



## Asian Affairs Commission

Regular Meeting | August 5, 2025 | 12:00 – 1:00 pm  
City Hall at One Technology Center | Room 411

### Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Sarah Gilpin, Ha Huynh, Athan Lau, Hieu Lê, Yasamin Nawabi, Cecilia Nguyen, Sofia Noshay, Bee Paredes, Parisa Pilehvar, Vivian Wang, Yi Zhang

Commissioners Absent: Meg Chang, Masood Kasim, Anna Thao

#### I. Call to Order

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin called the meeting to order at 12:03 pm.

#### II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin entertained a motion to approve June meeting and July retreat minutes.
  - i. Vice Chair Pilehvar made a motion, Commissioner Lau seconded.
    - 1. Aye: 10
      - a. Commissioner Wang was not yet present in the meeting.
  - ii. Motion carried, June meeting and July retreat minutes approved.

#### III. Guest Speaker: Wes Mitchell, Executive Director of 211 Eastern Oklahoma

- a. Wes Mitchell explained the difference between calling 911 (emergencies), 988 (mental health emergencies), and 211.
- b. Vision: To provide accessible, comprehensive, and empathetic information and referral services that link Eastern Oklahomans to essential resources, fostering a stronger, more resilient community.
- c. 2024: Took 240k+ requests. 37 counties across Eastern OK. Only database with 9k resources that are curated and validated at least once annually.
  - i. Requests come in online, calls, and text.
  - ii. Goal is user ease—it shouldn't be difficult to ask for help.
  - iii. 68% of callers are calling for the first time, most are working and only one incident away from needing help.
  - iv. Sometimes people need to talk to someone just as much as they need resources.
- d. Wes showed a pie chart of demographics of help seekers, which mirrors state demographics.
- e. 211 offers three-way translation calls. If someone calls who speaks a language other than English, 211 will have an interpreter added to the call with the help seeker and the 211 staff. Don't want language to be a barrier in receiving help.
- f. Top five referral categories: utility assistance, food, housing, health care, legal, consumer, and public safety services



- i. 211 is part of the ecosystem preventing homelessness.
- ii. Top services provided: rent payment assistance, homeless motel vouchers, transportation cost assistance, rental deposit assistance, electric service payment assistance
- iii. Also keep track of unmet needs, when someone calls and there is nowhere to refer them to. Top five unmet needs: housing, transportation, utility assistance, clothing/personal/household needs, individual/family/community support.
- g. In June 2023, a local nonprofit decided they could no longer support 211. Tulsa Area United Way took over operations.
- h. 211 is part of emergency management ecosystem (ie: warming or cooling stations, natural disaster response).
- i. 211 needs: Sustainable funding (solely funded by TAUW, no state or federal funding) and increased outreach and awareness.
- j. Commission Discussion
  - i. Wes: How can 211 work better with your communities?
    1. Commissioner Paredes: There are many different languages spoken within the Asian community. Start with top three to five and ensure resources are translated and interpreters are available. Wes reiterated that the interpreter services they use has all languages available.
    2. Commissioner Paredes: Be out in the community with us.
    3. Chairwoman Gilpin: Can't represent the City of Tulsa but can reach out to legislators as individual residents who support 211. Building awareness and attending community events is important. Invite Wes and 211 to table at Tulsa Asia Fest. There isn't a larger volume of Asian calls because the community isn't aware yet.
    4. Vice Chair Pilehvar: Data & Research Committee is making this a project for at least the next four months. Concerns from community, will immigration status be disclosed, will resources be in my language?
      - a. Wes assured that 211 is completely anonymous. Screening questions that include demographic info are solely to determine eligibility of the caller to access certain resources.
      - b. Vice Chair Pilehvar: Committee is setting a goal of increase in Asian-identifying callers.
      - c. Chairwoman Gilpin made recommendation to include "safe and confidential" on 211's collateral.
  - ii. Vice Chair Pilehvar: What happens to conclude an unmet need call?
    1. Wes: 211 staff record data of why the need was unmet. When meeting with legislators, they elevate that data.
    2. Vice Chair Pilehvar wondered how often callers may encounter an unmet need when calling, Wes shared only 6 – 7% of calls result in an unmet need.



3. Vice Chair Pilehvar suggested adding AAC info to the Asian community's marketing so AAC can help elevate unmet needs.
- iii. Commissioner Nguyen: Grateful to know this resource exists. Don't have to reinvent the wheel by creating other resource centers.

#### **IV. Chair / Vice Chair Report**

- a. Chairwoman Gilpin reflected on the constructive retreat in July realigning to AAC's 2025 goal of leadership development. Title V Commission retreat was the same day and was very insightful, the commissions are all doing very impactful things.
- b. Vice Chair Pilehvar welcomed Commissioners Noshay and Nawabi to their first official commission meeting.

#### **V. Committee Reports**

- a. Cultural Hubs and Community Advocacy
  - i. Commissioner Nguyen passed out a flyer with upcoming events (Appendix 1) and highlighted where AAC will be tabling.
    1. Tulsa India Fest (8/23): Great opportunity to connect with Tulsa's Indian and South Asian community. Need at least two commissioners to table.
      - a. Commissioner Lê volunteered.
    2. Welcoming Week Kickoff Event (9/12): City of Tulsa event.
    3. Tulsa Driller's Game (8/29 at 5:45pm): AAC will be a highlighted organization during the game. Need at least two commissioners to table.
  - ii. Commissioners attended the Han Korean BBQ opening, run by Commissioner Lau and his family.
  - iii. AAC Newsletters will be quarterly moving forward but can still highlight important events and opportunities when needed. Welcomed commissioners and public attendees to add themselves to the email list.
- b. Workforce and Education
  - i. Commissioner Zhang: Committee has cleared major hurdles thanks to the City and Chairwoman Gilpin's help.
  - ii. Opportunities for support:
    1. Parking for event – Chairwoman Gilpin will contact BOK
    2. Tracking ticket sales – determining where people will purchase tickets. Chairwoman Gilpin will reach out to Tulsa Community Foundation.
    3. Call for nominations and sponsorship.
    4. Commissioner Lau will help confirm performances for the ceremony.
  - iii. Chairwoman Gilpin urges all Commissioners to share link to nomination form and submit their own nominations before August 30.
- c. Data and Research
  - i. Vice Chair Pilehvar provided a handout with the Data and Research Committee update (Appendix 2). Committee has reached many of the original objectives set out in April 2024, will be setting new goals.
  - ii. Next focus for remainder of 2025:



1. Equip our leaders with access to resources
  2. Collect and curate community stories that raise awareness and nurture leadership
- iii. Vice Chair Pilehvar invited commissioners who are interested in these two projects to join committee meetings.
- d. Cultural Event
  - i. Commissioner Lau: Committee met in July and made progress on Tulsa Asia Fest.
  - ii. Proposed Tagline—Many Stories: One Tulsa
  - iii. Great marketing professionals on the committee working on branding, will work with Lexi to coordinate with City of Tulsa.
  - iv. Thinking about cultural booths, interactive elements.
  - v. Next Meeting: Aug 27 at 6pm
  - vi. Invite to commissioners to join committee. Currently, Commissioner Lau is the only commissioner on the committee.
- VI. Old Business** – no old business
- VII. New Business** – no new business
- VIII. Announcements / Public Comments**
  - a. Public Comments
    - i. Nem Lun with City of Tulsa thanked Commissioner Nguyen for highlighting the Welcoming Week Event. Welcoming America chose Tulsa to be the host city for the kickoff event. Will have a Title V Commission table, opportunity for AAC to put out flyers.
- IX. Adjournment**
  - a. Chairwoman Gilpin entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.
    - i. Commissioner Lau made a motion, Commissioner Pilehvar seconded.
      1. Aye: 11
  - b. Motion carried, meeting adjourned at 1:00 pm.