

**NEBRASKA COMMISSION ON LATINOAMERICANS QUARTERLY MEETING
Saturday April 22nd 2023. Bellevue University El Camino Latino Center.**

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Nebraska Commission on Latino-Americans Chair Maria Whitmore called the meeting to order at 9:11 am.

II. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Maria Whitmore welcomed everyone, and Executive Director Maria Arriaga introduced Public in attendance.

III. ROLL CALL / RECORD ABSENTEES

Present: Chair Maria Whitmore, Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz, Secretary Jaime Suarez, Governor's Representative Lali Sage, Commissioner Sandra Lopez, Commissioner Adi Nancy Dobbins, Commissioner Leticia Rodriguez, Commissioner Aida Evans. **Staff Present:** Executive Director Maria Arriaga, Office Specialist Dora Lima; Communications Specialist Hilda Rey. **Community members present:** Former Commissioner Adriana Carvajal-Rodriguez, Arley Velasco of "Tu mission" Columbus Nebraska, Moises Saucedo of El Camino Latino, and Gina Ponce of El Camino Latino.

Chair Maria Whitmore recognized Former Commissioner Adriana Carvajal-Rodriguez.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Arley Velasco, from [www. tumission.com](http://www.tumission.com) Columbus Nebraska, spoke about the importance of education, good level educational offer for children in nebraska, his survey of reasons for students' lack of interest in receiving secondary education. He spoke about mental health and the need for a support system and inspiration for latinoamerican families.

Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz asks if Arley Velasco's organization is a 501c3, Arley responds that at the moment it is an LLC. Chair Maria Whitmore thanks Arley Velasco.

V. PUBLIC NOTICE OF MEETING

NEBRASKA COMMISSION ON LATINOAMERICANS QUARTERLY MEETING

LINCOLN - The Commission on Latino-Americans will host its Quarterly Meeting on Saturday, April 22nd, 2023. The meeting will take place at Bellevue University, El Camino Latino Center, 1028 Bruin Blvd Ste. 480 Bellevue, NE 68005. We will begin at 9 a.m. and adjourn at no later than 2 p.m. The Quarterly Meeting is open to the public and all interested individuals are invited

to attend. Time will be allocated for public comments within the first hour of the meeting. We encourage those wishing to speak to call our office ahead of time, in an effort to provide better accommodations. The agenda for the Quarterly Meeting will be kept current and made available for public inspection at the Commission's office. For further information, please contact us at (402) 471-2791. Public Notice of this meeting was placed in the Kearney Hub and the Star Herald on April 7th, 2023, The Lincoln Journal Star, The North Platte Telegraph, The Grant Island Independent, and Lexington Clifford Harold on April 8th, 2023, The Omaha World-Herald on April 11th, 2023, and Mundo Latino Publications on April 13th, 2023, and was e-mailed to the NCLA e-mail list and posted on all Nebraska Commission on Latino-Americans social media channels.

VI. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (MOTION 1)

***Motion 1** was made by Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz to approve the Agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Leticia Rodriguez*

Vote Yes: Chair Maria Whitmore, Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz, Secretary Jaime Suarez, Governor's Representative Lali Sage, Commissioner Sandra Lopez, Commissioner Adi Nancy Dobbins, Commissioner Leticia Rodriguez, Commissioner Aida Evans.

*Vote No: None **Motion Passed***

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (MOTION 2)

***Motion 2** was made by Commissioner Leticia Rodriguez to approve the Minutes for October 13th, 2022. Seconded by Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz*

Vote Yes: Chair Maria Whitmore, Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz, Secretary Jaime Suarez, Governor's Representative Lali Sage, Commissioner Sandra Lopez, Commissioner Adi Nancy Dobbins, Commissioner Leticia Rodriguez, Commissioner Aida Evans.

*Vote No: None **Motion Passed***

***Motion 3** was made by Governor's Representative Lali Sage to approve the Minutes for January 21st, 2023.*

Seconded by Chair Maria Whitmore

Vote Yes: Chair Maria Whitmore, Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz, Governor's Representative Lali Sage, Commissioner Sandra Lopez, Commissioner Adi Nancy Dobbins.

Abstained: Secretary Jaime Suarez, Commissioner Leticia Rodriguez, Commissioner Aida Evans.

Vote No: None Motion Passed

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. The Nebraska Latino Youth Summit

Executive Director Arriaga presents for consideration the continuing of the Nebraska Latino Youth Summit in new locations so that other communities can have the seed funds to support the event starting in the year 2025. E. Director Arriaga also mentions the decision to disburse the Latino Youth Summit their allocated funds earlier than typical so they can plan for the coming event better. It is brought up that the conference may move around Nebraska, with specific locations discussed being North Platte, Lexington, or Scottsbluff, all discussed locations are in consensus about being in the western portion of the state.

***Motion 4** start looking for new locations for the Nebraska Latino Youth Summit starting in 2025 and disburse funds for the 2023 Latino Youth Summit in Columbus before the fiscal year ends.*

Motion was made by Commissioner Governor's Representative Lali Sage, Seconded by Chair Maria Whitmore.

Vote Yes: Chair Maria Whitmore, Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz, Secretary Jaime Suarez, Governor's Representative Lali Sage, Commissioner Sandra Lopez, Commissioner Adi Nancy Dobbins, Commissioner Leticia Rodriguez, Commissioner Aida Evans.

Vote No: None Motion Passed

2. Website Proposal

Executive Director Arriaga presents the 5 quotes for the board to review. The quotes include redesign, and new content, training and updates. E. Director Arriaga and Marketing and Communications Specialist Hilda Rey prepared the analysis of the quotes since the Executive Committee was given the task to select the best option at the January Meeting they selected the quote from "Unanimous" this company has previously worked with the State of Nebraska and offered a more attractive option. Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz asked if would continue using the LatinoAC.Gov dominion for the website, Secretary Jaime Suarez asked to clarify that there would be a translation option available for the site E.D. Arriaga responded yes to both questions. The Executive Committee recommended once the contract is sent by Unanimous to have it authorized by the Attorney General office, to make sure everything is correct.

***Motion 5** update the website, follow through with Unanimous as the web re-designers, and approve the budget \$16,400 made by Commissioner Adi Nancy Dobbins Seconded by Commissioner Aida Evans.*

Vote Yes: Chair Maria Whitmore, Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz, Secretary Jaime Suarez, Governor's Representative Lali Sage, Commissioner Sandra Lopez, Commissioner Adi Nancy Dobbins, Commissioner Leticia Rodriguez, Commissioner Aida Evans.

Vote No: None Motion Passed

3. Department of Education on COVID-19 Update

Executive Director Arriaga explains that the federal funds transferred by the Department of Education to the Commission to create a project related to COVID never happened and the deadline in the contract for it to be executed had passed. E.Director Arriaga had been in conversation with the Department of Education to find a way to be able to use the funds but it is not possible to use them so the funds will return to the federal government. E.Director Arriaga explains that because the commission received the funds via an invoice we will receive an invoice from the Department of Ed to return the funds that were never used. Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz asks if there will need to be a motion for the invoice to be paid and Chair Maria Whitmore explains that because the process was just an administrative one no motion is needed as it had already been approved in a previous meeting.

IX.NEW BUSINESS

1. Process Improvement Coordinator

E.D. Arriaga explains the responsibilities and role of the Process Improvement Coordinator as established in the job description the position will be shared between several offices and we will have the PIC as a staff member 30% of the time. Approximately \$16,000 will be allocated to the position. Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz asks what can be done with a person 30% of the time, E.D. Arriaga explains it will be on a project by project basis to create and implement process improvement, specifically starting with a procedures manual for the office so to have the basic guide for staff in the long term.

Janelle Mahood, explained more about the position role and duties. Commissioner Leticia Rodriguez asked, what are you planning to improve or what have you worked on so far?" Mahood and E.D. Arriaga explained that because an Memorandum Of Understanding had not yet been signed, they had not yet began working in the project. Office Specialist Dora Lima explained how it would be helpful to have this position to list and detail the responsibilities in the office and better walk through the processes so they can be understood by all staff members. Chair Maria Whitmore explained that this was important so that someone else could take over duties of another position if there was ever needed for members of the staff.

2. Commissioner Photos

Photos were taken of some commissioners and some commissioners will send their own headshots.

3. Cinco de Mayo Parade in Omaha May 13th

The Nebraska Commission on Latino Americans was invited to walk in the Cinco de Mayo Parade in Omaha on May 13th, 2023. Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz asks if people would be interested in having the logo of the commission shirts, E.D. Arriaga will put this together and send an email to the commissioners to coordinate the t-shirt purchasing. E.D. Arriaga urges everyone to attend and invite their families to the event.

Unidos U.S. Membership

Arriaga spoke about how previously the commission was a part of the Unidos US membership program, Unidos US is the largest Latino non-profit organization in America, they provide many resources for the Latino community and grants to organizations in partnership with them. The membership fee is \$771, Arriaga asked the board to consider renewing our membership. The benefits of our membership include boosting our website and social media accounts, they also have different summits, workshops, and events throughout the year that would be available to us.

***Motion 6** to approve funds to become members of Unidos U.S. was made by Governor's Representative Lali Sage Seconded by Commissioner Aida Evans.*

Vote Yes: Chair Maria Whitmore, Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz, Secretary Jaime Suarez, Governor's Representative Lali Sage, Commissioner Sandra Lopez, Commissioner Adi Nancy Dobbins, Commissioner Leticia Rodriguez, Commissioner Aida Evans.

*Vote No: None **Motion Passed***

4. Unidos US Summit (Motion 7)

The Unidos US Summit in Chicago will be in July. Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz expressed that she believes if there is money in the budget it is a good idea to be present. Commissioner Leticia Rodriguez exhorted all commissioners to attend the conference in addition to E. Director Arriaga.

***Motion 7** to approve funds for Executive Director Maria Arriaga and at least one Commissioner to attend the Unidos U.S. Conference. Motion was made by Commissioner Adi Nancy Dobbins. Seconded by Commissioner Sandra Lopez.*

Vote Yes: Chair Maria Whitmore, Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz, Secretary Jaime Suarez, Governor's Representative Lali Sage, Commissioner Sandra Lopez, Commissioner Adi Nancy Dobbins, Commissioner Leticia Rodriguez, Commissioner Aida Evans.

Vote No: None

Motion Passed

5. Social Media Analytics

Communications and Marketing Specialist Hilda Rey presented several graphs from the previous month's data collected about social media presence and growth. Secretary Jaime Suarez suggested that we track monthly statistics for our Facebook information, it was mentioned that there are 2 linked in accounts so Secretary Suarez additionally suggested that we change one of the LinkedIn accounts to be the Commission and the other the Executive Director's professional. This last to be the parent account for the second account logged in to the page.

6. Nebraska Public Meeting Act

Chair Maria Whitmore gave a brief review of the rules and regulations for commissioners under the NE Public Meeting act. Emphasizing it is possible to have a situation where there could be enough commissioners in an event, to be considered a quorum. That all need to remember to abstain from commenting any Commission of Latinoamericans business in a setting other than the public meetings so to respect the mentioned rules and regulations under the law.

7. Bellevue Office

E.D. Arriaga signed a Memorandum of Understanding (M.O.U.) for the Bellevue Office agreement. The Attorney General's office helped with the process. E. Director Arriaga expects that having an satellite located office will allow us to reach more Latinos in south Omaha and Bellevue area. Nebraska. E.D. Arriaga further asked the commissioners to investigate their communities and see if there are even more opportunities to be present in other communities. Chair Maria Whitmore suggested other ways to make appointments available at the Bellevue office like a QR Code that takes you to an electronic scheduler. Secretary Jaime Suarez explained that a satellite office also allows us the opportunity to work with interns and have the opportunity to engage more with our youth and the community. Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz proposed a regular schedule for Maria to be present in the Bellevue Office and asked that the M.O.U. be shared with the commissioners.

8. Latino Business Report

E.D. Arriaga explained the \$18,400 contract with Juan Paulo Ramirez PhD from GIS & Human Dimensions evaluation and consulting, to update the Latino Business Report and create various other reports in the addendum. Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz asked when the last Latino Business Report was published, which was in 2012 with 2008 data. Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz also asked if there would be COVID data included, and E.D. Arriaga explained that the report would certainly include COVID data, and stated the importance of having an updated report beyond COVID and in response to the growing Latino population in 2020 census.

Motion 8 to approve funds for a contract for \$4,400 with Juan Paulo Ramirez PhD from GIS & Human Dimensions evaluation and consulting, to update the Latino Business Report, funds would be disbursed before the end of the fiscal year. Motion was made by Commissioner Aida Evans Seconded by Commissioner Adi Nancy Dobbins.

Vote Yes: Chair Maria Whitmore, Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz, Secretary Jaime Suarez, Governor's Representative Lali Sage, Commissioner Sandra Lopez, Commissioner Adi Nancy Dobbins, Commissioner Leticia Rodriguez, Commissioner Aida Evans.

Vote No: None ***Motion Passed***

9. Sponsorships

Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz reminds the commissioners of the sponsorship process to navigate issues they were having in the past with approval of sponsorships being requested in an untimely fashion. Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz explains that in an effort to be transparent and fair when several organizations request funds in one of the periods established. It is important to follow the process established to also have support to organizations in a timely fashion and with goals compatible and coherent with the mission we have been assigned by the Governor and the Legislature.

Las Mañanitas Sponsorship, las voces sponsorship

Chair Maria Whitmore gives Adi Nancy Dobbins the opportunity to further share the plans and events she is requesting funds for in her community. The request is for a series of events in September explaining details of the request is for a Latino Heritage Festival in North Platte, NE

Motion 9 to approve funds for Las Mañanitas sponsorship was made by Governor's Representative Lali Sage Seconded by Commissioner Aida Evans.

Vote Yes: Chair Maria Whitmore, Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz, Secretary Jaime Suarez, Governor's Representative Lali Sage, Commissioner Sandra Lopez, Commissioner Leticia Rodriguez, Commissioner Aida Evans.

Vote No: None

Abstains: Commissioner Adi Nancy Dobbins ***Motion Passed***

Motion 10 to approve funds for "Las Voces" sponsorship. Chair Maria Whitmore advises since this request for funding has not been submitted within the guidelines of the process established by the commission it should not be considered at this time in order to have a fair process for all organizations that do follow the guidelines established by the commission board. Commissioner

Sandra Lopez, Commissioner Leticia Rodriguez, Commissioner Aida Evans Vicechair Cristina Castro agree.

This motion will not be voted on at this time due to the extemporaneous timeline of the request. Vicechair Cristina Castro, Commissioner Leticia Rodriguez, Secretary Jaime Suarez and Chair Maria Whitmore recommend Executive Director Maria Arriaga to educate those organizations requesting funds about the process approved by the Commission and the timeline and requirements established as those were approved by the Commission in the Quarterly meeting October 2022.

10. Commissioners reports.

X.FINANCIAL REPORTS (MOTION 8)

1) Review Budget Status Reports for January, February, and March

2) Review General Ledger Reports for January, February, and March

Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz requests that Executive Director Maria Arriaga meet with budget analyst to adjust travel expense part of the report, the commission shows is over budget in this area, it was addressed that the commission might want to move money into that budget expense account. Chair Maria Whitmore requested in addition we have an estimate of what the financials should look like for the rest of the fiscal year so enough funds are allocated appropriately being mindful of our being fiscally conservative.

Motion 11 was made by Commissioner Leticia Rodriguez to approve financial reports, 1. Budget report for Q1 2023, 2. Ledger report for Q1 2023. Seconded by Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz

Vote Yes: Chair Maria Whitmore, Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz, Secretary Jaime Suarez, Governor's Representative Lali Sage, Commissioner Sandra Lopez, Commissioner Adi Nancy Dobbins, Commissioner Leticia Rodriguez, Commissioner Aida Evans.

Vote No: None ***Motion Passed***

XI. DIRECTOR REPORT (MOTION 9)

E.D. Arriaga expressed that the current goal of the commission has been to expand the commission's reach to all of Nebraska. She has been meeting many New equipment was acquired in order to follow the updated position responsibilities. E.D. Arriaga discussed the launch of the website project and shared an attached contract. E.D. Arriaga has met with over 50 community leaders, senators, and community members to expand the commission's ability and reach. E.D. Arriaga has also been very present in the Latino media, specifically Latino Radio Stations. E.D.

Arriaga is being interviewed for El Perico Newspaper which will be published soon. The commission is being interviewed for several projects we have been working on. E.D. Arriaga created a partnership with We Care for Kids / Por Todos Los Niños. Our branding has been solidified by our constant presence on social media as well. E.D. Arriaga is working to have more reports about Latino's impact in Nebraska available through the commission. E.D. Arriaga has also had a shadowing; a student had the opportunity to follow E.D. Arriaga and learn what she does on a typical day and learn about the commission, she told everyone that she is open to more opportunities like this. E.D. Arriaga spoke about the bills that the commission has been testifying.

Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz congratulates Executive Director Arriaga for her dedication and hard work and the very positive impressions and connections established by E.D. Arriaga.

Motion 12 was made by Commissioner Adi Nancy Dobbins to approve the Director's Report. Seconded by Commissioner Aida Evans.

Vote Yes: Chair Maria Whitmore, Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz, Secretary Jaime Suarez, Governor's Representative Lali Sage, Commissioner Sandra Lopez, Commissioner Adi Nancy Dobbins, Commissioner Leticia Rodriguez, Commissioner Aida Evans.

*Vote No: Nones **Motion Passed***

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION (MOTION 10)

Motion 13 to go into executive session was made by Commissioner Leticia Rodriguez. Seconded by Commissioner Sandra Lopez

Vote Yes: Chair Maria Whitmore, Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz, Secretary Jaime Suarez, Governor's Representative Lali Sage, Commissioner Sandra Lopez, Commissioner Adi Nancy Dobbins, Commissioner Leticia Rodriguez, Commissioner Aida Evans.

*Vote No: None **Motion Passed***

Motion to end Executive session made by Commissioner Leticia Rodriguez seconded by Secretary Jaime Suarez. *Vote Yes: Chair Maria Whitmore, Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz, Secretary Jaime Suarez, Governor's Representative Lali Sage, Commissioner Sandra Lopez, Commissioner Adi Nancy Dobbins, Commissioner Leticia Rodriguez, Commissioner Aida Evans.*

*Vote No: None **Motion Passed***

XIII. COMMISSIONERS REPORT

Chair Maria Whitmore

Chair Maria Whitmore urged people to use the Nebraska Human Trafficking number if they have any suspicion of trafficking. Chair Maria Whitmore has been supporting E.D. Arriaga in her work at the capitol along with Secretary Jaime Suarez they testified in favor of budget increases for salaries for the Commission Staff. Chair Maria Whitmore has also been assisting the local church in her community to host for the first time a community festival for Cinco de Mayo. Chair Maria Whitmore has also been involved with the Latino Youth Summit board and encourages commissioners to attend if they wish. Chair Maria Whitmore also shared that there are free mental health first aid courses available at the Nebraska Regions and after attending one herself she recommends it for everyone there are mental first aid courses for children and for adults. Chair Maria Whitmore closed by sharing the information about the “Unicameral Kids” opportunity for Commissioners to share in their communities.

Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz

Vicechair Cristina Castro-Matukewicz spoke about the 2019 floods recovery and that her work is allocating funds that are being disbursed to help those communities rebuild to come back from the devastation of that natural disaster.

Secretary Jaime Suarez

Secretary Jaime Suarez also testified in favor of budget changes and increased salaries for the commission. Secretary Jaime Suarez has also been working with One World a lot in Omaha with upcoming changes. Secretary Jaime Suarez also talked about the health coordination with One World and the focus on mental health and the fact that they charge on a sliding scale. Secretary Jaime Suarez later discussed that they were a part of the opening of a mobile dental health office for Omaha. He also testified on behalf of the commission before adjudications committee.

Governor’s Representative Lali Sage

Governor’s Representative Lali Sage brought information on meat packing bill of rights and her business cards. Much misinformation was spread during different hearings related to labor issues and she is available for any questions in this regard. Without being able to disclose details there is work to prevent and end Labor Trafficking in our State if anyone has any questions the reports are available online.

Commissioner Sandra Lopez

Commissioner Sandra Lopez is working on seminars on credit for the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and volunteering a lot to help with finance coaching with small businesses.

Commissioner Adi Nancy Dobbins

Commissioner Adi Nancy Dobbins spoke about *Las Mañanitas*, the group is working to be the middle ground for troubled youth so they can break out of the circle of poverty and the prison/detention center pipeline. Currently, they are working on North Platte murals.

Commissioner Leticia Rodriguez

Commissioner Leticia Rodriguez spoke about the importance of dental health in our community.

Commissioner Aida Evans

Reported there are many families from many different countries arriving in Hastings, they are getting ready for summer school with the migrant program. There will be an event the following Friday. In July they plan on receiving 130 families and they invite everyone to the welcome event.

XIV. NEXT MEETING

Next meeting

Date: TBA Between July 2023 - August 2023 a poll will be shared with the commissioners to decide an official date.

Location: Possibly Lexington, NE 9 am – 2 pm

Some commissioners visited the Commission's office in Bellevue University.

XV. ADJOURN.

Adjourned at 2:10 pm

Secretary: Jaime Suarez _____

Acting Secretary: Leticia Rodriguez

Transcribed: Hilda Rey and Maria Whitmore.