

MINUTES

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

12:00 PM WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2020
GLOBAL GOTOMEETING VIDEO CONFERENCE PLATFORM
INITIATED AND CHAIRED FROM
LRGVDC MAIN CAMPUS - 301 W. RAILROAD STREET, WESLACO, TEXAS
BUILDING B, SMALL BOARD ROOM

PRESIDING: MAYOR JIM DARLING, PRESIDENT

President Jim Darling called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was declared.

President Darling then moved to item 2: Consideration and Action to Approve Meeting Minutes (October 28, 2020)

Mayor Pro-tem Rick Salinas made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 28, 2020 Board Meeting as presented. Mayor Pro-tem Norie Gonzalez Garza 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. Consideration and Action to Appoint Two (2) Members-at-Large to the Board of Directors

Executive Director Manuel Cruz was recognized and stated that the Members-at-Large met among themselves and recommended Mr. Eleazar “Yogi” Garcia, Jr. and Mr. Sergio Contreras to fill the vacancies on the Board of Directors. ***Commissioner David Garza made a motion to approve Mr. Garcia and Mr. Contreras to fill the vacant Member-at-Large seats. Commissioner Edward Gonzalez seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

B. Recognition of Service, Partnership, and Advocacy by Dr. Shirley Reed, President of South Texas College

President Darling stated that South Texas College has been a game changer for the Rio Grande Valley due to Dr. Reed’s tireless efforts to promote college education. He stated that this recognition upon her retirement is well deserved. He then turned the floor over to Mr. Cruz who showed the Board the award and read the plaque aloud. It says, “In honor of 27 years of distinction representing progress, integrity and leadership for South Texas College. The Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council and Valley Metro hereby recognize Dr. Shirley A. Reed, a prominent founder of the South Texas College “JagExpress” and true champion of regional transit”. Mr. Cruz wished Dr. Reed all the best in her retirement then turned the floor over to Mr. Tom Logan, LRGVDC Director of Regional Transit (Valley Metro). Mr. Logan detailed the 2013 origins of the JagExpress and how it grew to connect multiple campuses, even extending to Starr County.

President Darling then called for a motion to extend the Board of Director’s deep appreciation for all Dr. Read has done for the Rio Grande Valley. ***Mayor George Rivera made a motion to express the Board’s deep appreciation to Dr. Reed; Mayor Pro-tem Norie Gonzalez Garza seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

Dr. Reed was unable to attend this meeting, and Ms. Alina Cantu, Public Safety & Transportation Service

Manager for South Texas College accepted the award on her behalf.

C. Consideration and Action on Date and Time for Annual Report & Budget Committee Meeting.

It was the consensus of the Board to schedule the Annual Report & Budget Committee meeting on January 14, 2021 at 12:00 noon via GoToMeeting; no action required.

D. Presentation on LRGV Flood Study

Ms. Shonda Mace from the Texas General Land Office was recognized and noted that joining her on this presentation are her director, Dr. Coleen Jones and Ms. Sarah Douglas who works with them in the Planning Department and Inter-Governmental Relations.

Ms. Mace gave a presentation titled "Texas GLO Proposed Studies". The presentation covered the LRGV Flood Study which encompasses Hidalgo, Willacy, Cameron, and Starr Counties and will be funded with both 2015 flood funds and mitigation funds for a total cost of \$10 million. This study will evaluate mitigation and abatement strategies to reduce disaster impacts and increase community resiliency. It will mirror the ongoing flood studies within the Combined River Basins study. The second study Ms. Mace presented is a Walkability (Transportation) Study, the purpose of which is to study how the City of Mission's population located in the low tide section of downtown, can walk to shelters during a high rainfall event. The presentation also included an overview of an Economic Development Study, the objective of which is to expand economic activities in our region in order to grow its base of jobs, help its residents prosper, and remain sustainable throughout future economic development. Upon conclusion of the presentation Ms. Mace turned the floor over to Dr. Jones for comment. Dr. Jones expressed hope that the vendor for these studies will be named by the first of the year and informed the Board that the GLO is partnering with the Texas Water Development Board as well as other entities for the best possible results.

Mayor Pro-tem Norie Gonzalez Garza requested an update at the next meeting on the Flood Study and notification when a vendor has been selected. Dr. Jones stated that as soon as the selected vendor is made public and the program is situated they would like to have that vendor provide updates for the Board of Directors as well as other entities; she stated it may not be as soon as the January meeting, but updates will be forthcoming.

E. Executive Director Report

1. Introduction of New Staff Members

Mr. Cruz announced that Mr. Andres Maldonado has joined the staff as a Regional Police Academy Instructor I; and that Mr. Armando Perez was promoted to Assistant Director of Business Operations.

2. 2021 Board Meeting Calendar/Schedule

Mr. Cruz informed the Board that the proposed 2021 meeting calendar is similar to the 2020 calendar. The meetings are scheduled at 12:00 noon on the last Wednesday of the month with the exception of there being no meeting in July or November, and the December meeting is scheduled on the third Wednesday to accommodate the holidays. It was the consensus of the Board to accept the 2021 meeting schedule as presented, no action required.

3. Update on LRG Flood Planning Group (LRG-15)

Mr. Cruz reported that Hidalgo County Drainage District #1 was selected as the sponsor for the newly created LRG Flood Planning Group (LRG-15) and that the first regional plan is due in January 2023 and the first State Plan is due in 2024.

4. Texas Association of Regional Councils (TARC) Updates

Mr. Cruz reminded the Board that the TARC, which is located in Austin, is our liaison to the state legislature. During the recent monthly conference call for all Texas COG Executive Directors, TARC staff reported that due to an increase in COVID-19 cases, the Area Agency on Aging Ombudsmen program is moving forward with a temporary policy of COVID-19 testing every 14 days in order to reduce the spread of the virus, those ombudsmen who do not wish to be tested every 14 days must use full PPE for all visits. Mr. Cruz reported that the 87th legislative session is scheduled to meet at noon on the 2nd Tuesday of January 2021. Access to the capitol is still limited and safety protocols will be developed and implemented.

Mr. Cruz reported that on November 11, 2020 CSEC (Commission on State Emergency Communications) presented the upcoming budget to the Governor's Office of Budget, Planning, Policy, and Legislative Budget Board. The driving factors to this budget are related to rapid changes to the way the public adapts and utilizes communication technology. Next Generation 9-1-1 digital replacement is underway, and the State of Texas is scheduled to complete the conversion by FY 2023. The LRGVDC 9-1-1 Department anticipates completion of the conversion of its systems by February or March of 2021. Mr. Cruz reminded the Board that staff is in the process of having Hidalgo and Willacy Counties designated as the Rio Grande Valley Regional 9-1-1 Emergency Communications District. With the help of TARC, staff has made contact with CSEC to express the interest of the stakeholders in this region in establishing a district designation. Moving forward staff will be in close communication in order to facilitate a smooth transition. The target date to establish the ECD is August 2021, which is the last month of this biennium with CSEC.

5. RGV B-Cycle

Mr. Cruz reported that all nine (9) docking stations in Brownsville and Harlingen have been installed. Five (5) are in Brownsville and four (4) are in Harlingen. An unforeseen issue of a shortage of bicycles and tires has arisen which is due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. With more people turning to bicycling as a measure of safe exercise while social distancing, maintaining the fleet of bicycles and supply of spare tires has been difficult.

Lastly, Mr. Cruz shared the report from the Texas Division of Emergency Management regarding COVID-19 vaccine distribution. This information will be coordinated through the Emergency Management coordinator and Mr. Cruz will share the information document with the Board.

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, but he wanted to make the Board aware that there is a meeting scheduled at 2 pm today to discuss the Economic Development Study the GLO reported on earlier in the meeting. Mr. Carrera also announced that the next RWRAC meeting is scheduled for tomorrow at 10:00 am, and the GLO is also making a presentation on the Lower Rio Grande Valley Flood Study there. And lastly, the next region M meeting is scheduled for January 6, 2021.

B. Health & Human Services

Director Jose Gonzalez was recognized to address the following items:

Program Action Item

1. Consideration and Action to Provide Funding to Mission Housing Authority and WellMed Medical Foundation

Mr. Gonzalez informed the Board that the Area Agency on Aging issued a request for proposal notice for interested organizations for COVID-19 Support Services. However, none of the applications submitted met the requirements. Pursuant to procurement procedures, the process was opened to interested organizations to submit proposals. The Mission Housing authority applied for Senior Center Operations and Transportation for the Mission area.

WellMed Medical Foundation submitted a proposal for Social Reassurance Services. This service will address the issue of a proposal for Social Reassurance Services which will address the issue of social isolation among seniors.

The Advisory Council recommends funding the Mission Housing Authority in the amount of \$34,624.00 for both Senior Center Operations and Transportation services. The Advisory Committee also recommends funding WellMed in the amount of \$42,173.00 for Social Reassurance Services. ***Mayor Chris Boswell made a motion to approve the funding to Mission Housing Authority and WellMed Medical Foundation as presented. Mayor George Rivera seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

Program Status Reports

The status reports on the Social Reassurance Services and Healthy Kits were available for review in the meeting packet. Mr. Gonzalez stated that the Social Reassurance Services program is volunteer based and is designed to contact those senior citizens that have been identified as isolated, this will augment the Senior Companionship Program.

C. Public Safety

Program Action Items:

1. Consideration and Action to Approve Homeland Security Advisory Committee's (HSAC) Recommended Updates to Policy & Procedures for Grants, Bylaws, and Scoresheets for FY 2021-22 Homeland Security Grant Division Funding Cycle

Annually reviewing and revising these documents to align with local state, and federal guidelines is required by the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement with the Public Safety Office of the Office of the Governor. The HSAC convened on November 19 to discuss and make recommendations.

2. Consideration and Action to Approve Homeland Security Advisory Committee's (HSAC) Project Recommendations for Reallocation from Block Funding 2019

The LRGVDC will need to submit projects chosen by December 31. This reallocation will go to fund the City of Pharr's Hazardous Material Response Team and the Brownsville Fire Department's Dive team with the 2019 reallocated funds for the LRGVDC region, which totaled \$61,823.00. These projects address gaps that were identified in the LRGVDC's 2019 Threats and Hazards Identification of Risk Assessment and Stakeholder Preparedness Review.

3. Consideration and Action to Approve Criminal Justice Advisory Committee's (CJAC) Recommended Updates to Policy & Procedures for Grants, Bylaws, and Scoresheets for FY 2021-22 Criminal Justice Division Funding Cycle.

Upon conclusion of presentation of items 5. C. 1-3, **Mayor Chris Boswell made a motion to approve all three items as presented. Ms. Celeste Sanchez 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.

D. Transportation

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

Program Action Item:

1. Consideration and Action to Approve Valley Metro Maintenance Program Revisions

Mr. Logan stated that the revisions include changes to the Vehicle Maintenance Policy and the Facility Maintenance Plan regarding new vehicles that have been added to the fleet. Adoption of these revisions will ensure Valley Metro and the LRGVDC remain in compliance with FTA regulations. The full document was provided for review. **Mayor George Rivera made a motion to approve the revisions as presented. Mayor Chris Boswell 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.

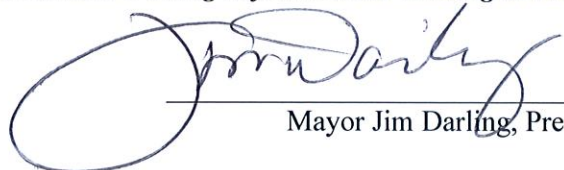
President Darling noted that the RGVMPPO is scheduled to meet tomorrow, December 10, 2020

Item 6. – New or Unfinished Business

Mr. Cruz reported to the Board that LRGVDC has fared well so far during this pandemic and continue to follow pandemic mandates as set forth by the county. He gave special thanks to the Transportation staff and Area Agency on Aging staff that are front-line workers. He thanked the Board of Directors for their leadership throughout this process.

Item 7. – Adjourn.

There being no further business to come before the Board, **President Darling adjourned the meeting at 12:55 pm.**



Mayor Jim Darling, President

ATTEST:



Deborah Morales, Recording Secretary