The following are summary minutes for the meeting of the City of Las Cruces – Health Policy Review Committee/COVID 19 Vaccine Task Force for February 3, 2021 at 3:00 p.m., via Zoom.

Members Present:
Yvonne Flores, City Councillor, District 6
Kassandra Gandara, City Councillor, District 1
Tessa Abeyta-Stuve, City Councillor, District 2

Others Present:
Eric Enriquez, Administration
Phil Catanach, Parks & Recreation
Sonya L. Delgado, Parks and Recreation
Zechariah Massey
Dr. Bernie Mccann, Human Resources
Meg Haines, Human Resources
Nina Nunez, Burrell College
Jeff Harris, Burrell College
Dawn Sanchez, Department of Health
Melanie Goodman, Senator Ben Rey Lujan Office
Amanda Lopez Askin, Dona Ana County
Lynn Gallagher, Quality of Life
Manny Sanchez, Dona Ana County
Shannon Duffy, Mountainview Regional
Angela Green, Quality of Life

Members Absent:
Adrian Larson, Mountainview Regional

I. Call to order: Councilor Abeyta-Stuve

This meeting was called to order at 3:02 p.m. by Councilor Abeyta-Stuve.

II. Conflict of interest

Councilor Abeyta-Stuve asked Councilors who are voting members to indicate if there is any conflict of interest. Councilor Gandara stated none. Councilor Flores stated none. Councilor Abeyta-Stuve stated none.
III. Acceptance of Agenda

Councillor Abeyta-Stuve asked for a motion to approve the Agenda.
Moved by Councillor Flores. Seconded by Councillor Gandara.

None opposed. All in favor. Motion carried.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Councillor Abeyta-Stuve asked for a motion to approve the Minutes from meeting held on December 2, 2021. Moved by Councillor Gandara. Seconded by Councillor Flores.

None opposed. All in favor. Motion Carried.

V. Discussion Items

COVID 19 Vaccine Task Force

Councillor Abeyta-Stuve asked that everyone present introduce themselves. Councillor Abeyta-Stuve then introduced Mr. Eric Enriquez, Assistant City Manager, who then spoke on the Mission and Vision of the COVID 19 Vaccine Task Force.

- **Mission:** “The mission of the Covid-19 Vaccination Task Force is to implement appropriate support mechanisms to deliver and promote vaccinations in our area, by engaging community leaders, organizations and trusted messengers to support outreach and engagement to our community.”

- **Vision:** Dona Ana County will have 80% of the population vaccinated by the end of the year.

Mr. Enriquez stated that numbers to date of vaccination was 17,000, which are first responders. If vaccinations are around 16-17,000 a month for the next 11 months it will be over 185,000 which will be around 80-85 percent of our county vaccinated. The purpose for this task force will be to collaborate, to implement appropriate resources to fund, to educate and communicate, and to coordinate an effective distribution of the vaccine program. As it continues to expand and grow, as more members and resources get involved, we want to stay with a foundation of what the mission and purpose is of the task force. It is not to replace the Office of Emergency Management or of other things going on with hospitals and NMSU, so that we can meet our vision of getting 80 percent of population vaccinated by the end of the year.

Councillor Abeyta-Stuve thanked Mr. Enriquez and asked Ms. Dawn Sanchez from the Department of Health (DOH) for an update.
Ms. Sanchez stated that there are still very high numbers of positives within our county. Still second highest in the state and would like to reiterate to practice COVID safe practices. There is a registration app for the vaccine, not all COVID vaccine providers use the app about 50 percent actually do. The data she has is only as accurate as who is using the app. The numbers are not the same as what Mr. Enriquez has just mentioned, but we can follow up later and see where we really are on numbers in the system. As far as vaccine there is still a limited supply coming into the state. In order to be a provider you need to have an agreement with the Department of Health and with the Center of Disease control. We are currently not bringing in additional providers since supply is limited due to more demand than supply. Work is still being done on Phase 1 that includes health care workers and first responders and slightly moving into phase 1B which is individuals 75 years and over and 16 and over with Chronic conditions. Secretary Collins was on a call this morning and it was mentioned that teachers will be next in line as part of the essential workers Phase 1B but we need to get through the current group to get to that point. Pfizer and Moderna are the vaccines currently in the state, Johnson vaccine will come online at end of February to increase supply in the state as well as AstraZeneca. Currently, the focus is on booster shots and additional PODS come the week of the 15th at East Mesa Community College off Sonoma Ranch. Currently the POD is at the Convention center Wednesday and Thursday and NMSU on Friday. Those have been very successful. Currently trying to find ways to support those who do not have access to internet, phone or email and how to get them registered. We are able to do paper copy. Individuals can call the office if they need help registering, they can call 1-855-600.3453 which is the call center to register. The DOH is also working with Aging and long-term services through UNM to build the capacity within the call center to get people the assistance in helping to register.

Councilor Gandara stated that since we are limited and we have providers within the area that are willing to help with vaccinations she would like to see what can really be done and start the advocacy crusade on getting vaccinations to those providers.

Ms. Sanchez stated there is a focus to equalize distribution throughout the state even by population of County in that respect then there will be a lot more vaccine coming to our area. The piece of that is also the capacity of providers that we have and how we can build that up to have that capacity locally. Between NMSU and convention center is 2000 vaccines a week, one goal with Stephen Lopez, Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is about 1000 a day. There are goals that need to be set and a lot of that is the capacity of staffing. There should be more vaccine available the week of the 15th to start having larger events.

Councilor Gandara asked Ms. Sanchez if the numbers from Vaccinations being administered by Walmart were being fed into the dashboard as well. Ms. Sanchez stated yes.
Councilor Flores asked Ms. Sanchez if ordering vaccinations centrally is the issue with Dona Ana County in only receiving 17 percent of vaccinations. Ms. Sanchez stated no it does not impact what is received. It depends on the number of providers and what they order. Working with providers, ramping up our events and the availability of more vaccines available will help pull more vaccines into our area.

Ms. Melanie Goodman asked anyone present from the hospitals on what their ability is on pushing out events and ability to request more vaccines or are they limited? What are the plans on opening up more events? Mr. Matthew Conrad, Mountainview Medical, responded that they are ordering what they can use. When first starting out, not being a hub hospital, they were delivered vaccines that had been thawed and needed to give everything out that had been received and had 4 days or it would go to waste. They have since been able to store vaccines with the addition of a sub negative 80 freezer so a possibility of helping on larger events is possible. They try to use everything they have and their max is about 1000 with using staff without additional staff. They do have resources and if they can partner with anyone else, whether it be other physician’s, security, outside of the hospital just so that they are not liable for those patients coming in from the exterior. They can hold more vaccine if available and if it’s being pushed out and he will get back to everyone on the exact number.

Mr. Manny Sanchez stated they have reached out to the state in terms of trying to find out what is being done on the distribution on vaccines. If it’s a resource issue, the County is more than happy to support. Mr. Lopez with OEM has been trying to communicate with County Manager Macias. They are trying to make sure they are raising the awareness as much as they can.

Ms. Tessa Stuve asked Mr. Jeff Harris, Burrell College, on his perspective and ways they would like to partner. Mr. Harris stated they have been working with NMSU with their distribution PODS and have seventy students that are ready, willing, and able to be labor on the ground. If there are entities and as opportunities come up, they are trained vaccinators and they can provide that medical support so additional clinics can be done. There are other components of clinics such as pharmacy and traffic control. In his opinion NMSU runs a very well-organized event and suggest they be a model. Taking that level of logistics and moving it to the parking lot of Mesilla Valley Mall you would have a substantial impact. There has been an issue on where you go for vaccines. When there are people with low mobility, sending them to Walmart is not an ideal location. It does sound like there is an opportunity for coordination between human resources and there are a whole bunch of groups to bolster these community events. They are finding there are logistic things that need to be addressed such as lack of WIFI access, carts that do not run-on pavement well, etc. Burrell College is interested in supporting this effort as broadly as they can.

Councilor Gandara stated we need to focus our attention on our elderly and if there is a way that the City can have that focus on making sure seniors get registered and
they are able to navigate this process. Our focus should be those who are disabled, seniors and those having issues navigating because of technology and lack of WIFI. Councillor Gandara asked Ms. Sanchez how to coordinate efforts with Department of Health to provide Hot Spots and tablets for our PODS. Ms. Sanchez stated that is a concern for our seniors that need help. They are working with the county resource centers to be a place where they can get help to register. Regarding the mobility issue, NMSU is a very good drive-up event. They set up the Convention Center mainly during inclement weather. Working with National Guard to have almost a drive thru and working on that process.

Ms. Lynn Gallagher stated that in the early start of December the senior program site began working through our connection with aging and long term services as well and the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) to provide pamphlets and surveying those coming through on the grab and go meals and also those receiving homebound meals to determine what services they need on getting vaccinated. Daily telephone calls are made to those who are those eligible to receive the services from the city and are signed up to participate. They have started do assist seniors to get registered whether that be technologically or if they do not have technical capabilities our care givers also provide that for them. The ADRC statewide system for helping anyone over the age of 60 under the Older Americans act. They also have two telephone lines that are available to help seniors with connectivity issues or mobility issues and they are 1.855.600.3453/1.800.342.2080. They have had meetings through the Unified Area Command in connection with Mr. Eric Enriquez to talk about what additional opportunities we can help provide with the services through convention center. One is to work with the DOH to provide a drive thru registration event that we are working towards. The Quality of Life department as a whole are working on updated bus wraps and with the Department of Health links and info that will help inform them if you are in certain categories to receive the vaccine where they can go get that information. Additional marketing is being done to put out simplified pamphlets to those over the age of 60.

Interim Chief Jason Smith stated that he has been briefed by Deputy chief Justin Allen over at Unified Area Command on capacity at POD sites it is around 3000 a week with 250 doses a day. To speak on member in the community who are home bound, about 15 have received the vaccination in home through sort of a pilot program. Planning on doing a second dose for those here in the city. We do have additional resources if we do receive more vaccines and we need more POD sites. For LCFCD this is a priority, and all staff know training, or any other outreaches are on hold and they are available to do more.

Dr. Amanda Lopez Askin asked Ms. Sanchez about the categorization of those who are more vulnerable and the availability of vaccines for a member of the community who is in a top priority group. Ms. Sanchez stated the DOH is following the guidelines and staff from children's medical services that do some case management for difficult
situations help those who need it. How people register on the app, since there is an area where to list chronic conditions, will allow them to get into those slots available.

Councilor Flores asked Ms. Sanchez once someone receives the appointment to receive the vaccination is there any way for them to contact someone to get the location changed if there is an issue with difficulty in standing or sitting for long periods of time? Ms. Lynn Gallagher asked permission to respond and stated that this is something that has been discussed with the DOH specific to the Convention center and other coordinated sites was the use of wheelchairs for those events and having several wheelchairs at each of those events that can be placed at those venues and working through the medical reserve core in coordination with the Quality of Life volunteer network program to help wheel that individual to their vaccination site. Ms. Sanchez stated there is a supply at wheelchairs at the Convention center. As far as changing their location, that is something that they can do. The DOH does not do the scheduling for the Walmart’s or the Walgreens so individuals would need to call 1.855.600.3453. If someone does need assistance, they can always also call the office number 528.5001.

Commissioner Manny Sanchez asked Ms. Sanchez if the reason for the disparity between Bernalillo County, Santa Fe county, and Dona Ana county on distribution was happening based on the vulnerable population because DOH is looking at demographics or just those registered in the system? Is Dona Ana County not receiving vaccines mainly because we do not have enough people registered who are identified as 1A/1B or is it related to other data? Ms. Sanchez stated the discrepancy is the capacity of providers in each location to request doses of vaccine and it is a centralized system to request doses and some of the larger city have more providers and can have larger events. Mr. Sanchez asked how to set up events outside in other communities outside of the City of Las Cruces. Ms. Sanchez stated DOH has worked with OEM and with Gadsden Independent School District for events, two so far, and are set up for boosters. It does take a lot of support to get these events done and working through OEM is a great way to cover the County. Coordination with other providers in the County is something that needs to be worked on so when there are a lot of vaccine to push out those mechanisms are set up and we are ready to go.

Councilor Abeyta Stuve suggested that a master list of resources and what capacity limitations might be should be compiled.

Ms. Dawn Sanchez mentioned that if anyone would like to go through the Medical Reserve Corp as a volunteer which is run through the OEM they can do that also.

Ms. Melanie Goodman would like to mention that when calling the hotline at 1.855.600.3453, they need to press option 0 and then option 4 for tech support. Veterans in Las Cruces who go to the clinic here in Las Cruces they will be required to go to El Paso for their vaccine which may be an issue and would like everyone to consider possibly partnering with Veterans Affairs. She also stated that she was
concerned that Ben Archer is not on the list for vaccination providers and since the FQHC's have trust in those communities and are key partners and wanted to know if there has been an effort to partner with our clinics especially in northern Dona Ana County. Ms. Sanchez responded to Ms. Goodman that both La Clinica and Ben Archer are providers and their vaccine is limited and have been focusing on phase 1, not all Ben Archers are signed up but the one for T or C, Hatch, and Las Cruces are signed up but community events are limited.

Mr. Eric Enriquez notified everyone that Ms. Montoya will send out his contact information to include his cell number for any thoughts, ideas, resources they can provide. He will be in constant communication with Unified Command and with Ms. Dawn Sanchez.

Ms. Jamey Rickman suggested that for the next agenda for this meeting might include FAQ's on mixtures of vaccines or if they miss their 21 day booster.

Councilor Abeyta Stuve would like to make sure that we all are able to distribute a cohesive message for daily questions.

Ms. Sanchez wanted to reiterate that when you are vaccinated to still use COVID safe practices as we are still in a pandemic.

Human Resources Presentation (Available Leave Types)

Councilor Abeyta-Stuve asked for a motion to table the presentation to the March 3, 2021 meeting.

Moved by Councilor Gandara. Seconded by Councilor Flores.

None opposed. All in favor. Motion carried.

VI. Future topics for Discussion

Human Resources (Available Leave Types)

VII. Next Meeting Date

Next Meeting: March 3, 2021 3:00 p.m.

VIII. Adjournment: 5:00 p.m.

Chair

Approved: March 18, 2021