

# MINUTES

**VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE  
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS, GENERAL MEMBERSHIP &  
LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL CORPORATION**

12:00 PM WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27, 2021  
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 JIM DARLING, PRESIDENT

President Jim Darling called the meeting to order at 12:06 p.m. Roll call was taken for the Board of Directors and for the General Membership and a quorum was declared for both entities.

President Darling then moved to item 2: Consideration and Action to Approve Meeting Minutes of:

A. Annual Elections Meeting of May 27, 2020

B. Board of Directors Meeting of December 9, 2020

***Mayor Pro-tem Rick Salinas made a motion to approve both the minutes of the Annual Elections Meeting of May 27, 2020 and the Board of Directors meeting of December 9, 2020. Mr. Troy Allen seconded; and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

President Darling then moved to item 3: Public Comment and/or Report from Legislative Delegation; there being none he moved to item 4: Administration.

A. Ratification of Executive Committee Action on RGV Metro Express

President Darling provided background information on the RGV Metro Express bus service and explained that this route currently requires subsidy to continue serving the community. The Executive Committee met and agreed to request additional local match funds from Brownsville, McAllen, Harlingen, and UTRGV (Edinburg) to keep the Metro Express running. ***Mayor Chris Boswell made a motion to ratify the Executive Committee action on RGV Metro Express. Mayor Trey Mendez seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

B. Consideration and Action by General Membership Regarding FY 2021 Annual Report and Budget

The Annual Report & Budget Committee met on January 14, 2021 to consider a recommendation on the 2021 Annual Report & Budget. The committee unanimously recommended approval of the 2021 Annual Report & Budget as presented. President Darling stated that the Annual Report & Budget was made available for review prior to this meeting and proceeded to summarize the budget highlights. One of the line items in the budget is a 3% performance-based salary increase for those employees who have successfully achieved all standards per the annual evaluation process. Upon conclusion of his summary, President Darling stated that the Executive Committee conducted the annual evaluation of Executive Director Manuel Cruz; in addition, he interviewed LRGVDC's program directors and was pleased to report that Mr. Cruz received good reviews from all. Nonetheless, Mr. Cruz has declined a salary increase for 2021 based on the fact that he has served as Executive Director for six months. With that in consideration President Darling recommended that the 3% increase be applied based on his previous salary as Director of Public Safety.

*Mayor David Suarez made a motion to approve the FY 2021 Annual Report and Budget as presented. Councilwoman Norie Garza seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.*

- C. Consideration and Action to Accept Quarterly and Annual Investment Reports  
*Councilwoman Norie Garza made a motion to accept the Quarterly and Annual Investment Reports as presented. Mayor Pro-tem Rick Salinas seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.*
- D. Discussion and Consulting with State Representatives Regarding Conducting Hybrid Virtual Meetings Post Pandemic

President Darling acknowledged the difficulty of conducting virtual meetings from a technical standpoint, as well as the convenience that they provide by allowing members to participate who would otherwise have to travel long distances to attend in-person meetings. Mr. Cruz reported that he consulted with staff at the Texas Association of Regional Councils (TARC) on this matter and they advised that this option would require legislative changes to the Open Meetings Act. There was consensus from the Board that when social distancing mandates are lifted, they would like to have the option of attending meetings virtually as well as in person. President Darling stated he would send a letter to our local representatives and the TARC Chair with this recommendation. No action needed.

- E. Executive Director Report

Mr. Cruz was recognized and welcomed the six (6) new Board Members: Primera Mayor Jorge Ledesma, Mercedes Mayor Oscar Montoya, San Benito Mayor Ricardo Guerra, TSTC Ms. Cledia Hernandez, Member-at-Large Eleazar Garcia, Jr., Member-at-Large Sergio Contreras.

- 1. Introduction of New Staff Members

Mr. Cruz announced that Ms. Melany Rodriguez has joined the RGVMPPO staff as a Planner; and that Mr. Rey Soto has joined the Community & Economic Development Department as a Program Specialist.

- 2. It's Time Texas Community Challenge Pledge Approval and Signing

Ms. Melissa Garcia, It's Time Texas (ITT) RGV Regional Manager, was recognized and briefly explained the ITT Community Challenge. She then turned the floor over to Dr. Amy McGeady, ITT Chief Executive Officers. Dr. McGeady explained the impact of social interaction and thanked the Board for their commitment to the Community Challenge. Mr. Cruz stated that one of the LRGVDC's contributions to this effort in 2021 is a ribbon cutting ceremony for BikeShare RGV in Brownsville during the second week of February. Next, he provided an opportunity for Board Members to sign the Mayor Pledge and Community Member Pledge. After signing the pledges, they were asked to hold them up for a photo opportunity and encouraged them to download and use the newly released ITT app to earn points for their communities.

- 3. CDBG Conflict of Interest Forms.

Mr. Cruz informed the Board that our Valley Metro Department and the Area Agency on Aging have applied for Community Development Block Grants in the past; and that currently the Area Agency on Aging has applied for these funds from the Cities of Edinburg, Harlingen, McAllen, Mission and Pharr. Each grant has a requirement for each of our twenty-seven (27) Board Members to sign a Conflict of Interest form. He informed the Board that what ties them to this process is their membership on this Board and asked for their timely response when they receive these forms.

Mr. Cruz announced that starting this March, staff will make presentations to the Board that provide an overview of their programs. The sessions will begin at approximately 11:15 am just before the monthly Board of Directors meetings. Commissioner David Garza suggested recording the sessions for future reference.

4. 87<sup>th</sup> Legislature Updates

Mr. Cruz provided a summary of the Legislative Session updates that TARC is following and highlighted some of the pertinent updates.

5. COVID-19 Vaccinations

President Darling reported to the Board that an informal task force has been working to figure out a way to get COVID-19 vaccinations to the over 2,200 homebound elderly persons in our population. The group is working with the counties and UTRGV; he stated that it has been a difficult task and a viable plan of action has not yet been developed.

Upon conclusion of Administration Items President Darling moved to item 5: Department Reports.

A. Community & Economic Development

Program Status Reports

Program Director Rick Carrera was recognized and stated that there were no action items this month and that the status reports were available for review in the meeting packet. He highlighted that a Request For Qualifications (RFQ) for tire disposal has been released and the proposal deadline is Friday, February 12, 2021 at 12:00 pm. This is in preparation for the next Road-to-Recycling event.

President Darling added that the Region M Water Planning Group's 2021 Rio Grande Regional Water Plan has been approved by the Texas Water Development Board and it is now posted on their website.

B. Health & Human Services

Director Jose Gonzalez was recognized to address the following items:

Program Action Item

1. Consideration and Action to Add a Direct Purchase Service Contractor

Mr. Gonzalez informed the Board that the Area Agency on Aging has maintained open enrollment for contractors for all services. The Advisory Council requests approval of Alegria Primary Home Health Care, Inc. for Homemaker and Respite Care Services at \$14.75 per unit of service, a unit of services is 1 hour. ***Ms. Celeste Sanchez made a motion to approve Alegria Primary Home health Care, Inc. as a Direct Purchase Service Contractor as presented. Mayor Chris Boswell seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

Program Status Reports

The status reports on the Texas Silver-Haired Legislature, Annual funding, and Home Delivered Meals were available for review in the meeting packet.

## C. Public Safety

### Program Action Items:

Ms. Jayni Saenz, Assistant Director of Criminal Justice and Homeland Security was recognized to report on behalf of Public Safety Director Randall Snyder.

1. Consideration and Action to Approve Homeland Security Advisory Committee's (HSAC) Recommendation for Chair and Vice Chair

Ms. Saenz reported that as per HSAC bylaws, annual elections were held for the Chair and Vice Chair positions. Mr. Tom Hushen from Cameron County was reelected as Chair, and Mr. James Cardoza from the City of Mission was reelected as Vice Chair. **Mayor Chris Boswell made a motion to approve the election of Mr. Tom Hushen as HSAC Chair and Mr. James Cardoza as Vice Chair. Ms. Celeste Sanchez seconded, and upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.**

2. Consideration and Action to Approve Resolutions for FY 2021-22 Homeland Security Grants Funding

Ms. Saenz stated that as part of the Public Safety Office's Homeland Security Grants Division grants guidelines, applications must include a resolution that contains information such as authorization by its governing body for the submission of an application. The LRGVDC Homeland Security program will manage the following grant projects: Regional Planning, Coordinator for Regional Fire Academy, and Equipment for RGV-Tx Task Force Type 3. **Commissioner David Garza made a motion to approve the resolutions for FY 2021-22 Homeland Security Grants Funding as presented. Mayor Trey Mendez seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

### Program Status Reports:

The program status reports were provided in the meeting packet for review. Mr. Cruz announced that formation of an Emergency Communications District for Hidalgo and Willacy Counties is progressing. Of the 27 resolutions required to move forward, 23 have successfully been passed and approved. He is confident that the 4 pending resolutions will be passed in a timely manner.

## D. Transportation

Program Director Tom Logan was recognized to report on the following:

### Program Action Item:

1. Consideration and Action to Approve Purchase of Up to Ten (10) Revenue Vehicles for "Fast Ride" Microtransit Service

Mr. Logan informed the Board that these buses will be incorporated into the Valley metro motor bus fleet and will be utilized for the "Fast Ride" (ride share) Microtransit Service. Purchase of these vehicles will be made using TxDOT grants (TX-2019-144-01 and TX-2017-086) with local match from TxDOT's TDCs and local funds. The cost of each bus is \$72,355.00. **Councilwoman Norie Garza made a motion to approve the purchase of ten (10) revenue vehicles as presented. President Jim Darling seconded, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

### Program Status Reports:

The program status reports were provided in the meeting packet for review.

President Darling noted that the RGVMPPO is scheduled to meet at 1:30 pm today.

Item 6. - Executive Session

- A. Personnel Matters pursuant to Section 551-074(1) to deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer or employee RE: Executive Director Annual Performance Evaluation

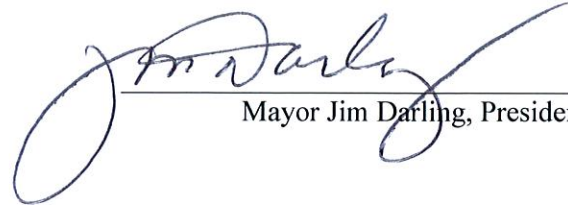
It was the consensus of the Board not to adjourn into Executive Session and to let the Executive Committee recommendation discussed under item 4. B. stand.

Item 7. – New or Unfinished Business

There being no further business to come before the Board, *President Darling adjourned the meeting at 1:07 pm.*

ATTEST:

  
Deborah Morales, Recording Secretary

  
Mayor Jim Darling, President