

**Virginia Latino Advisory Board Meeting
Draft Meeting Minutes**

Friday June 14, 2019 10:31 a.m. – 3:20 p.m

Williamsburg Public Library
515 Scotland St, Williamsburg, VA

In Attendance: Cecilia Williams, Sergio Rimola, Aida Pacheco, Michael Martinez, Alex Guzman, Gloria Pena Rockhold, Melody Gonzales, Manuel Leiva, Edgar Lara, Vivian Sanchez-Jones, Jorge Yinat, Ana Solorio, Cecilia Barbosa (chair), Paul Berry (secretary)

Not in Attendance: Victoria Cartagena, Eugene Chigna, Edgar Aranda, Karina Kline-Gabel (vice-chair), Damien Cabezas, Juan Espinoza, Carmen Romero

Guests: Richard Torres-Estrada, Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for the Dept of Human Resources Management; Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth Traci Deshazor; Michael Perry and Sabina Vohra, Secretary of the Commonwealth; Michelle de la Cruz, Elizabeth Carina Paz, and Alex Cintron, Governor's fellows.

Staff & Counsel: Justin Bell, Assistant Attorney General; Maribel Castaneda, Staff Liaison; Fernando Mercado-Violand, Director of Latino Outreach

Call to order: Cecilia Barbosa called the meeting to order at 10:31 a.m. Quorum met.

Welcome and Introductions: Introductions by all board members present. Aida Pacheco commented on how fantastic it is to have a Director of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion in the Governor's administration.

Jorge Yinat added that lunch will be provided by a local Williamsburg restaurant.

Public Comment: Cecilia asked if there was any public comment. There were none.

Review and Approval of Minutes/Bylaws – 10:33 a.m.

Cecilia Barbosa thanked everyone for being present and proceeded to present an overview of the meeting agenda.

She asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting. Michael Martinez made a motion to approve them, and Vivian Sanchez-Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, with two abstentions (Sergio Rimola and Aida Pacheco). There are no votes against the motion.

Cecilia Barbosa asked members to review the proposed bylaw changes and policy in preparation for vote in the afternoon.

Richard Torres-Estrada, Director of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, Department of Human Resources Management – 10:41 a.m.

Cecilia Barbosa introduced Mr. Torres-Estrada and thanked him for joining the meeting. Mr. Torres-Estrada introduced himself again and proceeded to describe the topic of his discussion. In the Office of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion there are new changes coinciding with the new redefined mission of the office. He previously worked in the Dept. of Defense and spent time in other parts of the federal government prior to joining the administration. He litigated cases in some settings and was an attorney in a small law firm in Puerto Rico as well. He is very passionate about diversity and inclusion and engaging this in a way that makes organizations productive. The primary aim of his new role is to improve diversity and inclusion but also educate on its importance and identify places where it can be improved. This is the first Governor's administration that has put this mission in place.

Mr. Torres-Estrada continued by describing that the concept of changing the mindset of management and leadership for a positive change has existed for decades in different industries but applying this in state government settings is relatively new. One new idea is that diversity is organizationally driven. Diversity as its own goal is important, as is both the differences and commonalities between colleagues that work together in an organization. When there is a sense of belonging there is better engagement and improved organizational output.

Aida Pacheco asked about the definition of "equity".

Mr. Torres-Estrada answered that equal employment opportunity is the first component and historically a chief part of the mission of his office – leveling the playing field through a set of laws where people are developed professionally and advance on their merits, not because they are a protected category (*c.f.* EEO – Equal Employment Opportunity). The Diversity and Inclusion approach is by contrast a broad set of organizational strategies, not a set of laws. It is research and study based, informed by empirically researched ideas that help organizations guide their work environments. Diversity is "getting invited to the party", while Inclusion is "being part of the party planning committee" as Mr. Torres-Estrada described. The organization plays a key role because leadership must define where they want to go, where they are, and how they are going to get there.

Mr. Torres-Estrada then presented a PowerPoint slide deck. The first slide described the structure of the office he now heads. Next, he described the previous office structure and mission. The antecedent focus was on compliance (EEO investigations and EEO Assessments).

Presently, the Office of ED&I, still located in the Department of Human Resources Management, focuses on compliance (investigations and assessments), learning and education in the areas of inclusion, diversity, civility in the workplace, harassment prevention, outreach, and cultural observance. Adding the focus of diversity and inclusion during the reorganization of the office was meant to increase focus on those two issues special issues. The code that governs the office still requires that investigations and assessments take place, so we are witnessing an

expansion of the mission. Mr. Torres-Estrada stressed that cultural competency and lowering bias are two work areas to advance. In January new policies regarding civility in the workplace were released and this also became a part of the ED&I mission.

Mr. Torres-Estrada has been providing training to different agencies within the state government – the focus is not restricted to the law and its application. His focus is on identifying and eliminating inappropriate behavior that is not necessarily illegal. He aims for a civil and respectful workplace. Subsequently, outreach to achieve this training has risen to new levels in order to expand the reach and availability of the new office.

Mr. Torres-Estrada continued by describing that he foresees several activities ahead as part of the new mission, centered around round table discussions to talk about preliminary goals of the office and how state entities and organizations can be involved. Additionally, he foresees strategically planning and discussing ideas on what is achievable and where to improve the goals that different stakeholders value as part of their mission.

He observed that Latinos are underrepresented in state government and expressed a hope to change that. He aims to increase the viability of state government as a recognized option for Latinos to be employed and have continuous opportunities in an inclusive environment. He added that the underrepresentation of Latinos is ubiquitous problem, not just in Virginia, but in many state and federal agencies. He observed that interview panels frequently look like the job candidates they evaluate and this has to change if meaningful reform is to take place.

Mr. Torres-Estrada wants to hold an EEO, Diversity and Inclusion Forum twice yearly to discuss what is currently happening in that space and share lessons learned and best practices. Additionally, he wants to form partnerships and alliances throughout the state government so that we can combine resources and build the business case for adding resources to the EDI Office. He motivated this point by observing that 10 years ago this office had 9 employees but now it is 4.

Strategic Goals: when Mr. Torres-Estrada had discussions with HR practitioners, he arrived at four goals for what he is aiming to accomplish:

- 1) a demonstrated commitment from Leadership
- 2) Outstanding outreach, education and development
- 3) Exceptional Advisory Services
- 4) Relevant, periodic assessments of diversity and inclusion in state government.

Next month he will be joining a group from the Virginia Alcohol & Beverage Control in an effort to train on EEO and D&I. He wants to serve as a resource to all parts of the administration in an advisory capacity to increase diversity and inclusion. Lastly, he wants to provide periodic assessments that are data-driven; collecting the right data and evaluating the collection process is important to defining progress and where improvements need to be made.

Mr. Torres-Estrada next described how his office can be an “agent of cultural change” by addressing certain issues and by acting as a sounding board to aide in this process. He also wants to provide educational resources to those who want to make improvements. Mr. Torres-Estrada stressed that is the first time the Commonwealth has created a diversity position and this is a critical opportunity to making the state an employer of choice.

In conclusion, Mr. Estrada finished by providing the board with his contact information. He then asked for questions.

Aida Pacheco asked if it is possible to have the slides. She also asked how VLAB can help him succeed and be a partner in accomplishing what he wants to accomplish. Mr. Torres-Estrada answered affirmatively in regards to sharing the slides, and that increased resources are what is necessary – his current workforce composition will allow him to pursue multiple goals in the strategy he just described, but expansion is necessary. 10 years ago there were 9 employees in his office, then reduced to 8, and now it has been reduced to 4. Developing alliances and partnerships within the administration is also something he wants to accomplish. Mr. Torres-Estrada feels like there are many institutions out there that have already implemented these measures and efforts for decades – it will take years to build a robust diversity and inclusion program because this is a paradigm shift. Ultimately, there has to be buy-in from the leadership to make this successful – he is seeking VLAB’s buy-in as part of that leadership.

Michael Martinez asked if the position in his office that is open was posted. Mr. Torres-Estrada said it closed yesterday and they will be reviewing applications.

Alex Guzman asked if there is a vision for what “Equity” means in the context of the office. Mr. Torres-Estrada answered by stressing that it refers to equal opportunity, fairness, merit, and leveling the playing field. Alex Guzman observed that equity and equal opportunity are different.

Alex Guzman then posed a second question, asking if there are any particular agencies or offices that need greater diversity and inclusion measures. Mr. Torres-Estrada answered that yes, there are. Law enforcement agencies in Virginia are one agency, but that in general, the higher you go within a department or agency the less diversity there is. This is a trend that is not particular to Virginia, but one seen nearly everywhere. When he worked at NASA he developed a program for increasing diversity in the STEM fields, as well as for increasing diversity in the mid-level, non-technical fields. Developing equivalents here will take some time but are possible. He then recognized that the application process has been improved.

Michael Martinez commended him for his work and observed that when he did similar work he found the same problem: a lack of diversity in upper management. He asked an open question on how to address this, for if hiring decisions are not altered to meet diversity and inclusion goals then the overall goal may not be realized. Mr. Torres-Estrada answered that increasing the applicant pool is key. Michael Martinez then observed that diversity in the applicant pool may be present, but asked how to positively alter the way interview panels approach diversity in the pool.

Gloria Rockhold observed that whomever is doing the interviewing is important, and posed an open question: How to you have equitable opportunity at the micro level, not just the macro level? She gave an example that people of color face a high bar to become school counselors because there are multiple obstacles to fulfilling requirements that most Latinos find difficult to accomplish. She then asked how do we remove barriers to accessing opportunities that will allow people to gain the experience and credentials necessary to be competitive. She commented that we fall short in that respect and she would like Mr. Torres-Estrada's office to look more at the systemic barriers.

Melody Gonzales thanked Mr. Torres-Estrada for the presentation and asked what kinds of trends he sees in representation of Latinos in Virginia's government. Mr. Torres-Estrada answered that he observed lower than expected rates compared with the rest of the civilian labor force. He observed the application and screening stage is problematic from implicit or explicit bias and that he is going to be looking into this. One of the other issues is the geographic locations of positions – if mostly in Richmond, e.g., relocation presents a challenge.

Mr. Torres-Estrada believes it is important to deliver one consistent message that there are plenty of opportunities in the commonwealth but reach a bigger audience that includes underrepresented groups. From his own experience, when he joined the federal sector you had to move around to move up because there was a certain ceiling and this continues to be problematic.

Melody Gonzales then asked if there is any data that could be shared she would ask that it be made available.

Edgar Lara wants to see a change in the term he has seen "best people", and a redefinition of what we consider fitting this category. He observed that law enforcement is an apt example area where this applies.

Aida Pacheco observed that she has been in state employment for 30 years, and that systemic barriers exist as Michael Martinez and Gloria Rockhold mentioned. There has to be political will to do this. There has to be a way to look at existing policies and reevaluate them so as to increase best practices in hiring. Empowering the state employees to bring diversity issues to the attention of decision makers is important.

Gloria Rockhold observed that not having a network and being able to navigate the system is critical for diversity job seekers.

Aida Pacheco agreed that there has to be a push over the next two years and that there should be pressure on the top part of the administration to carry out goals.

Michael Martinez observed that allocating or not allocating financial resources can help reevaluate internal priorities in agencies or departments. Mr. Torres-Estrada acknowledged that

performance management plans are ways to help evaluate how supportive individuals, groups, and agencies are of diversity and inclusion.

Maribel Castaneda mentioned that the governor's office will be hiring a director of diversity, equity, and inclusion and that Mr. Torres-Estrada's office will work closely with that new director.

Cecilia Barbosa acknowledged that creating a diversity and inclusion group was in the recommendations, as was instructing that the secretaries create plans to address diversity and inclusion in their own departments.

Gloria Rockhold clarified that Mr. Torres-Estrada is working on diversity in the DHRM, and that this is a permanent position. The governor's position Maribel Castaneda described will be a cabinet level appointed position.

Cecilia Barbosa reinforced that recruitment with a diversity mindset is essential at all levels. She has seen equity and systems change as emphasized concepts in professional settings, and emphasized that resources are necessary, as are the establishment of networks. Lastly, positive incentives must be part of the equation.

The board thanked Mr. Torres-Estrada.

Cecilia Barbosa welcomed Cecilia Williams and welcomed Manuel Leiva to his first meeting.

Manuel Leiva introduced himself and mentioned where he grew up and what professional industry he works in. He specifically pointed out Delegate Alfonso Lopez's mother, an Arlington guidance counselor, as essential to encouraging him to go to college and law school when he was previously not going to make that decision.

Cecilia Williams then introduced herself and talked about her work in the medical field with Latinos and others.

Liaison's Administration Report – Maribel Castaneda - 11:35

Maribel Castaneda briefed the board on the following topics:

- The Governor is calling a special session to address gun violence, to include: universal background checks, child access prevention, reporting lost or stolen firearms, and others.
- The Governor is hosting a number of gun violence prevention roundtables and Maribel Castaneda will email those event times. Fernando Mercado-Violand stressed that having the Latino presence in those settings is important. Cecilia Barbosa reinforced this.
- The Governor announced the "Virginia is for Learners" initiative designed to improve success and job attainment in the 21st century, including new accreditation standards and improved early childhood education.

- The Hampton Roads bridge expansion project is going forward and the Governor emphasized that increasing participation in the construction project by small business owners from the Latino community is a goal of his.
- The Governor signed an executive order creating the Commission to Examine Racial Inequity in Virginia Law.

Latino Outreach Report – Fernando Mercado-Violand

Fernando Mercado-Violand covered the following points:

- A recently-signed bill that did not cover protections for farm workers, important because it impacts the Latino community.
- His focus on the VA Complete Count Commission and expanding awareness of the Census. Aida Pacheco has led the way on forming local commissions and Fernando Mercado-Violand has represented the Governor for Latino outreach in a number of settings.
- Mercado-Violand will be in NoVA on June 18th and will meet with the Complete Count Commission later this month and the VA Leadership Council.
- Fernando Mercado-Violand has held constituent service office hours in various parts of Virginia and has fielded questions recently about Real ID and TPS holders interested in renewal processes. Michael Martinez asked about new driver's licenses.
- Fernando Mercado-Violand is learning more about the emergency readiness preparations for hurricane season.
- There is ongoing outreach for Medicaid expansion; the Latino community still has higher than average numbers for participation in expansion when they do qualify and it is important to continue outreach.

Aida Pacheco mentioned the many positive aspects resulting from the expansion of diversity outreach that was started in 2018.

Melody Gonzales observed that communication in both directions is advantageous and to the extent possible it would be helpful to have points of contact to increase communication between VLAB and various parts of the administration.

Aida Pacheco added that additional resources are needed for the Census effort; in previous years the VLAB board tried to find out what events were happening in the communities in which they lived that could be relevant to civic engagement and these were shared through the website. Adding a survey on the website so that people could include events of relevance would be helpful. Melody Gonzales added that creating a Google doc for sharing information could be helpful for internal purposes.

Alex Guzman reminded the board that the website has not been translated into Spanish.

Advancing VLAB's Recommendations

Meeting with the Governor/Annual Report Update and Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth Traci Deshazor – 11:53 a.m.

Cecilia Barbosa introduced Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth, Traci Deshazor. The Deputy Secretary greeted the board and introduced herself. Two guests accompanied Deputy Secretary Deshazor: Michael Perry and Sabina Vohra.

Cecilia Barbosa described her meeting with Policy Director Jennie O'Holleran prior to the meeting with the Governor, who informed her that the Governor will make a policy speech on his priorities at the end of August and release his budget at the end of December. As a next step, Policy Director O'Holleran suggested that VLAB prepare two letters: 1) a summary of VLAB's legislative recommendations, and 2) a budget letter – VLAB's requests for funding. Cecilia Barbosa thinks the first is already mostly in place but that the second should be taken up by the committees.

On June 5th, VLAB Officers met with the Governor. In attendance were the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth, the Secretary of Education, the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Resources, the Deputy Secretary of Transportation, the Deputy Secretary of Commerce and Trade, Fernando Mercado-Violand and Maribel Castaneda.

Cecilia Barbosa started with a review of Latinos in Virginia and grouped the recommendations as either smoothing the adjustment of new Virginia residents to a new society or enabling Latinos to fully contribute to the Virginia economy and society.

Secretary of Education Qarni was interested in the English Language Learners topic. The Governor asked about wage theft and the ways he could help VLAB function more effectively.

Deputy Secretary Deshazor thanked Cecilia Barbosa for that summary and described how she views moving forward with these recommendations. The next step is to review these recommendations and determine who in each secretariat will address different aspects. Assigning staff for the different areas is a precursor to delegating them authority to give status updates at the next VLAB meeting in September.

The next phase will be focused on how to prepare for possible actions prior to the 2020 legislative session. The recommendation of Deputy Secretary Deshazor is to stay in constant communication between now and then so that relevant legislative topics that impact the Latino community be addressed effectively by the board before and during the sessions.

After the session finishes there should be consideration for how to assess the progress made and what remains to be pursued.

Aida Pacheco observed that the ongoing communication is a great idea, that the way this was tried in the past was productive, and that addressing new, more complex budget priorities will likely necessitate increased contact. The Deputy Secretary replied that she is working with Fernando Mercado-Violand and Maribel Castaneda to identify points of contact.

Melody Gonzales suggested setting up calls between VLAB meetings. Gloria Rockhold stated that not having the ability to meet or call more easily is a structural barrier to completing board work.

The Deputy Secretary reinforced the availability of the administration and suggested that increasing contact will help realize the various recommendations. During the summer as preparations for the General Assembly session take place there will be time to schedule in working meetings to help move VLAB recommendations forward.

Michael Martinez observed that the 2020 report is going to start being created now.

Learning from Other statewide groups - 12:13

Cecilia Barbosa reviewed a spreadsheet she prepared identifying the priorities and recommendations of other organizations in the state with similar agendas, including the Virginia Asian Advisory Board (VAAB), the Virginia Latino Leaders Council (VLLC), the Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations.

Michael Martinez asked about the payday and car-title loan caps and Cecilia Barbosa indicated she has reference material available.

Aida Pacheco thanked Cecilia Barbosa and Paul Berry for their work putting the report together and the delivery to the Governor. She recommended adding the African American Advisory Board and other relevant advisory boards to this spreadsheet.

The second handout Cecilia Barbosa crafted for the board is a tool to track recommendations, grouped by Secretariat.

Cecilia Barbosa prepared a worksheet for committees to complete by the end of the meeting, including suggested addenda to the recommendations for the annual report – with the next General Assembly session in mind and the upcoming budget creation process, she asked what should be added to supplement VLAB's recommendations to the Governor. Second, she asked for budgetary estimates of recommendations in the annual report. Third, she asked for any changes to legislative recommendations in the report. Barbosa asked that the committees fill these out and return them to Maribel Castaneda.

Deputy Secretary Deshazor observed that the process Cecilia Barbosa and the Board are using is a great approach. She addressed communication and complimented the structure of the report and its content. The forums were effective and she would like to engage with VLAB on

creating more forums or hosting calls on different topics. She offered administrative support for this and added that VLAB members should feel empowered to build the mission in their own communities. Lastly she emphasized the importance of future collaboration between the different advisory boards. She wants to ensure good partnership and promote shared work goals.

Deputy Secretary Deshazor also added that the importance of diversity on advisory boards is high and that they welcome interaction on that topic. The website is changing to include the Spanish language. The Deputy Secretary welcomed suggestions toward meeting shared goals.

Cecilia Barbosa thanked the Deputy Secretary. Aida Pacheco reiterated those thanks and observed that the community forums were part of VLAB alone but that now with greater support she welcomes continuing that approach from the administration. Deputy Secretary thanked the board for continuing their work.

At 12:34 the board was dismissed for lunch and committee meetings.

Reconvened at 1:47pm

Committee Reports

Cecilia Barbosa asked the committees for additional recommendations to be placed in an addendum to the annual report:

- Health Committee: Sergio Rimola congratulated the Governor for the goal to reduce maternal mortality by 2025. He recommended expanding Medicaid to cover care up to a year rather than 60 days postpartum. More than half of pregnancy-related maternal deaths occur after delivery.
- Housing Committee: Mike Martinez recommended adding citizenship status as a protected category to the Virginia Fair Housing Law.
- Open and Accessible Government: Aida Pacheco recommended proposing funding to increase staff in the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and to communicate its plan.
- Civic Engagement: Develop the capacity of all state agencies to engage with Latinx communities.
- Education: Melody Gonzales recommended allowing in-state tuition for all Virginia residents, not solely Dreamers.. Melody Gonzales also added how Education and Workforce can work together to engage with Latinos such as hiring interpreters and having Multilingual websites.
- Business Committee: Jorge Yinat and Manuel Leiva recommended promoting the re-introduction of last year's House Bill 1687 – nonpayment of wages; private cause of action by an employee, that "Provides that an employee has a private cause of action against an employer who fails to pay wages to recover the amount of wages due plus interest at eight percent annually from the date the wages were due. If the court finds that the employer knowingly failed to pay wages, the court shall award the employee reasonable attorney fees and other costs. If the court finds that the employer's failure to

pay wages was willful and with intent to defraud the employee, the court shall also award the employee three times the amount of wages due.”

Cecilia Barbosa and Melody Gonzales will work together to write the addendum.

Melody Gonzales moved to create an addendum that lists VLAB’s recommendations plus the additional items presented by committees. The motion was seconded by Ana. The motion passed unanimously.

Melody Gonzales recommended connecting with the Virginia Hispanic Caucus to see what their legislative actions are that should be on VLAB’s radar

Census Complete Count

Fernando Mercado-Violand and Aida Pacheco provided an update on the Complete Count Commission.

Fernando Mercado-Violand summarized the 2020 Census Latinx Informational Call that was held on Tuesday, June 11th. There were over 50 participants from Hampton Roads to Richmond, Roanoke and beyond on the call. There will be a follow-up call on July 24th and Fernando will follow-up with an e-mail survey with more information. The next Complete Count Commission meeting is June 25th.

Aida Pacheco reported that the call to action was to identify participants’ local commissions. Census solutions workshops are intended to educate, energize, engage and empower communities to participate in the census, brainstorm ideas, develop an outreach plan, and recruit volunteers who can be trusted ambassadors.

The state funding for census education and outreach was not approved by the General Assembly so the state commission is relying on resources that will help – have workshops by the fall, talk to friends about the census, primarily Latino community, Census Bureau has a lot of resources but what is needed in your community? There are contacts in Virginia that are available to help. What is the role Latinx leaders have? Be the leader in your communities and know the people into the community. If there is no commission in the community, start one. If there is not Latinx voice on the commission, be the voice.

Fernando Mercado-Violand stated that \$1.5 million was asked for and that it would have been used for a media campaign. He continued that human capital and local complete count commissions will set aside funds to support local census outreach. Volunteers will also help drive this effort.

Aida Pacheco offered to be a resource for people who want to get involved and answer any questions.

Vivian Sanchez asked what the 2010 budget was for the Census. Fernando Mercado-Violand said he would look into this question.

Melody Gonzales commented that digital engagement is valuable and she thinks the Supreme Court decision on the citizenship question is important to consider.

Aida Pacheco commented that the structure of the local CCCs are up to those who form them.

By-Laws (vote) 2:41 p.m.

Cecilia Barbosa asked Michael Martinez to lead the board on this topic. Michael Martinez asked if there are any questions on the proposed bylaws. Hearing none, he made a motion to make the proposed changes. Aida Pacheco seconded the motion.

Discussion was offered – in Section 4.1 Michael Martinez commented that there is a question to address: there are two proposals – one that standing committees will address the governor’s priorities and priorities established by the Board. The second proposal is that the areas of civic engagement, business development, education, workforce development, and health be established in the by-laws as priority areas; furthermore that the Board will vote on the establishment or disestablishment of committees and committee members to address the priorities.

Gloria Rockhold commented that giving the Governor’s office additional input ability on board subgroups might be advantageous.

Melody Gonzales advocated for the ability to include “friendly amendments” to acknowledge there is a space for other topics that appear infrequently such as family detention, family separation, and others.

Gloria Rockhold and Michael Martinez both added that topics have changed over the years. Michael Martinez and Aida Pacheco added that keeping the topic areas broad will provide more flexibility. Aida Pacheco proposed a change that incorporates that flexibility (*c.f.* Bylaws draft)

Cecilia Barbosa made a point that there are only 21 members so expanding with too many committees is not necessarily practical.

Jorge Yinat clarified that he believes the topics are being created organically from within the board.

Cecilia Barbosa emphasized that looking back on the Code of the board can clarify. Michael Martinez said that the code does not list priorities.

Discussion centered around how to word the language of the bylaws so as to not limit any future consideration of particular important policy issues.

Manuel Leiva commented that the first proposal is simple from a legal perspective. The second one seems longer and possibly more restrictive.

A vote took place. There are:
12 votes for the first proposal
2 votes for second proposal

Alex Guzman makes a motion to amend the bylaws as proposed by Michael Martinez. Michael Martinez seconded the motion. There is one abstention for the bylaw changes and all others vote "yea".

AAida Pacheco moved to pass the new VLAB Elections Policy. Alex Guzman seconded the motion.

Discussion was opened and a small edit was made. A vote is called and Manuel Leiva and Jorge Yinat abstain, all others vote "yea".

The last document is a policy on vacancies drafted by Justin Bell. Aida Pacheco asked who should validate the nominations if the VLAB Secretary is nominated. We add that the "staff" will handle official duties in those cases, but Justin Bell needs to revisit this and draft wording to outline this situation.

Melody Gonzales asks why Justin Bell's document focused on the Chair and Vice Chair, and Justin Bell answered because this was what was requested of him. Justin Bell made draft edits to the elections policy document with the board present to accommodate the inclusion of the Secretary position into the language. The collective discussion from those present agreed that this should be tabled until next time to allow for a proper review of this item.

Jorge asks if there are any other policies in the works/under construction. Cecilia Barbosa replied that this is the work of the Ad Hoc Governance Committee.

The governor's fellows were grateful to the board for attending the meeting. Ana Solorio gave a short farewell speech given she is moving to California and the board wished her well. Jorge offered his thanks for her contributions to the Business Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15.