MINUTES

MEETING OF THE
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2016 - 12:00 P.M.
LRGVDC MAIN CAMPUS - 301 W. RAILROAD ST., WESLACO, TEXAS
KEN JONES EXECUTIVE BOARD ROOM

PRESIDING: MAYOR CELESTE SANCHEZ, 1ST VICE PRESIDENT

Vice President Celeste Sanchez called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. and noted that a quorum of voting members was present. She then announced that today is 75th anniversary of the Bombing of Pearl Harbor and read a tribute to “the date that will live in infamy” after which there was a moment of silence. The Vice President then moved to item 2. – Consider Approval of October 26, 2016 Meeting Minutes. **Mr. Ronald Mills made a motion to approve the October 26, 2016 Meeting Minutes as presented. Councilman Homer Jasso, Jr. seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

Vice President Sanchez next recognized Mr. Manuel Cruz, Director of Homeland Security who announced that the Texas School Safety Center has selected six (6) youths from the Rio Grande Valley for the inaugural Texas Youth Preparedness Council. Mr. Cruz then turned the floor over to Homeland Security Planner Jayni Saenz who recognized three of these individuals who were able to attend this meeting: Miss Camila Saenz from IDEA Quest College Prep, Miss Amanda Borjas from Weslaco ISD, and Miss Ana Martinez from Weslaco ISD. Miss Ariana Cisneros from Brownsville ISD, Miss Jesli Ramirez from Brownsville ISD, and Miss Trinity Hernandez from Harlingen ISD were also selected but were unable to attend today’s meeting. The Texas Youth Preparedness Council is a new youth initiative; it is one (1) of only three (3) state youth preparedness councils across the nation; the other two are in Arkansas and New Mexico.

Upon conclusion of the presentation the Vice President moved to item 3. A. – Report from Legislative Delegation, however no reports were available at this time, and she moved to item 3.B. – Public Comment. Mr. Jose Ramirez, Texas Low Income Housing Information Services was recognized and commented on the Presentation on Stormwater Drainage Planning for the Colonias of the Lower RGV scheduled under item 9 on the agenda. Mr. Ramirez suggested that Halff and Associates select a community-driven venue to present the results of this study, one where colonia residents could be present in order for them to understand the status of their communities’ flooding issues. Mr. Ramirez offered locations at LUPE and ARISE for that purpose.

Vice President Sanchez next moved to item 3.C. – Consider Appointment of Annual Work Program & Budget Committee and recognized Executive Director Ron Garza. Mr. Garza reminded the Board that the Annual Work Program (AWP) is our service program that outlines our goals, objectives, and performance measures. This year, to avoid duplication of information contained in both the AWP and the Budget, staff has created one seamless document that will incorporate information from both. Mr. Garza suggested taking a different approach in appointing the 2017
Committee; since 2/3 of the Board were on the 2016 Committee, instead of asking who would like to serve, he asked who would NOT like to serve, to which no one responded. With this indication, the Hon. Norma G. Garcia made a motion to approve the full Board of Directors roster on the 2017 Annual Work Program and Budget Committee. Commissioner Veronica Whitacre seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously. Mr. Garza noted that there is not a quorum requirement for the Annual Work Program and Budget Committee to make recommendations to the Board.

The Vice President next moved to item 3.D. – Consider Time and Date for Joint Annual Work Program & Budget Committee and Nominating Committee Meeting. Mr. Garza provided several options for the time, date, and location for this meeting during the second week of January, and upon conclusion of discussion Mayor Henry Hinojosa made a motion to schedule the Joint Committee meeting on Wednesday, January 11, 2017 at 12:00 noon at the LRGVDC Ken Jones Executive Board Room. Commissioner Eddy Gonzales seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

Vice President Sanchez next moved to item 3.E. – Presentation and Possible Action RE: Changing from TexPool to TexPool Prime and recognized Mr. Ed Sanchez. Mr. Sanchez informed the Board that he represents Federated Investors, which is the portfolio and administrative manager for TexPool. The LRGVDC has been a member of TexPool since 2000, and in 2003 the Comptroller's Office added a second fund called TexPool Prime. The differences between the two funds are minimal: TexPool can only invest in U.S. treasuries, U.S. agencies, and overnight repurchase agreements; TexPool Prime, in addition to those, can invest in commercial banks and CDs. Since TexPool Prime was opened after TexPool, all entities who want to participate in it must add it via a separate resolution. Vice President Sanchez asked if any fees were associated to adding TexPool Prime to the account. Mr. Sanchez said there were no fees; the only requirement is the resolution giving the LRGVDC authority to use TexPool Prime. Upon conclusion of the presentation and discussion Commissioner Danny Guzman made a motion to add TexPool Prime to the current LRGVDC account. Mayor Henry Hinojosa seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

The Vice President then moved to item 3.F. – Executive Director Report and recognized Mr. Garza to address the following items:

1. **LRGVDC Updates & Activities**
   Mr. Garza was recognized and announced that in 2017 the Board Meeting information will be posted on Lrgvdc.org instead of the FTP (File Transfer Protocol) site. This will eliminate the need for a user ID and password. This will also make the information available to the public and improve LRGVDC’s transparency. The Board was pleased with this change.

   Mr. Garza then unveiled the Regional Strategic Plan (RSP) Executive Summary and informed the Board that staff has been working on this document since March and the full plan is available on Lrgvdc.org.

   Mr. Garza informed the Board that he attended three events since the last meeting:
   - On October 27th there was a legislative briefing session on the RSP that included funding to grow Valley Metro and Public Transportation;
   - LRGVDC staff hosted BiNED (Binational Economic Development Zone) committee meetings

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On November 15th Rio Grande Guardian coordinated a Legislative Agenda event where Mr. Garza was a part of a five-person panel that highlighted the RSP.

2. Consideration of Regional Rail Coalition Advisory Committee
   Mr. Garza stated that during the October 27 legislative briefing session Senator Lucio presented “The Rio Grande Valley Challenge” to consider the feasibility of a light rail system from a regional perspective. With Board approval, the LRGVDC would like to provide administration as part of the Regional Rail Coalition Advisory Committee. The purpose would be to facilitate discussions with public and private stakeholders. Staff has had discussions with State Representative Armando Martinez because the Hidalgo County Rail Distract has had many of the same discussions. The Regional Rail Coalition Advisory Committee would be an extension of the Hidalgo County Rail Committee and would consider the long-term feasibility of commuter rail across the region.

   Vice President Sanchez asked how the Advisory Committee would be selected. Mr. Garza stated that the first meeting has been tentatively scheduled for December 20 and stakeholders would be invited to attend. The committee could be selected from those in attendance and could begin formulating potential bylaws. The Regional Rail Coalition Advisory Committee could operate as other LRGVDC advisory committees do. Commissioner Jerry Tafoya made a motion to form the Regional Rail Coalition Advisory Committee. Commissioner Veronica Whitacre seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

3. Large Cities Coalition (Upcoming Meeting – November 1)
   Mr. Garza stated that at their last meeting the Coalition discussed Bi-NED and focused on exploring regional marketing efforts.

4. Regional Spotlight

   a. Regional Active Tourism & Transportation Plan
      Mr. Ramiro Gonzalez, Assistant Director of Planning for the City of Brownsville was recognized and informed the Board that the Lower Rio Grande Valley Active Transportation and Tourism Plan or “Active Plan” effort began a year and a half ago. Ten (10) communities in Cameron County agreed to be linked together through active transportation, to bring economic development, and target a niche of tourism that has not yet been targeted. The ten participating communities are Brownsville, Combes, Harlingen, Laguna Vista, Los Fresnos, Los Indios, Port Isabel, Rancho Viejo, San Benito, and South Padre Island. They will be linked by a regional bicycle and pedestrian network that will promote healthy lifestyles. The Harlingen-San Benito Metropolitan Planning Organization master plan envisions spending between $16 million and $58 million over the next two decades to link trails, paths, and parks.

   b. RGV Partnership / Rio South Texas Economic Development
      Mr. Garza introduced Mr. Sergio Contreras, RGV Partnership CEO, and Mr. Matt Ruszczak, RESTEC Executive Director, and stated that they both, like himself, are new to their organizations, which gives each of them a fresh perspective to guide their respective organizations. Mr. Garza stated that the three of them communicate routinely on regional issues and he foresees positive collaboration.
from the RGV Partnership, RESTEC and the LRGVDC.

Mr. Contreras was recognized and thanked the Board and Mr. Garza for the opportunity to speak today. He reiterated the close communication and collaborative efforts between the three entities. Mr. Contreras stated he became the CEO of the RGV Partnership about one month ago, but has been involved with the organization since 2005. He informed the Board that the Partnership was founded in 1944 for the purpose of driving economic development and providing advocacy to the region. It is a membership driven organization and has a long history of advocating on behalf of their business partners. He then summarized a list of events scheduled for the next few months.

Upon conclusion of Mr. Contreras’ presentation, Mr. Matt Ruszczek was recognized and thanked the Board and Mr. Garza for the opportunity to speak. He informed the Board that he joined RESTEC as the CEO this June. RESTEC is a regional economic development organization that is membership based, and it morphed into its current form in 2008. RESTEC’s founding principle is “Collaborate to Compete”, which means that they consider this region as a whole when marketing it for economic investment. This is accomplished by building relationships and telling a story. They build outreach to developers, site selectors, commercial real estate agency, and community leaders and tell the story of the RGV. RESTEC also provides data to back up the stories that can be accessed during cyber analysis when this region is being considered for new development. Locally RESTEC helps build regional connections. Mr. Ruszczek stated that one of his personal goals is to make sure the leading groups of domestic and international site selectors will have an RGV data set in their portfolios and run that data as they search for locations. At the conclusion of his presentation, Mr. Ruszczek praised Mr. Garza on his collaboration efforts between the three organizations.

Upon conclusion of Administration items Vice President Sanchez moved to item 4. – Report from 9-1-1 Department and recognized Program Director Sergio Castro. Mr. Castro stated that the regular status reports were on the Board tablets and announced that the 9-1-1 Department would participate in the Weslaco Christmas Parade on Saturday, December 10 where they planned to incorporate public education.

Vice President Sanchez next moved to item 5. – Report from Area Agency on Aging and recognized Program Director Joe Gonzalez. Mr. Gonzalez stated that his status report was on the Area Agency on Aging’s Annual Program Performance. Staff created this report to provide a picture of the positive impact of providing services to the elderly. No action needed.

Vice President Sanchez next moved to item 6. - Report from Economic Development Department and recognized Program Director Terrie Salinas who addressed item 1. – Consider Approval of Pace Resolutions for Cameron, Willacy, and Hidalgo Counties. Ms. Salinas stated that the Cameron County resolution was approved on January 12, the Willacy County resolution was approved on January 14, and the Hidalgo County resolution was recently approved on November 15. Although approved, the Cameron and Willacy County resolutions were pending, and have received final clearance by their respective legal departments. By this Board approving all three resolutions the LRGVDC will officially be the first Council of Governments to have the entire region designated as a PACE District. The Hon. Norma G. Garcia made a motion to approve the
PACE Resolutions for Cameron, Willacy, and Hidalgo Counties as presented. Mayor Pro-tem Eddy Gonzalez seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

Vice President Sanchez next moved to item 6.A.2. – Consider Approval of PACE Interlocal Agreements between Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy Counties and the LRGVDC. Ms. Salinas stated that Hidalgo County also approved the PACE Interlocal Agreement with the LRGVDC. The LRGVDC recognizes the economic benefits the Hidalgo County PACE Program will provide and desires to provide support for the administration of this program. Therefore in consideration of the mutual promises, covenants, and agreements set forth in the agreement, the LRGVDC will, upon Board approval, provide the administrative services for the benefit of the Hidalgo County PACE Program. The Interlocal agreements for Cameron and Willacy Counties were previously approved by their commissioners’ courts and also require Board approval. The Hon. Norma G. Garcia made a motion to approve the PACE Interlocal Agreements between Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties as presented. Mayor Henry Hinojosa seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

Upon conclusion of action, Vice President Sanchez moved to item 3. – Consider Approval to Amend the Professional Services Agreement by and between LRGVDC and Texas Property Assessed Clean Energy Authority to Include Hidalgo County. Ms. Salinas stated that this agreement received Board approval on April 27 to allow the LRGVDC to engage the services of a qualified consultant to administer a Texas PACE Program for Cameron and Willacy Counties pursuant to the PACE Act. Due to the approval of the PACE program in Hidalgo County last month, the LRGVDC is requesting approval to amend this agreement to include Hidalgo county in the services to be provided by the Texas PACE Authority. The Hon. Norma G. Garcia made a motion to approve the amended Professional Services Agreement by and between the LRGVDC and Texas PACE Authority to Include Hidalgo County as presented. Mayor Henry Hinojosa seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

Upon conclusion of Economic Development items Vice President Sanchez then moved to item 7. – Report from Hidalgo County Metropolitan Planning Organization (HCMPO). HCMPO Director Andrew Canon was recognized and reported that a Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for tomorrow and the Board will consider action on merging the HCMPO with the Brownsville MPO and the Harlingen-San Benito MPO. The Board will consider the voting structure of the merged MPO and the process of merging itself.

Vice President Sanchez next moved to item 8. – Report from Homeland Security and recognized Program Director Manuel Cruz. Mr. Cruz introduced Ms. Odee Leal, HSAC Chair who offered to answer any questions the Board might have. Mr. Cruz then addressed item A.1. – Consider Approval RE: FY 2017 LRGVDC Homeland Security Grant Program Conditionally Approved Jurisdictions, Ranking, and Funding Amounts. Mr. Cruz stated that due to the State’s upcoming stringent timelines, and in an effort to conduct an accurate and thorough review of local applications, the Homeland Security Advisory Committee (HSAC) decided to take a proactive approach to next year’s grant application process by conducting the local grant application period earlier than in prior years. At their November meetings the HSAC reviewed the Notices of Intent ( NOI) and has selected the eligible jurisdictions and amounts for each. The decision for the amounts was figured based on the three regional priority projects in accordance with the regions’ Risk Methodology and scoring instrument: 1. Interoperable communications, 2. Regional Response Teams, 3. Critical Infrastructure. These jurisdictions will submit their approved applications(s) on the Homeland Security Grant Division (HSGD) eGrants system once it becomes available in December. The HSAC will conduct a final screening to ensure all jurisdictions meet the state’s
eligibility criteria at their next meeting in March 2017. Upon conclusion of discussion, Commissioner Jerry Tafolla made a motion to approve the FY 2017 LRGVDC Homeland Security Grant Program’s Conditionally Approved Jurisdictions, Ranking, and Funding Amounts as presented. Mayor Pro-tem Norie Gonzalez Garza seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

Upon conclusion of action Vice President Sanchez moved to item 8.A.2. – Consider Approval RE: Allocation of 25% for LRGVDC Homeland Security Program. Mr. Cruz stated that LRGVDC regional planning provides the foundation for all other regional efforts in building and sustaining essential operational capabilities and addressing gaps. Regional planning efforts continue to play a critical role by promoting the development of effective response measures prior to a disaster allowing any response to be carried out in an organized and effective manner. Planning benefits the region by enabling jurisdictions to collaboratively develop, train, and equip to a common standard and supported strategy for addressing all disasters. In doing so, the local readiness level is increased and ultimately the risks of loss of life and property damage are reduced. Historically, the federal and state guidelines have allowed for 25% maximum of the regional allocation for planning purposes. In 2016 LRGVDC planning grants were budgeted from $30,000 to more than $330,000. This coming funding cycle eliminates the cap of 25% for all COGs; however, a good assessment of the planning activities performed by LRGVDC staff should be conducted in order to determine the LRGVDC percentage allocation. The state will assess all project budgets; reasonableness and necessity will be factors in the approval process. In order to continue with the planning efforts noted above and many other planning activities, staff is requesting Board approval of a minimum of 25% of funding for LRGVDC planning from the regional allocation. There will be an annual reevaluation and the elimination of the prioritization process for future Homeland Security Grant Programming funding. **Mr. Ron Mills made a motion to approve the allocation of 25% for the LRGVDC Homeland Security Program. Commissioner Jerry Tafolla seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.** Upon conclusion of action Mr. Cruz gave the status reports for both the Homeland Security and Criminal Justice programs.

The Vice President next moved to item 9. – Regional Planning & Services and recognized Program Director Marcie Oviedo. Ms. Oviedo stated that the status report for Region M was on the Board tablets for review, and then addressed item 9.A.2. – Solid Waste Management, item a. – Consider Approval of Solid Waste Advisory Committee Membership Appointments. She stated that at their November meeting the Solid Waste Advisory Committee made recommendations for Ms. Grace Gonzalez from South Texas College to fill the vacancy in the Education category and Mr. David Escobar to fill the vacancy in the Private Citizen category. Board action is required to make these appointments. **Mayor Pro-tem Norie Gonzalez Garza made a motion to approve the appointments of Ms. Grace Gonzalez and Mr. David Escobar to the Solid Waste Advisory Committee. Commissioner Jerry Tafolla seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

Upon conclusion of action Ms. Oviedo stated that the program status report was on the Board tablets for review and turned the floor over to Mr. Raul Garcia, Senior Project Manager for Halff Associates, Inc. who gave a presentation entitled Stormwater Drainage Planning for the Colonias of the Lower RGV “Filling the Gap”. Mr. Garcia began the presentation by giving the history of the study. The funding came from the state following Hurricanes Dolly and Ike, through the CDBG appropriations and was administered by TWDB. The goal of this project is to examine the drainage infrastructure needs of colonias and identify drainage study and infrastructure gaps that need to be filled in order to address drainage issues. He illustrated the Planning area and that the
LRGV is a flood-prone area. Upon conclusion of the presentation Ms. Oviedo noted that the Program Status Reports on the 2nd Round of Disaster Recovery Funding were in the Board folders for review.

Vice President Sanchez next moved to item 10. – Report from Regional Police Academy and Training Center and recognized Mr. Garza; he informed the Board that staff is finalizing the 2017 calendar for academies that will begin in the spring.

The Vice President next moved to item 11 - Report from Valley Metro and recognized Assistant Director Maribel Contreras who reported that FY 2017 saw a decrease of 3% due to service changes and that staff is promoting bus service through bus wraps and billboard advertising; she also noted that the Regional Transportation Plan should be completed by February 2017.

Vice President Sanchez then moved to item 12. – Old or New Business; there being none the Hon. Norma G. Garcia made a motion to adjourn; Mayor Pro-tem Eddy Gonzalez seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 1:31 pm.

ATTEST:

[Signature]
Deborah Morales, Recording Secretary

[Signature]
Mayor Celeste Sanchez, Vice President