



GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY  
LANSING

SUSAN CORBIN  
ACTING DIRECTOR

**Hispanic/Latino Commission of Michigan, Commission Meeting  
GVSU Detroit Center  
163 Madison St Detroit, MI 48226  
August 12, 2023 10:00AM-12:00PM  
Meeting Minutes No. 348**

**Commissioners Present**

Jesse Bernal, Chair	Aurora Saucedo	
Floren시오 Hernandez, Treasurer	Vanessa Guerra	
Abril Valdes-Siewert, Secretary	Elias Gutierrez	
Angelita Valdez	Juan Rodriguez	
Jose Sanchez III	Anthony Rubio (Virtual)	

**Staff Present:**

Isabel Montemayor-Vazquez (Executive Director)  
Marisa Constantini-Ramos (Administrative Assistant)

**Guests:**

Poppy Hernandez (Office of Global Michigan)  
Mika Mcaskill (Commissions Administrative Manager)

**1) Call to Order:**

Chair Jesse Bernal called the meeting to order at 10:03am. Introduced and welcomed new commissioner Juan Rodriguez. Commissioner Juan Rodriguez shared his background, highlighting his family story, and his experience as the executive director of Latin American United for Progress (LAUP) in Holland, MI. He announced the upcoming fundraising gala scheduled for October 20<sup>th</sup>, hosted at the Holland Civic Center. Further details can be found at: [www.laup.org/events](http://www.laup.org/events).

Chair Bernal informed the commissioners that if anyone wishes to attend the fundraising, the commission is offering to cover registration fees and seats for the event.

**2) Approval of Agenda:**

Reading of the agenda.

**MOTION: Motion for the approval of the agenda was made by Chair J. Bernal, supported, and passed by majority.**

**3) Roll Call:**

Secretary Abril Valdes-Sierwert completed the Roll Call. Jesse Bernal, Floren시오 Hernandez, Abril Valdes-Siewert, Angelita Valdez, Vanessa Guerra, Aurora Saucedo, Vanessa Guerra, Elias Gutierrez, Jose Sanchez III, Juan “Johnny” Rodriguez, Anthony Rubio (virtual)

**4) Acknowledgement of Commissioner Absences:**

Commissioners Consuela Barber-Lopez, Jesus Hernandez, Sonya Hernandez, Monteze Morales, and Celeste Sanchez Lloyd (she was present virtually, but her presence did not count for quorum) were not present.

Jesse Bernal, Chair  
Consuela Barber-Lopez, Vice Chair  
Floren시오 Hernandez, Treasurer  
Abril Valdes Siewert, Secretary  
Sonya Hernandez

Vanessa Guerra  
Anthony Rubio  
Jesus M Hernandez  
Celeste Sanchez-Lloyd  
Jose Sanchez, III

Monteze Morales  
Angelita Valdez  
Aurora Saucedo  
Elias Gutierrez  
Juan Rodriguez

**5) Approval of Minutes from July 14th, 2023 :**

It was noted that an amendment needs to be made to minutes from the July 14th meeting due to a change in the finance report, as requested by Commissioner Florensis Hernandez.

**MOTION: Motion for the approval of the minutes amendment was made by Secretary Valdes Siewert, supported by commissioner Guerra, and passed by majority.**

**6) Executive Director Report:**

**a) Dr. Isabel Montemayor-Vazquez**

Events:

- HHE: The commission is taking reservations for the Hispanic Heritage Event in Kalamazoo, set to take place at the Delta Marriot Hotel and Conference Center in Kalamazoo Michigan 5pm Networking hour 6-9pm dinner and program.
  1. Our scholarship recipients will be in attendance and will receive recognition along with our Hispanic Heritage Award Recipients.
  2. We ask that commissioners reserve their spots and those of their guests via the link/QR code on the invitation.
  3. Commissioners should reserve their hotel room ahead of time if they are planning on staying at the venue, it is anticipated that hotel rooms will fill fast.
  4. Please follow the same Conlin reservation instructions you utilize for other hotel reservations.
  5. We ask that commissioners please arrive by 4:30pm to welcome guests and introduce yourself as the networking hour begins.
  6. An agenda for the event will be going out to commissioners in the upcoming weeks.
- The Hispanic Heritage Award recipients were determined by committee. Commissioners Angelita Valdez, Johnny Rodriguez, Elias Gutierrez, and Florensis Hernandez reviewed and ranked the nominations. The awardees have been notified and both they and their nominators have received their formal invitation for the Hispanic Heritage Event.
- 2023 Scholarship applications are currently being reviewed by commissioners and we should have the list by next week. Thank you to Commissioners Aurora Saucedo, Vanessa Guerra, and Jose Sanchez for reviewing and scoring the applications.
- The Statewide Latinx Summit: Planning committee met at the campus of Davenport University to even out summit logistics, add to the list of invited guests, and prepare a general plan for breakout sessions. If you know of a Latinx serving organization, you would like to have invited to the summit please share their contact information and we will cross reference to make sure they are included.
- Ballet Nepantla: There were some delays. We are hopeful that the payment should go through next week and the advertisement should go out next week as well. Secretary Valdes-Siewert inquired about additional funding to transport people to the Ballet Nepantla event. The E.D. responded that she secured additional funding specifically for that. She informed that Comcast has committed to contributing \$1,500 for transportation and will also feature a TV spot. She also mentioned that \$4,500 will be added to the donations account. The commission will be funding organizations across the state for \$500.

Meetings:

- IMSC: The IMSC and IMSC health sub-committee met. It was decided that a smaller subcommittee will be formed to work on the air quality and heat awareness campaign for MSFWs.

- Unemployment and Insurance Agency: Commissioners Jose Sanchez, Elias Gutierrez and Jesse Bernal attended the UIA meeting on barriers to accessing unemployment benefits. OGM staff will be meeting with UIA to share feedback and best practices to assist them in executing inclusive focus groups across the state, to capture the data they require.

E.D. addressed the commissioners, requesting them to register for the upcoming Hispanic Heritage Event. Chair Bernal inquired about HHE awardees from 2022. E.D. provided an explanation that all recipients had received their awards except for two individuals due to logistical challenges. She will present and award in Grand Haven for one of the awardees from last year.

Chair Bernal welcomed Commissioner Sanchez Lloyd, who joined the meeting virtually.

E.D. reaffirmed that during the Hispanic Heritage Month, as long as commissioners represent HLCOM and wish to participate in any event, they are eligible for reimbursement.

**b) Chair’s Report- Dr. Jesse Bernal (No written report was submitted)**

- Chair J. Bernal thanked to the commissioners who participate in the retreat on August 11.
- He shared that in the upcoming commission meeting, there will likely be a vote on the 3 pillars of priorities: operations, community engagement, and legislative advocacy.
- Chair requested Secretary Valdes Siewert to join the legislative advocacy group, and she accepted the role.
- Treasurer Hernandez expressed the desire to analyze the 2024 budget in consideration of the priority list.
- Chair conveyed that the schedule for the 2024 commission meetings will not be finalized yet, but a calendar for approval will be presented in the next meeting.
- Chair confirmed the participation of organizations such as the MHCC, Law Enforcement, MCIRR, Drive Safe Coalition, and Mi Poder in future commission meetings.
- Treasurer Hernandez proposed several options, including the Latinx Coalitions, El Concilio, Voces, Hispanic Center, and DHDC.
- Commissioner Valdez proposed inviting the Mexican Consulate to participate in one of the meetings.
- Treasurer Hernandez further suggested the Michigan Associations of College Admissions Counseling.
- Chair sought advice regarding a request from a representative who has asked for time with the commission.
- OGM Director mentioned that the commission is permitted to provide time to representatives but emphasized that doing so should not be interpreted as a political endorsement.
- Chair announced that the E.C. will be focused on implementing comprehensive changes to the full commission through the bylaws.

**7) Report from Office of Global Michigan:**

Director Poppy Hernandez expressed gratitude to the commissioners who participated in the retreat.

She shared several updates:

1. Job opening for a Refugee Coordinator.
2. Collaborative efforts between the Unemployment Insurance Agency and the Michigan High-Speed Internet Office to provide more equitable and inclusive experience for individuals in the local community.

3. The staff at OGM will be actively supportive of the Strategic Initiative Groups.
4. She highlighted the proposal of Commissioner Guerra regarding the early voting process. Mika Mcaskill, Commissions Administrative Manager, will coordinate with other commissions to determine their potential participation.

## **8) Committee Reports**

### **a) Finance Subcommittee:**

Treasurer Florenso Hernandez provided an update, stating that the commission successfully sponsored 29 organizations with a total budget of \$26,000. He emphasized that this achievement sets a significant precedent. He listed several organizations that received funding.

- a. Finance Subcommittee- (Florenso Hernandez, Treasurer) Thirteen sponsorships were approved by the EC and Finance Committee per the process voted on by the Commission in January. The commission had \$117,248 remaining as of June 24th. We have not obtained the new B2A for this month nor will we have a budget estimation for 2024 until closer to the next commission meeting.

**A motion for the finance report was made by Chair J. Bernal, Commissioner Abril Valdes-Siewert supported the motion, and passed by a majority.**

### **New Business:**

- a. 2024 Dates and Locations: Identify locations for Graduation, Hispanic Heritage Month, Retreat. Chair suggested to reevaluate the current 6pm meetings on Fridays and explore options. He suggested shifting the meeting time to 3pm to 5pm or at noon. He asked to commissioners to volunteer to host a meeting. Secretary Valdes-Siewert stepped forward to volunteer as a host and voiced her disagreement regarding the flexibility of the meeting time. She emphasized the importance of maintaining consistency in the meeting times. A poll will be sent to the commissioners to gather their votes and preferences. Commissioners Sanchez, Rodriguez and Valdez volunteered to host a meeting. Commissioner Valdez also offered to host a retreat in Muskegon.

E.D. mentioned that last year, a meeting was planned in Adrian, MI, but had to be canceled. She pointed out that this year, there is a proposal to cancel the September meeting, which is also scheduled there. She explained that there had been a request for the commission to hold a meeting in that location.

- b. Chair suggested that the graduation celebration should consistently take place in Lansing, as it is a central location that allows students to attend. Commissioner Valdez proposed that the graduation celebration could be scheduled after the Dia de la Mujer celebration in Lansing to ensure greater attendance.

- c. Hispanic Heritage Event. Chair mentioned that Commissioner Gutierrez expressed an interest in hosting the Hispanic Heritage Celebration in 2024. Commissioner Gutierrez suggested that the venue could be the Detroit Institute of Arts and shared details about the cost and options for the venue. E.D. emphasized the need for the commission to have three venue options, present a cost comparison, and provide justification for the final choice. The Director of OGM shared information about a new venue available in the Capitol Building in Lansing. Commissioner Valdez highlighted the importance of ensuring that the chosen venue must support the food service from a Latino business. Chair informed that commissioners would receive a survey regarding the preferred time and dates for commission meeting in 2024. The survey will include options for venues for both the graduation and Hispanic Heritage Celebration.

- a. Sponsorship overview 2023
- b. Cancellation of September meeting. Chair proposed to cancel the September commission meeting in Adrian. He mentioned the possibility of rescheduling a meeting for either November or December.  
Treasurer Hernandez suggested the idea of moving the Adrian meeting from September to October. Commissioner Sanchez offered to look into the possibility of tentatively shifting the October meeting in Detroit to either November or December. E.D.

**MOTION: A motion for the cancellation of September meeting was made by Commissioner Vanessa Guerra, Treasurer Floren시오 Hernandez supported the motion, and passed by a majority.**

Chair Bernal requested E.D. to contact the City of Adrian to inquire about the venue's availability for the commission meeting on December 1<sup>st</sup>.

**MOTION: A motion for a commission meeting in Adrian on December 1st at 6:00PM was made by Commissioner Vanessa Guerra, Treasurer Floren시오 Hernandez supported the motion, and passed by a majority.**

Commissioner Anthony Rubio expressed his willingness to volunteer as a host for a meeting in the 2024. Chair Bernal indicated that it will be added to the list of options for hosting.

**9) Announcements:**

Commissioner Valdez announced several upcoming events:  
September 8, 9 and 10. Giant Doll "Lele" from Queretaro Mexico will be in Grand Rapids  
September 9. Latino Festival in Muskegon  
September 16. The Hispanic Festival in Grand Haven.

**10) Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 11:55am

Respectfully submitted,

---

Jesse Bernal, Chairperson

Date

---

Abril Valdes Siewert, Secretary

Date