

# MINUTES

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

12:00 PM WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2020  
LRGVDC MAIN CAMPUS - 301 W. RAILROAD STREET, WESLACO, TEXAS  
BUILDING B, KEN JONES EXECUTIVE BOARD ROOM

PRESIDING: MAYOR DAVID SUAREZ, PRESIDENT

President David Suarez called the meeting to order at 12:01 p.m. Roll call was taken for the Board of Directors, General Membership & Corporation and a quorum was declared for all entities.

He then moved to item 2: Consideration and Action to Approve Meeting Minutes

- A. May 29, 2019 Annual Elections Meeting
- B. December 11, 2019 Board of Directors Meeting

***Commissioner Eddy Gonzales made a motion to approve both the minutes of the May 29, 2019 Annual Elections meeting and the December 11, 2019 Board of Directors meeting as presented. Commissioner David Garza seconded and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

President Suarez then moved to item 3: Public Comment and/or Report from Legislative Delegation. There being none, he moved to item 4: Administration

### A. Consideration and Action by General Membership Regarding FY 2020 Annual Report and Budget

Mayor Jim Darling, Chairman of the Annual Report & Budget Committee was recognized to report on this item. He stated that the committee met on January 22 and that this newly formatted document has four (4) sections: LRGVDC Overview & Designations, Organization Structure, Departmental 2020 Performance Goals, the 2019 Productivity Outcomes, and the 2020 Annual Budget.

The 2020 Annual Budget is \$26,435,640 and reflects a decrease of \$959,448 from the 2019 budget due to some projects coming to the end of their contracts. It does not reflect an increase in Membership dues. The 2020 Fringe Benefit rate is 51.85% and reflects a decrease of 2.65% over the 2019 fringe benefit rate of 54.50%.

The 2020 (Total Budget Expenditure) Indirect Rate is 14.37% and reflects the State's revised guidance for calculation. Utilizing the revised calculation method, the 2020 indirect rate reflects an increase of 1.21% from the 2019 amount of 13.16%. The 2020 salary recommendations for staff includes a 3% performance-based salary increase for those employees who have successfully achieved all standards per annual evaluation process. The committee recommends approval of the 2020 Annual Report & Budget as presented. ***Upon conclusion of this report, Mr. Ronald Mills made a motion to approve the FY 2020 Annual Report & Budget as presented. Commissioner David Garza seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

### B. Consideration and Action Regarding Revisions to LRGVDC Personnel Policy Manual

Executive Director Ron Garza was recognized and reported that the LRGVDC's Personnel Policy Manual includes the comprehensive set of policies established to provide rules, guidelines, and standards to professional staff and representatives. The revision process was lengthy and inclusive. As previously reported at the December Board of Directors meeting, the Executive Director hosted an all-staff meeting in

which the initial draft was presented for feedback and comment. Additionally, each staff member had the opportunity to present written comments. The draft manual has also been thoroughly reviewed by legal representation. The draft included in the meeting packet contains these additions and revisions. The Annual Report & Budget Committee unanimously recommends approval of the revised LRGVDC Personnel Policy Manual. ***Mr. Ronald Mills made a motion to approve the revised LRGVDC Personnel Policy Manual as presented. Commissioner Rick Salinas seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

C. Consideration and Action to Accept Quarterly and Annual Investment Reports

Finance Director Crystal Balboa presented the Quarterly and Annual Investment Reports. ***The Hon. Norma G. Garcia made a motion to accept the Quarterly and Annual Investment reports as presented. Commissioner Pilar Garza seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

D. Executive Director Report

LRGVDC Updates & Activities

1. Introduction of New Staff Members

There were no newly hired staff in December and January.

2. Census 2020

Mr. Garza reminded the Board that on March 12, households will begin receiving official Census Bureau mail with detailed information on how to respond to the 2020 Census online, by phone, or by mail. On April 1, Census Day is observed nationwide, and households can respond to the 2020 Census. He informed the Board that the LRGVDC recently hosted a Census Marketing meeting at which the LRGVDC was asked to procure a regional marketing campaign for the 2020 Census. He sent an email with details about it this morning to Valley mayors, city managers, Census Committee members, and Complete Count Committee members across the region. The most important part of the proposed regional marketing campaign is that it will not have any production locally. The regional marketing campaign is a way to push the messages the US Census Bureau has already established; they have already produced commercials dedicated to different populations, and the taskforce has chosen to promote those messages that are geared toward the Latino population. They have set a goal to combine resources and raise \$100,000 specifically toward radio and TV commercial ad-buys. Joining efforts would garner a greater economy of scale and provide the Valley with more airtime. For full neutrality, no one individual jurisdiction would be mentioned during the commercial airtime. The \$100,000 is the benchmark that would allow a presence across the region and air the commercials beginning February 15 for approximately three months. To meet this timeline, commitments from any interested city, county, or other private source is needed no later than Thursday, February 6. Several entities have already agreed to contribute significantly, and there will be no minimum or maximum, any amount will be accepted. The marketing experts that serve on various Complete Count Committees agree that anything under \$100,000 may not provide the needed coverage.

3. Mitigation & Disaster Recovery Funding

Mr. Garza provided a summary on the status of this funding. He stated that these funds are a result of previous disasters that occurred in 2015, 2016, 2018, and 2019. He stated that there are three different key initiatives of note:

- 1) *Mitigation* dollars through HUD's \$4.2 billion allocation with the majority going to areas impacted by Hurricane Harvey but the Valley is included in portions of that. The final draft of the action plan is due back to HUD February 3.

- 2) The second item is disaster *recovery*, it was originally \$46 million but has been increased to \$72 million for 2018 disasters. Texas GLO will be doing an action plan for this one, just like mitigation. This is combined for 2018 and 2019 disasters.
- 3) Tomorrow TWDB will have a public hearing for the State Flood Plan. During the last legislative session SB 7 and SB 8 were passed which will allow for an allocation of the Rainy-Day Fund to use for what has been dubbed the Flood Financial Assistance Program. The rules for this program have been published and the comments period is just about to close for the State Flood Plan, the Financial Assistance Program and the Flood Planning Regions. He showed a map of the proposed regions for Flood Planning. The Proposed Rio Grande Flood Planning Area goes all the way from El Paso down to Brownsville. On behalf of the LRGVDC, staff will provide comments to encourage that this area be divided to include the Rio Grande Regional Water Planning (Region M) area, which would be the lower half of the proposed area.

4. Explore RGV

Mr. Garza announced that the Regional Travel and Tourism Committee is being resurrected after 40 years of inactivity. They will be the advisory committee for the Explore RGV program.

5. RGV B-Cycle

Mr. Garza reported that the RGV B-Cycle program is progressing. Two (2) bike demo stations have been installed on our campus right outside Building B. Site inspections have been completed in Brownsville and Harlingen, and these sites will interface with McAllen's infrastructure. He was pleased to announce that the LRGVDC has been recognized by the League of American Bicyclists as a bike friendly business.

6. 2020 Mayors' Walk for Wellness (It's Time Texas Community Challenge)

Mr. Garza thanked all those who participated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual RGV Fit 5K and Mayors' Walk for Wellness. Eleven (11) mayors and elected officials participated in the Mayors' Walk and signed the big pledge board. He then invited those mayors present who have not signed the big board to do so. He reminded the Board that the cities that win this challenges win grants for wellness activities which provides a good incentive for participation.

He then put the current Statewide Scoreboard from the It's Time Texas website on the screens showing the current rankings of held by RGV cities:

CATEGORY	CITY
Metropolitan Areas - 300,000 +	San Antonio 1 <sup>st</sup> ( <i>Valley does not qualify</i> )
Large Cities of 100,000 - 300,000	<b>McAllen 1<sup>st</sup>, Brownsville 5<sup>th</sup></b>
Mid-Size Cities of 40,000 - 100,000	<b>Harlingen 1<sup>st</sup>, Pharr 3<sup>rd</sup></b>
Small Cities of 5,001- 40,000	<b>Los Fresnos 2<sup>nd</sup>, San Juan 3<sup>rd</sup>, Alamo 4<sup>th</sup></b>
Extra Small Cities of 1 - 5,000	Smithville 1 <sup>st</sup> , currently no Valley Cities are in the top five

Upon conclusion of the Executive Director report President Suarez next moved to item 5: Department Reports.

A. Community & Economic Development

Assistant Director Blanca Davila was recognized to address the following:

Program Action Items:

1. Consideration and Action to Approve Regional Small Cities Coalition (RSCC) Updated Bylaws

Ms. Davila reported that the RSCC members updated their bylaws to specify that member cities will have a population of no more than 24,999 according to the most current census numbers. There are currently thirty (30) such incorporated municipalities in Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties that are eligible for membership to the RSCC. ***The Hon. Norma G. Garcia made a motion to approve the Regional Small Cities Coalition updated bylaws as presented. Commissioner David Garza seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

Program Status Reports

Upon conclusion of action, Ms. Davila stated that the status reports were provided in the meeting packet for review.

B. Health & Human Services

Program Status Report

Program Director Joe Gonzalez was recognized and informed the Board that Health & Human Services Regional Director Fred Schuster is scheduled to visit the Area Agency on Aging on February 6. The purpose of his visit is to share the current priorities of the HHS. In addition, he would like to learn about the work the Area Agency on Aging is doing in this region and explore areas that HHS may be able to support their efforts. Mr. Gonzalez also reported that the Older Americans Act programs fared well on appropriations. Lawmakers ultimately agreed upon important, but modest national funding increases for the Older Americans Act Title III programs.

C. Public Safety

Program Action Items:

Public Safety Director Manuel Cruz was recognized to report on the following:

1. Consideration and Action to Approve Resolutions for Homeland Security Funding for Regional Planning, Fire Academy, and Statewide Emergency Radio Infrastructure

Mr. Cruz stated that as part of the Public Safety, Homeland Security Grant Division's (HSGD) grant guidelines, applications from nonprofit organizations, local governments, and other political subdivisions must include a resolution that contains specific information such as authorization by its governing body for the submission of the application to HSGD. Upon approval the resolutions will be uploaded in eGrants on or before the grant deadline of February 29. ***The Hon. Norma G. Garcia made a motion to approve the resolutions for Homeland Security Funding for Regional Planning, Fire Academy, and Statewide Emergency Radio Infrastructure as presented. Commissioner Pilar Garza seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

2. Consideration and Action to Approve the Regional Animal Care Coalition (RACC) Bylaws

The RACC convened on January 9 to review the final draft of their bylaws. After much discussion the members unanimously approved the recommended updates that were presented. ***Mayor Pro-tem Norie Gonzalez Garza made a motion to approve the revised Regional Animal Care Coalition bylaws as presented. Commissioner David Garza seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried***

*unanimously.*

Program Status Reports:

Mr. Cruz turned the floor over to Mr. John O'Valle, Texas Department of Emergency Management (TDEM) District Coordinator to give a presentation on TDEM Form 147. Mr. O'Valle informed the Board that this form is used to make the required notification to TDEM in accordance with Governor Executive Order GA-05. It is to be submitted annually by the 1<sup>st</sup> of February or within 30 days of any change of elected or appointed officials.

LRGVDC Program Specialist Marcie Oviedo was next recognized to give an update on the Kari's Law project under the Emergency Communications/9-1-1 Department. Ms. Oviedo reported that this law was created because of a horrible incident in 2013 when Mr. Hank Hunt's daughter, Kari, was attacked and killed by her estranged husband in a Marshall, Texas hotel room. Kari's 9-year old daughter was in the room and tried calling 9-1-1 on the hotel phone four times as her mother was attacked. But not one of her calls went through because the hotel phone system required guests to dial a "9" before calling outside the hotel, even for 9-1-1. Since that day, Mr. Hunt has worked tirelessly and successfully with the FCC and congress to change the law so a "9" is no longer needed for 9-1-1 calls from multi-line systems. His efforts culminated in Kari's Law becoming a law of the land on February 15, 2018. LRGVDC's Emergency Communication department has worked to get the word out about Kari's Law and they have had good response, especially from schools that were not familiar with this law.

Upon conclusion of her report, Mr. Garza announced that tomorrow is a special day for Ms. Oviedo as it is her last day with the LRGVDC. She is retiring after 35 years with us. She was presented with an engraved crystal vase filled with a beautiful bouquet of flowers. The Board gave her a standing ovation for all she has done. She thanked God for leading the way through everything and thanked her staff for their support throughout the years.

D. Transportation

Program Status Reports:

Valley Metro Director Tom Logan informed the Board that FY 2019 closed with a 25% increase in ridership due to the new services that were launched.

President Suarez next moved to 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 officers or employee RE: Executive Director's Annual Performance Evaluation

***Mr. Ronald Mills made a motion to go into executive session; Mayor Jim Darling seconded, and upon a vote executive session began at 12:49 pm.***

- B. Reconvene into Open Session to Consider Action on Items Related to Executive Session as Described above

***At 1:07 pm President Suarez reconvened open session.***

***Mayor Jim Darling stated that upon conclusion of his evaluation the Board is in agreement that Mr. Garza has done a great job as the LRGVDC Executive Director and has advanced the mission of the LRGVDC; in regard to that he made a motion to give him a 5% increase to his annual salary. Commissioner Rick Salinas seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously. 5***

President Suarez next moved to item 7. – New or Unfinished Business.

There being no further business to come before the Board, *Commissioner Eleazar Guajardo made a motion to adjourn; Commissioner Rick Salinas seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:08 pm.*

  
Mayor David Suarez, President

ATTEST:

  
Deborah Morales, Recording Secretary