

Alameda County Commission on the Status of Women
Meeting Minutes for February 10, 2021

In attendance: Kim Fogel, SSA Staff, Victoria Wu, County Counsel, Commissioners Domínguez, Scott, Welch, Borjón, Greenwood, Gilmore, Levine, Kreeger, Gonzales, Johnson, Safinya-Davies

Members of the public:

Absent: Commissioners Walker, Hernández, Tangren, Coleman, Gary

Called to order at 6:33 pm.

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Approval of Minutes for 12/9/20 and 1/13/21

Domínguez makes a motion to table approval of the minutes. Gilmore seconds. All ayes but one abstention from Safinya-Davies for the 1/13/21 minutes. Motion approved.

3. Treasurer's Report and Budget Update

Borjón reported that we did not receive any response from Sylvia Soublet re: our questions about the budget. But at the Human Relations Commission Soublet was present and explained that we do not need to submit an overall budget request but should submit project-based budgetary requests. Still waiting to hear a response re: how much lead time we need for a project-related request. Fogel offered to help Borjón schedule a time to meet with Soublet.

Domínguez asked whether the committee chairs would like COSW to purchase a Zoom account. Kreeger is ok but others are unsure. We have the funds to do this so any committee member should ask if they need it. A template for making requests will be forwarded by Borjón to Fogel for distribution, and it will be on our shared Google drive.

4. County Counsel Presentation

Wu reviewed her slides on the Brown Act. No questions from the commissioners.

Wu asked whether we are taking roll call when we vote via Zoom. Domínguez said no. Wu recommended that we take a roll call while meeting via Zoom.

Safinya-Davies asked whether COVID has raised access issues. Wu noted that not everyone has access to technology and shared that some cities are looking

into providing free Internet access to the public. In the future, the Brown Act will need amendments to continue remote access.

Gilmore shared that on a state commission she sits on she has noticed increased participation with remote access.

Safinya-Davies requested that commissioners throughout California can participate in conversations about continuing remote access. Wu said that there's no coordinated effort but will let us know if one develops. Safinya-Davies asked whether we can initiate a coordinated effort. Wu said yes, but again, the Brown Act will need revision once the COVID-related orders expire so will need a legislative champion. She suggested reaching out to Soublet re: the BOS's PAL committee.

Wu reviewed the County Administrative Code. All commissions are advisory to the BOS; we do not stand on our own. COSW cannot state a position that is contrary to the BOS's position. If COSW wants to pass a resolution, we need to go through the PAL committee to bring the issue before the BOS. The requirement that COSW go through the SSA is the structure of the county. The code is out of date. Our subject matter jurisdiction has to be under what is listed in the Admin Code.

Gonzales asked for clarification about adopting proclamations. Wu confirmed that we cannot adopt one; only the BOS can take an official position on any issue.

Domínguez gave the example of our proposed proposition about Black History Month. Wu asked why we would need to do that if the month is federal. Greenwood shared that COSW wanted to uplift the issue and COSW's support. Safinya-Davies shared the examples of DV awareness month and likened our effort to an awareness campaign. She asked if there is any prohibition. Wu said COSW shouldn't make proclamations. We should be advising BOS to take action around issues we've identified, studied, etc.(pay equity, for example), not making statements.

Kreeger clarified that we can make a report to the BOS about issues we identify. Wu said that we can make reports to BOS more often than we do now. Kreeger asked whether we can go into our districts and ask people to speak on certain issues. Wu said yes, and we can invite members of the public to present at our meetings. Kreeger shared that we were told we couldn't share a draft COSW report with the public that hadn't been seen by/approved by the BOS. Wu said yes, that's correct. But we can solicit input from the public while creating the report.

Greenwood said that when we bring Wu back, we would like legal advice about what we can and cannot do.

5. Black History Month Proclamation

Domínguez said that after Wu's presentation, she would like COSW to issue a statement rather than a proclamation. Kreeger shared that she loves the proclamation and asked whether we can rephrase it as a celebration of Black History Month. Gilmore said that she is concerned about putting this out right after hearing from Wu; feels like we may be ignoring her. Domínguez said she heard that we cannot make proclamations but can make statements. Gilmore asked whether the BOS has made a statement. Domínguez said that BOS recognized some individuals, but no Black History Month proclamation. Scott said we may have more impact asking the BOS to make a proclamation and questioned whether making a statement would qualify as stating an opinion, which Wu said we cannot do. Fogel reminded us that we have asked the BOS to make proclamations in the past but doing that requires more advance notice that we have in February. Domínguez suggested that we take proclamations off of the list of things we can do.

Safinya-Davies asked whether we can just promote Black History Month on social media with facts. She noted that the proclamation would need the BOS signatures, not COSW. Domínguez shared that we have been given a social media policy from SSA and so she has only been reposting things from the county because we know they are vetted.

Safinya-Davies made a motion that we share pieces of this proclamation on our social media throughout February. Kreeger seconded.

Gonzales said that she doesn't think that the medium matters if we are a recommending body; is it a wording problem? Scott shared that we may be veering into stating an opinion on behalf of the county if we post anything other than the bare fact that it's Black History Month. Levine asked what we are trying to achieve. Gilmore agreed with Scott and suggested that we may be able to get around the problem by lifting language from a previous year's BOS proclamation about this issue.

Domínguez asked everyone to stay until 8:15 pm. Scott said that no motion is needed to extend the meeting time.

Gilmore suggested making a substitute motion that would have to be approved by the original motion maker. Domínguez made the substitute motion that COSW forward a proposal to BOS to make a proclamation for Women's History Month with elements already included in our draft Black History Month proclamation to uplift Black women's experiences. Borjón reminded us that we need to go through SSA first. Scott suggested that Wu reminded us that we can make a lot of strong recommendations to the BOS, beyond proclamations. Safinya-Davies clarified that her motion was to just post that it is Black History

Month because it matters that we make that statement. Domínguez shared that she heard Safinya-Davies suggest that we use other pieces of the proclamation in our posts. Domínguez clarifies that she was suggesting a substitute motion so we can get on the BOS agenda in March to put forward a proclamation for both months. Gilmore clarified that we need to know whether Safinya-Davies accepts the substitute motion. Domínguez withdrew her substitute motion. Fogel noted that BOS generally acknowledges Women's History Month but it not sure whether that is happening. 8 no votes and one yes; Johnson and Welch absent during this vote. Motion does not pass.

Domínguez made a motion for COSW to request to be on BOS agenda in March to make a presentation on the COSW's issues of concern including, but not limited to, issues regarding Black women's health inequity during the pandemic. Levine wondered whether we have an ask to accompany our concern. Domínguez said she is open to amendments. Johnson said that we know Black women have been disproportionately impacted by COVID and have health disparities generally. Levine thinks we should be concrete and doesn't want to waste this opportunity without thinking it through. Levine gave free wifi in the county as an example to reduce educational disparities. Scott shared that we should take a step back and make sure that our recommendations are thorough and well-thought out. Greenwood agreed that we should take time, beyond March; maybe by April we would be ready.

Domínguez amended her motion to suggest that we go in April instead. Johnson reiterated that we need to go through SSA first. Borjón shared that we did not have a retreat so we do not have goals. She suggested that we have a meeting where we set goals and bring those goals to the BOS. Kreeger shared that during the policy committee meeting that getting data takes a long time. She suggested that we wait until we get the data Kreeger requested. Gilmore noted that the motion is very broad. Domínguez's second amendment to her motion – end the motion at “our topics of concern.” Johnson seconded. Two no votes, 7 yes votes. Welch not present. Motion passed.

6. Human Relations Commission Report

Postponed.

7. Committee Assignments and Updates

Postponed.

8. Open Public Comment

No public comment.

9. Agenda Building

Agreed on retreat planning, April BOS presentation, and annual goals.

Johnson recommended adding Black women's health inequity as an agenda item to the policy committee agenda. Agreed with Scott's request to discuss annual goals.

Domínguez shared that she will look into calling a special meeting to address some of the longer-term planning ideas.

10. Adjournment

Domínguez shared that the Women's Hall of Fame is taking nominations.

Kreeger sent out a Doodle poll for the policy committee meeting but needs more responses.

Johnson shared that HRC has their awards presentation on March 4, 2021.

Adjourned at 8:32 pm.