



**State of Connecticut**  
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**Affairs Commission**

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*Werner Oyanadel*

**Special Projects Director/  
Grants Writer**

*Lucía Goicoechea-Hernández*

**Senior Legislative Secretary**

*Clarisa Cardone*

**MINUTES**  
**LPRAC Regular Commission Meeting**  
**July 20, 2011**  
**Legislative Office Building, Hartford, Connecticut**  
**5:35 pm**

Commissioners Present:	Ramón L. Arroyo, Isaías T. Díaz, Esq., Yolanda Castillo, Richard A. Cruz, Francisco Cuin, Dr. Sonia B. Mañjon, and Dr. Eugene Salorio
Commissioners on phone:	Honorable Migdalia Castro, Ed Rodríguez and Norma Rodríguez Reyes
Commissioners Absent:	Carlos Candal, Esq., Enrique Marciano Sr., Lourdes E. Montalvo, Juan M. Pérez, Danny Torres and Maritza Tirú
Staff:	Werner Oyanadel, Acting Executive Director Lucía Goicoechea Hernández and Clarisa Cardone, Sr. Legislative Secretary

**Tape 1A**

**Mr. Oyanadel** stated, as a point of order, that the last meeting was suspended abruptly in the middle of the agenda due to a power outage at the Legislative Office Building (LOB) but it was not adjourned.

**Chairman Díaz, Esq.** agreed with the point of order and asked, therefore, that the record reflect who was in attendance during our meeting for the month of June. For the record the list is as follows: Commissioners Ed Rodríguez, Isaías T. Díaz, Esq., Maritza Tirú, Ramón L. Arroyo, Carlos Candal, Esq., and Yolanda Castillo were present at the LOB before the power outage. The Honorable Migdalia Castro was in route to the LOB but was instructed to turn back due to the outage at the LOB so for all intended purposes she was present. Commissioners Francisco Cuin, Rick Cruz, Dr. Sonia Mañjon, Lourdes Montalvo, Juan Pérez, and Norma Rodríguez Reyes were in attendance via phone. Chairman Díaz, Esq. stated that Quorum was reached but the meeting was suspended due to the power outage. He then asked Mrs. Cardone to do roll call for the month of July as Commissioner Maritza Tirú, Secretary of the Board was not present at the time. Quorum was established.

**Public Participation:**

**Chairman Díaz, Esq.** reported that since Hartford City Councilman Luis Cotto was not present, we will start with the second public participant, Noemi Montalvo.

- 1) Luis Cotto, Hartford City Councilman about Safe Communities.
- 2) Noemí Montalvo asked LPRAC to advocate in support of legislation that would abolish the rules of felony murder. She then spoke about what happened to her son who is in prison as an example why we should consider her recommendation.

**Chairman Díaz, Esq.** said that he would like to make a recommendation to the Priorities and Legislation Committee to address this issue.

- 3) Mr. & Mrs. Galarza spoke to LPRAC about their negative experience with the foster care system at the direction of the State Department of Children and Families (DCF). They testified to LPRAC that it took them approximately 2 years to adopt a child from DCF and they were frustrated with the DCF for failing to inform them that the child they adopted had special needs that will now require additional funds to reach the proper care.

**Chairman Díaz, Esq.** told them that a delegation from DCF testified before our agency about entering into a new partnership between our two agencies to help them reach out to the Latino community about the need to have more Latino families becoming foster parents and adopt children in DCF custody. He then referred them to our Public Information Sub-Committee to see how we can get involved in the process with us.

**Commissioner Cruz** said that the Public Information Committee met with representatives from DCF about their public information campaign to promote fostering among Latinos. It is a work in progress and they are meeting with Commissioner Katz at the end of the month to discuss our concerns about the foster care system and to learn from her about their plans to improve a system that was dire need for improvements. Commissioner Cruz thanked our

speakers and told them that they would ask the Commissioner of DCF about making improvements to the system as recommended.

**Commissioner Arroyo** asked Mr. & Mrs. Galarza to give the staff their name, address and phone number so that when the Legislature convenes in January they could be reached in case there is legislation being heard on the issues they brought to our attention. He emphasized the need to have people testify before the legislature how difficult it is to adopt a child in CT.

**Commissioner Arroyo** left at 6:04 p.m.

**Commissioner Cuin** came in at 6:05 p.m.

**Commissioner Cruz** said that no public hearings have been set yet on this issue but the Public Information Committee is planning to meet with Commissioner Katz about the foster care system. They came to us to promote their new public information campaign on fostering and adoption and until we can meet with the Commissioner to address these issues and concerns we are not going to move forward with this campaign. He suggested that Mr. & Mrs. Galarza send a letter to LPRAC with their recommendations to the foster care system.

**Commissioner Castillo** mentioned that Mrs. Galarza is her coworker and she asked her to come to the meeting today. She works for the Bureau of Rehab Services and they work with people with disabilities. She asked her to come because she adopted a child but the child had some developmental issues that DCF did not want to recognize at the time and they did not pay for a lot of things that needed to be done with her and she hopes that through our discussion with the Commissioner, we will be able to help this family because the DCF does not want to admit this child has a disability. Now it is going to be their responsibility to have to pay the additional costs of raising this child and she feels that DCF still has the responsibility even though the child has been adopted. They have 5 children of their own and are willing to take these children that are here.

**Chairman Diaz, Esq.** asked Mr. & Mrs. Galarza, since they will be having a meeting with the Commissioner of DCF on Thursday, July 28, 2011 to address all these shortcomings. As Commissioner Cruz mentioned, please submit something to the Commission in writing, explaining your background and we'll have a case study to present.

**Mr. Galarza** said that they'll be glad to send the letter but will not be available for next week.

- 4) Last speaker is **Gwen Samuel** on Lead Poisoning and Civil Rights of Children. She is a parent from Meriden, CT and the Founder of the CT Parents Union. She spoke about a new gun range being built next to a Pre-K to 5<sup>th</sup> grade school in Waterbury, which is 60% Latino, 26% African American, 11% White and 0.2% Asian. She is advocating against it and wants to find out if LPRAC is against it as well in order to mention our agency in a list of other state agencies such as the African American Affairs Commission at a local school forum and to copy us with any correspondence on this topic when discussing it other elected officials.

#### **Tape 1 B**

**Mr. Oyanadel** thanked Ms. Samuel for coming in and asked her if the decision by the local zoning board can be challenged due to public health concerns for these children.

**Ms. Samuel** answered absolutely. She thinks that the city was looking at something to stop it and that's why she brought in conversations because of the lead poisoning and the achievement gap. You have to think about the long term effects. All communications are in English with 60% of the school being Hispanics. This has to be changed.

**Commissioner Rodríguez Reyes** said that besides being a commissioner, she is also the Publisher of La Voz Hispana which is a state wide Spanish language newspaper and she thinks this issue is definitely of importance to our leadership and asked Ms. Samuel to email her some of the information or maybe give her the information so that one of her reporters can interview her on this important issue.

**Ms. Samuel** said that she will give the information to the Acting Executive Director, Werner Oyanadel. She thanked everyone for the opportunity to participate in our meeting.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion made to approve the minutes of June 15, 2011 by Commissioner Castillo and seconded by Commissioner Cruz. Motion approved as follows:**

**8 Yeas: Commissioners Arroyo, Castillo, Hon. Castro, Cruz, Cuin, Rodríguez, Rodríguez Reyes and Dr. Salorio,**

**7 Absent: Commissioners Candal, Esq., Dr. Mañjon, Marcano, Sr., Montalvo, Pérez, Tirú and Torres**

#### **CHAIRPERSON'S/ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**Chairman Díaz, Esq.** congratulated Commissioner Migdalia Castro on her speech at the redistricting public hearings in New Haven; spoke about the budget situation affecting our agency and highlighted some of our agency victories in the last legislative session including the passage of House Bill Number 6390 An Act Concerning Access to Post Secondary Education.

**Motion made to approve the Chairperson's/Executive Director's report by Commissioner Rodríguez and seconded by Commissioner Montalvo. Motion approved as follows:**

**8 Yeas: Commissioners Castillo, Hon. Castro, Cruz, Cuin, Dr. Mañjon, Rodríguez, Rodríguez Reyes & Dr. Salorio**

**7 Absent: Commissioners Arroyo, Candal, Esq., Marcano, Sr., Montalvo, Pérez, Tirú and Torres**

**Mr. Oyanadel** announced that both Commissioner Castillo and he will be leaving at 7:00 p.m. to testify on the Redistricting Commission.

#### **PUBLIC INFORMATION/TALENT BANK COMMITTEE REPORT**

**Commissioner Cruz, Chairman of this committee** said that to date, they will be meeting with Commissioner Katz on Thursday, July 28, 2011 about their new public information campaign on the foster care system and he would like to get some questions from the board of Commissioners. He informed everyone that he will be calling a conference call before that meeting to talk about the foster care system situation. He also stated that he testified before the reapportionment committee on Monday, July 18, 2011 in Norwalk, CT along with Mr. Oyanadel and State Representative Andres Ayala. There was a reporter from a Greenwich newspaper who wanted to quote us and bring out our points in the article.

**Motion made to approve the Public Information/Talent Bank Committee report by Commissioner Castillo and seconded by Commissioner Dr. Salorio.**

#### **Discussion:**

**Commissioner Castillo** said that when we meet the Commissioner, we need to listen and then see what her plans are on improving this state agency and working with these families. Then we come back and continue our research on recommendations and improvements, when we have all the information then we are going to better prepared what we are going to do next.

**Chairman Díaz, Esq.** asked Commissioner Cruz when their next Public Information Committee is meeting.

**Commissioner Cruz** responded that the next meeting will be in September prior to the Commission Meeting, unless we can do a conference call next week.

**Motion approved as follows:**

**8 Yeas: Commissioners Castillo, Hon. Castro, Cruz, Cuin, Dr. Mañjon, Rodríguez, Rodríguez Reyes & Dr. Salorio**

**7 Absent: Commissioners Arroyo, Candal, Esq., Marcano, Sr., Montalvo, Pérez, Tirú and Torres**

#### **PRIORITIES AND LEGISLATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

As **Commissioner Candal, Esq.** is not present, meeting has been tabled till next commission meeting.

#### **SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE REPORT**

**Chairman Díaz, Esq.** announced that Commissioner Pérez is not here and Commissioner Montalvo has fallen ill.

**Mrs. Goicoechea Hernández** announced that Commissioner Castillo was going to report but since she left at this time, Commissioner Cuin was asked to read the report.

**Commissioner Cuin** announced the winners as follows:

**Latina Citizen of the Year:** MAJ Lesbia I. Nieves of Manchester and Ruth Vazquez Centeno of New Britain.

**Latino Citizen of the Year:** Luis Caban of Hartford and Angel Ruiz of Coventry.

**Community Service Award:** The Spanish Speaking Center of New Britain.

**Lifetime Achievement Award:** Dr. Elsa Nuñez and Dr. Antonia Pantoja – Founder of ASPIRA and other programs.

**High School Candidates:** Jessica Barragan – Stratford High School  
Noel Bautista – Windham High School  
Gypsy Garcia – West Haven High School  
Javier Martino – Waterford High School  
Nicholas Prieto – Stratford High School  
Jonathan Reyes – New Britain High School  
Vanessa Rodriguez – Classical Magnet High School – Hartford  
Alexis M. Sanchez – Montville High School  
Caitlyn Sanchez – Windham High School  
Kelly C. Sanchez – Sacred Heart Academy – New Haven

**College Candidates:** Steve Basora – UCONN – Storrs Campus  
Christian A. Cruz – University of Hartford  
Kevin Irizarry – Central CT State University  
Valeria Lopez – Stamford – Manhattanville, NY  
Darisel Ventura Rodriguez – UCONN – Hartford Campus

**Commissioner Cuin** then reported the following:

1. The LPRAC Golf Tournament is postponed until the Spring of 2012 due to budget constraints;
2. The subcommittee on RBA is considering turn the curve sessions on health and education and co-chairs, Commissioners Salorio and Castillo are going to discuss his outlines and to determine some meeting dates. They hope to reach out to Ana Maria Garcia for training this summer or early spring;
3. The Board-Staff Retreat date most accepted by the Board was August 19 and 20, 2011 however due to the budget allotment we received and now knowing what will happen in August;
4. Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration will be discussed at the August Special Projects Committee but the planned date is September 30, 2011 and we will unveil the 5 newly acquired Latin Jazz stamps that include Carlos Gardel, Tito Puente, Selena, Celia Cruz and Carmen Miranda;
5. Secretary of the State Denis Merrill is asking us to partner with her and Rep. Andres Ayala in conducting a voter registration campaign; and
6. The committee wishes for the agency to work on organizing a reception for Judge Espinosa and to include new selected magistrate Norma Sanchez Figueroa.

**Motion made to approve the Special Projects Committee Report made by Commissioners Cruz and Rodríguez Reyes and seconded by Commissioner Cuin.**

**Discussion:**

**Commissioner Rodríguez** announced that he was very heart warmed to hear the number of candidates and how well represented throughout the state they all are. Kudos to the committee for the hard work of reading and going and sifting through all of this information and coming up with these hard choices. Kudos to all of you.

**Tape 2 A**

**Commissioner Dr. Mañjon** asked about the retreat being during the week.

**Commissioner Cuin** said that it's an alternative because of the freeze of the budget.

**Commissioner Cruz** said that he thought it was going to be postponed due to the fact that we couldn't sign the contract until the negotiations with the State is resolved for the budget and he thought there wasn't going to be a retreat.

**Mrs. Goicoechea Hernández** announced that they are recommending the middle of the week date because it's less costly for the overnight stay if we opt to do the evening before to regroup and determine what we will discuss the following day. The true dates are August 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> and the lodging the State won't cover so that's on us. With regards to the postponement, Acting Executive Director Oyanadel indicated that he hopes that maybe early in the month we will get our regular budget back so we would be able to hang in there but if not then yes, we will have to postpone it for August.

**Commissioner Dr. Mañjon** said that this will be her first retreat but she is in California until the 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Chairman Díaz, Esq.** added that the middle of the week will be difficult for everybody, including him and others that have full time jobs except for professors like Commissioner Salorio.

**Commissioner Cruz** said that he cannot attend a retreat during the middle of the work week either.

**Commissioner Dr. Salorio** congratulated and thanked everyone on the committee for the great job in having so many applicants respond to our request for nominations.

**Chairman Díaz, Esq.** also agreed on everybody's comments and he also wanted to recognize the Public Information Committee too for their work on the redistricting process.

**Motion approved as follows:**

**8 Yeas: Commissioners Castillo, Hon. Castro, Cruz, Cuin, Dr. Mañjon, Rodríguez, Rodríguez Reyes & Dr. Salorio**

**7 Absent: Commissioners Arroyo, Candal, Esq., Marcano, Sr., Montalvo, Pérez, Tirú and Torres**

#### **RESULTS BASED ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE REPORT**

**Commissioner Dr. Salorio** said that Commissioner Cuin with the assistance of Mrs. Goicoechea Hernández has given you what there is. He's been away and Commissioners Castillo and Montalvo have done 100% of what's been done and he hasn't reviewed it with them and cannot add anything to what is already been said.

**Chairman Díaz, Esq.** tabled the RBA Report for the next meeting.

#### **OLD & NEW BUSINESS**

**Chairman Díaz, Esq.** spoke about the felony murder statute presented a situation where her son was involved in a robbery and one of the individuals with him actually took the life of another person. Her son was charged with felony murder and given a 34 year sentence without the possibility of parole. The question is, as a Commission, is that something that we are willing to tackle.

**Commissioner Cruz** said that it's something really difficult and to try to address it because it is the law. He does not think we are ready to do so at this point in time. To look at this individual case, it needs further looking into as to the son's character, etc. Then he asked if there was any possibility of parole.

**Chairman Díaz, Esq.** responded to Commissioner Cruz's question saying that there was no possibility of parole and they did mention that there were four states to have abolished it, Hawaii being one of them. He then said that the motion that he is looking for is to defer this issue to the Priorities & Legislation Committee.

**Motion made of referring the issue of abolishing or making an attempt to get Legislation introduced that would abolish the felony murder statute to the Priorities & Legislation Committee to be vetted and explored by Commissioner Cruz and seconded by Commissioner Castillo. Motion approved as follows:**

**8 Yeas: Commissioners Castillo, Hon. Castro, Cruz, Cuin, Dr. Mañjon, Rodríguez, Rodríguez Reyes & Dr. Salorio**

**7 Absent: Commissioners Arroyo, Candal, Esq., Marcano, Sr., Montalvo, Pérez, Tirú and Torres**

**Motion made to explore entering discussions involving the potential health hazard and achievement gap issues created by the firing range in Waterbury with a friendly amendment from Commissioner Dr. Mañjon to include the RBA on education if we are looking at lead poisoning impact on the achievement gap and seconded by Commissioner Cruz. Commissioner Dr. Mañjon rescinds her amendment to the motion.**

**Motion made that LPRAC as a Commission will be involved in any discussions regarding the lead poisoning in a predominately Latino School by Commissioner Dr. Mañjon and seconded by Commissioners Castillo and Cruz. Motion approved as follows:**

**8 Yeas: Commissioners Castillo, Hon. Castro, Cruz, Cuin, Dr. Mañjon, Rodríguez, Rodríguez Reyes & Dr. Salorio**

**7 Absent: Commissioners Arroyo, Candal, Esq., Marcano, Sr., Montalvo, Pérez, Tirú and Torres**

**Motion made to create an Ad Hoc Committee to address the issue of the firing range next to the predominantly Latino Elementary School in the City of Waterbury by Commissioner Cruz and seconded by Commissioner Castillo.**

**Motion approved as follows:**

**8 Yeas: Commissioners Castillo, Hon. Castro, Cruz, Cuin, Dr. Mañjon, Rodríguez, Rodríguez Reyes & Dr. Salorio**

**7 Absent: Commissioners Arroyo, Candal, Esq., Marcano, Sr., Montalvo, Pérez, Tirú and Torres**

**Chairman Díaz, Esq.** appointed Commissioner Dr. Mañjon as Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Committee to research the issue of the firing range in Waterbury and Commissioners Castillo, Cruz, Cuin, Salorio and Rodríguez agreed to participate in this newly formed committee.

**Mr. Oyanadel** asked if the Special Projects Committee recommendations to LPRAC for Citizen of the Year and all of the Scholarship Awardees were accepted by the approval of the Special Project Committee report.

**Chairman Díaz, Esq.** responded yes.

**Commissioner Rodríguez Reyes** commented that she heard that they had two Citizens of the Year, two names for one position for two difference positions.

**Motion made that LPRAC as a Commission accept the recommendations for scholarships and awards of the Special Projects Committee by Commissioner Dr. Salorio and seconded by Commissioner Castillo.**

**Tape 2 B**

**Motion approved as follows:**

**8 Yeas: Commissioners Castillo, Hon. Castro, Cruz, Cuin, Dr. Mañjon, Rodríguez, Rodríguez Reyes & Dr. Salorio**

**7 Absent: Commissioners Arroyo, Candal, Esq., Marcano, Sr., Montalvo, Pérez, Tirú and Torres**

**Motion made to adjourn at 7:58 p.m. by Commissioner Dr. Salorio and seconded by Commissioner Rodríguez Reyes. Motion approved unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted by,

Maritza Tirú  
Secretary  
LPRAC Board  
MT:cjc