

MINUTES

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

12:00 PM WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 25, 2021
VIA 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 12:07 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 (June 30, 2021). ***Mr. Ronald Mills made a motion to approve the June 30, 2021, meeting minutes as presented. Commissioner David Garza 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, he moved to Item 4: Administration.

Item 4. E. – Introduction of UTRGV's New Dean of School of Medicine was taken out of order and heard at this time. Ms. Veronica Gonzales, UTRGV Senior Vice President of Governmental & Community Relations, was recognized and introduced Dr. Hocker noting that he has been with UTRGV for two months and looks forward to meeting the LRGVDC Board Members in person. Ms. Gonzalez gave an overview of Dr. Hocker's education and accomplishments then turned the floor over to him. Dr. Hocker thanked the Board for their support of UTRGV through the years and the development of the UTRGV School of Medicine. He summarized the status of, and vision for, the School of Medicine and stated he looks forward to meeting each of the Board members.

A. Ratification of Executive Committee Action on Purchase of 9-1-1 Equipment Upgrade for Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs)

Executive Director Manny Cruz informed the Board that at the end of July the Executive Committee approved the purchase of front and backroom computers, software, server equipment and accessories for all seventeen (17) PSAPs. Mr. Cruz reminded the Board that the LRGVDC will be separating from the State's 9-1-1 program and purchasing this equipment prior to August 20 would leverage existing State funds prior to this separation. Purchase of these items is in line with the 10-year replacement schedule of all equipment which would benefit the 9-1-1 work centers tremendously. Staff asks for ratification from the Board on this Executive Committee action. ***Mayor Javier Villalobos made a motion to ratify Executive Committee Action on the Purchase of 9-1-1 Equipment Upgrade for Public Safety Answering Points. Mayor Trey Mendez seconded, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

B. Presentation and Consider Action on 2020 Annual Audit

Ms. Melissa Gonzalez, Oscar R. Gonzalez, CPA & Associates, was recognized and stated that she was here to present the LRGVDC audited financial report for the year ended December 31, 2020. She stated that their firm has audited the accompanying financial statements of the governmental activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the LRGVDC as of, and for the year ended December 21, 2020, and the related note to the financial statement which collectively comprise the

LRGVDC's basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents. In their opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the LRGVDC as of December 31, 2020. Ms. Gonzalez stated that this means that the LRGVDC has a clean opinion, their staff did all their audit procedures on various grants and balance sheets. Their staff did the single audit as well, and everything was found as it should be. She stated that all necessary information was provided to them in a timely manner, and everything was very good. She summarized several statements from the audit and concluded by stating that there were no findings, and the LRGVDC received an unmodified opinion, which is a clean opinion. **Mayor Javier Villalobos made a motion to accept the 2020 Annual Audit. Mr. Ronald Mills seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

C. Presentation and Action to Accept Quarterly Investment Report

Finance Director Crystal Balboa was recognized and presented the Quarterly Investment Report. **Councilwoman Norie Garza made a motion to accept the Quarterly Investment Report. Councilman Johnny Garcia seconded, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

D. Presentation on State of Texas' Proposed Opioid Settlements

Ms. Stephanie Everheart, Assistant Attorney General for the Office of the Attorney General was recognized and gave a presentation entitled "Global Opioids Settlement, What it Means for Texas. The presentation provided an update on the Opioids Crisis and stated that on July 3, 2021, Attorney General Paxton announced global settlements had been reached with the three (3) major opioid distributors which are McKesson, Cardinal Health, and Amerisource Bergen (ABDC), and opioid manufacturer Johnson & Johnson (J&J). The distributors' settlement is for \$21 billion, and the J&J settlement is for \$5 billion. The settlements include injunctive relief that changes the industry. Ms. Everheart informed the Board that Texas could receive as much as \$1.17 billion from the distributors and \$268 million from J&J, most of which is targeted for opioid abatement. The actual amount Texas receives will depend upon the participation of cities, counties, and other political subdivisions in the state. Texas has decided to join those settlements. A 120-day sign on period has just started for cities and counties to make a decision as to whether or not to join, the deadline for this is January 2, 2022. The AG's office has decided to make the rounds much sooner than this deadline in an effort to get support and a consensus for the settlements. The presentation which includes their contact information is available on the LRGVDC website at:

<http://www.lrgvdc.org/meetings.html>.

Presentation only, no action needed.

E. Introduction of UTRGV's New Dean of School of Medicine

This item was heard at the top of the agenda.

F. Presentation and Discussion on Redistricting.

Ms. Nina Perales, President of Litigation, MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund), was recognized and began by informing the Board that MALDEF is a non-profit law firm that was founded to bring civil rights cases on behalf of Latinos. Voting rights have always been a central topic MALDEF has worked on over the years. They have litigated every round of redistricting in Texas since 1968. Ms. Perales stated that in every single round of redistricting, Texas has been found to have discriminated against Latino voters in one or more of its statewide redistricting plans. In terms of consideration for local redistricting, Ms. Perales stated that as communities enter into the redistricting process, community input is critical. She strongly suggested that public hearings be scheduled both in-person and virtually; that communities reach out to groups and individuals that are interested in weighing in on redistricting to make sure they are aware of public hearing dates and have the opportunity to fully participate in the process.

G. Presentation and Consider Action on Partnering with Unidos Contra la Diabetes to Increase Diabetes

Awareness and Prevention

Ms. Raina King, Unidos Contra la Diabetes (UCD) Facilitator, was recognized and gave a presentation about reducing diabetes and bridging health gaps in the Valley. She began by stating that their mission is to reduce the number of new cases of type II diabetes in the RGV resulting in a 10% reduction in the prevalence of diabetes by 2030. UCD is committed to doing this by bringing together schools, businesses, medical providers, and community organizations and making small changes that lead to a greater quality of life. She explained who UCD is, showed who their partners are, and provided data on the high prevalence of diabetes in the RGV, especially among Mexican Americans and Latinos. She stated the rate of pre-diabetes is over 32% in the RGV. She listed the risk factors associated with diabetes and stated that UCD looked at the major issues to see where they can bridge the gaps and work with the community to reduce diabetes rates in the RGV. One way is their campaign called “Our Life is Sweet Enough”, which is a sugary beverage campaign they will restart soon. She asked for a commitment from the LRGVDC to support the work UCD does and bring awareness of diabetes and pre-diabetes. Ms. King’s presentation, which includes her contact information, is available on the LRGVDC website <http://lrgvdc.org/meetings.html>. Upon conclusion of the presentation **Mayor Javier Villalobos made a motion for the LRGVDC to continue to support UCD with the use of their facilities and distribution of information. Mayor Trey Mendez seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

H. Executive Director Report

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

LRGVDC Updates & Activities

1. Introduction of New Staff Members

A list of five (5) new staff members was displayed on the screen: Ms. Jennifer Zavala, Ms. Gladis Saenz, and Ms. Orfelinda Fox were hired for the Area Agency on Aging; and Ms. Maria Gonzalez, and Ms. Jennifer Carr were hired for the Homeland Security Program.

2. Consider Action to Approve Resolution for Advance Funding Agreement

Mr. Cruz reminded the Board that this item was introduced at a previous meeting, and that this Advance Funding Agreement is for a Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TASA) Program project between the LRGVDC and the Texas Department of Transportation. The Hidalgo County Active Mobility Plan project will define opportunities for a regional network in Hidalgo County that focuses on active multimodal transportation and opportunities for active tourism: bike and pedestrian infrastructure, tourism destinations, flooding and drainage mitigation strategies, health and wellness, and community & economic development. The LRGVDC will coordinate this plan along with cities in Hidalgo County. Cities in Hidalgo County will provide the local cash match required for the project, the LRGVDC will act as the project manager to ensure the project is completed. **Mayor Javier Villalobos made a motion to approve the resolution for Advance Funding Agreement as presented. Commissioner David Garza seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

3. Rio Grande Valley Emergency Communication District

Mr. Cruz reported that at 5:30 pm on Tuesday, August 31, 2021, the City of Weslaco will consider approval of the final resolution that will create the Rio Grande Valley Emergency Communication District, and a ribbon cutting ceremony is scheduled in anticipation of its approval. The inaugural meeting of the RGVECD is scheduled for Thursday, September 2, 2021, at 10:30 am and Mr. Cruz extended an invitation to the Board to attend both events.

4. American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

Mr. Cruz stated that Mr. Rick Carrera, Community & Economic Development will provide information on this item further down on the agenda.

5. GLO's Response to HARP (Homeowner Assistance and Reimbursement Program)

The GLO responded to a letter sent by President Aurelio Guerra voicing concerns about the lack of local administration of the HARP as well as the lack of outreach and guidance and the limited public comment period. The GLO's letter of response was included in the meeting packet for review.

6. Texas Open Meetings Act Requirements Commencing September 1, 2021

Mr. Cruz reminded the Board of the Texas Open Meeting Act Suspension Updates that will be in effect as of September 1, 2021 and summarized the changes.

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 Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Resolution

Mr. Carrera informed the Board that a signed resolution from the LRGVDC governing body must accompany the FY 2022/2023 Regional Solid Waste Grants Program application. The LRGVDC is required to submit the signed resolution with the LRGVDC application. ***Commissioner David Garza made a motion to approve the resolution for the TCEQ Solid Waste Grants program as presented. Councilmember Johnny Garcia seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

Program Status Reports

In follow up to Mr. Cruz reference to the American Rescue Plan Act funding, Mr. Carrera reported that there are several funding opportunities available from the Economic Development Administration. He and his staff have contacted stakeholders, partners, and others in the area to inform them about several of the EDA's Notices of Funding Opportunities. The big opportunity is the \$1 billion Build Back Better Regional Challenge that will provide a transformational investment to 20-30 regions across the country that want to revitalize their economies. Staff has held preliminary meetings with some communities and are opening the door to others who are interested in this opportunity. All of the EDA Notices of Funding Opportunities are posted on the LRGVDC website under the Community & Economic Development tab and Economic Development on the drop-down list or on the EDA website at: <https://www.eda.gov/arpa/>.

B. Health & Human Services

Director Joe Gonzalez was recognized to report on the following items:

Area Agency on Aging Program Action Items

1. Consideration and Action to Approve Subrecipient Funding for Fiscal Year 2022

Mr. Gonzalez informed the Board that the Advisory Council recommends approval to fund the following organizations for fiscal year 2022 under the Older American Act program:

- Amigos Del Valle - \$3,554,955.00
- City of Los Fresnos - \$71,494.00
- City of Rio Hondo - \$70,536.00
- City of La Joya - \$51,480.00
- Mission Housing Authority - \$28,000.00
- WellMed Medical Foundation - \$290,825.00

Mr. Ronald Mills made a motion to approve the funding amount for these organizations as presented. Mayor Rick Guerra seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

2. Consideration and Action to Add Vendors (Contractors) to the Vendor Pool

Mr. Gonzalez informed the Board that the Advisory Council recommends approval of thirty-six (36) vendor agreements for fiscal year 2022. The service these vendors will provide include:

- Home modifications
- Medical transportation
- Medical assistance
- Medical supplies and equipment
- Homemaker services
- Caregiver respite care

These vendors will be utilized by case managers to purchase services for their clients in our Case Management Program and Caregiver Respite Program. ***Commissioner David Garza made a motion to add the vendors (contractors) to the vendor pool as recommended by the Advisory Council. Mayor Rick Guerra seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

3. Consideration and Action to Seek Additional Vendors (Contractors) for the Fiscal Year 2022 Vendor Pool

Mr. Gonzalez informed the Board that the Advisory Council recommends opening enrollment for the Direct Purchased Service contractor pool for the period of October 1, 2021, through September 30, 2022. More vendors are needed to provide residential repairs, homemaker services, and respite care. ***Mayor Rick Guerra made a motion to approve seeking additional vendors (contractors) for the FY 2022 vendor pool as recommended by the Advisory Council. Mayor Trey Mendez seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

Program Status Reports

Mr. Gonzalez stated that the status reports are 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 Renewal of Network Monitoring and Management Services with Mission Critical Partners

Mr. Snyder reported that the cost for these services is estimated at \$323,844 over the 2-year contract. These services include 24/7 network monitoring, tier one incident support services, and a cyber security assessment. This vendor is on the State of Texas DIR Contract DIR-TSO-3839. ***Mayor Rick Guerra made a motion to approve renewal of network monitoring and management services with Mission***

Critical Partners as presented. Councilwoman Norie Garza seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

Program Status Reports

Mr. Snyder stated that the program status reports were provided in the meeting packet for review and encouraged the Board to review the FEMA Advisory in the Homeland Security Program status report. This advisory discusses the continues support for COVID-19 resources and recovery assistance.

D. Transportation

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

Program Action Items

1. Consideration and Action to Authorize Executive Director to Negotiate and Enter into a Contract with Moore and Associates, Inc.

Mr. Logan informed the Board that after completing the process of ranking proposals submitted by several contractors, the Regional Transportation Advisory Panel (RTAP) sub-committee tasked with updating the Regional Public Transportation Coordination Plan has selected Moore and Associates, Inc. to perform work outlined in our 2020 Plan Update Application to TxDOT. Authorizing the LRGVDC Executive Director to negotiate and enter into the contract with Moore and Associates, Inc. will allow the LRGVDC to adhere to the timeline for delivery set forth in the aforementioned application. State funding for the project is already in place at 100% with no local match required. ***Commissioner David Garza made a motion to authorize the Executive Director to negotiate and enter into a contract with Moore and Associates, Inc. as recommended by the RTAP. Mayor Trey Mendez seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

2. Consideration and Action to Approve Procurement of Fareboxes for Valley Metro Urban Fleet along with Farebox Management Software, Peripherals, and Vault System

Mr. Logan stated that staff requests Board approval to purchase fareboxes and management software, as well as the vault system from Genfare to equip units in the Valley Metro fleet in preparation for the collection of Fares. This will ensure that our farebox system is compatible with both Brownsville and McAllen metro systems. Furthermore, this will ensure that our goal of seamless fare systems in the Valley, as recommended by our regional plan, is achieved. The purchase of these parts will be made using FTA and TxDOT grants, which will cover this purchase at 100%, no local match will be required. ***Commissioner David Garza made a motion to approve the procurement of fareboxes for the Valley Metro Urban Fleet along with farebox management software, peripherals, and the vault system as presented. Mr. Ronald Mills seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

3. Consideration and Action to Approve Revisions to Valley Metro Transit Service Policy

Mr. Logan stated that staff requests Board approval to adopt revisions to the Valley Metro Transit Service Policy. The recommended revisions are related to definition on the various types of route cancellations, a standard operating procedure on the approval of cancellations, and a system for reporting cancellations to TxDOT and FTA. Adoption of these revisions will ensure Valley Metro/LRGVDC maintain sufficient oversight of scheduled service, while remaining in compliance with FTA and TxDOT regulations. ***Mayor Rick Guerra made a motion to approve the revisions to the Valley Metro Transit Service Policy as presented. Councilmember Johnny Garcia seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

4. Consideration and Action to Approve Procurement of Revenue Vehicles for Valley Metro Rural Fleet

Mr. Logan informed the Board that staff requests Board approval to purchase up to eight (8) Type II buses. These buses will be incorporated into the Valley Metro Rural Motor Bus Fleet and will be added to the new FAST RIDE Micro transit service. Purchase of these vehicles will be made using TxDOT grants at 100%. The cost of the eight Type II buses is \$612,138.56. **Mr. Ronald Mills made a motion to approve the procurement of revenue vehicles for the Valley Metro Rural Fleet as presented. Mayor Jorge Ledesma seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

Program Status Reports

Mr. Logan noted that the Valley Metro Program status reports were available in the meeting packet for review.

Item 6. - New or Unfinished Business

Commissioner David Garza announced that Cameron County is using ARPA funds to offer an incentive of \$50.00 for children aged 12–18 years old who get vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccination between the 10th of August and the end of September; the only requirement is that they are enrolled in a school in Cameron County. He encouraged other counties and cities to offer a similar incentive to encourage citizens to be vaccinated.

Ms. Veronica Gonzales announced that UTRGV has offered a similar incentive. They opened a portal where students, faculty, and staff can input their vaccination status, and UTRGV has clinics open that provide vaccinations. There is a \$100 incentive to use the portal and they have had a massive influx of students participate; they are at approximately 80% vaccinated. She encouraged other entities to also provide monetary incentives to get vaccinated if they are able to do so.

Item 7. – Adjourn.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 1:28 pm.



Judge Aurelio Guerra, President

ATTEST:



Deborah Morales, Recording Secretary