



CAN Board of Directors Meeting

9/11/20 Minutes

Location: Virtual Zoom Meeting

Present: **Marina Bhargava**, Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce; **Eric Bustos**, Capital Metro; **Chris Cervini**, Austin Community College; **Nora Comstock**, CAN Community 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; **Juan Garza**, (for Mike Geeslin, Central Health); **Nancy Gilliam**, CAN Community Council; **Dr. Suchitra Gururaj**, UT Austin; **Jennifer Hanna**, Del Valle ISD; **Stephanie Hawley**, Austin ISD; **Patricia Hayes**, Greater Austin Black Chamber of Commerce; **Kenny Hill**, Goodwill Industries Central Texas; **Jeremy Martin**, Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce; **Rudy Metayer**, Council Member, City of Pflugerville; **Leah Meunier**, **Katrina Montgomery**, (for Colette Pearce Burnette, Huston-Tillotson University); **David Smith**, United Way for Greater Austin; **Luanne Southern**, Integral Care; **Andre Spencer**, Manor ISD; **Ann Teich**, Austin ISD; **Jeffrey Travillion**, Precinct 1 Commissioner, Travis County

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

Other guests: **Caitlin Brown**, Precinct One Commissioner's Office; **Fang Fang**, Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce; **Melinda Gildart**, Manor ISD; **Jonathan Harris**, Del Valle ISD; **Walter Muse**, Precinct One Commissioner's Office; **Ed Van Eenoo**, City of Austin; **George Gogonas**, Austin ISD; **Jessica Rio**, Travis County;

Call to order and Introduction: Board Chair Jimmy Flannigan called the meeting to order at 1:02 pm and introduced the meeting.

Minutes: The 8/14/20 meeting minutes were approved, after a motion by Juan Garza and a second by Nora Comstock. The minutes were approved with one edit.

Community Council Update: Nora Comstock mentioned that the Council selected at the beginning of the year the issue of community Health, with special attention to mental health, as work topics for this year. The COVID-19 pandemic caused a shift in the focus to issues more directly related to the pandemic. The Council has had the opportunity to learn from the community serving institutions who received funding or serve special populations such as the incarcerated or elderly care. The report will be released in December 2020 or January 2021. The Council will work on planning for 2021 in November and December, and on creating a framework that can be used by future councils to facilitate the decision-making process.

Ruben Cantu of the Community Resiliency Trust presented on their approach to collaboratively create inclusion and shared expertise for the betterment of the community. The Community Council is also recruiting members and seeking to increase diversity & inclusion. Please nominate new members that you think may bring a good perspective to the council. Currently the Council has 16 members.

Executive Director's Report: Executive Director Raul Alvarez welcomed Fang Fang, who will be the new Executive Director of the Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce starting in January. The 2020 CAN Dashboard will be released on September 23rd, together with the "We Can! ATX" website. In a time of crisis, it can be very useful to share valuable, up-to-date information about community needs and resources. Another item CAN has been working to develop with the Language Action Access Team is a set of community engagement modules for linguistically isolated communities. We'll share more details about these resources once they are finalized. Around issues of race equity,

CAN has been working on developing a race equity asset map. There will be an opportunity to share feedback on this item on October 10. Also, together with the One Voice Equity & Social Justice Committee, CAN is helping to develop materials to facilitate “Courageous Conversations About Race” as a follow-up to the Beyond Diversity trainings in which many partner representatives have participated. There will be an opportunity to share feedback on this item on September 25.

CAN Partner Budget Highlights & Preview of key drivers for 2021-2022 Budget Process, Cities & County:

Jessica Rio presented on the Travis County Planning and Budget Office’s work, focusing on CARES Act funding, 2021 Preliminary Budget Highlights, and FY 2022 Fiscal Challenges. In terms of CARES funding, Travis County received \$61.1M. 2021 budget highlights include reductions to the preliminary budget in some areas while maintaining current service levels in others, transfers between departments and funds, and maintaining current service levels for several essential programs. The preliminary budget for 2021 totals \$935.1M, and the adopted budget for 2020 was \$882.6M. Challenges for FY2022 include the impact of COVID-19 on County revenue and expenditures, County budget drivers for mandated services and commitment to establish the Public Defender’s Office, unknown property tax collection rates, potential reductions in commercial property values, and concerns regarding future budget time scope, flexibility, and adaptability to emerging circumstances.

Ed Van Eenoo with the City of Austin provided an update on the City budget. The City’s COVID-19 spending framework totals \$330.3M, including \$170.8M from the Coronavirus Relief Fund, \$58.7M for airport improvement, and an estimated \$55M from FEMA. Funds designated for Emergency Response includes \$105.5M for emergency management and expenses of public safety and public health staff substantially dedicated to COVID-19 response. Another \$103.2M are proposed for economic support, including direct economic and other support to individuals, small businesses, and nonprofits. There are also \$62.9M for medical and public health needs. The City Council approved the 2020-2021 budget in August, totaling \$4.2B. The General Fund consists of \$1.1B, reflecting recent changes in funding allocation related to public safety. Reimagining Public Safety includes a reduction of \$31.5M from some areas of public safety to be reinvested in other areas and creates two funds: a Decouple Fund and a Reimagine Safety fund. Overall, a roughly 1% (or \$39.62) combined projected increase on the average individual tax bill can be expected. Challenges ahead include 3.5% property tax revenue cap, economic and budget uncertainty due to COVID-19, and managing growing pension and post-employment benefit liabilities.

Trey Fletcher, with the City of Pflugerville, provided an overview of the city’s FY21 tax rate and budget. The adopted rate for FY 21 is lower than the FY20 rate and the voter approved rate. Today, the city has \$6,636,378,971 in property valuations, roughly double what there was 10 years ago. Of the combined Pflugerville Tax Rate, 57% is comprised by the school district, 21% by the City of Pflugerville, 13% by Travis County. Compared with neighboring communities, Pflugerville falls at the middle in terms of property tax rate. For the month of August sales tax collections were approximately 34% greater than the same period in 2019. FY21 budget highlights include maintaining existing staff and resources, a focus on select projects, and payment for service & services. For FY22, anticipated challenges include economic uncertainty, ongoing impact of legislative and administrative changes, and effective communication.

CAN Partner Budget Highlights & Preview of key drivers for 2021-2022 Budget Process, School Districts:

Dr. Andre Spencer, Superintendent of Manor ISD, began with an overview of the district’s plans to start the school year. The district opened with virtual instruction on August 17, with an initial 4 weeks of virtual schooling time that was extended to an additional 4 weeks scheduled to run until October 9th. Support for first responders was identified as a need to be included in the plans to start the school year. Virtual learning was not working for families with parents who are first responders, so the district opened a first responder site to help with childcare for first responders, which will continue until October when the district starts back with in-person services. Spencer then introduced the 2021 budget, which was recommended at 2019-2020 level while minding current circumstances due to COVID-19. Melinda Gildart, Chief Financial Officer of Manor ISD, discussed specific items from the 2020-2021 budget. Among the items funded are the hiring of an additional 16 full-time secondary teachers, investments

in academic initiatives, and investments in benefits and salary. Anticipated challenges are largely related to revenue uncertainty, including TEA funding, possible lower tax collection rate, lower interest rates, and other challenges.

Jennifer Hanna, Chief Financial Officer of Del Valle ISD, began with a brief overview of the budgetary actions the district has taken this fiscal year. Before COVID-19, the district put together a finance advisory committee and secured contingency funds for crisis response. DVISD has also applied for grant funding for Corona Relief Funds and is still facing a tight budget. DVISD was able to leverage funds from a 2019 bond with a technology component to help provide devices to students. DVISD have found connectivity to be a challenge. They have also been providing expanded food service, including delivering meals on bus routes and curbside pickup for parents. Del Valle ISD is preparing to go back to face-to-face instruction on October 13th at between 25% to 50% capacity. This has led to several expenditures to secure necessary equipment to address safety and access.

George Gogonas, Executive Director of Financial Services for Austin Independent School District, began with an overview of the district's COVID related expenditures. Beginning in March, with a focus on meal delivery, deep cleaning, PPE, hazard pay, and technology. The district is focused on providing 1:1 hardware. To that end they have purchased over 24,000 iPads for pk to 2nd grade, purchased Chromebooks for 3rd to 7th graders, and have deployed over 60,000 computers through curbside to families that need it. AISD has also purchased over 25,000 additional hot spots. Planning for the replacement cost of much of these and other hardware has already started. AISD food service has served more than 1,500,000 meals since March 13, which is about 1/10 of what is normally served. This has impacted federal funding and as a result, the district has had to dip into reserve fund to cover the gap. AISD has also partnered with the City of Austin to provide caregiver meals to parents of students in the district at some of the curbside sites. The trend of decreasing enrollment was a concern before COVID-19 occurred. The most recent recapture payment totaled \$618M. Fund balance is decreasing because of this combination of adverse factors. The budget adopted for the upcoming fiscal year has a \$48M deficit. The district has identified several different funds that have become available as reimbursements.

Several partners spoke about the uncertainty regarding long-term support once initial funds have been depleted. Lack of leadership at the Federal and State level on this issue and lack of access to health services further complicate the situation. Another issue to consider is that the quality of life experienced by many members of our community before the pandemic was already not very good. "Going back" to the way things were before the pandemic may not necessarily be a good thing for these families, so we need to double down to ensure that it the situation they face going forward is not worse than what it was before the pandemic.

Adjournment: Jimmy Flannigan adjourned the meeting at 2:58 pm.