



CalAccount Blue Ribbon Commission

MINUTES

CalAccount Blue Ribbon Commission

Thursday, January 18, 2024

901 P Street, Rm 102 Sacramento, California 95814

Public Participation Call-In Number: (877) 411-9748; Access Code: 3790012

OPEN SESSION

ITEM #1

ROLL CALL

Call to Order and Roll Call

Stephanie Tom for Treasurer Fiona Ma, Chair, calls the meeting to order at 10:31 A.M. and advises that the meeting is being recorded.

Sean Colier, Public Phone Line Coordinator announces to the public joining in by phone the instructions for being heard.

Mariah Ramos, Commission Presenter, calls roll.

Members Present:	Stephanie Tom for Fiona Ma, CPA, State Treasurer’s Office Byron Lopez, Governor Appointee James Hicken, Governor appointee Manisha Padi, Governor appointee Miguel Santana, Assembly appointee Paulina Gonzalez-Brito, Senate appointee
Members Absent:	Greg Young for Clothilde Hewlett, Commissioner of the Department of Financial Protection and Innovation Fr. Gregory Boyle, Assembly appointee
Staff Present:	Cassandra DiBenedetto, Executive Director, CalAccount Blue Ribbon Commission Stephanie Tom, Deputy Director Mariah Ramos, Commission Presenter

Aldo Ruiz Riviera, Spanish Translator
Sean Colier, Public Phone Line Coordinator

Chair Tom declares a quorum present.

Chair Tom advises that public comment will be limited to two minutes per person or four minutes if an interpreter is needed.

Aldo Ruiz Riviera, Spanish Translator, translates the instructions for public comment in Spanish to public participants joining in the room and on the public phone line.

ITEM #2

ACTION ITEM

Approval of the Minutes from December 14, 2023

Chair Tom introduced the item and asked if there were any public comments on the or comments from the Commissioners.

Seeing none, Chair Tom asks Sean, if there were any public comments.

Seeing none, Chair Tom provides instructions on how to make a comment over the phone.

Hearing none, Chair Tom asks if there was a motion to approve the Minutes from the December 14, 2023 meeting.

Commissioner motions to approve.

Commissioner seconds the motion.

Chair Tom asks Mariah to call roll.

Mariah calls roll:

<i>AYE</i>	<i>NAY</i>
<i>Chair Stephanie Tom</i>	<i>none</i>
<i>Commissioner Byron Lopez</i>	
<i>Commissioner Jim Hicken</i>	
<i>Commissioner Manisha Padi</i>	

Chair Tom recognizes the Minutes as approved.

ITEM #3

Guest Speaker Erika Toriz-Kurkjian, Executive Director, Haven Neighborhood Services

Chair Tom introduces item number 3 of the agenda: Guest Speaker: Erika Toriz-Kurkjian, Executive Director, Haven Neighborhood Services

Chair Tom thanks Erika for being here and asks her to proceed with her presentation.

Erika Toriz thanks everyone for allowing her to speak on this issue.

Erika Toriz begins her presentation.

Erika Toriz shares her personal mission and the mission of Haven Neighborhood Services. Erika's mission is to educate consumers so that those who are marginalized and do not have access to basic financial principles will begin to make better financial decisions and will take advantage of economic opportunities. By educating the community, a knowledge of basic financial principles will prevent consumers from making poor financial decisions. Haven's mission is to financially empower vulnerable communities by providing no-cost financial education and services to end their financial crisis.

Erika Toriz continues her presentation and provides additional information related to the unbanked and underbanked.

Erika Toriz concludes her presentation by thanking everyone for being apart of this and hopes that everyone can come together to help this community.

Chair Tom thanks Erika and asks if the commission has any questions for Erika.

Commissioner Paulina Gonzalez-Brito has a question.

Commissioner Gonzalez-Brito thanks Erika Toriz for her presentation and asks about the "trust issue" that came up during her presentation. She goes on to ask how a State branded account like CalAccount can help with the mistrust issue.

Erika Toriz responded by sharing Haven's experience. Haven uses a program and does not steer any of their clients to a specific bank. It is important to have product's that is geared towards this community. As a banker we need to understand the products that are needed for this community, as well as education on this community.

Chair Tom thanks Erika and asks for additional questions from the commissioners.

Commissioner Miguel Santana has a question.

Commissioner Santana thanks Erika for her presentation and shares about his personal experience with the community.

Commissioner Santana brings up the issue of distrust and how there is a large distrust against the government. How would that issue not be applied to a state bank.

Commissioner Santana asks an additional question regarding accessibility with the immigrant community. How would a state bank be accessible in a way that immigrant communities can access it.

Guest Speaker Erika Toriz responds with bringing up that there are different communities that we need to work with. She shares the importance of understanding the different communities and how state banks help them. Having products that are geared towards them.

Chair Tom asks if there are any additional questions or comments from the commissioners.

Commissioner Byron Lopez has a question.

Commissioner Lopez asks about the checking system and what Erika's experience is with explaining checking accounts and the challenges.

Erika Toriz talks about ordering a check system report that Haven sponsors, to be able to find out why some individuals are not able to open a checking account. Some banks have second chances. By having these restrictions, that is when they turn to PayDay Loan's check cashing. An issue that has come up was when her uncle tried to cash a check at her bank and was denied because he did not have a visa. She feels that the check cashing industry sees them as an opportunity to financially gain. She thinks that we need to have a State bank to help those that are unbanked.

Commissioner Lopez asks what are the different reasons for closed accounts?

Erika Toriz responds by mentioning a variety of reasons including overdrawn account's, bad checks, and trust.

Chair Tom asks if there any additional questions or comments from the commission.

Seeing none, Chair Tom any questions or comments from the public, phone, or virtually.

Translator Aldo Ruiz Riviera translates.

ITEM #4

Announcing Upcoming Public Hearings

Chair Tom introduces item number 4 of the agenda, Announcing Upcoming Public Hearings.

Executive Director Cassandra DiBenedetto announces the public hearings that will take place in February at Fresno, Oakland, and Los Angeles.

Chair Tom asks if there are any questions from any of the Commissioners.

Seeing none, he asks if there is any public comment from anyone in the room.

Seeing none, he asks if there is any public comment from anyone on the phonline.

No comments were made from those in attendance.

ITEM #5

RAND Update

Chair Tom introduces Item 5 of the agenda, Rand Update.

Jon Welburn thanks Chair Tom.

Jon Welburn provides an update on behalf of the RAND team.

Chair Tom thanks Jon Welburn for the update on RAND.

Chair Tom asks if any of the Commissioners have any questions or comments for Mr. Welburn.

Commissioner Paulina Gonzalez-Brito asks about subject matter experts. She wanted to know if the study will make use of experts like the guest speaker heard today.

Jon Welburn confirmed that the survey will be making use of subject matter experts.

Chair Tom asks if any of the Commissioners have any questions or comments for Mr. Welburn.

There was no response and no additional questions.

Chair Tom asked if anyone from the public has any comments.

Commissioner Santana asked about the questions that may be on the survey. He would like to know if questions regarding distrust will be on the survey.

Jon Welburn confirmed that the survey covers trust and distrust.

Chair Tom asked if anyone from the public has any comments.

There was none.

ITEM #6

Location of Future BRC Meetings

Chair Tom introduces Item 6 of the agenda, Location of Future BRC Meetings.

Executive Director Cassandra DiBenedetto requested the commissioners vote to having the location of future meetings rotate.

Chair Tom asks if any of the Commissioners have any questions or comments.

Commissioner Miguel Santana made the comment that he would be happy to host the meetings free of charge at his office.

Chair Tom asks if any of the Commissioners have any questions or comments.

There was none.

Chair Tom asked if anyone from the public has any comments.

There was none.

Chair Tom asks the translator to translate.

Translator Aldo Ruiz Riviera translates.

Chair Tom asks for a motion to move the meetings.

James Hicken motions.

Chair Tom asks Mariah to call the roll.

Mariah calls the roll.

ITEM #7

Items not on the Agenda

Chair Tom introduces item number 7, Items that are not on the agenda.

Chair Tom asks the commissioners if there are any agenda items they would like to go over.

Commissioner Lopez has a comment.

He requested to hear more from subject matter experts like the guest speaker that we had today.

Commissioner Hicken has a comment.

He requested someone from Bank of America to come and speak to the commission to provide their perspective.

Chair Tom asks if any of the Commissioners have any questions or comments.

There was none.

Chair Tom asked if anyone from the public has any comments.

There was none.

Chair Tom asks the translator to translate.

Translator Aldo Ruiz Riviera translates.

ITEM #7

Public Comment

Chair Tom introduces item number 7 of the agenda, Public Comment.

Chair Tom asks if there are questions or comments from the Commissioners.

Seeing none, Chair Tom asks if there are any questions or comments from those in the room.

Seeing none, Chair Tom asks if there are any questions or comments from those on the phone.

Chair Tom then asked if there were any addition comments from the public.

Hearing none, Chair Tom thanks everyone for their participation.

Chair Tom adjourns the meeting.