

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

12:00PM Wednesday April 30, 2025

HELD IN-PERSON AND VIA THE GLOBAL GOTOMEETING VIDEO CONFERENCE
PLATFORM INITIATED AND CHAIRED FROM
LRGVDC MAIN CAMPUS - 301 W. RAILROAD STREET, WESLACO, TEXAS
BUILDING B, KEN JONES EXECUTIVE BOARD ROOM

PRESIDING: Mayor Norma Sepulveda

Mayor Norma Sepulveda called the meeting to order at 12:06 p.m. Roll Call was taken, and as of 12:07 pm quorum was attained.

Present: Mayor Norma Sepulveda

Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza, City of Mission
Commissioner Ernie Garcia, Willacy County
Mayor John Cowen, City of Brownsville
Commissioner Pete Garcia, City of Weslaco
Commissioner Ellie Torres, Hidalgo County
Mayor Alma Salinas, Sullivan City
Mayor George Guadiana, City San Perlita
Mayor Alejandro Flores, City of Los Fresnos
Commissioner Edward Gonzales, City of Raymondville
Mayor Rick Guerra, City of San Benito
Ms. Veronica Gonzales, UTRGV Edinburg
Mr. Paul Hernandez, South Texas College
Mr. Luke Lucio, TSTC
Mr. Ron Mills, Willacy Co. Nav. Dist.
Mr. Jim Darling, Member at Large
Mr. Tony Chavez, Member at Large
Ms. Ann Williams Cass, Member at Large
Ms. Lupita Sanchez Martinez, Grassroots Org

Absent :

Mayor Ramiro Garza, City of Edinburg
Commissioner David Garza, Cameron County
Mayor JR Garza, City of Alamo
Mayor David Moreno, City of Donna
Mayor Javier Villalobos, City of McAllen
Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez City of Pharr
Commissioner Marco Villegas, City of San Juan
Mr. Troy Allen, Delta Lake ID

Without any questions from the board, Mayor Norma Sepulveda, moved on to Item #2

Item #2: 1. Consideration and ACTION to approve Board of Directors Meeting Minutes for March 26, 2025. ***Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza made a motion to approve Meeting Minutes for March 26, 2025. Ms. Lupita Sanchez seconded the motion and upon a vote; the motion was carried unanimously.***

Item #3: Public Comment- No Public Comment currently.

With no further comments and questions, Mayor Norma Sepulveda moved on to Item #4.

Item #4: Administration

4.A. Mr. Cruz began by stating the first action item addressed was the consideration and action to set the date and format for the 2025 Nominating Committee meeting. As board elections are scheduled for May, it is necessary to establish the Nominating Committee at the beginning of the month.

The Nominating Committee will include all general membership and the Board of Directors. The meeting can be held either in person or virtually, and will address the following:

1. Review and Selection of Members-at-Large

- There are ten total members-at-large.
- Five are appointed by the general membership.
- Five have been appointed by the Board of Directors.
- From these ten, three will be nominated to serve on the Board of Directors as representatives of the members-at-large, with final approval at the end-of-month board meeting.

2. Executive Committee Officer Recommendations

- The committee will also discuss and recommend officers for the Executive Committee for the 2025–2026 term.

The nominating committee meeting is typically held during the second week of May.

Following the Nominating Committee

Subsequent meetings will be held by various member groups to select their representatives to the Board of Directors. These groups include:

- **Small Cities:** Total of 26 members, from which three representatives are selected.
- **Medium Cities:** Comprising six members; three representatives are selected based on population.
- **Special Government Units:** Two representatives are selected.
- **School Districts and Public Education Institutions:** Two representatives will be selected to represent educational entities.
- **Grassroots Organizations:** Will also conduct their own selection process.

The board must determine the date and format (in-person or virtual) of the 2025 Nominating Committee meeting to proceed with the outlined selection and nomination processes.

A discussion then took place among the Board members on what date would be best for everyone to join virtual. Upon the discussion the board all came to an agreement that May 7th, 2025 @ 8:30am would be a perfect time for everyone to attend the Nominating Committee Meeting. ***Commissioner Ellie Torres made a motion to approve the Date & Time for the Virtual Nominating Committee Meeting; Mayor Alma Salinas seconded the motion and upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.***

4.B. Presentation and Action to Accept Quarterly Investment Report. Mrs. Crystal Balboa presented the First Quarter Investment Report for the Board's review. She noted that, if there were no questions, the report would require Board approval. ***Mr. Jim Darling made a motion to approve the Quarterly Investment Report, Mr. Ron Mills seconded the motion, upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.*** Mr. Cruz noted that there was a brief financial update to share, acknowledging that changes continue to occur frequently under the current administration.

Crystal reported a slight decrease in interest rates, noting a 0.13-point drop from the fourth quarter to the third quarter. She added that during the same period last year, the decrease was more significant, at one full basis point.

4.C. Economic Development Strategy and Diversification Study Presentation. Ms. Shonda Mace was recognized and started her presentation. The presentation was delivered by the Manager of Research Studies Development (also known as Cleaning Studies) within the Community Development and Revitalization Division. It was noted that the speaker was not the project manager for the study. Due to time constraints, questions may not be addressed immediately, but the presenter offered to share their email in the chat following the presentation for any follow-up inquiries.

Background

The study focused on Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy counties and was funded through mitigation funding associated with the 2019 floods. It was a 15-month project targeting HUD-designated counties significantly impacted by the flooding. Approximately 38.32% of the study area lies within a 1% annual chance floodplain.

Stakeholder Outreach

Stakeholder engagement was an ongoing component throughout all three phases of the project.

Phase 1: Research and Inventory Development (Sept 2022 – Mar 2023)

- Conducted research across eight focus areas
- Included study area site visits and asset mapping surveys

Phase 2: Economic Diversification Strategy Development (Mar 2023 – Aug 2023)

- Drafted and refined strategies and goals based on stakeholder input
- Conducted stakeholder interviews and virtual strategy review sessions
- Distributed a stakeholder survey to gather additional feedback

Phase 3: Action Plan Finalization (Mar 2023 – Aug 2023)

- Developed and refined action plan strategies within five goal areas
- Held both virtual and in-person sessions for review

- Final strategies were updated and incorporated into the final plan

Approach and Methodology

- Engaged 405 stakeholders
- Conducted 61 meetings and received 42 survey responses
- Study duration: approximately 15 months
- Broad representation from various stakeholder groups

Vision and Goals

Vision Statement: To position the Lower Rio Grande Valley as a collaborative region characterized by resilience and a sustainable economy benefiting all communities and individuals.

Goal Areas:

1. **Organizational Capacity** – Enhance resilience through strengthened partnerships and market access
2. **Transportation & Infrastructure** – Support regional growth via strategic infrastructure projects
3. **Housing** – Promote affordable, workforce-supportive housing with flood risk mitigation
4. **Economic Development & Diversification** – Foster economic resilience and inclusion
5. **Quality of Life & Community Resilience** – Improve community appeal and environmental stewardship

Final Deliverable

The final product is a comprehensive report titled *Economic Development Strategy and Diversification Study*.

With no further questions or comments, Mayor Norma Sepulveda then moved on to Item B on the agenda.

Executive Report: Mr. Cruz then moved on to introduce all LRGVDC New Hires. Mr. Cruz went on and stated that on another item I'd like to report on is the ongoing legislative session. I want to take a moment to sincerely thank all of you—your elected officials, not only for your efforts this month but throughout the entire year. Over the past month, since the legislature convened, I've seen a noticeable increase in your activity and engagement in representing the Valley. I've come across several online videos and live streams where many of you spoke on behalf of our region on a variety of important issues. Most recently, our president gave a presentation regarding the recent disaster that affected the region, particularly the City of Harlingen.

Thank you for consistently putting the Valley at the forefront. Your efforts are making a real difference in ensuring our voices are heard. Your dedication and advocacy continue to elevate the Lower Rio Grande Valley, and that means a great deal to all of us. Once again, thank you for your commitment, your leadership, and the strong representation you provide. It truly speaks volumes.

Lastly, for the remaining updates, I'll turn it over to our staff, specifically Ms. Margarita Lopez and Mr. Tom Logan, who will be providing important information regarding the current impacts we're seeing under the current administration. These impacts are not limited to services but also extend significantly to funding.

Mr. Lopez has prepared a presentation, copies of which are on your desks—and after the presentation, you'll see that we're already exploring some potential strategies moving forward. As we progress into the year,

particularly around May or June, if we don't see any meaningful changes, we will begin implementing those strategies more aggressively.

In the meantime, we'll continue to work closely with our national and state associations to better understand the situation and advocate for necessary adjustments. Ms. Lopez and Mr. Logan will play a key role in leading these efforts and ensuring the administration receives the data and context needed to reconsider current or proposed funding decisions. Many of the affected programs are critical—not only to the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council—but to the entire state of Texas and communities nationwide.

For context, regional planning commissions like ours operate across the United States. When a program is reduced or eliminated, the impact is far-reaching, with even greater consequences for our local population here in the Valley.

No questions or comments, Mayor Norma Sepulveda then moved on to Item #5 Department Reports.

Item #5: A. Community & Economic Development: Melisa Gonzalez had no Action items on the agenda for her department.

Status Reports: Mrs. Gonzales shared a few announcements. First, I want to thank everyone who participated in our *Road to Recycling* event held last week. The event is still ongoing, and we are continuing to collect tires. While I don't yet have final numbers, that's a good sign—it means more tires are still being collected! So far, 30 entities have participated, and I hope to share complete data on the total number of tires collected and recycled by our next meeting. Our goal remains to divert as many tires as possible from the landfill.

A few important announcements:

- **Region M Meeting:** Scheduled for **May 7 at 9:30 a.m.** This will be a hybrid meeting.
- **Region M Public Q&A:** Scheduled for **May 22 at 2:00 p.m.** at the Ken Jones location, also with hybrid access. This session will cover updates to the Region M Plan. Please attend or log in if you can.

Lastly, I'm excited to share that Mr. Dominguez and I presented our *Clean Cities Coalition Apprenticeship* at the SWANA (Solid Waste Association of North America) Conference last week. We joined forces with the four current Clean Cities coalitions of Texas and were proud to be included in their efforts. While we may face some challenges in achieving full designation due to upcoming changes, the Department of Energy has encouraged us to keep moving forward—and that's exactly what we're doing.

I'll be including photos from the conference in next month's presentation. It was a great opportunity to connect with other coalitions and witness the impactful work being done to improve air quality across the state.

No further questions or comments, Mayor Norma Sepulveda moved on to B. Health and Human Services.

B. Health & Human Services: Margarita Lopez had 2 Action Items on the agenda.

1. Consideration and Action to approve the Contractor Solicitation timeline for the Fiscal year from 10/01/2025-09/30/2026. These services will be funded under the title III of the older Americans Act as amended and State general Revenue funds (SGR). **Mr. Ron Mills made a motion to approve the contractor Solicitation timeline for the fiscal Year from 10/01/2025-9/30/2026. These services will be funded under the Title III of the older Americans Act as amended and State General Revenue Funds (SGR), Commissioner Ellie Torres seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.**

2. Consideration and Action to approve the timeline for the Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit operating plans for services for the Fiscal year from 10/01/2025-09/30/2026. This action refers to services provided through our subrecipients and funded under Title III of the Older Americans Act Amended, and State General Revenue Funds (SGR). ***Commissioner Ellie Torres made a motion to approve the timeline for Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit operating plans for services for the Fiscal Year from 10/01/2025-9/30/2026. This action refers to services provided through our Subrecipients and funded under Title III of the Older Americans Act Amended, and State General Revenue Funds (SGR) Mr. Ron Mills seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.***

Status Reports: Ms. Margarita Lopez mentioned that if there were any questions her report was attached to the packet provided. Ms. Lopez then moved on to **State-Level Funding Overview and Fiscal Year 2025 Planning Summary**

We are currently operating under two key sections for today's discussion. I'll begin with an overview of the ongoing state-level funding situation and its impact on our planning and service delivery for Fiscal Year 2025 at LRGVDC.

Members, you have a printed version of this overview on your desks. The slides on the screen reflect the same content, with your packets containing additional details for further review.

Funding Timeline & Background

At the state level, the Office of the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) informed us that they could not fully match the approved budget for FY2025. Additionally, they were unable to fund the match for FY2023 and FY2024 carryover dollars. Initially, we were directed to plan using only **80% of our approved 100% budget** for FY2025.

In September, during the TARC meeting and subsequent discussions, this 80% funding directive was confirmed. However, in October/November, there was a temporary indication that the full 100% might still be awarded. Due to this uncertainty, we moved forward cautiously allocating only up to the 80% level and prioritizing services that did **not** require contracted vendors in order to avoid budget overages.

On **April 25th**, AAA confirmed that the **final allocation for FY2025 is 80%**, with the possibility of awarding the remaining 20% **only if** the state receives additional funding. We have not received that award as of today.

Budget Adjustments and Operational Strategy

Upon receiving the initial 80% directive, we immediately revised our internal budget, ensuring that:

- Only 80% of funds were allocated and used.
- Salaries were protected to maintain staffing through the fiscal year.
- Contracted services were limited to avoid overspending.

This cautious planning approach ensured that we preserved our workforce in case additional funds (either the remaining 20% or carryover dollars) became available.

Carryover Funds for FY2024

We have received confirmation that we **will receive 75%** of the FY2024 carryover funds. These are **restricted for service delivery only**, they cannot be used for administrative costs. Additionally, the carryover applies **only to select services**, so not all programs will be reinstated.

Despite these limitations, we are confident that we can fully utilize the carryover funds and maintain salaries **through September 30, 2025**.

While other AAA agencies have already had to reduce staff hours or issue layoffs, our proactive planning has allowed us to avoid such measures. We will continue to manage funds cautiously and responsibly, prioritizing service continuity and fiscal sustainability. Mayor Norma Sepulveda then asked, Margarita, will you know the exact amount of potential additional funding before the end of Fiscal Year 2025 (September 30, 2025)? Ms. Lopez then answered, For Fiscal Year 2025, we are currently allocated 80% of the budget. We expect to receive notification about the remaining 20% before the end of the fiscal year.

For FY2025, only 80% of the budget is currently allocated. While there is a possibility of receiving the remaining 20%, we are not planning on it. Despite this, we have maintained wait lists, continued client intakes, and made referrals. However, services involving contractors—such as residential repairs or modifications—have been paused due to funding uncertainty.

To prepare for the potential release of additional funds, several special initiative projects are in place and ready for execution should resources be available.

Board Advocacy

Mayor Norma Sepulveda asked what support the board could provide to advocate for the release of the remaining 20%. Ms. Lopez responded that staying informed and using any available platform to highlight the urgency of these funds would be valuable. She committed to sharing impact data to support advocacy efforts.

Contractual Concerns

Jim Darling raised concerns about executing contracts through September 30, 2026, without assurance of future funding. Ms. Lopez explained that:

- The contracts in question are tied to the **federal** budget, not the state-level funding currently under discussion.
- Federal contracts must still be submitted to remain in compliance with current obligations.
- Contracts are explicitly marked as contingent on federal funding availability.
- Even if the federal budget is not yet finalized, contracts must be in place by October to avoid service disruption.

Financial Oversight

Mr. Manuel Cruz emphasized the proactive steps being taken to monitor expenditures and ensure up-to-date reimbursement requests from contractors. This ensures that if funding were suddenly halted, there would be no outstanding contractor debts.

Ms. Lopez confirmed the current outstanding payments include:

- **\$61,004.77** pending from vendor contractors (awaiting billing submission).
- **\$1,570,116** pending with sub-recipients, for which funding is already secured.

She also reiterated that services were paused to prevent overspending and protect the budget, in line with responsible fiscal management at the state level.

As we shift to the federal landscape, we're closely monitoring the proposed **FY2026 federal budget** and its **potential impact** on the **Area Agency on Aging (AAA)** and **Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)** services.

1. Broader Community Impact

- The proposed budget changes will not only affect AAA and ADRC directly but will also significantly impact **services for older adults** across the region—**regardless of provider**.
- Tracking **funding sources** is essential to understanding where these services may be redirected.

2. Funding Overview and Historical Spending

- A summary of funding sources (Title III-B, III-C, III-D, III-E, NSIP, etc.) is provided in your packet, mapping each service to its respective source.
- Historical spending:
 - **2020**: \$6.2 million (including CARES Act funds)
 - **2021**: Over \$8 million
 - **2022**: Over \$8 million
 - **2023**: \$7 million (decline due to loss of COVID relief funds)
 - **2024**: Nearly \$9 million
 - **2025 (to date)**: Over \$4 million
- **Service demand remains strong**, further justifying the need for sustained funding.

3. Proposed Federal Realignments

- Major service **realignments** are proposed under **CMS, ACF, and ASPE**.
- If AAA/ADRC are no longer managing these services, these agencies may take over.
- The concern is: **new managing entities may not have the infrastructure or knowledge** to deliver services effectively, nor will individuals know where to go for help.
- AAA/ADRC remain ready to support **regardless of who receives the funding**, to ensure continuity of care for older adults.

4. Services at Risk or Eliminated (If Budget Is Approved as Proposed)

At Risk = Funds will shift to other entities; continued delivery is uncertain.

- **At Risk:**
 - **Case Management** (Title III-B/E)
 - **Caregiver Support (BRI team)**
 - **Information & Referral (IRNA team)**

- **Senior Centers** (Title III-B)
- **Eliminated:**
 - **Benefit Counseling** (HICAP, MEPA)
 - **Hospital Discharge Support (CTI team)** – Title III-D
 - **Ombudsman Program** (Title VII)
 - **All ADRC Services**, including:
 - Housing Navigator
 - Promoting Independence
 - Local Contact Agency Services
 - Disability-focused MEPA
 - Respite Services for individuals under 60
- **Continuing Services (under new management):**
 - **Nutrition Programs:**
 - Congregate Meals (Title III-C1)
 - Home-delivered Meals (Title III-C2)
 - Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP)
 - These may be transferred to agencies such as Head Start or others.

5. Advocacy and Accountability

- **Board members** were encouraged to **remain informed** and, where possible, **advocate** for continued funding through legislative or agency channels.
- AAA will continue to **track and report service impact and spending** to support advocacy efforts.

6. Transition and Outlook

- If the proposed budget passes as-is, **AAA and ADRC services will end** after FY2025.
- Contracts will be fulfilled through **September 30, 2025**.
- AAA is prepared for a **clean, responsible closure** but remains hopeful that services may resume if future funding is restored.

Commissioner Ellie Torres commented that while Margarita's actions are limited due to pending decisions at the federal level, it is crucial for congressional members to be informed. She asked whether the document outlining the potential service cuts has been shared with Congress, emphasizing that it clearly shows which programs—and therefore which constituents—will be impacted if funding under specific titles is not approved. **Ms. Lopez** stated that while the impact summary was specifically formatted for the board, the underlying data has already been shared with national partners such as **USAgings**, the **Silver-Haired**

Legislature, and through participation in federal-level surveys and questionnaires. She will also ensure this new format is shared going forward.

Mr. Cruz added that discussions have already occurred with congressional staff and that information from US Aging—indicating potential elimination of most AAA services in the proposed FY2026 budget—has been forwarded. He emphasized that as more awareness is raised, there is still potential for change. The team is working with **national and state associations** (US Aging, TARC, NADO) to advocate on behalf of local services.

In the coming months, staff will provide the board with **draft letters or resolutions** for formal approval and collective submission to elected representatives. This will strengthen the advocacy effort.

Mayor Sepulveda suggested a **joint letter of support** signed by all member cities and stakeholders to demonstrate a united front and amplify the message. She also highlighted the importance of including **personal stories** of impacted individuals and families to help Congress better understand the human impact of the proposed cuts.

Commissioner Torres agreed, adding that sharing the **number of people impacted** across programs could provide a more compelling case.

Ms. Lopez encouraged cities to keep the older population in mind as they prepare their **upcoming budgets**, noting that AAA maintains data by city and can provide localized statistics upon request. She also noted the importance of staying informed and prepared to collaborate with **new service providers**, such as Head Start, should federal funds be reassigned.

Mayor Sepulveda reiterated the urgency of receiving impact data as early as possible to inform city budget planning and potential support efforts.

Mr. Paul Hernandez asked whether current service recipients have been notified. Ms. Lopez confirmed that transparency has been maintained with both clients and staff. Individuals undergoing intake are being informed of service delays and funding risks. Staff were also briefed during a recent internal meeting on the contingency plan, emphasizing continued operations through September 30, 2025, and a commitment to a clean and orderly transition should funding end. Mayor Sepulveda states she believes that everyone should take part and spread the word so everyone is aware of what is going on.

No further questions or comments Mayor Norma Sepulveda moved on to Public Safety.

C. Public Safety: Criminal Justice & Homeland Security. Mr. Cesar Merla was recognized and mentioned that he had 5 action items on the agenda.

Due to not having time Mr. Merla went through all action items for approval at the same time. They are as follows:

C1.Consideration and Action and Approval Criminal Justice Advisory Committee's (CJAC) Recommendation for FY 2025-2026 Edward Bryne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program Rankings and Resolution. **Ron Mills approved the Criminal Justice Advisory Committee's (CJAC) Recommendation for FY 2025-2026 Edward Bryne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program Rankings and Resolution. Paul Hernandez seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.**

C2. Consideration and Action to Approve Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (CJAC) recommendation for FY 2025-2026 Juvenile Programs (SF) Fund Program Rankings and Resolution. **Ron Mills made a motion to approve the Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (CJAC) recommendation for FY 2025-2026 Juvenile Programs (SF) Fund Program Rankings and Resolution, Paul Hernandez seconded the motion upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.**

C3. Consideration and Action to approve Criminal Justice Advisory Committee's (CJAC) recommendation for FY 2025-2026 Truancy prevention Grant Program (TP) program Rankings and resolutions. **Ron Mills made a motion to approve the Criminal Justice Advisory Committee's (CJAC) recommendation for FY 2025-2026 Truancy prevention Grant Program (TP) program Rankings and resolutions; Paul Hernandez seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.**

C4. Consideration and Action to approve Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (CJAC) recommendation for FY 2025-2026 Victim of Crime Act Formula Grand Program (VA) Program Rankings and Resolution. **Ron Mills made a motion to approve the Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (CJAC) recommendation for FY 2025-2026 Victim of Crime Act Formula Grand Program (VA) Program Rankings and Resolution. Paul Hernandez seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.**

C5. Consideration and Action to approve Criminal Justice Advisory Committee's (CJAC) recommendation for FY 2025-2026 Violence Against Woman Formula Grant (WF) program Rankings and Resolution. **Ron Mills made a motion to approve Criminal Justice Advisory Committee's (CJAC) recommendation for FY 2025-2026 Violence Against Woman Formula Grant (WF) Program Rankings and Resolution. Paul Hernandez seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.**

Status Reports: Mr. Cesar Merla started with two key updates from his department:

- **Narcan Training – May 23, 2025**

A Narcan training session will be held on **Thursday, May 23rd** from **9:00–9:30 a.m.** at the **Ken Jones Executive Board Building**, in partnership with **Behavioral Health Solutions of South Texas**. The event is open to both **in-person and virtual attendees**. A QR code for registration is available, and all interested participants are encouraged to attend.

- **Advanced Active Shooter Incident Management (ASIM) Training – August 12–14, 2025**

For the first time in the history of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, an **Advanced Active Shooter Incident Management (ASIM) training** will be hosted locally. The event will take place **August 12–14, 2025**, from **8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**, at the **NAP Medical Conference Center in Weslaco, Texas**.

- The training is **free of charge** and open to **emergency managers, law enforcement, fire departments, and school district personnel**.
- A **minimum of 60 participants** is required, and broader attendance is encouraged to maximize impact.
- Mr. Merla urged board members to spread the word among relevant agencies to ensure strong participation.

No further questions or comments Mayor Norma Sepulveda moved on to LRGV Police Academy.

C.2 LRGV Police Academy: Mr. Javier Solis had an Action Item on the Agenda.

1. Consideration and Action to approve the Utilization of LRGV Academy GPI funds in the amount of \$23,139.27 for the purchase of new electronic tasers. **Jim Darling made a motion to approve the Utilization of LRGV Academy GPI funds in the amount of \$23,139.27 for the purchase of**

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new electronic tasers. Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.

2. Consideration and Action to approve an Interlocal between the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council and the City of Weslaco, Texas for the implementation of a police academy site to be hosted by and through the Weslaco Police Department, and for the authority to have the LRGVDC Executive Director Manuel Cruz, sign and finalize the agreement. ***Ron Mills made a motion to approve an Interlocal between the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council and the City of Weslaco, Texas for the implementation of a police academy site to be hosted by and through the Weslaco Police Department, and for the authority to have the LRGVDC Executive Director Manuel Cruz, sign and finalize the agreement. Mayor Rick Guerra seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.***

Status Reports: Mr. Javier Solis wanted to mention a quick update on the Academy. A total of **51 in-service courses** were conducted during the month, training **537 officers**. Instructors delivered **274 hours** of instruction, resulting in a cumulative total of **3,800 contact hours**.

No further questions or comments Mayor Norma Sepulveda moved on to the Rio Grande Valley Emergency Communication District.

Mr. Cruz stated that they would skip the Rio Grande Valley Emergency Communication District due to having no more time. Status Reports were sent out to all board members for their review.

No questions or comments, Mayor Norma Sepulveda proceeded to Item D Valley Metro.

D. Transportation Valley Metro: Mr. Tom states that today he will have 3 action items on the agenda.

D.1. Consideration and Action on approve revised LRGVDC Regional Transit Service Departments Drug & Alcohol-Free Workshop Policy in compliance to FTA's Drug and Alcohol Compliance Auditing Program. ***Jim Darling made a motion to approve revised LRGVDC Regional Transit Service Departments Drug & Alcohol-Free Workshop Policy in compliance to FTA's Drug and Alcohol Compliance Auditing Program Commissioner Ellie Torres seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.***

D.2. Consideration and Action to approve Contractual Services for the LRGVDC Valley Metro Edinburg Transit Terminal Office Building 1st floor finish-out Phase III. ***Mayor Alma Salinas made a motion to approve Contractual Services for the LRGVDC Valley Metro Edinburg Transit Terminal Office Building 1st floor finish-out Phase III. Commissioner Ellie Torres seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.***

D.3. Consideration and Action to approve contractual services for the LRGVDC Valley Metro new Harlingen Terminal location Building "A" (office building) HVAC replacement from Terra Cooling – 3110 W. Spur 54 Harlingen, Tx 78552. ***Mayor Alma Salinas made a motion to approve contractual services for the LRGVDC Valley Metro new Harlingen Terminal location Building "A" (office building) HVAC replacement from Terra Cooling – 3110 W. Spur 54 Harlingen, Tx 78552. Commissioner Ellie Torres seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.***

Status Reports: Mr. Tom Logan starts off; A brief update was provided regarding a recent communication from **Region 6 of the FTA** containing a letter from **U.S. DOT Secretary Sean Duffy**. The letter outlines legal requirements for DOT grant recipients and emphasizes compliance with **federal laws**, particularly regarding:

- **Non-discrimination and Equal Protection:** Agencies must follow U.S. constitutional and federal laws that prohibit discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, and religion in federally funded programs.

- **Employment & Contracting:** Hiring and promotions must be **merit-based**, avoiding any race- or sex-based preferences.
- **Immigration Enforcement:** Agencies must **cooperate with ICE** and other federal agencies. Preventing access to facilities or vehicles may lead to **legal penalties**.
- **Consequences of Non-Compliance:** Failure to follow federal law may result in **audits, loss of funding, or other legal actions**.

Transit employees, especially drivers, have been instructed to **cooperate with federal officers**, including allowing them access to buses and facilities. Employees are also expected to **notify a supervisor, dispatch, or management immediately** if such interactions occur.

There are **growing concerns among staff** regarding how to handle these situations, including route diversions and rider interactions. Questions are being collected and addressed on a case-by-case basis. Management is actively monitoring the issue in coordination with national transit industry trends.

Potential Impact on Ridership: Early indicators show **possible declines in ridership** due to community concerns about immigration enforcement visibility on public transit.

The **ridership report is included in the meeting packet**, and this topic will be explored further in the upcoming **Policy Committee meeting**.

No further Questions or comments, Mayor Norma Sepulveda then moved to Rio Grande Valley MPO.

RGVMPO was not able to attend the meeting. No status reports for them currently.

Item #6: New & Unfinished Business: A reminder was issued that the **Nominating Committee meeting is scheduled for May 7th at 8:30 a.m.** Members are encouraged to log on and mentioned no quorum required and act on pending items.

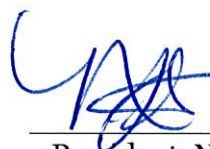
At the **next board meeting**, the **new slate of officers** will be presented. It was noted that **Mayor Garza** will be stepping down, and under the current circumstances, a new officer will be appointed. Additionally, appointments to various committees and groups will be reviewed—some members may continue in their roles, or new appointments may be made.

With no further questions or concerns, Mayor Norma Sepulveda moved on to Item #7.

Item #7: Adjourn: There being no further business to come before the board, Mayor Norma Sepulveda made a motion to adjourn at 1:08 PM

ATTEST:


Liza Alfaro, Recording Secretary



President, Norma Sepulveda