



Dr. CAN Board of Directors Meeting 8/14/20 Minutes

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting

Present: **Marina Bhargava**, Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce; **Eric Byrd**, Office of Council Member Natasha Harper-Madison; **Eric Bustos**, Capital Metro; **Chris Cervini**, Austin Community College; **Dr. Nora Comstock**, CAN Community Council; **David Escamilla**, Community Justice Council; **David Evans**, Austin Travis County Integral Care; **Jimmy Flannigan**, Council Member, City of Austin; **Sherri Fleming**, (for Judge Sam Biscoe, Travis County Commissioner's Court); **Trey Fletcher**, City of Pflugerville; **Simone Talma Flowers**, Interfaith Action of Central Texas; **Nancy Gilliam**, CAN Community Council; **Dr. Suchitra Gururaj**, UT Austin; **Patricia Hayes**, Greater Austin Black Chamber of Commerce; **Gustavo Jimenez**, (for Tamara Atkinson, Workforce Solutions Capital Area); **Liz Johnson**, St. Edward's University; **Dan Leal**, One Voice Central Texas; **Jeremy Martin**, Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce; **Rudy Metayer**, Council Member, City of Pflugerville; **Katrina Montgomery**, (for Colette Pearce Burnette, Huston-Tillotson University); **Sarah Olson**, (for Kenny Hill, Goodwill Industries Central Texas); **Rich Segal**, Austin LGBT Chamber of Commerce; **David Smith**, United Way for Greater Austin; **Ingrid Taylor**, Ascension Seton **Ann Teich**, Austin ISD.

CAN staff in attendance: Raul Alvarez, Carlos A Soto, Jelina Tunstill

Other guests: Ara Merjanian; Dr. Stephanie Hawley, Austin ISD.

Call to order and Introduction: Board Chair Jimmy Flannigan called the meeting to order at 1:01 pm and introduced the meeting.

Minutes: The 6/12/20 meeting minutes were approved, after a motion submitted by Rudy Metayer which was seconded by Patricia Hayes. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Community Council Update: Dr. Comstock mentioned that the Community Council did not have its regular member meeting in July, but the officers met to discuss the final report which they are putting together. The report will focus on the topics that address COVID-19 response to various populations and situations. For Monday, August 17 Community Council have invited two organizations: The Family Independence Initiative to provide a "where are we now", what their forecast is, and results of research they are working on with the Aspen Institute; and Ruben Cantu, of the CRT group, will discuss innovative responses from the Design Process Approach. With the help of CAN advocate and supporter Ara Merjanian, Nancy Gilliam, our vice chair, Hunter Ellinger, past chair, and current chair Dr. Comstock are building a framework for future learning to present to the Community Council for their input for the topics for 2021. Community Council also need to ask you to think about individuals you would like to recommend to Community Council from your districts or organizations. Community Council will email you the nomination forms with criteria based on the current membership and slots that need to be filled. Please nominate individuals to join.

Executive Director's Report: Executive Director Raul Alvarez provided updates on recent CAN staff and partner efforts. Since the pandemic began, CAN has published several blog posts about impact on the African American, Asian, Latino, and immigrant communities and about the impact of the health and economic crisis on mental health. The CAN "Get Engaged" Podcast, which launched in June, is currently in its 13th episode and has grown to 52 subscribers. The podcast is designed as an weekly community calendar highlighting events and activities during the coming week. It is a tool that complements the CAN newsletter that is published monthly. The Central Texas Collective for Racial Equity was officially launched on August 11, 2020. Approximately 20 groups signed on as charter members. The idea that brought the group together was to bring together the folks focusing on race equity

work to talk about what they are working on, make sure they are not duplicating efforts and instead make sure they are partnering and identifying gaps where race equity issues are not being addressed. The planning team included Raul Alvarez, Ashton Cumberbatch, Amina Haji, and Kazique Prince. The group serves as a structure through which to advance some of the recommendations from the Mayors Task Force on Institutional Racism, and it is chaired by Dr. Colette Pierce Burnette.

Next, Alvarez demonstrated a working version of the We Can ATX website. The content is available in English and Spanish and is designed to be easily translatable into some of the other most commonly spoken languages in the Austin Area. In addition to charts showing deaths, cases, and hospitalizations, the “Get Informed” section also includes charts showing top 2-1-1 call categories, unemployment claims in Central Texas, and unemployment rate in Central Texas. Economic relief program data is visualized in 3 maps showing relief by zip code. There is also a chart showing the top complaints to Austin Code related to COVID-19 in July, 2020. The “Get Help” section helps folks navigate how they can get assistance such as where to access treatment or testing for COVID-19, apply for unemployment benefits, get help related to experiences of abuse or neglect, and get emotional support. The “Get Engaged” section features a link to the podcast and community calendar, a link for ways to donate money, a link to sign-up to volunteer, and a link for organizations to request volunteers.

CAN Partner Updates & Highlights on COVID-19 Impact, Health Arena: Jimmy Flannigan provided an overview of items that would be on the ballot and discussed the budget that was passed. Trey Fletcher mentioned that City of Pflugerville approved the Interlocal Agreement with Travis County to allow the flow of CARES Act funds to Pflugerville. They’ve also authorized the Pflugerville Cares grant program with their Pflugerville Community Development Corporation to support small businesses. They have awarded a contract to a firm to start Pflugerville’s new Comprehensive Plan Update. They are also moving forward with the implementation of a transit development plan implementation with a transit pilot using Cap Metro. Sales Tax revenues have reached a level that exceed pre-COVID projections. Some challenges include rising cases and trying to manage community behavior in terms of PPE. Ways to support City of Pflugerville in its efforts include continued collaboration, communication, and resource sharing. Rudy Metayer mentioned how he with other elected and appointed leaders are actively working to ensure that an inclusive, diverse group of individual voices is working on making public health decisions at Central Health, and encouraged members and partners to speak out when witnessing acts of racial injustice.

Sherri Fleming, speaking for Travis County Judge Sam Biscoe, thanked CAN partners for the great partnerships that have developed in response to current events. The Travis County budget hearing is scheduled for this coming Tuesday. Partners are invited to share comments. On June 29th . with CARES act funds. Travis County launched a rental assistance program, which will pay up to 3 months of rental assistance for residents. The program will run through November 30. The County is also in coordination with the City of Austin as they launch rental assistance as well. Fleming also mentioned that the County Business Grant program application period closed on July 31st.

David Evans from Integral Care mentioned that the CAN Dashboard calls for a reduction of the percent of people reporting 5 or more poor mental health days per month, from 25% in 2017 to 15% by 2020. However, sources abound reporting an increase not only in mental impact and issues due to COVID, but also an expectation of a larger “second wave” after the pandemic. On March 16, while serving 30,000 individuals with 950 staff in 45 locations, Integral Care shifted operations procedures to prioritize the health of staff and consumers. The Call Center, 472-HELP, will be able to take 1 17,000 calls this year. Integral Care is also working with the City to embed with 9-1-1 and the FCC has approved a 988 national suicide prevention hotline, which will route calls placed within Central Texas to the Integral Care call center. Integral Care was also able to secure a FEMA grant, CARES money, and worked with the State on expanded direct crisis counseling online.

CAN Partner Updates & Highlights on COVID-19 Impact: Basic Needs Arena: David Smith from United Way began with an update on All Together ATX which completed the second phase of distribution totaling \$2.2M. Funds were used to focus on domestic violence, child abuse, the digital divide, utility assistance, and the elderly. In terms

of “baking equity into contracts”, United Way worked with the CRT (Community Resilience Trust) on including equitable measures in the scoring and selection process for the funding recipients. 2-1-1 have noticed that calls surge as cases surge, initially to a volume of 8 times regular call volume, which has leveled off to about 2 times the regular call volume. Requests for rental assistance are surging again, likely due to CARES act rental assistance funding running out. Safe accessible childcare remains a priority.

Simone Talma Flowers, of Interfaith Action of Central Texas, foresees current situation extending to next year and are normalizing operations in response. The crisis continues to wear on the community physically, economically, and emotionally. Rental assistance continues to be a significant problem. They have seen families who have had to move-in together to make ends meet. In one case, 5 families under one roof. IACT is also busy helping families bridge the digital divide.

Dan Leal from One Voice thanked the funders who responded in support of nonprofits throughout the crisis. Also grateful to the city and county for their support and receptivity towards One Voice and the nonprofit community. In addition to what other partners have raised related to client and nonprofit needs, he highlighted non-profit needs in terms of technology, technology development, and the effective use of technology, especially due to confidentiality requirements that videoconferencing services may lack.

Eric Bustos mentioned how CAP Metro is still providing approximately 40,000 essential service trips per day. There is a service change coming up (more information on the website). Metro Access team has delivered over 565,000 meals to community members to reduce trips to stores. Masks are required on all vehicles and are provided to riders who may need one. Other initiatives include Care Kit distribution at different stops (these contain information, sanitizer, and masks), and the recent launch of a See Say Now app so riders can report issues they may have or witness while riding the CAP Metro service. Finally, the CAP Metro Cares program supports qualified nonprofits in leveraging space on buses for advertising.

CAN Partner Updates & Highlights on COVID-19 Impact: Education & Economic Development Arena:

Chris Cervini mentioned that on August 21, ACC would reopen the CARES act student emergency fund application process. Classes will largely be held online for the fall semester, with limited in person instruction for hands-on workforce programs. Conversations are ongoing with the Coordinating Board and the Board of Nursing to discuss nursing completion and simulation to address lack of clinical spots. ACC is also closely monitoring the Federal funding situation to ensure future student emergency funding allows DACA recipients to be able to access the funding. Cervini also mentioned that funds were released through the Governor’s Emergency Education Relief program directed at short term upskilling and reskilling programs for people who have been displaced. ACC is working with the Coordinating Board and workforce partners to operationalize how to get that into the community.

Ann Teich of AISD announced the district will welcome a new superintendent this week, Dr. Stephanie Elizalde. Classes at AISD will begin September 8 online, with limited exceptions on a case-by-case basis. AISD applied for a waiver to extend online learning past October 4th, still waiting for TEA response. Elementary school administrative staff are calling students and parents individually to ensure parents understand the resources available and expectations for the school year. Dr. Hawley underscored the mental health piece. AISD continues to engage with the community to understand the community’s needs, as the situation changes.

Liz Johnson announced that St Edwards University begins class on August 24th, with 90% of courses online. Students were given a choice whether to live on Campus or not, and approximately 50% will use campus housing. As campus reopens, testing and screening protocols were established for all returning staff and students. St. Edward’s continues to award emergency aid funds through state and federal programs. St. Ed’s also partnered with APH to ensure their plans are in line with those of the City, such as contact tracing.

Katrina Montgomery mentioned that Huston-Tillotson University is shifting to online instruction this semester as well as taking other measures to protect students and staff.

Dr. Gururaj mentioned how UT plans to have over half of their students on campus. Preparative measures include proactive testing and contact tracing. Instructors are participating in learning groups to strengthen capacity to teach online. UT also plans to be in-person in the spring with alternative plans just in case. Dr. Gururaj also mentioned that in January the Center for Community Engagement will open the John S. Chase building located on 1191 Navasota Street. The building will house the UT Community Engagement Center. Challenges for UT going forward include serving diverse student body, retention, PPE, technology, and questions about broader community impact. CAN partners can support UT and its students with internships and other experiential learning opportunities. Dr. Gururaj concluded by inviting partners to think of ways to use the new Center for Community Engagement at the John S. Chase building.

Jeremy Martin of the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce noted that unemployment is declining in the region, compared to earlier in the pandemic. There are currently over 52,000 available job postings this month. Companies seeking to relocate or expand in the area announced 7,000 new jobs last month. There were 4,300 new first-time postings. The GACC partnered with City of Austin to conduct two surveys, a business survey, and a childcare survey. Results highlight challenges for hospitality industry and schools & the digital divide. Most of the districts have a 1:1 device ratio, especially at higher levels, but many districts had to draw on reserves to make that capital investment. Funding for schools will be a key issue this session. The GACC's Financial Aid Saturdays will start up in October, to help graduating seniors complete financial aid forms. Volunteer training begins later this month.

Marina Bhargava mentioned that the Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce is busy serving as bridge for the Asian community, including translation and interpretation. Working with the National Asian Chamber to share resources with the community.

Patricia Hayes mentioned that the Greater Austin Black Chamber of Commerce is also working on similar initiatives to other partners, in terms of engagement and monitoring community needs. The Black Chamber is working on initiatives to support black professionals and business owners through the pandemic and beyond.

Rich Segal of the LGBT Chamber mentioned challenges including business members reporting difficulty navigating forms. Concerns include regional economic strength, loss of local business, and impact on the creative industries. Since the shutdown, the chamber has worked hard to help small business members and the broader community. The Austin LGBT Chamber also did an event together with the Nashville Gay Chamber to promote local music and support local musicians. Their Health and Wellness committee has increased focus on webinars and making these engaging.

Adjournment: Jimmy Flannigan adjourned the meeting at 2:47 pm.