the funding if this is not approved now. Saldate responded that it would be smart to approve it and if there are additional projects or programs that we want to do with the SELACO and HUB Cities, we can discuss this before going into contract. Member Ed Wilson said he understands that we are trying to approve this workplan and with that approval, we would receive the \$2 million dollars. Member Wilson asked for clarification on which meeting the Board or Executive Committee approved submitting the project proposals, or if approval today would be doing this. Finally, he asked if it is possible to approve this today and be subject to any modifications needed to be made, as the Board deems fit. Saldate responded that this is correct for the pilot projects. He clarified that for the project services that Member Zamora mentioned, these could be done utilizing other resources to ensure success. With the workforce development boards serving as our experts, he believes we can have success working on these projects. Director Pfeffer noted that this process has been a bit backwards. The County had funding leftover from Measure H and they told the COGs they would give them this funding. The County told COGs they have 90 days to tell them what they intend to do with this funding that has already been provided, and the projects presented today by Saldate are what's being proposed. Chair Wilson asked if there needs to be an approval of the modification of the contract. Director Pfeffer clarified that this was already done earlier in the year.

Member Dunton wanted to offer his thoughts, as he is on the Committee on Homelessness. He directed Board members to the agenda report which talks about how the funding would be divided. In April 2020, the TAC agreed on the 4 points described on page 86 of the agenda. The first is for regional employment and housing and rental subsidies, a total of \$919,000 for this category. The second, for the regional homeless plan, is a total of \$50,000. The third project for homelessness services liaison is \$150,000. Lastly, the Montebello assistance program is for \$463,000. These funding amounts are what's being recommended and has been approved by the Committee on Homelessness last week. The COG will be getting \$100,000 for administrative costs, and there some additional pilot projects. There is money in there for recommendations made by Board members today, they would just have to be vetted through the TAC. The \$2 million grant funding is not a lot for this large region but its money we don't want to waste. Member Dunton said he believes the TAC has come up with a good way of dividing this money, and while there's not enough money to get to everything we need, we want to get the most bang for our buck. He expressed appreciation for Saldate's efforts in developing the workplan and trying to best disperse the funding across the project categories.

Chair DuBois expressed it was helpful to have someone from the Committee provide comment on the item. Member Wilson asked if the funding is allocated to 1 or 2 LCAs or all 4. Saldate clarified that the funding would go in all LCAs, and that is why the COG

reached out to the 2 workforce development boards to be involved, as they cover all of the COG. Member Wilson asked why there was no mention of Signal Hill or Long Beach. Saldate responded that Long Beach has its own Continuum of Care, so they got their own funding through that. He noted that the City of Signal Hill is included in LCA 4.

Member Dunton made a motion to approve the staff recommendation and Immediate Past President Fernando Dutra seconded. GCCOG staff Arevalos performed a roll call. The item was approved with 1 abstention from Member Karina Macias. COG counsel asked if there is a reason for the abstention. Member Macias explained she hasn't previously been part of meetings and does not feel comfortable approving at this point.

Chair DuBois went on to the next item. Election of nominees for the Gateway Service Council. Member Dunton made a motion to approve the three nominations. Chair DuBois asked if there have already been nominations made. COG counsel clarified they are in the agenda report and Director Pfeffer stated there are 3 self-nominations for 3 positions that were done by prior applications. Second Vice President Cinde MacGugan Cassidy seconded the motion. Chair DuBois asked to know who has been nominated. Director Pfeffer responded the 3 nominees were members Maria Davila, Samuel Pena and Sean Ashton. Chair DuBois thanked the members for their service. GCCOG staff Arevalos performed a roll call. The item was approved with 1 abstention from Member Davila. She chose to abstain as she was nominated.

COG counsel asked, if appropriate, if the Board can approve items C and D and the added item together as they are all related. Director Pfeffer said that would be fine if approved by the Chair. Chair DuBois turned it over to Executive Director Pfeffer to present the items. Item C is a proposal to advocate for federal relief funding for local governments during the pandemic. Federal bills have been capped to those jurisdictions with a population of 500,000 or more, leaving even our biggest city, Long Beach out. Director Pfeffer explained that COG staff developed this letter at the suggestion of the Chair of the Economic Development Working Group, Jerry Caton. Item D is for approval of a similar letter in regards to funding received by the State under the federal bills. The letter requests that the state consider subvention of some of that funding to the local level, especially to smaller jurisdictions that have yet to receive anything from federal relief packages. This letter originated from the League of Cities, with modifications made to apply to our COG. The third item added to the agenda earlier this evening is not written yet, but approval today would direct the COG staff to submit a similar letter at the County level. The county has received relief funding, therefore this request would ask them to consider releasing funding to the local level. Chair DuBois asked for questions from the Board. Past President Dutra asked if any of the programs offer funding for regional organizations such as the COG. Director Pfeffer responded that none of the laws have any provisions for funding to come to COGs, to staff's knowledge. This suggestion is included in the letter to the federal government, as COGs were formed since the federal government did not want to deal with numerous smaller cities. Past President Dutra asked if it would help to ask to receive support from counties for both cities and COGs to be included for federal

funding. Chair DuBois added that it wouldn't hurt to make the ask. Director Pfeffer noted again that this is included in the federal level. Past President Dutra emphasized if there is value in also including this request to the county and state. Director Pfeffer responded that if that is the direction of the Board, we are happy to do so. Past President Dutra said it would be up to the Board and that he doesn't see a downside for the COG to make this request. Member Saab agreed it was a good idea and made a motion to approve the item with Past President Dutra's modification. Member Zamora seconded the motion. GCCOG staff Arevalos performed a roll call and the items were approved unanimously.

Under Matters from the Executive Committee, Chair DuBois said that in the next month or so the COG will be moving to an election process for the 2020-21 COG Officers. These are for President, First Vice President, Second Vice President and Immediate Past Present. The 4 officers are elected every year and this year it will be July 1st. In the past, there has not been a formal process for nominations of candidates for these office positions. With things in disarray, Chair DuBois suggests to continue with the current process and then start work to develop a formal nomination process for the future. Past President Dutra asked Member Wilson if he is familiar with anything that was done in the past that could support the suggestion being made. Member Wilson agreed with the suggestion to maintain the same process that we've had in the past, and then start addressing a more formal process going forward. Chair DuBois expressed the importance of giving all folks an opportunity to participate and there needs to be a process to allow that. She said if no objections, we can move forward as has been done in the past to elect the officers to assume their role in July. Past President Dutra asked Exec. Director Pfeffer to check with other COGs and research what their process is. Member Dunton said he remembers officers have taken effect August 1st and asked if the Chair is considering having officers nominated, elected or taking office by July 1st instead. Chair DuBois clarified they can be elected on July 1st to take office the next day if that is the desire of the Board. By formalizing the process, we give the opportunity to more folks to participate in leadership. Member Dunton suggested that a start could be to have staff develop a white paper asking for interest in COG officers for the future and refresh this list every year as the pace changes. Chair DuBois suggested that be put into action after July 1st, as its late to do that now for the next election. Past President Dutra expressed the difficulty that without having meetings and interactions that we have with other board members, it's difficult to get to know everyone. It's unfair to some people. This year, it's important to have interactions with other board members. Chair DuBois asked for agreement to look to holding elections for officer to take office on July 1st. She asked to have the COG staff think of how to have the election to take place. COG staff will follow up on a process.

Chair DuBois went on to discuss the performance review of Executive Director Pfeffer. The performance review was conducted earlier in the spring. The process was the same as last year, with each of the current COG officers and 1 representative of the city managers steering committee, completing an evaluation form. The Chair of the City Mangers Steering Committee compiled responses into one form with all comments included. This was sent to Executive Director Pfeffer and she has accepted all comments.

DuBois stated everything is top notch and they are pleased with Director Pfeffer's performance. Their feedback conveyed that management of the budget is critical, with greater advocacy for the region needed. Additionally, it is critical for the whole COG to speak with one voice so that our region gets the resources we deserve. Past President Dutra expressed appreciation for Executive Director Pfeffer's efforts in reaching out to other COGs to bring us together and show that there's strength in numbers. When COGs come together, and Executive Director Pfeffer has started this process, we can do great things for our region. One comment made was the importance of maintaining a budget that is sustainable, and keeping a high level of attention to the budget. Member Rebollo commented that her experience has been very pleasant. She got elected and first started with the COG in 2015, but it wasn't until Executive Director Pfeffer took over that she has gotten to know more about the COG. She expressed it has been a good experience especially for new politicians that are not seasoned. Member Rebollo agreed with Past President Dutra's comment about building relations with other COGs. She is looking forward to more years with Executive Director Pfeffer. First Vice President Maria Davila said Director Pfeffer has been a fresh air to the COG, with changes made such as with the staff. The COG now has staff that wasn't there before and Director Pfeffer has made sure we're staying on top of budget. She also communicates with all city managers, and they are the ones that guide board members. Member Davila thanked Executive Director Pfeffer for her work, and also noted the new programs and information she continues to bring to cities. Chair DuBois expressed appreciation for all the work she is doing. Executive Director Pfeffer appreciated the comments and stated this is the best job she's ever had.

Chair DuBois wished a great month to all and hoped the current situation would get better with face-to-face meetings allowed in the future. Board members also wished each other a Happy Mother's Day.

Adjournment: Chair DuBois adjourned the meeting at 7:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Pfeffer, Executive Director