



MEETING OF THE
TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION

DATE

JUNE 7, 2022

1 Tuesday, June 7, 2022

2 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Good morning. This meeting
3 is called to order. Mr. Trobman, has anyone signed up for public
4 comment?

5 MR. TROBMAN: No, sir.

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you so much. Good
7 afternoon, Ms. Gonzales.

8 MS. GONZALES: Morning.

9 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right, what else do we
10 have left on this agenda? Mr. Serna, is there an executive
11 director's report?

12 MR. SERNA: Sorry for the what we'll call
13 out of cycle executive director's report but there are several
14 things I want to make sure that we all were aware of before time
15 got away from us. First off, I wanted to make sure that the
16 commission knew that I'd be providing written responses or
17 written comments to Department of Labor rule regarding
18 employment services staff and staffing. We'll make sure that
19 your offices each get a copy of the written responses that I
20 provide when we submit those responses so that's going to be
21 forthcoming. These are rules that DOL had originally taken up
22 prior to the pandemic and then they were suspended, and now
23 they're taking them back up again. We've sought input from
24 stakeholders so we'll be including that. Second, Commissioner
25 Alvarez, you had a request to us last week to use unused TANF

1 funds for two education outreach specialists in Middle Rio. I'm
2 pleased to report the conversations that we've had with the
3 board executive director, Betty Sifuentes. Ms. Sifuentes has
4 indicated that they have unexpended TANF funds and will be
5 bringing on board two education outreach specialists so we won't
6 have to take any action at state level to support them in that
7 effort. We will of course support them through Lori Knight's
8 team's efforts to give the two new hires information and other
9 things that they need and will continue to support that board
10 but we don't have to expend any unused statewide TANF dollars
11 for that so I believe that's been taken care of per the
12 commission's request.

13 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Ed, would those
14 positions be under Lori or report directly to the board?

15 MR. SERNA: They'll report directly to the
16 board. They will be under Ms. Sifuentes.

17 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: OK, got it.

18 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Ed, can I ask another
19 thing when you—

20 MR. SERNA: Yes, sir.

21 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Two things that I
22 think I reference, and first of all I want to thank you for
23 working so closely with Ms. Sifuentes on this initiative, and I
24 appreciate the fact that they're going to be using their reserve
25 TANF dollars. A couple of things that I did highlight last week.

1 One was preferably if we could hire individuals from the
2 community as outreach specialists, those that can speak both
3 English and Spanish would be preferred, right? And those that
4 are familiar with the demographics and just the people in
5 general. And then the other one was what I thought was the most
6 important was that these individuals that work as outreach
7 specialists are familiar and really kind of focus on dropout
8 recovery. I mean dropout recovery is going to be key to the
9 success of this program. As we know, that was certainly an issue
10 and even though there's a low percentage of people that have
11 dropped out of high school or school in that area just by the
12 research we've done, it's still something that needs to be
13 addressed so I appreciate you.

14 MR. SERNA: We'll make sure that we can
15 convey that to Ms. Sifuentes but I think that that's probably
16 already something that she wants to do, especially hiring local
17 in community and of course with the skills to be bilingual.

18 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Thank you for all
19 you've done, Ed. She was very complimentary on the work you've
20 done there.

21 MR. SERNA: I appreciate that. The third
22 thing is the request that the chairman had given me some time
23 ago to look at having commission meetings out of Austin. Staff
24 considered some alternatives and considering that this upcoming
25 year is a legislative year, we're going to recommend two out-of-

1 town commission meetings. The first will be, if the commission
2 agrees to this, the first will be at our annual conference in
3 early December in Dallas, and the second will be after the
4 legislative session and we'll work with the offices to determine
5 a location for that but it will probably be in some rural part
6 of the state because I think the request from the commission was
7 to have a mix of urban and rural so we'll look for the second
8 one to be in a rural location but the first will be at our
9 annual conference. We've already got facilities and everything
10 set up so we'll get that on the calendar and get that posted as
11 well if that's acceptable to the commission.

12 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: So am I correct that
13 the one that we had scheduled that we had discussed in September
14 while we had the apprenticeship summit, that one has been
15 rescheduled?

16 MR. SERNA: Yes, sir.

17 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: OK.

18 MR. SERNA: We won't have that one. We're
19 just going to have the two.

20 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: OK.

21 MR. SERNA: And then the last thing that I
22 wanted to share was at last week's Texas Digital Government
23 Summit hosted by Government Technology magazine, TWC won two
24 Best in Texas awards. The first was for best workforce or
25 workplace innovation using technology and innovation to advance

1 equal employment and fair housing. Our civil rights division
2 received an award for their significant move working with IT for
3 their significant move to a paperless information flow so we're
4 very proud of Brian and his work, and then second, we received
5 the excellence in project management. Thomas Beckley in our IT
6 shop was recognized for his innovative use in implementing a
7 combination of web-based version of Microsoft Project and Power
8 Builder to build project dashboards so we're very pleased that
9 we won two of the Best in Texas awards, one for an individual
10 and one for a division's efforts, and I just wanted to report
11 that to the commission as well. Other than that, I'll answer any
12 questions that the commission may have but I just wanted to make
13 sure that you knew about those especially the ES comments and
14 the follow up on education outreach specialists.

15 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you, Mr. Serna. Any
16 comments or questions?

17 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Regarding that, no.
18 Thank you, Ed.

19 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I have one in
20 regards to the board meeting being held at the annual
21 conference. Are we looking at docket and policy?

22 MR. SERNA: Yes, sir. We'll have both docket
23 and policy.

24 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: We already have a
25 date that's been considered?

1 MR. SERNA: It will be either—it will
2 probably be the Tuesday of the annual conference because our
3 conference starts on Wednesday but there are events that go on
4 on Monday and Tuesday including TAWB and EDC and some of our VR
5 so it will probably be on a Tuesday and we're thinking Tuesday
6 afternoon to give the commissioners and staff time to get there
7 for the commission meeting.

8 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: OK. The sooner we
9 have those dates and times, it will allow us to work on our
10 schedules [inaudible].

11 MR. SERNA: Yes, sir. We'll have the
12 specific date and time here probably before the week is up.

13 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: OK.

14 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I agree because I
15 know during that time, we meet with various people there and so
16 I'm sure room assignments will be designated where we're going
17 to have all this, will be on site or off site? What are you
18 thinking, Ed?

19 MR. SERNA: No, it will be where the
20 conference is so we'll already be at the facility.

21 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Perfect, love it.
22 That's all regarding that, chairman.

23 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: All right. Thank you, Mr.
24 Serna.

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1 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: The only other thing
2 I'd like to add, chairman, if it's OK, is I was sadly informed
3 last week that Clay was going to retire so I wanted to
4 acknowledge that. I think we're all going to miss you, Clay. My
5 six years that I've been here, it's been a privilege to work
6 with you. I really mean it. I really appreciate your leadership
7 and especially during the pandemic so I was saddened to read the
8 text or the email last week but I certainly wish you well. And
9 if I may, chairman, I'd like to introduce two people at this
10 time that just joined our office. One of them is Jade Ybarra who
11 is here from Austin. She comes to us from TDCJ so we're glad to
12 have Ms. Ybarra here working with us, Jade. And then of course
13 we have our new intern that I wanted to recognize. She's from
14 Edinburg, Texas, undergraduate from the Rio Grande Valley, going
15 to law school at Texas Tech. We're excited for that and she was
16 a legislative director for a state representative, Bobby Guerra,
17 so welcome aboard to both of you.

18 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: The world needs more Red
19 Raiders I have discovered. It's good to have one from Edinburg.
20 I went to school with a guy from Roma undergrad. He used to make
21 that drive all the time. It's a little ways from the Valley but
22 I think you'll find Texas Tech to be quite good. Tell me again,
23 what's your classification there?

24 STACIE MORALES: [inaudible].
25

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: 2L. So have you come
2 across a 1L student named Emily Daniel? Do you know her?

3 STACIE MORALES: She was in my [inaudible].

4 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: OK, I want to talk to you
5 after this meeting.

6 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I also want you to
7 know for the record she'll be preparing all our cases from now
8 on so let's see how we do. Let's see if it's true what they say
9 about Red Raiders, we all stick together, right?

10 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I think in your office you
11 know all about Red Raiders, commissioner.

12 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I know. I'm full of
13 them.

14 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Following Commissioner
15 Alvarez, I would like to introduce Arlene Smith who's trying to
16 hide behind Kim back here. She's working in our office this
17 summer. I love the summer intern season. So many new faces up on
18 the sixth floor. It's sort of reminds you of what it's like to
19 kind of charge in with something brand new, and it's a lot of
20 fun so we're glad Arlene is here. We're glad all the interns are
21 here.

22 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: I want to echo
23 Commissioner Alvarez's comments about Clay. A bittersweet
24 message that we received with that text but, Clay, thank you for
25 all the work that you've done. I've shared that both publicly

1 and privately. You guys, during the pandemic, you'll have
2 memories that mean a lot because you guys really came through in
3 big, big ways during the pandemic so thank you for all the work
4 that you've done. I, too, also want to thank Ed and the team for
5 our Texas Interns Unite! Initiative that we kicked off
6 yesterday, support of the chairman and Commissioner Alvarez in
7 those efforts as well. The press conference that really brought
8 together employers, future employees, talented pipeline of
9 individuals, and wanted to thank the team. Angela, thank you for
10 your work in that regard especially with the communications
11 team, the work and the efforts that were put forward there. I,
12 too, want to introduce our two interns. We have Josh Hall,
13 University of Houston student, and we also have Alejandro Perez,
14 a UTSA student as well. Two sharp individuals that are going to
15 do some great work on our team. Delighted to have them here, and
16 this Friday we're going to be kicking off our first event that's
17 a virtual summit in collaboration with the Texas Higher
18 Education Coordinating Board. It's going to be a virtual summit
19 at 10 o'clock so go to Texas Interns Unite! to register for that
20 event, and we'll take it from there and do something in July and
21 September but that's more details to come as well but Texas
22 Interns Unite! that's where we want to go for these activities,
23 and again, thank you guys for the support.

24 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Thank you. I still see
25 some unfamiliar faces in the crowd. Are there more interns in

1 here today? You know what? You don't get the benefit of one of
2 us introducing you so you're going to have to stand up and
3 introduce yourselves so let's just work our way around the room.

4 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: That's a great idea,
5 chairman. That's a great idea.

6 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: So I can start. Clay, you
7 take the honors.

8 [inaudible]

9 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I am very glad they're on
10 board and I'm so pleased you got an opportunity to get your
11 Horns up into the conversation.

12 [inaudible]

13 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Let me understand this.
14 You left New Orleans for the summer to come to Austin.

15 [inaudible]

16 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: OK, all right, that
17 explains so much.

18 [inaudible]

19 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Wonderful. Welcome aboard.
20 Anybody else? I don't want to leave anybody out. I didn't
21 neglect talking about Clay. I was going to save all my comments
22 for whatever happy hour Mr. Serna hosts for him later this
23 summer in recognition of his retirement.

24 MR. SERNA: We're going to have it much
25 later.

1 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I'm reserving all my
2 comments until then.

3 MR. SERNA: We didn't want him to have that
4 long of a-

5 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I want him to think about
6 all the things I'm going to say for the rest of the summer
7 especially after that Horns-up comment. Is there any other order
8 of business to come before the commission today?

9 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here, chairman.

10 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Mr. Chairman, I see
11 one person back there with Julie. I'm not sure it that's an
12 intern or-

13 [inaudible]

14 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Not bad at all.

15 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Congratulations to
16 all of you. So exciting to see all new faces here. You guys are
17 the future of this great state of ours, and someday all three of
18 us I hope will-we all know that one of you-we'd love to see all
19 three of you somebody taking our places. That's really our goal
20 is to have you all the next commissioners of this Texas
21 workforce, this great agency that we all represent so welcome
22 aboard.

23 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: I'd swap places with one
24 of them right now. I'd love to be an intern again. That would be
25 awesome.

1 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: Just a reminder that
2 our intern is doing all our cases, chairman.

3 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Anything else, guys?

4 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: None here.

5 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: Is there a motion to
6 adjourn.

7 COMMISSIONER DEMERSON: Before I second, we
8 did have Syracuse Orangemen cookies up here. Thank you, Julie,
9 for those Syracuse Orangemen cookies. I second the motion.

10 COMMISSIONER ALVAREZ: I move that we
11 adjourn.

12 CHAIRMAN DANIEL: It's been moved and
13 seconded to adjourn. We're adjourned.

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