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3 The following are summary minutes for the meeting of the **City of Las Cruces – Health**  
4 **Policy Review Committee** on June 1, 2022. At 3:00 p.m. at City Hall, 700 S. Main  
5 Street, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

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7 **Members Present:**

8 Becky Corran, City Councilor, District 2  
9 Kasandra Gandara, City Councilor, District 1

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11 **Members Absent:**

12 Yvonne Flores, City Councilor, District 6  
13 Kathryn Olszowy, Ex-Officio member  
14 Adrian Larson, MountainView, Member

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16 **Others Present:**

17 Phillip Catanach, Parks & Rec, Recreation Services Administrator  
18 Marina Montoya, Parks & Rec, Administrative Assistant  
19 Christine Rivera, City Clerk  
20 Joe Provencio, Employee Assistance Program, CLC  
21 Becky Baum, Recording Secretary, RC Creations, LLC

22  
23 **I. Call to Order:** Councilor Gandara called the meeting to order.

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25 **II. Conflict of Interest:** There was no conflict of interest.

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27 **III. Acceptance of the Agenda:** Councilor Corran motioned; Councilor Gandara  
28 seconded. The agenda was accepted.

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30 **IV. Approval of the Minutes – May 4, 2022:** Councilor Corran motioned, Councilor  
31 Gandara seconded. The minutes were approved.

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33 **V. Discussion Items:**

34  
35 **1. Occupational Health Survey:** Councilor Gandara stated that this has been a  
36 long standing agenda item. This survey came up from the mental health days.  
37 It was talked about in Council discussing if people wanted mental health days  
38 as staff. Research was done and it was identified that it would be \$300,000 to  
39 give everyone one or two days' worth of mental health days. It was put on the  
40 back burner but it's something they would like to see. At the time, Councilor  
41 Gandara had a student intern named Zach who developed an occupational  
42 health survey and did a presentation to Councilor Gandara, Ifo Pili, and  
43 Councilor Abeyta-Stuve. They wished to move forward but as they negotiated

1 and looked at it the survey was too narrow and specific on physical health  
2 rather than holistic; both physical and mental.  
3

4 Joe and Councilor Gandara had a meeting with Erica to go over the questions;  
5 had conversations with Ms. Richards and others to see where everyone is at.  
6 This survey is sanctioned by the National Institute of Safety and Health; CDC  
7 is part of that. The survey is extensive with 68 questions. If a survey like that  
8 is sent out to the employees they may not take it with that much. If it is able to  
9 be broken up into thirds then it would be more easily digestible; one related to  
10 work, one related to physical health, and one related to mental health. Joe  
11 suggested incentivizing it somehow, a giveaway of some kind of perhaps gift  
12 cards or items. The employee peer-to-peer foundation has been successful at  
13 getting donations for their giveaways which could be a possibility for this.  
14

15 If they break up the survey into thirds there is a higher chance of receiving  
16 more responses. Erica told Joe that if they were to get 600 responses that  
17 would be okay but ideal would be roughly 900 responses; that's difficult to do.  
18 Another thing to do before bringing out the survey is to sell the idea that there  
19 is a value to this; use SharePoint, go to staff meetings, send out a memo, and  
20 etcetera. If someone sees a value that will come back to them they are more  
21 likely to do it. Councilor Corran stated what a lot of people seem to think is if  
22 they fill out some survey nothing will happen with it and there's no motivation.  
23 They need to make sure to follow through and she doesn't know if the City has  
24 a reputation of follow through or not. She asked if they are going to have  
25 something on the survey that would make it identifiable in case issues come  
26 up.  
27

28 HR has done many surveys about various subjects with good feedback. Using  
29 Survey Monkey is anonymous. Mr. Provencio doesn't know the percentage of  
30 response. In 1995 or 1996 there was a lot of chatter that people didn't feel  
31 safe. A questionnaire was designed that asked safety questions. The Union  
32 got on board to get people to respond. It may be a fair question to ask if they  
33 were successful in getting people to respond and whether it was slanted  
34 because of that. There were just under 1,000 employees at the time with  
35 roughly 600 responses. From that a number of programs were developed that  
36 dealt with feeling safe in the workplace, conflict management, and conciliation  
37 with employees or supervisor and employee. He suggested selling the idea  
38 with what they will do, commit to it, and then the employees will feel that their  
39 responses will make a difference. The buy in is very important.  
40

41 When this was approached prior to the new Committee there was discussion  
42 on the possibility of working it within the Employee Wellness Program to take  
43 it away from HR stigma. Another incentive could be a half day off certificate  
44 as part of the Wellness Program. It is unknown what the history of HR surveys  
45 are. With Survey Monkey there's no way to find who wrote what responses.  
46 The cost of \$350 coming out of the budget, it's easier to give time off that is

1 already there from the Wellness Program. It is a policy issue that Council  
2 believes needs to happen; reduce the stigma around mental health. The  
3 question now is whether there really is mental health issues in the City; high  
4 cost of premiums with other data that does support the issues. It's good to  
5 have people reach out for help.  
6

7 When Mr. Provencio previously worked for the City his clients were roughly 11  
8 per month; now it's about 13. The stress is a high ticket item; second is grief.  
9 When he first came back the grief was a bit overwhelming; roughly a third of  
10 the people he's seen has been grief related issues. Anything that helps  
11 remove the stigma on mental health and emotional wellbeing has great value.  
12 The Wellness Program helps alleviate that stigma. If they believe HR would  
13 add to the stigma then HR doesn't have to be the driving force. Councilor  
14 Gandara would like for people to be more comfortable talking about their  
15 mental health before it gets to a critical stage. There used to be a class that  
16 was offered by the City roughly four years ago that discussed mental health  
17 and the different kinds there are. It's under First Aid for suicide prevention. It  
18 wasn't offered virtually during COVID and so QPR trainings have been offered  
19 instead for the suicide prevention group; lots of participation from groups. It  
20 was suggested they bring it back to help with the stigma.  
21

22 Erica has been looking over the survey questions to determine if they are  
23 needed, appropriate, duplicated, and etcetera. Councilor Gandara invited  
24 Councilor Corran to look over the survey and put in her opinions as well as be  
25 involved with the meetings with Erica. They will continue reporting until it's  
26 ready. Christine Rivera suggested getting buy in from the top down. There  
27 are exec staff meetings every week; this would be a good topic to bring up  
28 there. If the directors are on board then it should trickle down to other staff  
29 members. It would show care of the employees. Perhaps have something  
30 from the City Manager's office would help with the buy in of more people. Joe  
31 is very well respected and trusted by all the employees which is a benefit.  
32

33 Joe compared the stigma with how people used to talk about illnesses as  
34 people have learned more they talk more openly about them. He  
35 recommended looking at the strategies from making those more palatable to  
36 discuss and apply them to mental health. Perhaps they need to educate the  
37 supervisors and have it trickle down; an example of COVID symptoms was  
38 given and how supervisors dealt with the side effects prior to more knowledge  
39 happened. This could potentially be an ADA issue with finding solutions on  
40 how to work with employees who aren't at 100% but accommodate them; the  
41 sooner workers are back with their coworkers the more they feel like they're  
42 getting better. He recommends starting at the top with department heads and  
43 supervisors. Christine suggested offering a supervisory mental health class.  
44 She suffers from anxiety and can relate to employees but not every supervisor  
45 is able to do that.  
46

1 Councilor Gandara asked if they wish to suggest having a mental health class  
2 for supervisors and department heads to Council. It will help with the buy in  
3 on the survey with encouraging employees to do the survey; especially if they  
4 can prove that it can't be traced back. Educating staff also helps with the large  
5 number of employees out in the public, parks, inspectors, water lines, and  
6 etcetera. Sometimes there have been issues with someone in the public  
7 having a serious issue and took it out on the employee completely undeserved.  
8 Knowing ways to detach, de-escalate, walk away, not get engaged, and  
9 etcetera become needed. The next steps include going through the survey to  
10 find any questions that are not currently appropriate, set up a meeting with  
11 Erica, receive more feedback from people, and look into the mental health first  
12 aid for supervisors.

13  
14 Councilor Corran commented that they don't have to wait for the survey in  
15 order to begin having mental health classes to educate the employees. The  
16 mental health first aid helped educate people on issues but also helped people  
17 who were having the issues realize they weren't the only ones. Many people  
18 who have mental health issues believe they're the only one. Education makes  
19 a difference. Joe stated that if they did a comparison between the 1,600  
20 employees and 1,600 people at Memorial Medical they would find similar  
21 numbers. It doesn't matter what population you look at this is human nature.  
22 He recommended selling the idea with numerous things; mental health first aid,  
23 looking at long COVID which will be put in SharePoint, and etcetera.

- 24  
25 **2. Homeless/Faith Meeting Update:** Councilor Gandara and Councilor  
26 Bencomo put together a faith based meeting that happened last Thursday.  
27 With the help of Patti and Annette they sent a little over 140 invitations to faith  
28 based community, organization, churches, and others; whatever was found on  
29 Google. There were a little over 40 people who attended. Thankfully, the  
30 people who had a meeting next door had something happen and weren't there  
31 so they could move take the entire facility. It was a nice, facilitated event.  
32 Discussions included what they do if they are working with the homeless and  
33 if not why not; are there needs, fears, anxiety, and etcetera. They broke out  
34 the ideas in groups. It was requested that they break out into groups with  
35 people they didn't know.

36  
37 They had a significant amount of time to work through the questions. Once  
38 they worked through the questions, they were informed of what City Council is  
39 doing related to homelessness and asked what they need from the City; very  
40 specific items were asked for. They would like to meet again. They are  
41 working in the silos but would also like to have a system or database where  
42 the churches can communicate with each other and help the homeless  
43 population. Training was also requested, recognizing mental health issues,  
44 substance abuse, and etcetera. It was a very positive meeting; most felt  
45 hopeful and grateful with the help from the City.  
46

1 Councilor Gandara stated that they need a streets unit to help begin  
2 relationship building with these folks and engage with them; meet them where  
3 they're at and try to address their needs to get them off the street. There were  
4 some people who were very interested in that and will meet again in a month.  
5 There will be a meeting with home builders tomorrow from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm  
6 which Councilor Gandara will be there. She is also worried about folks that  
7 are near homelessness, not enough housing, not enough services, and  
8 etcetera. Joe commented that in Albuquerque they have a store called Dress  
9 for Success with nice used clothing that they will give to someone who is trying  
10 to get back into the workforce, women especially. They sell the clothing to  
11 support programs, trainings, and etcetera for getting back into the workplace;  
12 this can include homeless as well.

13  
14 Additional stories of homeless going back into the workforce was given. There  
15 has been an article which views cities that have very strict development codes  
16 has a direct correlation to more people becoming homeless; it tends to reduce  
17 the number of housing available when written too strictly. Stories of personal  
18 experience with being homeless and finding the skills to move out of it were  
19 given. Nutritional meals are essential as well to make sure people have the  
20 right nutrients to fuel their brain.

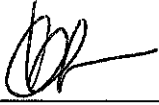
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22 **VI. Future Discussion/Task Listing:**

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24 **VII. Next Meeting Date – July 6, 2022:** The next meeting may be canceled. Councilor  
25 Gandara will not be present but Councilor Corran would be willing to facilitate the  
26 meeting as Co-Chair. Councilor Corran stated that the County Health Department  
27 has an idea of building different types of infrastructure to support restaurants and  
28 businesses to have higher indoor air quality filtering system. It would be put on the  
29 August agenda if the July meeting is canceled. Councilor Gandara stated they will  
30 cancel for the next month.

31  
32 The County Health Department has a community organization partner who can  
33 come talk to the Board. It would be good to have people from CD and ED as the  
34 partner discusses business related outreach and building COVID related things.  
35 The agenda item can be called Convert Indoor Commercial Air Quality. Air quality  
36 in Las Cruces can be bad which contributes to asthma and allergies. The County  
37 Health Department talks about incentivizing businesses; people would rather go  
38 where they can breathe comfortably. Philip Catanach will contact the people to  
39 set that up. There will also be a follow up on the mental health survey. Councilor  
40 Gandara suggested looking through the data to decide what they wish to do in the  
41 coming year. The Lift Up survey will go out soon; kick off date will be after the  
42 second week of June. The first Lift Up event is tonight at Apodaca Park.

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44 **VIII. Adjournment:** Councilor Corran motioned; Councilor Gandara seconded.  
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Chairperson