MINUTES

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

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2019 – 12:00 PM
LRGVDC MAIN CAMPUS - 301 W. RAILROAD ST., WESLACO, TEXAS
BUILDING B, KEN JONES EXECUTIVE BOARD ROOM

PRESIDING: HON. NORMA G. GARCIA, PRESIDENT

President Norma G. Garcia called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum was declared.

The President then moved to item 2: Consider Approval of Meeting Minutes (March 27, 2019 Board Meeting). Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Member-at-Large Eddy Gonzalez seconded and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

President Garcia then moved to item 3: Public Comment and/or Report from Legislative Delegation and recognized the 5th grade class from Rodriguez Elementary in Harlingen. Miss April Munoz, President of Rodriguez Elementary Student Council spoke on behalf of her fellow council members and thanked the Board for the opportunity to see government in action. She said their class is learning about recycling and participating in their own recycling projects and they are especially interested in the Road-to-Recycling Tire Collection Project. She stated that as elected officials of the RGV the Board’s voice and leadership is vital to our future and thanked them for their commitment and service. The Board was impressed with Miss Munoz’ poise and confidence as she made her comments.

Upon conclusion of Public Comments President Garcia moved to item 4: Administration and recognized Executive Director Ron Garza to address the following:

A. Consider Approval of Quarterly Investment Report
   President Garcia noted that this report was included in the meeting packet and asked if there were any questions on it. There being none, she asked for a motion. Mr. Troy Allen made a motion to accept the Quarterly Investment Report. Mayor Henry Hinajosa seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

B. Presentation on Texas Gas Service Cost of Service Adjustment
   Ms. Naomi Perales, TGS Community Relations Manager, was recognized and introduced Ms. Marie Masson, TGS Rates Manager, from their Austin Office. Ms. Masson gave a presentation that explained what a Cost of Service Adjustment (COSA) is, the 2018 capital investment in the RGV area from the COSA, the anticipated impacts to customer bills, and the implementation timeline. No action needed.

C. Executive Director Report

   LRGVDC Updates & Activities
1. Introduction of New Staff Members
   Mr. Garza announced that Valley Metro has hired four new bus drivers: Mr. Gerardo Medrano, Mr. David Lopez, Mr. Diego Moreno and Ms. Maribel Munoz; they were in training and unable to attend the meeting.

2. Staff Recognition for Years of Services
   Staff was recognized for 5, 10, 15, and 20 years of service to the LRGVDC.

At this time Mr. Garza yielded the floor and requested to continue his report later in the meeting.

President Garcia moved to item 5: Department Reports.

A. Economic Development

   Economic Development Status Reports
   Mr. Garza informed the Board that Director Terrie Salinas was unable to attend and that the reports on the Regional Small Cities Coalition, the Readiness for Resilience Workshop, the Texas Rural Funders Collaborative, and the Kari’s Law Project were in the meeting packet for review.

   Census 2020
   Mr. Garza thanked all who attended the April 1, 2019 Census Day events in Edinburg and Brownsville then turned the floor over to Assistant Director Blanca Davila. Ms. Davila informed the Board that the LRGVDC will host the next RGV Census 2020 Regional Taskforce meeting and the Regional Census Tracts Updates Forum on Tuesday, April 30, 2019.

   Explore RGV Status Report
   Ms. Davila stated the Explore RGV report was in the meeting packet for review.

B. Community & Environmental Services

   Community Development Status Report

   1. Consider Approval of Resolution 2019-01 Proclaiming April National Fair Housing Month
      Program Director Marcie Oviedo was recognized and informed the Board that this is an annual resolution declaring April as National Fair Housing Month and supports awareness of Fair Housing. Commissioner David Garza made a motion to approve Resolution 2019-01 Proclaiming April as National Fair Housing Month as presented. Member-at-Large Eddy Gonzalez seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously. Upon conclusion of action Ms. Oviedo informed the Board that the status reports for the HUD Disaster Recovery Housing Program and the Environmental Resources programs were in the meeting packet for review.

C. Health & Human Services

   Area Agency on Aging Status Reports
   Program Director Joe Gonzalez was recognized to address the following:

   1. Consider Approval to Issue Request for Proposals and Contractor Solicitation RE: AAOA
Services Under Title III of Older American’s Act
Mr. Gonzalez informed the Board that the Advisory Council recommends approval to authorize the Area Agency on Aging to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) and to solicit contractors for fiscal year 2020. The purpose of this RFP is to procure such services as congregate meals, home delivered meals, transportation, senior center operations, caregiver education and training. The purpose for the contractor solicitation to procure services that case managers provide for their clients on an individual basis. These services include medical transportation, homemaker, respite care, residential modifications, medication assistance, medical supplies, and durable medical equipment. The RFP and the solicitation of contractors will be posted in June 2019. Mayor Pro-tem Norie Gonzalez Garza made a motion to approve issuing RFPs and contractor solicitations RE: AAoA Services under Title III of the Older American Act as recommended by the Advisory Council. Mayor Cyndie Rathbun seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

2. Consider Approval to Provide Housing Bond Funding to COTO de Casa to Provide Housing Repairs for Seniors
Mr. Gonzalez stated that COTO de Casa is a non-profit organization under the Mission Housing Authority. The Advisory Council recommends approval to award the Housing Bond funds to COTO de Casa to provide housing repairs for seniors. The Housing Bond funds are a result of fees collected by housing corporations from loans to multi-housing developments. The fees are paid in lieu of a 5% housing unit set aside for older persons of low to moderate income including veterans, homeless persons, heads of household, or other older persons. The fees are paid to the Texas Health and Human Services Comission. The government code directs that the funds are to be used to obtain housing for older persons. The funds are made available to the Area Agencies on Aging and the amount of funds for the LRGVDC Area Agency on Aging is $19,082. A second round is set to be released before the end of April and all funds must be expended by August 31, 2019. Mayor Cyndie Rathbun made a motion to approve providing housing bond funding to COTO de Casa to provide housing repairs for seniors. Mr. Troy Allen seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

Upon conclusion of action Mr. Gonzalez informed the Board that the 22nd Annual Centenarian Recognition event is scheduled for Thursday, May 2 at the Weslaco Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center. There are over 140 centenarians in this region and May is designated as “Older Americans Month”. This event is a great opportunity to show appreciation to our older Americans by recognizing their contributions which have made this country and the RGV a great place to live.

D. Public Safety
President Garcia next recognized Director Manuel Cruz to address the following items:

Criminal Justice Program Status Reports

1. Consider Approval of FY 2019-2020 Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) and Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Program Rankings and Resolutions
Mr. Cruz stated that the Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (CJAC) convened on April 10 to review, score, and rank the JAG and JJDP grant applications. The prioritization lists and resolutions were provided to the Board for review. Raymondville Commissioner Edward Gonzales made a motion to approve the JAG and JJDP priority lists and resolutions as presented. Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion
carried unanimously.

2. Consider Approval of FY 2019-2020 Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and Justice and Training Program and General Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Assistance Direct Services Program Rankings and Resolution
Mr. Cruz stated that at the April 11 CJAC meeting the committee reviewed, scored, and ranked both the VAWA and the VOCA grant applications. The prioritization lists, and the resolutions were provided to the Board for review. **Mayor Henry Hinojosa made a motion to approve the FY 2019-2020 VAWA and VOCA Assistance Direct Services Program rankings and resolutions as presented. Mr. Paul Hernandez seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.** Upon conclusion of action Mr. Cruz stated that the Regional Crime Victim’s Liaison Program status report was in the meeting packet for review.

Emergency Communications Status Report

1. Consider Approval to Purchase Installation Services for Generators at Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs)
Mr. Cruz informed the Board that as per LRGVDC procurement procedures, the competitive sealed bids process solicited installation services for 13 generators at PSAPs. The generators will provide backup power in the event of an electricity outage so PSAPs are able to continue providing 9-1-1 services until power has been restored. The list of PSAPs receiving new generators is subject to change to a lesser amount pending evaluation of equipment and building specifications at some locations.

The solicitation of bids was conducted, and one qualifying bid was received. After further research and negotiation, the selected recommended vendor is Loftin Equipment Co. which will provide installation services, equipment set-up, and engineering services to meet all building requirements and codes. Upon Board approval LRGVDC will enter into contractual services at an average cost of $63,180 per unit. This is a budgeted line item with the Emergency Communications/9-1-1 Program approved by funding agency CSEC. **Mayor Rick Cavazos made a motion to approve the purchase of installation services for generators at PSAPs as presented. Mayor Henry Hinojosa seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

2. Consider Approval of Next Generation 9-1-1 (Stage 2 A) Strategic Plan
Mr. Cruz stated that as per CSEC requirements for the next biennium, regional planning commissions must submit a stage 2 strategic plan that outlines details of the region to include Next Generation 9-1-1, equipment plan summary, network, contingency plan, monitoring, and training requirements. **Mayor Cyndie Rathbun made a motion to approve the Next Generation 9-1-1 (Stage 2 A) Strategic Plan. Mayor Henry Hinojosa seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

Upon conclusion of action Mr. Cruz informed the Board that the week of April 14 is designated as National Public Safety Telecommunications Week to recognize the Public Safety Telecommunicators who serve the public in countless ways with little or no acknowledgement of their role in public safety. Mr. Cruz stated the LRGVDC Emergency Communications/9-1-1 Division takes great pleasure in presenting the following awards:

- Telecommunicator of the Year – Mr. Isamar Ochoa with Edinburg PD
Team of the Year – Ms. Laura Cerda, Ms. Brenda Alvarado, Ms. Rosa Lopez, Ms. Irma Barrera, and Ms. Clarissa Calzada with Edinburg PD Communications
Supervisor of the Year – Mr. Kenneth Ennis with Pharr Fire Communications

Homeland Security Status Report
Mr. Cruz noted that the Homeland Security Program status reports were in the meeting packet for review.

Regional Police Academy Status Report
Mr. Cruz noted that the regular status reports for the Regional Police Academy were in the meeting packet for review.

E. Transportation

Valley Metro Status Report
Valley Metro Director Tom Logan was recognized and informed the Board that the regular status reports were in the meeting packet for review.

Upon conclusion of the program status reports President Garcia recognized Mr. Garza to continue the Executive Director Report.

C. Executive Director Report

LRGVDC Updates & Activities

3. LRGVDC PeopleFirst Leadership Training
Mr. Garza informed the Board that management staff received PeopleFirst Leadership Training, an intensive 24 instructional hours of customized training completed in two sessions, the first in January and the second in April, that was custom designed for the LRGVDC by Dr. David Biemer. In between the two sessions an anonymous survey was conducted with all staff. In the second session an action plan was created from the results of the surveys. One significant course of action was to reframe the “Discipline” chapter of the LRGVDC Human Resources Policy & Procedures to “Employee Coaching and Performance”. This change reflects that instead of disciplining our employees, we feel that coaching to improve performance is more effective moving forward and continuing a first-class culture. He also announced that the 3rd Annual All Staff Meeting is scheduled for the end of May and that the action plan created based on the survey responses will be shared at this meeting. In addition to the survey, an anonymous 360° survey was sent to the management staff regarding Mr. Garza’s performance and how management sees the day to day interactions. The results of this survey will also be considered moving forward.

4. Consider Meeting Date for 2019 Nominating Committee Meeting
Mr. Garza informed the Board that the Nominating Committee is comprised of all Board Members, and he recommended having a lunch meeting on Wednesday, May 22 at 12:00 noon at Arturo’s Restaurant in Weslaco. **Member-at-Large Eddy Gonzalez made a motion to schedule the 2019 Nominating Committee Meeting at 12:00 noon on Wednesday, May 22 at Arturo’s Restaurant. Mayor Pro-tem Norie Gonzalez Garza seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

5. Caucus in May for Board Member Representing the Poor and Under Privileged
With the passing of Mr. Arturo Ramirez last May, Mr. Gilbert Ortiz who served as his alternate stepped in to fill his seat as the Grassroots member for the 2018-2019 term. According to LRGVDC bylaws, this group can caucus to select a representative to sit on the Board. Usually they would do so independently, but this year Mr. Garza has invited them to join the Annual Elections Meeting in May and caucus at the same time as the other groups under the same guidelines of one individual from each organization being able to cast a vote.

6. 2019 RGV to DC Trip
Mr. Garza informed the Board that the RGV Partnership is coordinating the RGV to DC Trip which is scheduled for June 18-21. The group will advocate the regional priorities developed through the Regional Strategic Plan during their time in Washington DC.

7. 86th Legislative Session
The regular session of the 86th Legislature will adjourn on Monday, May 27. The governor’s last day to veto is June 16 unless they go into special session. Senate Bill 2 and House Bill 2 have caught the attention of most jurisdictions. Senate Bill 2 was debated on the floor last week and House Bill 2 has been postponed. The Valley has had very good representation at the state capitol with almost continuous representation throughout the session.

8. 9th Annual Walk-N-Rolla
Mr. Garza announced that the 9th Annual Walk-n-Rolla and Mutt Strutt are scheduled for Saturday, April 27 and will be a part of the Edinburg Cool Cities Celebration.

9. 2019 Road-To-Recycling (Regional Tire Collection)
Mr. Garza announced that this is the 3rd year the LRGVDC is coordinating the Road-to-Recycling Tire Collection event. This year there are 50 collection sites in 22 cities throughout the 3-county area and citizens can bring in 4 tires at no charge which makes this a truly regional project.

A new tool to assist this year’s recycling effort is the development of a digital collection map created in partnership with Cityflag. Cityflag created the map at no cost, so no Board action is required. Using this map, citizens can easily locate the closest collection site to them and in addition, they can upload pictures of any illegally dumped tires they see and report the location for collection. Mr. Garza thanked the participating cities and is pleased that participation has increased each year.

This project is named “Road-to-Recycling” with the intent of it progressing to something more environmentally sustainable than collection. Mr. Garza has scheduled a visit to Pine Bluff, Arkansas May 16-17 to learn about Jefferson County’s robust, sustainable tire recycle program. This facility turns tires into an aggregate, the aggregate is processed into a fuel for the local paper mill industry. This recycling program has become so successful that a new paper mill opened in the area because of the availability of this sustainable resource. Jefferson County is willing to share what they have learned, the pitfalls and the best practices. Mr. Garza invited those who are interested to join him on this trip.

Lastly Mr. Garza thanked all those who participated in the “Census Day – 1 Year and Counting” events on April 1. The two events were well attended and held on the same day, the first one in the morning in Edinburg at the Hidalgo County Commission Chamber and the second in the afternoon in Brownsville at the Historic Market Square. This 1-year point puts the Valley in a critical window of preparation. As Ms. Davila reported earlier, a Regional Taskforce meeting is
scheduled for Tuesday, April 30. This meeting will focus on the PSAP (Participant Statistical Areas Program) process and finishing census tract splits. Every census tract has an optimal size that must be adhered to; some census tract sites exceed the limit and need to be split. Each jurisdiction is being asked to confirm their census tract splits to ensure they do not exceed the set limits. The Valley is identified as one of the most critically undercounted areas and most prone to be undercounted. The US Census Bureau has provided a tremendous amount of resources for this region, but it is ultimately in local hands.

Upon conclusion of the Executive Director Report, Mr. Garza asked the President’s permission to transition to and begin an historic event; a non-action item under Transportation. He announced that the signing ceremony to transition to the Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RGVMPO) will now take place and he invited the following federally designated signatories to come forward to sign the RGVMPO Re-Designation Agreement:

Cameron County Judge Eddie Trevino, Jr.
Hidalgo County Judge Richard Cortez
City of Brownsville Mayor Tony Martinez
City of Edinburg Mayor Pro-tem David Torres
City of Harlingen Mayor Chris Boswell
City of McAllen Mayor Jim Darling
City of Mission Mayor Armando O’Caña
City of Pharr Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez

They each came forward one by one to sign this historic agreement that merged the Brownsville MPO, the Harlingen-San Benito MPO and the Hidalgo County MPO into one Rio Grande Valley MPO.

To commemorate this historic event, each signatory was provided a pen engraved with their name and “Rio Grande Valley MPO”. Upon signing, the designee commented on the struggles they bore while forging this technically complex agreement. They acknowledged that the process began with Valley leaders years ago and that the groundwork they laid provided the foundation for today’s leaders to bring this merger to fruition. Many people thought that these communities would never put their differences aside for the betterment of the entire region, but through deliberation and concession every designee strongly advocated for their community, learned how to respect and honor each other’s differences, compromised, and determined what would be best for all the citizens of the Rio Grande Valley. They acknowledged that this document was built on trust and that great things can happen when the Rio Grande Valley works as one unit.

President Garcia next moved to item 6. – New or Unfinished Business. There being none, she called for a motion to adjourn. Mayor Henry Hinojosa made a motion to adjourn, Mr. Troy Allen seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:13 pm.

Hon. Norma G. Garcia, President

ATTEST:

Deborah Morales, Recording Secretary