The following are minutes for the meeting of the City of Las Cruces Quality of Life Policy Review Committee held at 3:00 p.m. January 26, 2022, in City Hall, Conference Room 2007A.

MEMBERS PRESENT:
1. Councilor Tessa Abeyta-Stuve – District 2 – Chair
2. Councilor Becki Graham – District 3 - Vice-Chair
3. Councilor Becky Corran – District 5
4. Dr. Marlena Fraune, Ex-Officio Member
5. Diego Medina, Ex-Officio Member

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT:
6. Rebecca Slaughter, Quality of Life Deputy Director and PRC Staff Coordinator
7. Dan Carrillo, Quality of Life Admin. Assistant and Acting PRC Recording Secretary
8. Lynn Gallagher, Quality of Life Director
9. Sergio Ruiz, Administration Policy Analyst
10. Christine Rivera, City Clerk
11. Jamie Michael, Doña Ana County Human Services Director
12. Gregory Shervanick, Member of the Public

I. CALL TO ORDER - Chairwoman Abeyta-Stuve called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Roll was called, and a quorum was established with Chairwoman Abeyta-Stuve, Councilor Graham, and Councilor Corran present.

II. CONFLICT OF INTEREST – Chairwoman Abeyta-Stuve read the conflict of interest statement. “Does any member of the City Council or any member of City staff have any known conflict of interest with any item on the agenda?” All members present indicated there were none.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA - Chairwoman Abeyta-Stuve requested a motion for acceptance of the agenda. A motion was made by Councilor Corran and seconded by Councilor Graham to approve the agenda. Role was called and the agenda was accepted by the committee members present.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Chairwoman Abeyta-Stuve requested a motion for approval of the meeting minutes from the October 27, 2021, meeting. A motion was made by Councilor Graham and seconded by Councilor Corran to approve the minutes. Roll was called and minutes were approved by the committee members present.
V. ACTION ITEMS

a. **Vote for Vice Chair:** Chairwoman Abeyta-Stuve requested a motion to appoint a Vice Chair. A motion was made by Councilor Corran to nominate Councilor Graham as committee Vice Chair. Chairwoman Abeyta-Stuve seconded. Roll was called and Councilor Graham was made Vice Chair of the Quality of Life Policy Review Committee.

VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. **What is the Quality of Life (QoL) Policy Review Committee and what we discuss:** Chairwoman Abeyta-Stuve requested for all members and guests present to provide an introduction to Vice Chair Graham and Councilor Corran.

**Existing Members and City Staff**

i. Diego Medina - Ex-Officio Member Quality of Life PRC, Piro-Manso-Tiwa Tribe member. Chairwoman Abeyta-Stuve added that Mr. Medina has been insightful with a lot of the history. He has presented to the committee and provides expertise.

ii. Dr. Marlena Fraune – Ex-Officio Member Quality of Life PRC, New Mexico State University Psychology and Human-Robot interaction Professor.

iii. Dr. K. Lynn Gallagher – Quality of Life Director

iv. Rebecca Slaughter – Deputy Director of Quality of Life, Staff Liaison for Quality of Life PRC. Ms. Slaughter added that as the liaison, she works directly with Chairwoman Abeyta-Stuve to set the agenda. If there are any items that members wish to discuss, please contact Ms. Slaughter to coordinate these items. Additionally, Ms. Slaughter will help facilitate any other questions members may have.

v. Dan Carrillo – Quality of Life Administrative Assistant, Branigan Library, currently participating as Recording Secretary for Ms. Ginger Barela, who is currently out of office.

**New Members**

i. Councilor Becky Corran – Councilor for District 5 and Professor of Public Health at Doña Ana Community College

ii. Vice-Chair Becki Graham – Vice-Chair Graham is the Councilor for District 3. Vice-Chair Graham has a master’s degree in anthropology and a Ph.D. in English. Vice-Chair Graham also performs economic development research at New Mexico State University.

**What we do here.**

Chair Abeyta Stuve informed the newest committee members that a lot of the focus for the last six months, the PRC has been on art. We have been able to see updates from Parks and Rec. In a lot of ways, Quality of Life is a lot of pieces put together. In the other committee assignments, you will see from Transportation, Health, and different
areas that all filter down to quality of life. In that way, this committee is unique. We get to say the many different thing that make citizens want to live and stay here. The hope is that us Councilors can identify items that can be beneficial, the next month be discussed or become an action item, and then be presented to City Council to bring to fruition.

b. Update of the Crisis Triage Center, Work with the Crisis Now Workgroup, and Statewide 988 Implementation plans presentation: Ms. Jaime Michael, Dona Ana County Health and Human Services Department presented to the committee an update on Crisis Response System. Ms. Michael informed the committee that while she is employed by the Dona Ana County governmental agency, the focus of the Health and Human Services Department is to connect people to resources. Although the majority of their work is in the unincorporated areas of Dona Ana County, that is due to the lack of resources available, but the area of focus is to serve all people in and out of the city limits. Ms. Michael added that one of the most important areas of interest is behavioral health, so the focus has been to look at Crisis Response in the County. The County has been working on crisis response in behavioral health for close to a decade, but it has been slow moving. Recent federal changes and state opportunities have created a real opportunity for change. Ms. Michael continued, that an opportunity that has helped move crisis response was the National Suicide Hotline Designation Act, which requires a new way for people to access services when they are experience a behavioral health crisis, such as substance use and suicide crisis. It is scheduled to go live July of this year. It is a direct three-digit number to the national suicide prevention call center. Currently there is a 1-800 number, or 911 services. The intent is to give people access to 911 for police of health-related emergencies and 988 for behavioral health related emergencies. These two systems will work together to deploy the appropriate resources for the appropriate type of emergency. This is not designed to be a one-call system, but to provide larger system of care. The intent is to reduce the ineffective spending on health care to get a better return and increase people’s quality of life. Dialing 988 will connect you with trained counselor on the New Mexico Crisis Hotlines. Responders are licensed clinicians will help connect people to immediate and on-going care. 85% of local calls to the suicide prevention hotline are already handled by the New Mexico crisis hotlines. Additionally, this will reduce the use of law enforcement responding to behavioral health needs and help end the stigma of behavioral health. Monthly stakeholder meetings are being held and work groups are focusing on call centers/interface, crisis response teams, Crisis Triage Center (CTC), needs of specific populations, and tribal communities utilizing the crisis now model and federal guidelines and standards. Locally, a memorandum of understanding between Mesilla Valley Regional Dispatch Authority (MVRDA) and the New Mexico Crisis Access Lines (NM CALS) was executed in 2019 to look at what types of calls can be transferred to the crisis line and not dispatch police, fire, and EMS. The Crisis Now Workgroups was created in September 2020, which includes City and County law enforcement and fire, CTC, MVRDA, and NM CALS. The CTC was opened in July 2021, and some County ARPA funds were allocated to support the model. The two main focuses have been
CTC and the mobile Crisis Response (MCR). CTC has contracted with RI co-authors of National Guidelines, have a licensed facility, hired/trained staff, secured Medicaid reimbursement, and is operational 24/7. MCR has been slow going. It is difficult to take workforce from other areas to make them mobile. Currently it is an expansion of the triage center. There is a need for sustainability planning and Medicaid funds. In the future there needs to be an increase in utilizing the CTC, expansion of the mobile crisis team, 988 federal and state implementation, local system coordination, and public education. Ms. Michael concluded her presentation. Chairwoman Abeyta-Stuve opened the floor for questions. Mr. Medina inquired about what circumstances would take place for a person to be turned away from the CTC. Mr. Medina’s inquiry was based on reports that he had received regarding a homeless individual that was taken to the CTC by the County Sheriff’s office and was turned away. Ms. Medina responded that this has happened. Specifically, for the situation in question, the gentleman was brought to the center during a time of minimal staff. There was not a nurse on site. Upon arrival, a counselor greeted the Sheriff and the gentleman to explain the situation and informed them that they could not provide services at that time. This issue has been resolved. They no longer rely on agency staffing but utilize pooled nursing units to come in when someone cannot work their assigned shift. This has not occurred again. The model is to say yes to all that come for assistance. Ms. Michael was further asked if there would be a seamless transition between 911 and 988. If an individual calls either number, will that call be forwarded to the appropriate staff dependent on the situation. Ms. Michael confirmed that this is the intent. Call takers in each center will be able to dispatch appropriate services dependent on the needs of the caller. It was next inquired if there would be multi-lingual providers. Ms. Michael responded that the utilization of peer support workers assists with ensuring ability to provide services. It was further stated that police and fire are not in a position where they have to have a quota of people in crisis to earn their budgets, what actions will be put in place to ensure that the operations of the CTC are not dependent on usage. Ms. Michael does not want to give the impression that services will be dependent on revenue generation. The County will need be prepared to subsidize funding for the CTC utilizing sources such as the behavioral health tax. Ms. Michael was asked if the staff members that work at the CTC have assistance available to them for their behavioral health. Staff participate in trauma training for assisting with trauma and dealing with their own trauma. They participate in self-care, and this is a priority in the organization. Chairwoman Abeyta-Stuve inquired if there are potential liability issues with improper transfers that resulted in incorrect services. Ms. Michael stated that it is similar to the system that is in place. Proper internal protocols and training reduce the liability. Chairwoman Abeyta-Stuve further inquired if the calls and responses will be tracked to document the percentage of calls managed properly and be able to identify incorrect transfers to address. Ms. Michael responded that the calls are already being tracked. The intent of CTC will be to provide follow-up services as well. Chairwoman Abeyta-Stuve additional inquired if the model of crisis mobile units will be beyond the scope of what the CTC can do. Ms. Michael responded that ideally, there would be two operational mobile response teams for the
community. These will be collocated with the CTC to ensure adequate staffing without duplication of staffing positions. Chairwoman Abeyta-Stuve further inquired if there was an outreach plan. Ms. Michael stated that they submitted a plan to the state for implementation, but there will not be public notice until the GO Live date in July. Currently there is not adequate staff to address the potential increase in calls. Lastly, Chairwoman Abeyta-Stuve asked if there were a City representative part of the monthly stakeholder meetings to ensure open communication. Ms. Michael replied that it is asked to include more parties to ensure proper representation. Ms. Michael does share during the Crisis Now meetings. Ms. Gallagher stated that she attends the Crisis Now meetings. Mr. Gregory Shervanick expressed that the first thing a person in crisis sees is very important. Ms. Shervanick then inquired that when a crisis team will go to the home of a person in crisis, what will they see? Will a person in uniform attire show up to their door? He further inquired what type of paper trail will be initiated for a person in crisis that does not have any form of identification. How will the CTC identify and track continued care? Ms. Michael responded that how an individual in crisis is really critical. The evidence shows that peers are the best to be the best point of contact. There should always be two people responding for safety, but it is important to start a non-threatening form of engagement. If the staff that arrive to assist the person in crisis identify a medical or safety emergency, they will call 911 for assistance. Regarding the paperwork issue, staff assist the person in crisis. Once the needs of the person in crisis have been met, then a consultant will work with the individual to establish eligibility for assistance regarding fees. All information is protected under Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

c. Budget QoL:: Ms. K. Lynn Gallagher began her presentation informing the committee members that currently the City is still under level two of the FY23 budget creation. After level two, they City Manager’s Office will have the opportunity to review the department recommendations. The Quality of Life Department wants to really improve the quality of life for the citizens. The department oversees senior programs, libraries, museums, volunteer programs, and public art. The department has marketing opportunities to collaborate with other departments and have a voice to get information out to the public. These opportunities were used to inform the public about mask-up events, secured bus wraps for hand washing and social distancing initiatives during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The department’s budget is first looked at through the lens of Elevate Las Cruces, which sets the tone and tenor for the City’s expectation for today and 25 years from today. We look at how we can be a catalyst in our community addressing the needs of areas that we directly and indirectly support, such as Las Cruces community schools. The next lens we look at the budget is the City’s strategic business plan. How do we provide for an aging population in Las Cruces? Our Senior Programs program receives federal and state funds, in addition to general funding. Areas of services for senior programs include nutrition, recreation, long-term care service report. Libraries are institutions of knowledge that connect communities, connect people, and provide access to education and experience that individuals may not have. The City provides free GED services, in English
and Spanish, and would like to expand on these services. The City has 4 museums. We wish to expand our partnership with the Smithsonian for exhibits. We wish to focus on the cultural heritage of the indigenous community. The department applies for numerous grants each year to subsidize funding of projects. Our volunteer network connects 400 community members with volunteer opportunities throughout the City assisting programs in Parks & Rec, Fire, Utilities, and more. He is currently working with Assistant City Manager, Eric Enriquez to coordinate distribution of 9,000 COVID test kits to the community. Recent Council approved Ordinance secured future funds to dedicate to Public Art for repair and maintenance. We assess the measurable outcomes from each program to see how we can better support the community. Ms. Gallagher concluded her presentation. No questions were asked regarding her presentation.

VII. FUTURE DISCUSSION ITEMS AND TASK LISTING: Chairwoman Abeyta-Stuve noted to the committee that there is still room for two Ex-Officio Members, and if the committee knows of any interested party, to please ask them to apply.

Master Calendar for Programs
Utility Structure/Public Art Assets by District
Indigenous Culture and Representation


IX. ADJOURNMENT - Chairwoman Abeyta-Stuve requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion to adjourn was made and seconded. Roll was called and all members present approved. Meeting adjourned at 4:24 p.m.

Chairperson

Approved