

MINUTES

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

12:00 PM WEDNESDAY, JUNE 30, 2021
GLOBAL GOTOMEETING VIDEO CONFERENCE PLATFORM & IN PERSON
INITIATED AND CHAIRED FROM
LRGVDC MAIN CAMPUS - 301 W. RAILROAD STREET, WESLACO, TEXAS
BUILDING B, KEN JONES EXECUTIVE BOARD ROOM

PRESIDING: JUDGE AURELIO GUERRA, PRESIDENT

President Aurelio Guerra called the meeting to order at 12:04 p.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum was declared.

President Guerra then moved to item 2 - Consideration and Action to Approve Meeting Minutes (May 26, 2021). ***Councilwoman Norie Garza made a motion to approve the May 26, 2021 meeting minutes as presented. Mr. Jim Darling seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

President Guerra next moved to Item 3: Public Comment and/or Report from Legislative Delegation; there being none, President Guerra next moved to Item 4: Administration.

A. Presentation on Property Tax Appraisal Process

Executive Director Manny Cruz stated that, as the Board requested at the May meeting, he has invited our county appraisal districts to give a presentation on the process of assessing property tax rates. The main question the Board has, is if there is a process whereby local governments can request a deferment or freeze on rate increases during a disaster such as the current pandemic. Mr. Cruz then turned the floor over to Mr. Richard Molina, Cameron County Appraisal District. Mr. Molina introduced his staff, Mr. Rolando Garza, Hidalgo County Appraisal District; and Ms. Rosalva Guerra, Starr County Appraisal District.

Mr. Molina and Mr. Garza led a detailed presentation that covered the establishment of appraisal districts, explained that they are responsible for appraising property for ad valorem purposes, that all taxable property is appraised at its market value as of January 1, and that market value is the price at which a property would sell. Mr. Molina explained that a disaster must be declared by the governor, that there must be physical damage to the property, and that the COVID pandemic did not qualify. While he appreciates the resolution the City of Edinburg passed, he is bound by the law to set property taxes according to legislation.

B. Presentation and Discussion on Redistricting and C. Presentation on Partnering with Unidos Contra la Diabetes to Increase Diabetes Awareness and Prevention

Due to the length of, and extensive discussion on the Property Tax Appraisal Process presentation, President Guerra will reschedule these presentations for the August 25 meeting.

D. Consideration and Action to Appoint Board Designee and Alternate to Texas Association of Regional Councils (TARC)

Mayor Chris Boswell made a motion to appoint Commissioner David Garza as the designee and Mr. Jim Darling as the alternate for the next term. Mayor Rick Guerra seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

E. Consideration and ACTION to Approve Procurement of New Phone System for Entire LRGVDC

Mr. Cruz was recognized and informed the Board that the proposed item is the CISCO-Business Edition 6000. The cost of this item will be \$87,879 or less depending on final equipment selections. The purpose of this purchase is to upgrade LRGVDC's old, antiquated phone system. A procurement cost analysis was conducted by staff and three quotes were received; one quote did not meet the specifications requested. The two quotes were evaluated, and TanChes Global Management has been selected under TX DIR #4167. Staff is confident that the selected vendor will meet all our needs and requirements for telephone communications. This item was included as part of the approved budget at the beginning of this fiscal year. ***Commissioner David Garza made a motion to approve the procurement of a new phone system for the entire LRGVDC. Mr. Troy Allen seconded, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

F. Executive Director Report

President Guerra recognized Executive Director Manuel Cruz to address the following:

LRGVDC Updates & Activities

Mr. Cruz took a moment to remember Mr. Richard Hinojosa who passed away on June 14, 2021. Mr. Hinojosa was with the LRGVDC from 1992 – 2005; and served as the Director of Regional Planning & Services, and then as the Deputy Executive Director. The LRGVDC family sends the Hinojosa family our prayers and deepest condolences.

1. Introduction of New Staff Members

Mr. Cruz showed a list of seven (7) new staff members who were hired for the Area Agency on Aging and for Valley Metro.

2. Auditor Information Request

Mr. Cruz informed the Board that our financial auditing process requires that a survey be completed by every LRGVDC Board Member. The information will be mailed via USPS with a pre-addressed envelope to mail it directly to our auditor, Oscar R. Gonzalez, CPA & Associates, P.L.L.C. Mr. Cruz encouraged prompt responses for the survey in order to not delay finalizing the 2020 audit.

3. 87th Legislature Updates

Mr. Cruz highlighted HB 5 on the expansion of broadband services in rural areas and offered the services of the LRGVDC as a platform to implement this project. Areas where the LRGVDC could assist are by identifying weak areas possibly through a propagation study, a feasibility study and/or market analysis on different types of technology. Four councils of governments have already ventured into this project; some are spearheading its implementation and serving as the platform to connect local governments with the private sector. He emphasized that the LRGVDC stands ready to assist as needed.

4. American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

This topic was covered under item 3.

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

A. Community & Economic Development

Director Rick Carrera was recognized to address the following:

Program Action Items

1. Consideration and Action to Approve Entering into an Advertising Contract with Advertir

Mr. Carrera informed the Board that Advertir is an advertising firm that was selected through a formal solicitation process, a Request for Proposals (RFP), by the Regional Tourism and Travel Advisory Committee (RTTAC). They were selected among three (3) respondents to the RFP. The contract will be for \$45,000 and will provide marketing services for the Explore RGV Application and website. ***Mayor Rick Salinas made a motion to approve entering into an advertising contract with Advertir as requested. Councilman Johnny Garcia seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

Program Status Reports

Mr. Carrera noted that the status reports were provided in the meeting packet for review.

B. Health & Human Services

Program Status Reports

Mr. Gonzalez stated that the status reports on CDC Funding Addressing Expanding COVID-19 Vaccinations for Seniors and the Consolidated Appropriations Act Funding for Home Delivered Meals were in the meeting packet for review.

C. Public Safety

Program Action Items

Director of Public Safety Randall Snyder was recognized to report on the following items:

1. Consideration and Action to Approve Purchase of Interoperable Communications Infrastructure Equipment

Mr. Snyder informed the Board that this equipment which will be purchased under current state grant #4016801, Interoperable Communications Infrastructure Regional Project, will help build and enhance communication capabilities among first responders, in particular the Edinburg-Pharr radio systems.

The quote, in the amount of \$381,528.28 is for infrastructure hardware and labor. This purchase will help build the capacity of the City of Edinburg's radio system which is currently tied to the City of Pharr's radio system. The current issue is when the City of Pharr's system goes down, so does the City of Edinburg's. Edinburg is home to some of the region's special teams that deploy to the city, region, and state; therefore, it is critical that communication capabilities be enhanced and sustained. The City of Edinburg will be responsible for connectivity and electrical costs as well as maintaining the system. The quote is from the vendor Daily-Wells which installed the original system and currently services it. Therefore, to maintain a smooth transition and continuation of operations it is recommended that Dailey-Wells provide the services. ***Mayor Chris Boswell made a motion to approve the purchase of interoperable communications infrastructure equipment as requested. Commissioner Edward 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

D. Transportation

Director of Valley Metro Tom Logan was recognized to address the following items:

Program Action Items

a. Consideration and Action to Approve Procurement of On-Board Camera System Upgrade

Mr. Logan informed the Board that staff requests approval to purchase this on-board camera system upgrade to enable live-streaming and wireless video footage download. This system upgrade will allow our staff to remotely monitor live footage of the buses in the field giving us the opportunity to address situations as they occur. Furthermore, the wireless video footage download will expedite the retrieval and review of footage of incidents and accidents and assist in personnel evaluations. This system is an extension of our Seon on-board camera system.

Purchase of this system will be made using TxDOT grant #RTAP-2020-LRGVDC-00017 Grant and will cover this purchase at 100%, no local match is required. ***Mayor Chris Boswell made a motion to approve the procurement of the on-board camera system upgrade as presented. Councilman Johnny Garcia seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

b. Consideration and Action to Approve Procurement of Employee Uniforms

Mr. Logan informed the Board that staff requests approval to purchase employee uniforms from the existing contract with Unifirst. Uniforms will be issued to the following staff positions: drivers, mechanics, dispatchers, call-takers, and contracted employees.

Purchase of these uniforms is made possible through cooperative procurement, and FTA grants will cover purchase at 50%, with a local match of 50%. ***Councilwoman Norie Garza made a motion to approve the procurement of employee uniforms as presented. Councilman Johnny Garcia 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. Mr. Logan reported that even though we are in the midst of a pandemic Valley Metro ridership is good and has served 151,000 riders year-to-date, and ridership continues to slowly increase. He added that the new Fast Ride Microtransit System is being utilized by the elderly and disabled as well as able-bodied riders. The Microtransit System offers curb-to-curb service anywhere here in the Valley.

Item 6. - New or Unfinished Business

Mr. Cruz reminded the Board that the LRGVDC is on its way to becoming an Emergency Communications District by the end of August. Staff will send invitations to the first meeting.

Item 7. – Adjourn.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 1:19 pm.



Judge Aurelio Guerra, President

ATTEST:



Deborah Morales, Recording Secretary