

# MINUTES

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

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2018 – 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 12:04 p.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum declared.

The President then moved to item 2: Consider Approval of Meeting Minutes (October 31, 2018). ***Commissioner Eduardo Gonzalez made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Gilbert Ortiz seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

President Garcia then moved to item 3: Public Comment and/or Report from Legislative Delegation, there being none she moved to item 4: Administration and addressed the following:

A. Recognition of Valley Association for Independent Living (VAIL) for Collaborative Effort on 9-1-1 Public Service Announcements

Public Safety Director Manuel Cruz was recognized and played the Public Service Announcement videos currently showing in movie theatres in Hidalgo and Willacy Counties. He then presented a letter of appreciation to Lidia Teran, Representative from VAIL, thanking them for their assistance in the recreation and enhancement of the 9-1-1 Public Education Public Service Announcements.

B. Consider Date and Time for Annual Work Program & Budget Committee Meeting

Executive Director Ron Garza was recognized and presented a couple of dates for consideration.

Upon conclusion of discussion ***Mayor David Kusch made a motion to schedule the Annual Work Program & Budget Committee Meeting on Wednesday, January 16, 2019 at 12:00 pm at Arturo's Restaurant in Weslaco. Mayor Henry Hinojosa seconded the motion and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

C. Executive Director Report

1. Introduction of New Staff Members

Mr. Garza was recognized and announced that Valley Metro has five (5) new bus drivers: Mr. Jorge Garcia, Mr. Feliciano Arreazola, Mr. Augustine Rendon, Mr. Juan F. Ruiz, and Mr. Andres Ramirez who were all in training and unable to attend the meeting.

## LRGVDC Updates & Activities

### 2. 2019 Board Meeting Calendar / Schedule

Mr. Garza presented a schedule to hold Board Meetings on the last Wednesday of the month, forgo a meeting in July and in November, and hold the last meeting of the year on the second Wednesday in December. ***Commissioner David Fuentes made a motion to approve the 2019 Board Meeting Calendar / Schedule as presented. Mayor Henry Hinojosa seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.*** Upon conclusion of action Mr. Garza stated that Board Member Orientations will be held on a quarterly basis and will be based on current program activities.

### 3. Census 2020

Mr. Garza announced that the next Regional Census 2020 Taskforce meeting is scheduled on December 11, 2018 at 9:00 am at LRGVDC's Ken Jones Executive Board Room. This is an all-inclusive meeting that anyone connected to the 2020 Census is welcome to attend. He also announced the US Census office has opened in McAllen. No action needed.

### 4. 2019-2024 Regional Strategic Plan (Executive Summary)

Mr. Garza emphasized that the goals in the Regional Strategic Plan are not those of the LRGVDC, but are goals set by stakeholders from the Rio Grande Valley and that these goals are for the Rio Grande Valley Region. This document serves as the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and is used as the platform of information to "drill down" for legislative advocacy. The Valley delegation will take high priority projects from these goals to RGV Day in DC. ***Mayor Pro-tem Pete Garcia made a motion to approve the 2019-2024 Regional Strategic Plan (Executive Summary) as presented. Commissioner Eleazar Guajardo seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

### 5. Large & Small Cities Coalition "Legislative Collaborative Forum"

Mr. Garza announced that this event is scheduled on December 13, 2018 at 11:30 am and is open to the Large Cities Coalition and Regional Small Cities Coalition. Announcement only, no action needed.

### 6. BikeShare RGV

There was no new information to report at this time.

### 7. 2019 Mayors' Walk for Wellness (It's Time Texas Community Challenge)

Mr. Garza informed the Board that as noted in the Regional Strategic Plan under Health & Human Services, Goal B is to *"Enrich community health, safety and wellness through program support for quality nutrition, food-access, physical activity, obesity prevention, medical self-care, and the promotion of active lifestyles"*; and he will make every effort to promote these goals. Many great things are happening in the Rio Grande Valley and the fact that three (3) categories were won by Valley entities in the 2018 It's Time Texas Community Challenge shows these achievements. He then turned the floor over to Ms. Cindy Salazar-Collier, Manager for It's Time Texas Community Challenge. Ms. Salazar-Collier informed the Board that It's Time Texas is a state-wide nonprofit organization emphasizing health and wellness and that their base initiative is the Community Challenge which is a one-of-a-kind state-wide competition. The next Challenge official begins on January 7, 2019 and goes through March 3, 2019 and registration began on October 9, 2018. She reiterated Mr. Garza's desire to bring the



RGV to the forefront with positive features like this and show that this region implements these healthy actions. The communities that win their category in the Community Challenge receive grants funds to further healthy initiatives in their communities. Mayors can earn their communities 10,000 points by signing the Mayor's Pledge, if a mayor does not sign the Pledge that city cannot win. She explained that the Pledge is to promote health and wellness in the community and she summarized other ways communities can earn points in this Challenge and distributed flyers with the details of this wonderful initiative.

- Consider Approval of Resolution and TxDOT Agreement  
Mr. Garza stated that the purpose of this resolution was to attain permission from TxDOT to temporarily close a portion of Business 83 for the RGV Fit 5K. However, the route of the 5K has been modified so it will not cross Business 83, therefore there is no need for this resolution nor any action.

Upon conclusion of Administration items, President Garcia moved to item 5: Department Reports.

#### A. Economic Development

##### Economic Development Status Reports

1. Consider Approval of Port of Brownsville's Request for LRGVDC to be Grant Administrator for "Port Infrastructure Project"

Economic Development Director Terrie Salinas was recognized and informed the Board that this EDA investment is for the construction of a public assembly area and erection pad to assist tenants in the ship building industry and future companies with their construction and cargo operations' needs in the Port of Brownsville. The investment will also improve and expand marine delivery and diversity of shipment, which will increase global competitiveness for the Lower Rio Grande Valley and is estimated to create 700 jobs. The Port of Brownsville was awarded a \$1,800,000 grant which was matched with \$4,637,200 from the Port. ***Mayor Henry Hinojosa made a motion to approve the Port of Brownsville's request for the LRGVDC to be the grant administrator for the Port Infrastructure Project. Mayor Cyndie Rathbun seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.*** Upon conclusion of discussion Ms. Salinas gave the status reports on the Regional Small Cities Coalition, and the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program.

##### Explore RGV Status Report

Economic Development Specialist Blanca Davila was recognized and reported that the November 14 Explore RGV Launch Reception was a success. Since the launch of the website, the promotional video has reached over 200,000 people by organic growth alone. Mr. Jorge Ayala, Regional Director for the US Department of Economic Development Administration attended the event and stated he was very impressed by this unique project.

##### RSTEC Update

Mr. Matt Ruszczak, Executive Director of RSTEC (Rio South Texas Economic Council) was recognized and reported that RSTEC has successfully secured certification from the European American Counsel FDI (Foreign Direct Investment). This certification means that this region is prequalified for site selectors and Mr. Ruszczak plans to heavily utilize this certification in the future. He announced that a site selector tour is scheduled at the end of January and that several



European based company representatives plan to attend. Mr. Ruszczak reported that he is scheduled to be in Dallas during the second week in January for the ICSC Show (International Council of Shopping Centers) and in early April he is scheduled to go to Germany for the Hanover Messe (Trade Fair) which is the largest manufacturing show in the world.

#### B. Community & Environmental Services

##### Community Development Status Report

Program Director Marcie Oviedo was recognized and informed the Board that the status reports on the HUD Disaster Recovery Housing Program were in the meeting packet for review.

##### Environmental Resources Status Report

Ms. Oviedo stated that the Solid Waste Program status report was in the meeting packet for review and noted that the Region M Water Planning Group has a vacancy in the Electric Generating Utilities category and the Water District category. The next Region M meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 6, 2019.

#### C. Health & Human Services

##### Area Agency on Aging Status Reports

Program Director Joe Gonzalez was recognized and gave the status report on the Community Development Block Grant funding and noted that the Medicare Open Enrollment period will come to a close on December 7, 2018.

#### D. Public Safety

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

##### Criminal Justice Program Status Reports

Mr. Cruz informed the Board that the Criminal Justice Program 2019 funding cycle will begin in Mid-December and close at the end of February 2019.

##### Emergency Communications Status Report

##### 1. Consider Approval to Purchase Advertisement with Valley Metro for Emergency Communications/9-1-1 Public Education

Mr. Cruz informed the Board that as part of this program's public awareness requirements the 9-1-1 division recommends a 2019 public education campaign by displaying 9-1-1 public advertisements through Valley Metro. Advertisements will utilize major bus routes in order to reach a large majority of citizens in Hidalgo and Willacy Counties. Public Education campaigns that will be advertised are: TEXT-to-911, Keri's Law, and Know Your 9-1-1 Address. These advertisements (bus wraps) will be placed on four (4) busses in the Hidalgo County area and one (1) bus in the Willacy County area. The estimated cost for this advertisement is \$77,857; 9-1-1 Public Education is a budgeted line item and approved by CSEC. ***Mayor Pro-tem Pete Garcia made a motion to approve the purchase of advertisement with Valley Metro for Emergency Communications/9-1-1 Public Education as presented. Commissioner Eleazar Guajardo seconded the motion, and upon a vote the***



***motion carried unanimously.*** Upon conclusion of action Mr. Cruz noted that the Emergency Communications program status reports were in the meeting packet for review.

#### Homeland Security Status Report

1. Consider Approval of Policy Manual for FY 2019-2020 Homeland Security Grant Program and Updated Risk-informed Methodology for Project Prioritization  
Mr. Cruz stated that in accordance with the Office of the Governor's Homeland Security Grant Division the LRGVDC is required to submit an annually updated Policy Manual and Risk-informed Methodology for grant prioritizations. The documents will be utilized by potential grantees as guides to formulate applications and by the HSAC to assist in allocations.
2. Consider Approval of Scoring Instrument for FY 2019-2020 Homeland Security Grant Program  
Mr. Cruz stated that in accordance with the Office of the Governor's Homeland Security Grant Division the LRGVDC is required to submit the most recent scoring instrument that will be used during the upcoming grant prioritization. It was the consensus of the Board to act on items 5. D. 1. and 2. together. ***Mayor Pro-tem Pete Garcia made a motion to approve items 5. D. 1. and 2. as presented. Councilman Gilbert Enriquez seconded, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***
3. Consider Approval of Homeland Security Advisory Committee's Recommendation for 2019 Edinburg-Mission HazMat Project to Receive Reallocation Funds  
Mr. Cruz stated that in accordance with the Office of the Governor's Homeland Security Grant Division, the Homeland Security Advisory Committee (HSAC) convened to review uncommitted/de-obligated funding in the amount of \$7,505.99 from the FY 2019 Funding Block. The HSAC selected this project and the funds will be used to purchase additional hazmat suites for first responders. This is only an estimated amount and any additional amounts will also be utilized for this purpose. ***Mayor Pro-tem Pete Garcia made a motion to approve the HSAC's recommendation for 2019 Edinburg-Mission HazMat Project to Receive Reallocation Funds. Councilman Gilbert Enriquez seconded, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***
4. Consider Approval of Homeland Security Advisory Committee Recommendation of Officers for 2019  
Mr. Cruz reported that in accordance with HSAC bylaws a chair and vice chair are selected to serve a one-year term. Tony Lopez, Fire Chief & EMC for the City of Weslaco, was selected as HSAC Chair. Doug Fowler, Fire Chief & EMC for the City of South Padre Island, was selected as HSAC Vice-Chair. ***Commissioner David Fuentes made a motion to approve Mr. Tony Lopez as HSAC Chair and Doug Fowler as HSAC Vice Chair; Commissioner Eddy Gonzalez seconded and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***
5. Consider Approval of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between LRGVDC and Emergency Training Alliance Board of Rio Grande Valley  
Mr. Cruz informed the Board that this MOU acknowledges the cooperation between both agencies and the desire to enter into this agreement to work together to accomplish the goals and objectives set for the FY 2018/2019 LRGVDC Regional Fire Alliance grant project.



Staff recommends approval for the Executive Director to execute this MOU. ***Commissioner Eddy Gonzalez made a motion to approve the MOU between the LRGVDC and the Emergency Training Alliance Board of the Rio Grande Valley and for the Executive Director to execute the MOU. Commissioner Veronica Whitacre seconded and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

6. Consider Approval to Explore the Creation of a Community Organization Active in Disasters (COAD) Under the LRGVDC

Mr. Cruz informed the Board that when a disaster occurs neighbors and community organizations are often eager to help. A COAD is a group of community organizations, businesses, nonprofits, and individuals working together to plan community responses to a variety of emergency and disaster situations and who may be active in all phases, mitigation, prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery. COADs do not provide direct services but rather provide a network through which individual organizations can more effectively address their mission and service goals during all phases of a disaster. A COAD enhances the ability for all communities involved to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. The LRGVDC would provide committee oversight, coordination, and as an established 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt organization to assume the role of the COAD's fiscal agent. ***Commissioner Eleazar Guajardo made a motion to approve the exploration of the creation of a COAD under the LRGVDC. Mr. Gilbert Ortiz seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.*** Upon conclusion of action Mr. Cruz noted that the Homeland Security Program status reports were in the meeting packet for review.

Regional Police Academy Status Report

Mr. Cruz stated that the regular status report was in the meeting packet for review. He added that in answer to the question from the last meeting on how many cadets have been employed, he has included that answer: from November 2015 through July 2018, 90.77% of graduates have found gainful employment.

E. Transportation

Hidalgo County Metropolitan Planning Organization Status Report

No report was available at this time.

Valley Metro Status Report

Program Director Tom Logan was recognized and addressed the following items:

1. Consider Approval of Revisions to Drug and Alcohol Policy

Mr. Logan reported that these policy revisions adhere to the Federal Transportation Administration's revisions to the 49CFR 655.45(b) Regulations ruling for employers to increase the minimum random drug testing rate from 25 percent to 50 percent of all FTA Safety Sensitive covered employees (drivers, mechanics, administration staff). From the Acting Administrator for FTA's Office of Transit Safety and Oversight: "This increased random drug testing rate results from a recent uptick in the proportion of violations identified through random drug testing". The 50 percent rate applies to any entities receiving federal assistance through 5307, 5309, 5339, and 5311 formula funding from TxDOT. Random alcohol testing is unaffected and will remain at 10 percent. These changes will go into effect on January 1, 2019. ***Commissioner David Fuentes made a motion to approve the revisions to the Drug and Alcohol Policy as presented. Councilman Gilbert Enriquez seconded, and***

***upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

2. Consider Approval of an Extension to Fare-Free Initiative for Valley Metro Public Transportation System

Mr. Logan stated that the main goal of this initiative is to continue to improve performance measures such as passengers per mile, passengers per hour, overall ridership, bus passenger miles, and service miles. This data impacts formula funding received by Valley Metro Regional Transit from both the FTA and TxDOT. Furthermore, this initiative has allowed for all patrons to have an affordable resource in connecting to the Rio Grande Valley. The Fare-Free initiative was installed March 1, 2017 and is scheduled to end December 31, 2018. If during the fiscal year there is a need to reinstate fares, Valley Metro will seek approval from the LRGVDC Board of Directors. ***Mayor Pro-tem Pete Garcia made a motion to approve extending the Fare-Free program as requested. Mayor Cyndie Rathbun seconded and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

3. Consider Approval Authorizing Executive Director to Execute Agreements with Partners for Metro Express Project

Mr. Logan informed the Board that Valley Metro recommends that the Executive Director authorize Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with partner transit agencies (City of Brownsville, City of McAllen, City of South Padre Island, and UTRGV) for the Metro Express Project. On September 28 the Metro Express Project was awarded funding from TxDOT through the Intercity Bus Program to transition the Metro Connect service and create Metro Express. The LRGVDC – Valley Metro will administer this project to ensure safe, seamless, efficient, and equitable regional transportation is provided in the Rio Grande Valley. Furthermore, the focus of the project will be to connect urban areas of the RGV to rural areas such as colonias. ***Commissioner Veronica Whitacre made a motion to authorize the Executive Director to execute agreements with partners for the Metro Express Project as presented. Councilman Gilbert Enriquez seconded and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

4. Consider Approval to Award Transit Fleet Advertisement Contract

Mr. Logan stated that Valley Metro recommends awarding a contract to Clean Zone Marketing to manage the advertisement and wrapping of Valley Metro Transit Fleet for a three (3) year period with the option to extend. The contract will be awarded based on responses to LRGVDC's Request for Proposals (RFP). This contract follows LRGVDC's Procurement Process and meets the requirements of Valley Metro's Advertising Policy. Clean Zone Marketing will develop a media kit with advertising rates and various products with the purpose of attracting more clients and generating revenue. They will also provide services to wrap fleet vehicles. Revenue collected through this contract will act as non-fare revenue for transit related activities and assist in supplementing costs. ***Mayor Pro-tem Pete Garcia made a motion for approval to award the Transit Fleet advertisement contract as requested. Commissioner Eleazar Guajardo seconded, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.*** Upon conclusion of action Mr. Logan noted that the ridership report was in the meeting packet for review.

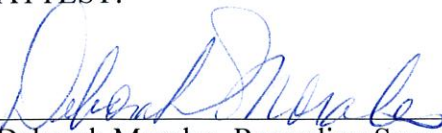
President Garcia next moved to item 6. – New or Unfinished Business. There was discussion about providing transportation for the soldiers currently deployed for extra border protection in Donna and Weslaco. Mr. Garza informed the Board that he was coordinating with several entities to determine how

best to serve this need.

Item 7 Adjourn, President Garcia called for a motion to adjourn. Mayor Armando O'Caña made a motion to adjourn, Councilman Gilbert Enriquez seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:09 pm.

  
Hon. Norma G. Garcia, President

ATTEST:

  
Deborah Morales, Recording Secretary