MINUTES
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2015 - 12:00 P.M.
LRGVDC TRANSPORTATION CENTER
510 PLEASANTVIEW DR. - WESLACO, TEXAS
PRESIDING: MAYOR CELESTE SANCHEZ, SECRETARY

President Chris Boswell was unable to attend and as the highest ranking Executive Committee Member present, Board Secretary Celeste Sanchez, served as Chair in his stead. Chair Sanchez called the meeting to order at 12:18 p.m. and asked for the roll to be called. Upon conclusion of roll call it was ascertained that a quorum was not present; however some members were reported to be en route. It was the consensus of those members present to hear items that did not require Board action until a quorum was attained. All items were taken out of order and will be reflected in these minutes in the order in which they were heard.

Chair Sanchez moved to item 3.A. - Report(s) from Legislative Delegation and recognized Mr. Humberto Garza, Chief of Staff for Congressman Filemon Vela. Mr. Garza announced that the congressman had opened a new office in Weslaco and provided the contact information for that office. He also updated the Board on the various committees on which Congressman Vela will serve during this legislative session.

Chair Sanchez next moved to item 3.B. - Public Comment and recognized:

- Mr. Ronald Mills. Mr. Mills is a Board Member and the Port Director for Port Mansfield and was happy to report that due to work completed by the Army Corps of Engineers the main shipping channel that has been closed since 2008 has been dredged and is again open for business at Port Mansfield.

- Mr. Mark De La Fuente spoke for The Texas Heritage & Independence Celebration Association historical reenactors from San Benito who all came to the meeting in authentic dress from the Texas War of Independence. Mr. De La Fuente informed the Board about San Benito’s Annual Texas Independence Celebration BBQ Cook-off event scheduled for March 13-14 at which there will be reenactments of three historical battles including the Alamo and San Jacinto.

Mr. Ken Jones, Executive Director, was recognized next to address item 3.D. - Update on Board Orientations and stated that as per survey results Ms. Marcie Oviedo, Director of Regional Planning & Services, will present her department’s programs at 11:00 a.m. prior to the March 25th Board meeting.

Chair Sanchez next moved to item 4.B. - Status Report from Regional Police Academy and recognized Mr. Paul Williams. Mr. Williams noted that the regular status report was in the meeting binders for review and added that there was no new legislative information pertinent to peace officers to report, but that he was monitoring such legislation and, as recently requested by the Board, will report updates as they occur. However, Mr. Williams reported that he is
tracking several bills regarding open carry of firearms throughout the state that are being considered. Additionally, staff has been presenting training on the topic of "Human Trafficking" throughout the region, and has plans to continue giving these presentations to law enforcement personnel. Staff is also currently working with Rio Grande Victims' Services to develop Human Trafficking awareness training geared toward educating the public in the hopes of more people becoming involved and rescuing victims of this crime. Lastly, Mr. Williams reported that the 179th Mission Day Academy is scheduled to graduate the first week of March. Mayor Pro-tem Esmeralda Lozano recommended Mr. Williams speak with the EMC Director at Region One to see if they would be interested in the Human Trafficking training presentation because of the dangers students face with exposure to so many social media outlets.

Next Chair Sanchez moved to item 7. - Report from Valley Metro and recognized Ms. Maribel Contreras, Valley Metro Program Administrator, who came to report on behalf of Director Tom Logan who was out of town for training. Ms. Contreras summarized the statistics on the status report and noted that the next Regional Transportation Advisory Panel meeting is scheduled for March 5, 2015 and that the committee is currently working on developing a bus driver training program to alleviate the shortage of qualified drivers needed to staff Valley Metro.

Item 6 - Report from Economic Development Department was addressed next and Ms. Terrie Salinas was recognized. Ms. Salinas reported on the status of the Regional Small Cities Coalition, the PACE Program, and the 2015 Washington Policy Conference "NADO on the Hill".

Ms. Oviedo was recognized next to give the status reports under item 8. - Regional Planning and Services. Under item 8.A.2.b. - Solid Waste Program Activities she noted that there were changes to the program's projects. The committee discussed the Cameron County Tire Amnesty Project and that Cameron County/Valley Proud was awarded $30,000 for a Regional Tire Amnesty Project. However, since Cameron County elected to execute the project in Cameron County only, the committee allocated $10,000 for this project and the remaining $20,000 will be allocated to the City of Los Fresnos for recycling trailers, which is the next project in line for funding. Staff continues to monitor the remainder of projects. Regarding item 8.B. - Reports on the 2nd Round of Disaster Recovery Funding, Ms. Oviedo noted they were in the meeting binders for review and added that the Pharr Housing project was pending final approval from HUD.

Chair Sanchez next moved to item 9 - Report from Homeland Security and recognized Mr. Manuel Cruz. Mr. Cruz gave the status reports for the Homeland Security Program and the Criminal Justice Program.

At this time the record reflects the arrival of Mayor Tony Martinez and the attainment of a quorum of the Board.

Chair Sanchez then moved to action item 9.A.1. - Consider Approval of HSAC Recommendations RE: Allocation of FY 2015 Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) Additional Funding. Mr. Cruz stated that the initial HSAC recommendation and subsequent Board approval back in September of 2014 was based on the FY 2014 minimum and maximum awards. The reason for this is that at the time, as in past years, the State Administrative Agency (SAA) did not have an indication from FEMA for the date and timeline of the release of the FY 2015 grant guidance. The SAA instructed the LRGVDC to proceed with the local review and allocation process, then on January 21, 2015 the LRGVDC received the SAA's FY 2015 HSGP guidance and preliminary award figures. The LRGVDC's regional minimum and maximum award allocations were slightly higher than last year's amounts. Adjustments to this guidance may be necessary upon release of the 2015 HSGP Funding Opportunity
Announcement by DHS/FEMA. The additional amount that may be available is $215,951.76 and has been distributed according to state and federal regulations and guidelines. Upon conclusion of discussion Mayor Tony Martinez made a motion to approve the HSAC recommendations for the allocation of FY 2015 HSGP additional funding as presented. Mayor Henry Hinojosa seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Sanchez moved back in the agenda to item 2. - Consider Approval RE: January 28, 2015 Meeting Minutes. Hon. Norma G. Garcia made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Ronald Mills seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Jones was recognized to address item 3.C. - Consider Approval RE: 2014 Annual Productivity Report, and informed the Board that this is a State reporting requirement and is a successful report on the LRGVDC’s work accomplished in 2014 and with the Board’s approval it will be submitted to the State. Mayor Henry Hinojosa made a motion to approve the 2014 Annual Productivity Report as presented. Mayor Pro-tem Pilar Garza seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Sanchez then moved to item 4.A.1. - Consider Approval RE: Release of Liability and Statement of Understanding Basic Peace Officer Course form. Mr. Williams was recognized and stated that this new form is a combination of two prior forms whose verbiage has been streamlined. This form has been reviewed by legal counsel and the Police Academy Advisory Committee recommends approval. Mayor Tony Martinez made a motion to approve the Release of Liability and Statement of Understanding Basic Peace Officer Course form as presented. Mayor Pro-tem Pilar Garza seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

Next was item 5. - Report from Area Agency on Aging (AAoA) Advisory Council Recommendation. Chair Sanchez recognized Mr. Joe Gonzalez, Program Director. Regarding item 5.A.1 - Consider Approval RE: Participation in the Community Coalition Charter with Texas Medical Foundation, Mr. Gonzalez stated that this coalition would complement the LRGVDC’s Community-based Care Transitions Program (CCTP) and that this coalition will bring together all post-acute care providers that have been working with AAoA staff on this project. Texas Medical Foundation (TMF) brings the necessary resources that will give local providers the technical assistance needed to implement the evidence-based intervention tools to reduce readmissions among all Valley hospitals. The Hon. Norma G. Garcia made a motion to approve participation in the Community Coalition Charter with TMF as recommended by the Advisory Council. Mr. Ronald Mills seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously. Upon conclusion of action Mr. Gonzalez gave the status report on the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) launching a Toll Free number for Aging and Disability Resource Centers across the state.

Chair Sanchez next moved to item 8.A.2.a. - Consider Solid Waste Advisory Committee Recommendation RE: SWAC Membership and recognized Ms. Oviedo. Ms. Oviedo stated that the SWAC recommends Mr. Jamie Sandoval, City of Mercedes Assistant City Manager to fill a vacancy in the Small City representation. The Hon. Norma G. Garcia made a motion to approve Mr. Jaime Sandoval to fill the Small City vacancy on the SWAC as recommended by the committee. Mayor Henry Hinojosa seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.
Upon conclusion of action Chair Sanchez moved to item 10 - Report from 9-1-1 Department and recognized Mr. Juan Gomez, Program Director. Mr. Gomez stated that the regular status reports were in the meeting binders for review and added that the LRGVDC region is one of two Beta Sites that have been selected by the Commission on State Emergency Communications (CSEC) for the Text 9-1-1 service. He added that the mapping department is working with new tools to help detect and correct errors in GIS and will work with cities to rectify any address issues.

Chair Sanchez moved to item 11 - Old or New Business and brought up the issue of the impending Border Patrol/DPS furlough. Because this region is on the border, and the men and women in the Border Patrol and DPS are a part of our communities, Chair Sanchez felt compelled to support their issue and asked the Board for their recommendation on how to do so. Mayor Tony Martinez recommended requesting that Mr. Jones write a letter of support that states if the furlough passes affirmative steps need to be made, and to make reference in the letter to the fact that because this region is on the U.S. - Mexico border we are very concerned about immigration reform. It was the consensus of the Board to do so, and for Mr. Jones to coordinate with Mr. Garza, Congressman Vela’s Chief of Staff on the letter.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 1:11 p.m.

Mayor Chris Boswell, President

ATTEST:

Deborah Morales, Recording Secretary