

MINUTES

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

12:00 PM WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 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 12:21 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 (April 29, 2020)

Commissioner David Garza made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 29, 2020 Board Meeting as presented. Mr. Ron Mills 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 on Recommendations from Nominating Committee

1. Selection of Five (5) Person for Election as Members-at-Large to the General Membership

The Nominating Committee recommends the following five (5) persons for election as Members-at-Large to the General Membership:

NAME	CITY	COUNTY
Ms. Diana Serna	Mercedes	Hidalgo
Mr. Eleazar "Yogi" Garcia, Jr.	Raymondville	Willacy
Mr. Sergio Contreras	Mission	Hidalgo
Mr. Noel Bernal	Brownsville	Cameron
Mr. Chris Gonzalez	Mission	Hidalgo

Mayor David Suarez made a motion to approve the Nominating Committee's recommendation as presented. Mr. Javier Deleon seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

2. Selection of Three (3) Members-at-large to be Elected to the 2020-2021 Board of Directors

The Nominating Committee recommends the following individuals to fill the three (3) at-large seats on the Board of Directors for 2020-2021:

NAME	CITY	COUNTY
Ms. Norma G. Garcia	Donna	Hidalgo
Ms. Celeste Sanchez	San Benito	Cameron
Commissioner Jesse Zuniga	La Feria	Cameron

Mayor Pro-tem Ricardo Salinas made a motion to approve the Nominating Committee's recommendation as presented. Mayor David Suarez seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

B. Consider Ratification of Executive Committee Action on the Following Items:

1. Approval of Amendment to Amigos Del Valle Fiscal Year 2020 Budget

The Area Agency on Aging will receive a notification of funding award from the prior fiscal year and the CARES Act for meals. Funds from the Family First Coronavirus Response Act have already been released. The sum for the prior year and Family First is \$2,051,835. Based on the Family First award, it is estimated that the CARES Act funding for the meals will be approximately \$2,070,000. The Family First and CARES Act funding needs to be depleted by September 30, 2021. Amigos Del Valle has been notified of the funds and are working to reduce the home delivered meal waiting list. Texas received \$53,699,314 under the CARES Act to support Area Agencies on Aging in Addressing the COVID-19 emergency.

2. Approval of Funding for Amigos Del Valle and City of Mercedes

Amigos Del Valle and the City of Mercedes responded to the Special Request for Proposals. The total amount of the request was \$163,477. The City of Mercedes requested \$19,688 to hire three existing volunteer firefighters for 3 months to provide first-line response care to seniors in the community. Examples are picking up prescriptions, groceries, and other essential errands. This funding will be under the senior center operation category.

Amigos Del Valle requested \$143,779 for the following:

- \$109,764 to replace three (3) older vehicles that provide transportation for seniors from the communities of Weslaco, Harlingen, and San Benito.
- \$34,015 to purchase eight (8) food warmers for meals being prepared for delivery.

It was the consensus of the Board to act on both items B. 1. & 2. together. ***Ms. Norma G. Garcia made a motion to ratify Executive Committee approval to amend the Amigos Del Valle FY 2020 Budget and approval of funding for Amigos Del Valle and the City of Mercedes. Mr. Paul Hernandez seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

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

A. Community & Economic Development

Director Blanca Davila was recognized to address the following:

Program Action Items:

1. Consideration and Action to Approve Submission of Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) Flood Infrastructure Funding (FIF) Abridged Application

Ms. Davila informed the Board that Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties have brought the proposed project to the Regional Water Resource Advisory Committee (RWRAC). The RWRAC recommends moving the TWDB abridged application forward for a proposed regional, multi-jurisdictional and Flood Protection Planning for Watersheds project. The deadline is June 15, 2020 at 5:00 PM.

Commissioner David Garza added that RWRAC has developed a project that includes different caveats, and this is a true regional project with involvement from all three counties. There are two priorities and objectives for this project. One is for the establishment of a regional coordination and decision-making

network, along with the assimilation of hydrologic and hydraulic knowledge to support science driven policy and decision making. The other is to identify local and regional capital improvement projects that support regional flood management. Commissioner Garza reported that the RWRAC has contacted and met with every city in the LRGVDC region, and yesterday Cameron County passed a resolution in support of this project and committed to funding half of the 10% match amount, the other 90% will be covered by the TWDB Flood Infrastructure Fund grant. The RWRAC has identified a project in the amount of \$8.77 million, which includes a match for a future section 7001 grant from the Army Corps of Engineers for \$2 million which will include the whole Valley.

Commissioner David Fuentes thanked Commissioner Garza and Cameron County for taking the lead with respect to consultants and preparing the whitepapers for this application. He added that it is important to note that this is not a construction-type project, this is to plan two projects that will help with regional flood control and mitigation. The Hidalgo County Drainage Districts will assist, and the LRGVDC will be asked to provide administrative oversight. Upon conclusion of discussion ***Ms. Norma G. Garcia made a motion to approve submission of a TWDB FIF abridged application as presented. Commissioner David Garza seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

2. Consideration and Action to Approve Texas Community Development Block Grant Priorities 2021-2022

Ms. Davila reported that the non-entitlement cities met via video conference on May 19 to discuss and comment on TxCDBG Regional priorities to be submitted to the Texas Department of Agriculture. The scoring sheet was provided in the meeting packet. ***Mayor David Suarez made a motion to approve the TxCDBG 2021-2022 priorities as presented. Commissioner David Garza seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

3. Consideration and Action to Support the Terrabella Environmental Services TX (RN109658260) Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Permit

This permit application for a Type V Facility: Medical waste Transfer Facility was reviewed by the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) on May 19 and had favorable comments. The letter will be submitted to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for their review. TCEQ letters to residents and a public comment period will follow. ***Ms. Celeste Sanchez made a motion to support the Terrabella Environmental Services Edinburg, TX (RN109658260) Municipal Solid Waste permit as requested. Ms. Veronica Gonzalez 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.

B. Health & Human Services

Director Jose Gonzalez was recognized to address the following items:

Program Action Items:

1. Consideration and Action to Authorize Issuing Vendor (Contractor) Solicitation for Additional Services and Contractors

Mr. Gonzalez stated that staff seeks authorization to issue a vendor (contractor) solicitation for additional services and contractors. The Family First and CARES Act provide for additional funding for congregate and home delivered meals. The Administration for Community Living and CARES Act provide the Area Agency on Aging the authority to transfer as much funds as required to meet the need for home delivered meals. The purpose for this solicitation is to seek vendors for home delivered meals, chore services, emergency response, and personal care. Plus, additional vendors for existing services as

the need has increased. Current contractors will not need to respond to the solicitation unless they are adding a new service. **Mayor Pro-tem Ricardo Salinas made a motion to authorize the issuance of vendor solicitation for additional services and contractors as requested. Ms. Norma G. Garcia seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

Program Status Reports

The status reports on Food Bags Distributed in Cameron and Willacy Counties was available in the meeting packet for review.

C. Public Safety

Program Status Reports:

Program Director Manuel Cruz was recognized and reported that no action was required for his programs this month. Mr. Cruz briefly summarized the Public Safety program status reports provided in the meeting packet.

D. Transportation

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

Program Action Items:

1. Consideration and Action to Approve Procurement of Professional Services for Architecture and Engineering

Mr. Logan stated that staff requests approval to procure professional services (Architecture and Engineering) as part of the Valley Metro Expansion/Renovation project at the Weslaco Transportation Center. This project will accommodate current and future growth, and address Transit Asset Management Plan needs for facility upkeep. Procurement of these services will be made using an FTA grant through Region 6. Due to the high dollar value of this procurement it requires Board approval. **Mayor David Suarez made a motion to approve initiation of the process to procure professional services for architecture and engineering as requested. Mr. Ron Mills seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

2. Consideration and Action to Approve Purchase of Automated Fareboxes

Mr. Logan stated that staff requests Board approval to purchase automated fareboxes for the RGV Metro Express service. Automated fareboxes will update Valley Metro fare collection systems to streamline points of service, assist in data collection, and ensure compatibility with McAllen and Brownsville fare collection systems. The purchase of these fareboxes will be made using a TxDOT grant at 100% match. **Mayor David Suarez made a motion to approve the purchase of automated fareboxes as requested. Mayor Pro-tem Ricardo Salinas seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

Program Status Reports:

The Valley Metro program status reports were available in the meeting packet for review, and Mr. Logan stated that there is an 8% decrease in ridership. However, comparing the ridership in April 2019 to that of April 2020 there is an 87% decrease due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Fortunately, staff is seeing an increase in ridership this month and hopefully it will continue to increase over the next few months.

Mr. Logan reported that COVID-19 precautionary measures on Valley Metro busses include daily cleaning with CDC-approved disinfectant, passengers using the rear-door to board/deboard, cordoning-off driver area, installation of hand sanitizer dispensers inside buses, and issuing safety memos to staff.

President Darling asked if riders are required to wear face masks. Mr. Logan stated that it is highly recommended, and masks are available on the busses for riders who do not have one. Mayor Pro-tem Ricardo Salinas stated that it is important, essential even, that we make the use of face masks mandatory. President Darling stated that it would be appropriate to make wearing face masks mandatory while riding Valley Metro busses and subject to change as recommendations from the state change. He also asked Mr. Logan to check with the FTA if Valley Metro has the authority to make face mask use mandatory. **Mayor Pro-tem Ricardo Salinas made a motion that Valley Metro's COVID-19 precautionary measures shall include the required use of facemasks by passengers on busses, subject to approval by the FTA. Ms. Celeste Sanchez seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

President Darling next moved to 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 and Personnel Policies.

It was the consensus of the Board to discuss this item in open session.

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

President Darling stated that the Executive Committee unanimously recommends the appointment of Mr. Manuel "Manny" Cruz as the LRGVDC Executive Director at an annual salary of \$122,000 plus a \$750 car allowance. **Commissioner David Garza made a motion to approve Mr. Manuel Cruz as LRGVDC Executive Director as recommended by the Executive Committee. Ms. Celeste Sanchez seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**


Regarding revision to the Personnel Policies, **Mr. Troy Allen made a motion to approve the revision as presented. Ms. Celeste Sanchez seconded, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

Item 7. – New or Unfinished Business.

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

ATTEST:


Deborah Morales, Recording Secretary


Mayor Jim Darling, President