



**MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 8, 2022 – 3:30 P.M.**

The Mental Health Commission met in a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, February 8, 2022 at 3:40 p.m. via teleconference pursuant to Government Code § 54953, which allows the continuation to hold meetings without gathering in a room in an effort to minimize the spread and mitigate the effects of COVID-19 (Corona Virus Disease of 2019).

CALL TO ORDER Chair Henderson called the meeting to order at 3:40 p.m.

ROLL CALL Roll call was taken by JPA Administrator/Clerk Olmos.

PRESENT: Anne Henderson, Chair
Wray Ryback, Vice-Chair
Carolyn Cockrell, GB Member Liaison
Twila L. Stephens
Nichole Perry (joined the meeting at 3:42 pm)
Joan M. Reyes
Alfonso “Al” Villanueva (joined the meeting at 3:46 p.m.)

ABSENT: Clarence D. Cernal
Isabella A. Chavez
Toni L. Watson
David J. Weldon (Approved Leave of Absence from 1/2022 – 04/2022)

STAFF: Jesse H. Duff, Interim Executive Director
Elizabeth (Liz) Renteria, Chief Clinical Officer
Rimmi Hundal, Director of MHSA and Ethnic Services
Ken Riomales, Chief Information Officer
Mary Monzon, Housing Manager
Mica Olmos, JPA Administrator/Clerk

REGULAR BUSINESS

I. APPROVAL TO IMPLEMENT TELECONFERENCING REQUIREMENTS DURING A PROCLAIMED STATE OF EMERGENCY UNDER AB 361 (GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54953)

Governing Board Liaison Cockrell moved, and Vice-Chair Ryback seconded, to ask the interim executive director, or designee, to perform all actions necessary to implement the Brown Act provisions regarding teleconferencing in compliance with Government Code § 54953.

Chair Henderson opened the meeting for public comment; and there was no public comment.

There being no comment, the motion was carried by the following vote: AYES: Board Member Liaison Cockrell; Commissioners Perry, Reyes, and Stephens; Vice-Chair Ryback; and Chair Henderson. NOES: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Commissioners Cernal, Chavez, Villanueva, Watson, and Weldon.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 11, 2022 MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

Vice-Chair Ryback moved, and Commissioner Reyes seconded, to approve the Minutes of the January 11, 2022 Regular Meeting of the Mental Health Commission, with a correction on Page 5 of the Interim Executive Director Title.

Chair Henderson opened the meeting for public comment; and there was no public comment.

There being no further comment, the motion was carried by the following vote: AYES: Board Member Liaison Cockrell; Commissioners Perry, Reyes, and Stephens; Vice-Chair Ryback; and Chair Henderson. NOES: None. ABSTAIN: None. ABSENT: Commissioners Cernal, Chavez, Villanueva, Watson, and Weldon.

At 3:36 p.m., Commissioner Al Villanueva joined the meeting.

III. PRESENTATION – TRI-CITY MENTAL HEALTH AUTHORITY HOUSING UPDATE

Chief Clinical Officer Renteria announced that Tri-City's Housing Manager Mary Monzon was in attendance to provide an update of the California Rent Relief Program.

Mary Monzon, Housing Manager, shared her screen and announced that she would provide some updates regarding the number and the status of applications with the California Rent Relief Program. She indicated that rent relief became a topic of conversation as soon as a pandemic hit and people went into quarantine which meant they had to stop working, resulting in a lot of households having a difficult time to pay for rent. Therefore, in March of 2020 Governor Newsom put into place an eviction moratorium that protected people from being evicted for lack of rent payment during the pandemic; then the first rent relief came around August 2020, which was very limited because it had a cap of 50% Area Median Income (AMI), which would provide assistance of \$7,500; if they were under 30% AMI, then they would receive up to \$10,000, noting that at this time there was no assistance with utilities; however, utilities had also their own moratorium which could not be shut-off for non-payment; and indicated that no utilities have been shut-off at this point. Then, in October 2020 the City of Pomona Housing Authority opened their own rent relief assistance, which was even more limited because it only provided 25% of the total amount of rent owed to those with a 30% AMI, but helped people from being evicted as long as they paid 25% of the rent. She explained the frustration people suffered due to the difficulty with the application process because of all of the required documentation to show proof of hardship, which often times they could not obtain from places of work because they had closed due to the pandemic. Then in March 2021, the State of California established its own rent relief assistance program that goes up to 80% AMI, noting that initially they were paying 80% of rent and were asking landlords to forgive the rest; however, soon after they began to pay 100% of the rent for those that qualified, the utilities and internet. She explained that Tri-City was brought in by the City of Pomona to assist with its Rent Relief Program application process; then it became a hub to do the California Rent Relief Applications (CRR), and again the City of Pomona asked Tri-City to help with the application process, noting that Tri-City has been participating since July and have assisted 195

households, pointing out that the Pomona Housing Authority and Catholic charity organizations were also hubs for the CRR program where people could go there and get help from staff to complete the CRR application by entering in the computer their information and submit the application. She said that Tri-City does not have a way of tracking anything on our end and explained that Tri-City does not have any information about any specific applicants because they select the City of Pomona as the place where they completed the application; accordingly, all the assistance provided can be by Tri-City, the housing authority, or the Catholic charities and there is no way to distinguish which one of the agencies is the one that actually assisted them with that application. However, that the City of Pomona was provided with a list of every City in California that shows how many households per city are at-risk of eviction, and how many households in those cities have applied for the CRR, and identifies if there is an application gap; that in the City of Pomona 3,358 households were identified being at-risk of eviction, and 3,582 households have applied for the California rent relief, resulting in a zero; that the City of Claremont had 529 households at-risk of eviction and so far only 392 households have applied for CRR, resulting in an application gap of 25%; that in the City of La Verne there were 433 households at-risk of eviction and only 389 households have applied for the CRR, resulting in a 10% application gap. She stated that some cities had a 50% application gap and some had even a higher gap, thus, we are doing well in our three cities, but we can do better, and staff is looking forward to increasing the awareness of this program. She then talked about the additional benefits that Tri-City has seen from working with this rent relief program such as households getting linkages to our agency (those from the three cities); linkages to outside resources through Tri-City navigators (for those not living in the three cities); obtaining clarity on rental protections which were continually changing throughout the pandemic, and new landlord engagement which have learned that if they charge a fair price for their house or apartment, the tenants that live there understand it is a good deal and do not want to lose it; therefore they are easier to follow the rules, care for the rental property and are willing to do what it takes to stay there longer. She indicated that this information has been shared with Tri-City's Housing Stability Program and staff is now figuring out how to have those conversations with other landlords and helping them understand that there is a benefit in charging rent that is fair for both the landlord and the tenant.

Commissioner Villanueva stated that since Tri-City is a facilitator and it does not have a tracking system for the applications that are submitted, he inquired if there was data that showed whether the rent applications resulted in denial and possibly eviction or that were not granted the rent relief. Housing Manager Monzon replied that Tri-City is not running the program, rather it is a State of California program which has its own database; and indicated that if Tri-City could track those coming to us for assistance, staff would not be able to get substantial data since households in the three cities could be applying at home themselves and not necessarily coming into any of our agencies to fill it out; and pointed out that there is still a lot of data out there that it is unfinished; however, Tri-City will receive some kind of report since the State as a whole wants to know this information. Commissioner Villanueva then referred to the 10% gap of CRR applications in the City of Claremont and inquired for the reason people are not applying for the rent relief. Housing Manager Monzon stated that she has heard from applicants saying that they were not aware of the program, or that they believed that they did not qualify because it is for those who are really low income, or for the lack of accessibility to a computer; however, it could be a number of things. Commissioner Villanueva further inquired if the homeless population had increased during the pandemic. Housing Manager Monzon indicated that the homeless count supposed to take place last month; however, due to the high surges of Omicron, the homeless count was pushed back to February 22nd, and that the data results may be released in August. Commissioner Reyes stated that since some people found out about the CRR late, inquired if staff had considered doing PSAs -public service announcements- about the rental assistance

available. Housing Manager Monzon replied that Tri-City Commissioners, the Governing Board, and stakeholders in the cities can help with the promotion because they have more reach in areas where they can help Tri-City promote the information; that staff can provide flyers and other information through the state of California, noting again that it is not a Tri-City program and, thus, is not in charge of promoting this program. However, Tri-City housing team and navigators want to find out where to go and share flyers where people have not seen this information. Commissioner Reyes added that she watches cable in the morning and evenings and had not heard of the rent relief program perhaps because she was not watching local channels, and suggested posting flyers at the La Verne Community Center since it recently opened; as well as schools so that students can take it home to their parents. Housing Manager Monzon replied that these were good suggestions and staff will look into it.

Chair Henderson opened the meeting for public comment; and there was no public comment.

IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Interim Executive Director Duff reported that because of the recent surge of the current endemic, Tri-City had to take a step backwards and on January 13th he issued the 'essential services staffing order', and all employees who are not required to provide essential duties will be required to remain home and telework; that it appears that the Covid surge is declining, and that the mask mandate in California was going to be lifted soon, noting that this is encouraging; that when this essential worker policy is re-evaluated in February 13th, Tri-City will take guidance from CalOSHA who provides guidance to healthcare agencies.

Discussion ensued regarding the tentative days for the Commission AdHoc Committee to talk about desired qualifications and characteristics of the new executive director with Wendy Brown Creative Partners (WBCP), the recruitment firm.

Interim Executive Director Duff talked about the proposed outreach by WBCP, which includes interviews with the Governing Board members, community stakeholders, Tri-City's executive team, and an employee survey to all Tri-City staff so they can have their input as well. He then discussed the tentative recruitment schedule which is expected to open on February 11th and close on March 11th; that the final candidates will be discussed on March 24th; and that the final selection will be made by April 8th.

Commissioner Villanueva thanked Interim Executive Director Duff for his comments; inquired how many candidates from within Tri-City are being considered for the position; recommended Tri-City to look for an executive director from within the organization; and inquired how the two-year pandemic has affected the Tri-City staff team, if there are many vacant positions by employees that have made decisions to look for employment somewhere else or have retired as result of unintended consequences of COVID. Interim Executive Director Duff replied that he is aware of one current Tri-City employee that is interested in pursuing the job, but he was not aware of any others, and agreed that it makes for a strong organization when possible to promote from within; and reported that there are other reasons for employees leaving the agency; however, COVID has been the main reason; that we are kind of struggling filling those positions as result of schools being closed, childcare issues, and we are brainstorming ways to attract people to Tri-City and at the same time implementing measures to retain employees as well, but at this point still is a little bit of a struggle.

Chair Henderson opened the meeting for public comment; and there was no public comment.

COMMISSION ITEMS AND REPORTS

Commissioner Reyes commented that individuals becoming vaccinated has been an issue both in the workforce, not necessarily Tri-City, and in the community at-large, noting that the Biden Administration will pay community groups to help boost trust in vaccines; and stated that Tri-City might be interested in trying to do outreach to the community or its clients; and offered to reach out to the public health department in Pomona and see they will be the ones to give the vaccines if there would be an interest. Director of MHSA & Ethnic Services Hundal reported that Tri-City staff did a very extensive outreach on education on 'stop the spread'; that staff went out in the Community, did webinars, passed out PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and talked about the benefits of the vaccine; that Tri-City held vaccine clinics on-site which were made available to staff, clients, and others who were able to attend and get vaccinated; and that Tri-City will continue to do that. Commissioner Reyes stated that President Biden will allocate \$66.5 million dollars to community groups and that this is something that Tri-City might want to tap into, if it is not an issue, and pointed out that this data was reported today by NPR.

Vice-Chair Ryback shared the results of the Pomona Valley Hospital's 2021 Community Health Needs Assessment which helps identify areas to focus on; that two priority areas were identified: 'access to care' and 'care coordination'; that under 'access to care' it was determined that the primary need is 1) access to affordable preventive care and health screenings, and 2) access to mental health services and resources; noting that the work Tri-City is doing is very much needed in the community; that it continues to be one of the high priority needs as well as improved awareness of services, resources and health education, which she thinks the Commission talks about it almost every Commission meeting; and pointed out that we are here for a good reason.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

At 4:28 p.m., on consensus of the Mental Health Commission its Regular Meeting of February 8, 2022 was adjourned. The next Regular Meeting of the Mental Health Commission will be held on Tuesday, March 8, 2022 at 3:30 p.m. via teleconference pursuant to Government Code § 54953.



Micaela P. Olmos, JPA Administrator/Clerk