



CMEAA
COMMISSION ON MIDDLE EASTERN
AMERICAN AFFAIRS
M I C H I G A N

Meeting Minutes

June 04, 2020, 12:00 P.M

Meeting held online via Microsoft Teams

ATTENDANCE:

Commissioners Present:

Manal Saab- Chair
Michael Romaya- Vice Chair
Lina Hourani-Harajli- Treasurer
Suzanne Sukkar- Secretary
Nabeel Obeid- Trustee at Large
John Daoud
Adel Mozip

Susan Dabaja
Dave Abdullah
Martin Manna
Nadine Kalasho

Commissioners Absent:

Chief Ron Haddad, Fay Beydoun

Staff: Fayrouz Saad (Executive Director of Office of Global Michigan), Karen Phillippi (Director at Office of Global Michigan), Maan Abou Khzam (CMEAA Administrator).

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Saab at 12:02 p.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was present.

I welcome you all to our June 4th Meeting of the Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs. The Chair's remarks today will deviate from previous meetings as we are living in uncertain times. The past two weeks simply broke my heart witnessing the horrific death of George Floyd, and yet again, more violence, threats and racism against blacks. I watched the videos intentionally, as awful as they are, because, for me, it's important not to turn away. I believe we must do all we can to learn, to understand, to listen and try to deeply empathize, especially with those who know the sting of death and racism far deeper than us. And, we must become change agents. As leaders of organizations built on the principles of inclusion, respect and equality for all, I believe it's important that I say, and we say, hate is wrong. Racism is wrong. We simply cannot accept these terrible events and inequities as human beings.

Even though I know I can never truly understand the injustices and challenges that so many others face daily, I will keep trying – and learning – and advocating -- and doing all that I can to stand up against hate, to create safe and inclusive environments, and to take real actions to change the world in all the ways we can.

The global pandemic, which has tragically killed more than 100,000 people in our country alone, has also brought to light so many other related inequities. Especially in healthcare where people of color are dying disproportionately and being affected at higher rates from the disease. I'm grateful for the Governor for all that she's done and in particular for having this commission with such leaders as you around the table. I want you to know we heard your outcry about the needs developing in our communities from this COVID-19 pandemic, be it mental or substance abuse, or hunger. As we proceed with our Agenda today and you will note from the commission packet in your hands, we have tabled out pre-pandemic priorities and adjusted today's focus to align it with today's needs of our Michiganders.

Let us listen as we proceed and consider how you and your organizations may collaborate to assist through these tragic times. We know first-hand we have the leadership at this table to make an impact, individually and collectively.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On Motion duly made and supported, the Commission approved the meeting agenda of June 4. *Motion carries unanimously*

III. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

On Motion duly made and supported, the Commission approved the meeting minutes of December 4th as presented. *Motion carries unanimously.*

IV. LEO UPDATE

Director Saad introduced the Commissioners to Doug Ross who joined us today and spoke in length on futures for front-liners program. Director Saad also updated the commissioners on the governor's decision to expand the executive order on health care to include trained healthcare professionals and allow them to get a temporary license through LARA to be able to assist during the pandemic for the community that is internationally educated.

Census Update

Director Phillippi updates the Commission on the progress of the 2020 Census:

- The state of MI is at 67.1 % rate
- Counties Wayne at 62.2%
- Oakland at 75.5%
- Macomb at 78.8%

- Lansing at 64.7%
- Grand Rapids at 66.5%
- Saginaw at 55.2%
- Response from MENA category at 54.3%
- Dearborn at 64.5%
- Round tables are supposed to be no longer than 30 min. An alternative method maybe is some shorter versions of the information and trusted communities to respond for the census and how it will affect them, these will be in Arabic as the recordings are completed. We will circulate with all Commissioners.

V. TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Lina Hourani-Harajli presented the budget report for Full year 2020 in detail.

On Motion duly made and supported, the Commission approved the Treasurer's report as presented for FY 2020. Motion carried unanimously.

VI. CMEAA ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Implementation Plan

Administrator Maan Abou Khzam updated the Commission post his one on one meetings with all Commissioners. In light of COVID-19, the Commissioners engaged collectively to re-prioritize the items on the implementation plan. The plan was completed after taking in Commissioners feedback and will be circulated via email to all Commissioners.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

UMS

The Commission tabled UMS funding under old business for next CMEAA meeting on September 15, 2020.

Bylaws Amendment

During December 4, 2019, Chair Saab gave notice to the Commissioners to consider amending the Bylaws by changing the staff title from CMEAA Coordinator to CMEAA Administrator. The Commission moved unanimously to make that change at its regular meeting hep on June 4,2020.

On Motion duly made and supported, the Commission approved amending the name change stated in CMEAA bylaws from Coordinator to Administrator. Motion carried unanimously.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

CMEAA COVID RESPONSE

COVID-19 has dramatically increased physical and mental health challenges in MEA communities. Mental health services have seen a large increase in demand, as people are trying to cope with the frightening and stressful situations brought about by the pandemic. To accommodate these needs and ensure safety and wellbeing, we have successfully transitioned our mental health services and resources to a virtual format. Over the last few months, thousands of virtual therapy and tele-psych sessions, peer support workshops and case management services have been offered to children, adults, families and domestic violence, sexual assault, and torture survivors.

Domestic Violence Victims

As a result of spread of the virus, we have seen a dramatic rise in the number of domestic violence victims who are facing unimaginable environments as they, along with young children who are not able to attend school, are imprisoned with their abusers with stay at home orders in place. As part of our relief efforts, we aim to offer these women and their children a safe place of refuge through temporary shelters and through rent, food, and basic needs assistance.

Emergency Relief Services: Basic Needs & Utility/Housing Assistance

Through our food and basic needs assistance program, we can provide the necessary resources for disadvantaged families in our community to get through this hardship and be able to get back on their feet after the pandemic. Through distributed food vouchers, gift cards, and direct payments, clients have the freedom and flexibility to choose groceries and other items, according to their dietary

On Motion duly made and supported, the Commission approved the release of USD 30,000 to be equally split upon ACCESS, ACC and CCC in COVID-19 response emergency fund relief focused on mental health. *Motion carried unanimously.*

IX. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m. by Chair Saab.