



Greater Tulsa Area Hispanic/Latinx Affairs Commission

Regular Meeting | June 12, 2025 | 6:00 – 7:00 pm

City Hall at One Technology Center | 10 North Meeting Room

Meeting Minutes

Commissioners Present: Amy Ariza, Fatima Linares, Mark Ohnesorge, Carlos Bejarano, Jackiez Gonzalez, Jose Bamaca Hernandez, Mimi Martinez Herrera, Jessica Lozano-Alvarez, Amanda Peregrina

Commissioners Absent: Daniel Gomez, Chriss Chavez, Jacob Parra, Diana Pennington, Angelica Reina

Liaisons Present: Andy Little

Liaisons Absent: Ivan Patino-Cortez, Riley Howard

I. Call to Order

- a. Vice Chairwoman Jackiez Gonzalez called the meeting to order at 6:08 pm.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a. Vice Chairwoman Gonzalez entertained a motion to approve April and May meeting minutes.
 - i. Commissioner Berajano made a motion, Commissioner Ohnesorge seconded.
 1. Aye: 9, Nay: 0
 - ii. Motion carried, April and May minutes approved.

III. Vice Chair Report

- a. Vice Chairwoman Gonzalez acknowledged that previous Chairwoman Torres-Chamu has moved to Oklahoma City, therefore the Chair position is vacant. Gonzalez opened the floor to nominate a new Chair that will fill the position until the end of the year.
- b. Commissioner Bejarano self-nominated for the Chair position.
- c. Vice Chairwoman Gonzalez entertained a motion to appoint Commissioner Bejarano as Chair of the Greater Tulsa Area Hispanic/Latinx Affairs Commission for the remainder of 2025.
 - i. Commissioner Ohnesorge made a motion, Commissioner Martinez Herrera seconded.
 1. Aye: 9, Nay: 0
 - ii. Motion carried, Commissioner Bejarano was elected Chair for the remainder of 2025.
- d. Vice Chairwoman Gonzalez passed further meeting facilitation duties to newly appointed Chairman Bejarano.

IV. Guest Speaker: Tulsa Police Department Chief Dennis Larsen

- a. TPD Chief Dennis Larsen spoke about his positive experience working with the Hispanic community.
- b. Chief Larsen discussed some of TPD's major priorities, including reducing gun-related violent crime and combatting the proliferation of drugs such as fentanyl in the Tulsa community.
- c. Chief Larsen also spoke about TPD's immigration policies and translation services as it relates to the Hispanic community.
 - i. Assured commissioners that TPD seeks to treat everyone with dignity and respect as it conducts law enforcement activities.
 - ii. TPD is starting to utilize translation devices that enables officers to communicate with those who speak languages other than English. He is also interested in recruiting bilingual police officers from the Hispanic community.
 - iii. Stressed the importance of working together—TPD, Fire Department, City of Tulsa, churches, community organizations, and others—to address community challenges.
- d. Commission Discussion
 - i. Commissioner Peregrina asked if there is a way to know what percentage of the Hispanic community are involved in crime, whether it is a high percentage.
 - 1. Chief Larson noted that in his experience, Hispanic communities have low crime levels.
 - 2. Commissioner Peregrina: Given the negative stereotypes about the Hispanic community, is it possible to use TPD data to dispel these public misconceptions?
 - 3. Chief Larson suggested that the negative narratives and stereotypes come from the national level, not the local level.
 - 4. Commissioner Ohnesorge added that data is tracked by different organizations. However, TPD typically does not track demographic data in its crime analytics.
 - ii. Vice Chairwoman Gonzalez asked, given the level of misinformation and fear, whether TPD has increased its community education and outreach work to build trust and dispel fears.
 - 1. Chief Larson: TPD's strategy for outreach work hasn't changed. He described some of the department's ongoing outreach work, including participating as speakers at community organizations and churches. TPD also has community ambassadors who attend community events and answer any questions directly. He personally offered to speak at any venues that the Commission recommends.
 - iii. Commissioner Martinez Herrera expressed concern about social media, which can spread propaganda, as well as the large number of private citizens that call immigration with false accusations. She asked Chief Larson to describe how TPD

ensures that information is accurate and that all are treated with dignity and respect, particularly given the risk of a false accusation.

1. Chief Larson described the process that TPD takes in its investigations to verify the likelihood of crime being committed. TPD must build a substantial case and present it in written form to a judge, who then will decide whether to grant a warrant.
2. Commissioner Martinez Herrera asked about the Hispanic community's fear to gather at various events, given the fear of a possible ICE raid.
3. Chief Larson answered that ICE will not come to these events. He offered to send police presence to any events to engage with the community and ensure participants' safety. He suggested that the fear of what's happening at the federal level is not coming to our local community.
- iv. Commissioner Ariza thanked Chief Larson for all of TPD's amazing work in the community. She called out a new educational initiative—Citizen's Policy Academy in Spanish—that TPD will be starting that allows Hispanic people to learn more about the department.

V. Committee Reports

- a. Executive Committee – no report
- b. Education Committee
 - i. Commissioner Linares reported that the Tomas Rivera Awards attracted approximately 200 people, which was a great turnout in the current climate.
 - ii. The Committee is considering changing the criteria for nominating heroes to include workers in the school system (teachers, counselors, etc.) and other community members.
 - iii. The Committee is also looking into options to change the venue that are more cost effective and welcomes any recommendations.
- c. Community Advocacy Committee – no report
- d. Public Safety Committee – no report
- e. Immigration Committee
 - i. Chairman Bejarano noted that there is currently no Chair for this committee, so opened the floor to general updates from all Commissioners.
 - ii. Commissioner Martinez Herrara noted that there has not yet been much activity from ICE in Tulsa, although there have been unconfirmed sightings. The best thing the Commission can do for the community is dispel any misinformation. The Commission should also continue to inform people about their rights, how to respond to various scenarios, etc. Nevertheless, the fear people have is valid, given that Tulsa has had raids in the past.
 - iii. Commissioner Bamaca Hernandez shared that based on his work experience, he has not seen any evidence of ICE activity and that the unconfirmed sightings are likely false.

- iv. Commissioner Ariza highlighted that ICE is continuing its normal scope of work targeting individuals who should be deported. However, these deportations are very targeted and do not impact the general population.
- v. Commissioner Peregrina highlighted that it is important to verify information before it is spread. She also raised the Attorney General's initiative to remove the status of Venezuelans, which are part of the Hispanic community. This is a big fear and many families are impacted. She suggested that the Commission could create a letter addressing these changes.
- vi. Chairman Bejarano suggested that the Commission should assemble the Immigration Committee to focus on this work and develop recommendations for the entire Commission.

VI. Old Business – no old business

VII. New Business

- a. Vice Chairwoman Gonzalez presented to the Commission requesting endorsement of about a possible new initiative for the Immigration Committee called 4th Amendment Worksites.
 - i. It is an educational toolkit and training that provide restaurant owners with guidance on how to protect employees in the event of an unconstitutional search by federal law enforcement.
 - ii. Vice Chair Gonzalez suggests this resource could be valuable in the Tulsa context.
 - iii. An endorsement from the Commission would involve:
 - 1. Resource adaptation: Help curate and modify select tools for print, given that restaurant managers requested printed materials.
 - 2. Promotion and distribution.
 - 3. Resource tracking and evaluation.
 - iv. Proposed summer timeline:
 - 1. June/July: work meetings, commissioners attend virtual training, establish initial distribution plan.
 - 2. July: print initial batch of materials, identify distribution days, virtual training for local restaurants, ongoing distribution and education.
 - 3. August: revisiting businesses to understand ongoing needs and impacts of resources.
 - v. Chairman Bejarano suggested that this could be an initiative under the Community Advocacy Committee instead of the Immigration Committee, as they are more established.
 - 1. Vice Chairwoman Gonzalez suggested that this could slow down the timeline unnecessarily to push the initiative to committee rather than vote as a commission today.



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2. Commissioner Lozano-Alvarez responded that it would be better to vote on this endorsement today, given that this is urgent information to share with the community.
3. Chair Bejarano clarified if Vice Chair Gonzalez is seeking for the commission to formally vote on this today, Vice Chair Gonzalez said yes.
- vi. Chair Bejarano entertained a motion to adopt the 4th Amendment Worksites as a commission project.
 1. Vice Chairwoman Gonzalez motioned, Commissioner Herrera seconded.
 - a. Aye: 9, Nay: 0
 2. Motion carried, the commission adopted the 4th Amendment Worksites as a project.
- vii. Vice Chair Gonzalez will connect with folks in a smaller group to begin work.

VIII. Announcements / Public Comments

- a. The Commission heard public comments from Alfredo Marcelo from the organization Growing Together.
 - i. Mr. Marcelo highlighted that interpreters at the municipal court are not effective at carrying out their duties. They regularly mislead defendants and provide them with incomplete information that carries serious negative consequences, yet are not held accountable. Moreover, families do not have access to online information about incarcerated or detained family members. He suggests that these are major problems that face the Tulsa Hispanic community that the Commission should actively address.

IX. Adjournment

- a. Chair Bejarano entertained a motion to adjourn.
 - i. Commissioner Lozano-Alvarez motioned, and Commissioner Linares seconded.
 1. Aye: 9
 - ii. Motion carried, meeting adjourned at 7:15 pm.