

MINUTES

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

12:00 PM WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 2023

HELD IN-PERSON AND VIA GLOBAL GOTOMEETING VIDEO CONFERENCE PLATFORM
INITIATED AND CHAIRED FROM
LRGVDC MAIN CAMPUS - 301 W. RAILROAD STREET, WESLACO, TEXAS
BUILDING B, KEN JONES EXECUTIVE BOARD ROOM

PRESIDING: SECRETARY JIM DARLING

Chairman Jim Darling called the meeting to order at 12:05 pm. and a quorum was declared. Chairman Darling then moved to item 2. Consideration and Action to Approve Meeting Minutes (March 29, 2023). ***Mr. Eleazar Garcia, Jr. made a motion to approve the minutes from March 29, 2023, as presented. Mayor Rick Salinas seconded, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

Chairman Darling next moved to item 3. Public Comment, there being none he moved to item 4. Administration and recognized Mr. Manuel Cruz, Executive Director. Regarding Item 4. A. Consideration and Action to Set Date and Format for 2023 Nominating Committee Meeting, Mr. Cruz recommended scheduling a hybrid online/in person meeting at 12:00 noon on either Wednesday, May 10, or Thursday May 11. ***Mr. Eleazar Garcia, Jr. made a motion to schedule a hybrid Nominating Committee meeting on Wednesday, May 10 at 12:00 noon. Mayor Rick Salinas seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

Chairman Darling next moved to Item 4. B. Presentation and Action to Accept Quarterly Investment Report and recognized Ms. Crystal Balboa, Director of Finance. Ms. Balboa presented the quarterly investment report that was included in the meeting packet for review prior to the meeting. Chairman Darling then called for a motion; ***Mr. Ron Mills made a motion to accept the Quarterly Investment Report; Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza seconded the motion.*** Commissioner David Garza expressed concern regarding the ownership and backing of TxPool. After discussion, Chairman Darling asked staff to research TxPool and provide a report at the next meeting. ***Upon conclusion of discussion a vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.***

Chairman Darling next moved to Item 4. C. Executive Director Report. Mr. Cruz was recognized and introduced the following new staff members: Mr. Jose Flores and Ms. Monica Balderas joined Valley Metro as Non-CDL Drivers, Mr. Julian Meza and Mr. Javier Garza joined RGV9-1-1 as System Support Specialists. CJD/HLS staff member Ms. Mary Gonzalez was promoted to Planner I and Ms. Jessica Martinez was promoted to Program Specialist I.

Mr. Cruz informed the Board that the legislative update was included in the meeting packet and noted that he and the TARC staff are closely monitoring the bills related to Councils of Governments (COGs) because of the fluid nature of their movement through the house.

Next Mr. Cruz turned the floor over to Mr. Elijah Casas, Outreach Coordinator for the Texas General Land Office (GLO). Mr. Casas informed the Board that they have announced that the deadline for the 2018/2019 Homeowner Assistance and Reimbursement Program (HARP) is on April 28, 2023, at 5:00 pm. HARP is designed to assist homeowners that were impacted by the 2018 and 2019 disasters that impacted Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties. This program provides rehab, repair, mitigation, reconstruction and even reimbursement of up to \$40,000 for certain out of pocket expenses. Mr. Casas stressed the importance for those affected by these disasters to submit their application before the April 28, 2023, deadline.

After announcements on the GLO HARP, Mr. Cruz invited elected officials and community leaders to the Elected Officials Retreat sponsored by the American Flood Coalition (AFC) on South Padre Island on May 23 & 24. He informed the Board that the LRGVDC and the AFC in partnership with the RGV Stormwater Taskforce are pleased to host a regional RGV retreat designed with elected officials and community leaders in mind. On May 23 there will be an evening reception sponsored by the AFC with the hope of gathering as many elected officials as possible. This past year the Region has been involved in creating a flood plan for the region which will be one of the main attractions in order to bring awareness of this project and begin dialog around what flood/drainage project each city/county has completed or has planned so neighboring projects can coordinate to their maximum efficiency. Mr. Cruz thanked the Regional Water Resource Advisory Committee (RWRAC) for recommending holding this event.

Lastly, Mr. Cruz announced that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently opened up the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant. The program will award approximately \$250 million, the presumptive allocation for states is \$3 million. Our Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) McAllen-Edinburg-Mission should receive \$1 million to conduct a study on air pollution in the Hidalgo County area, and this grant has no match requirement. A letter of intent is due by April 28 and the application is due by May 31.

Upon conclusion of Administration items, Chairman Darling moved to Item 5. Department Reports,

A. Community and Economic Development Department

Program Action Item

1. Consideration and **ACTION** to Approve Resolution in Support of Reappropriating CDBG-DR 2018 and 2019 Funds for Regional Drainage in South Texas

Mr. Cruz was recognized and stated that Hidalgo County Commissioners' Court, the Cameron County Commissioners' Court, the Board of Directors of Hidalgo County Drainage District No. 1, the Board of Directors of the Cameron County Drainage District No. 6, and the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council support the reallocation of CDBG-DR 2018 and 2019 funds to regional flood-control infrastructure in Hidalgo County and Cameron County, which will permanently safeguard housing in the State of Texas and the Rio Grande Valley. This will involve investing in a range of infrastructure projects designed to improve drainage and reduce the risk of flooding. By taking these steps, we can help safeguard the health and safety of our residents, support economic growth in our communities, and provide a brighter future for all who call the State of Texas home. ***Commissioner Ellie Torres made a motion to approve the resolution as presented. Mr. Eleazar Garcia, Jr. seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

Program Status Reports

Mr. Cruz announced that the complete status reports were in the meeting packet for review and highlighted that this year's Road-to-Recycling event took place last Saturday, April 22. He thanked the jurisdictions who participated by providing collection sites.

Chairman Darling provided the reservoir level report noting that there was a small uptick from last month which should increase a little more with the storms that recently passed through our region.

B. Health & Human Services

Ms. Margarita Lopez, Director of Health & Human Services was recognized to address the following:

Program Action Item

1. Consideration and **ACTION** to Approve Vendor Rate Increase Request from San Jose Health Care and D'Oro Primary Home Care Services

Ms. Lopez informed the Board that the Advisory Council recommends approval to increase the San Jose Health Care service rate increase from \$9.000 to \$13.00 per hour. San Jose Health Care staff initially made an error on their contract by entering the incorrect rate. They continued to provide services at their contractual rate, but now they would like to amend this error. D'Oro Primary Home Care Services requests a rate increase from \$13.0 to \$13.75. *Mr. Ron Mills made a motion to approve the vendor rate increase request from San Jose Health Care and D'Oro Primary Home Care Services as presented. Commissioner David Garza seconded the motion and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.*

2. Consideration and Action to join "Making RGV Aging Friendly"

Ms. Lopez informed the Board that the Advisory Council recommends approval to join the "Making RGV Aging Friendly" initiative in collaboration with UTRGV. This initiative focuses on having/providing better services and will allow cities to apply for grants to support programs geared for the aging population. *Mr. Ron Mills made a motion to approve joining "Making RGV Aging Friendly". Mr. Eleazar Garcia, Jr. seconded the motion and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.*

Program Status Reports

The complete status reports were provided in the meeting packet, and Ms. Lopez highlighted the significant increase in the amount of residential repair services they were able to provide.

C. Public Safety

Program Action Items

It was the consensus of the Board to hear the following five action items and take action on them in one motion. Mr. Rene Perez, Program Supervisor I, was recognized and presented the following items:

1. Consideration and **ACTION** to Approve Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (CJAC) Recommendation for the FY 2023-2024 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program Ranking and Resolution

The CJAC was given two weeks to review and score grant applications. On April 12, 2023, the CJAC convened to review the rankings and amounts for the JAG grant applications. The committee recommends approval of the resolutions, rankings, and conditionally approved amounts as presented.

2. Consideration and **ACTION** to Approve Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (CJAC) Recommendation for the FY 2023-2024 State Criminal Justice Planning (421) Fund (SF) Program Rankings and Resolution

The CJAC was given two weeks to review and score grant applications. On April 12, 2023, the CJAC convened to review the rankings and amounts for the SF grant applications. The committee recommends approval of the resolution, rankings, and conditionally approved amounts as presented.

3. Consideration and **ACTION** to Approve Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (CJAC) Recommendation for the FY 2023-2024 Truancy Prevention Grant Program (TP) Program Rankings and Resolution

The CJAC was given two weeks to review and score grant applications. On April 12, 2023, the CJAC convened to review the rankings and amounts for the TP grant applications. The committee recommends approval of the resolution, rankings, and conditionally approved amounts as presented.

4. Consideration and **ACTION** to Approve Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (CJAC) Recommendation for the FY 2023-2024 Victims of Crime Act Formula Grant Program (VA) Program Rankings and Resolution

The CJAC was given two weeks to review and score grant applications. On April 12, 2023, the CJAC convened to review the rankings and amounts for the VA grant applications. The committee recommends approval of the resolution, rankings, and conditionally approved amounts as presented.

5. Consideration and **ACTION** to Approve Criminal Justice Advisory Committee (CJAC) Recommendation for the FY 2023-2024 Violence Against Women Formula Grant (WF) Program Rankings and Resolution

The CJAC was given two weeks to review and score grant applications. On April 12, 2023, the CJAC convened to review the rankings and amounts for the WF grant applications. The committee recommends approval of the resolution, rankings, and conditionally approved amounts as presented.

Upon conclusion of presentation of all 5 action items, *Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza made a motion to approve items 1-5 as presented. Councilman Johnny Garcia seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.*

Program Status Reports

Mr. Rene Perez, CJD/HLS Program Supervisor informed the Board that the complete program status reports were available in the meeting packet, and he highlighted that staff received feedback on their Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA), Stakeholders Preparedness Review (SPR), and THSSP Implementation Plan with a total of 43.5 out of 45 possible points.

Mr. Gilbert Luna, Regional Police Academy Assistant Director was recognized and highlighted some of the items in the program status report that was available in the meeting packet. He highlighted that staff is coordinating a job fair scheduled for July 13, 2023. Booths will be provided for each participating agency where they can provide applications and information to attendees.

Mr. Dennis Moreno, RGV9-1-1 Assistant Director was recognized and provided the District's status report. He highlighted Telecommunicators Week activities and how staff showed their appreciation to these unsung heroes at 17 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) in both Hidalgo and Willacy Counties. He informed the Board that bipartisan House Bill 9 relating to the development and funding of broadband and telecommunications service; providing for transfers of money for funding was introduced to the legislature which will increase 9-1-1 service fees. He added that another event staff is planning is a Public Safety Wellness seminar on September 14, 2023. The seminar will be telecommunicator driven but will be open to all public safety professionals in Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties.

D. Transportation

Valley Metro Action Item

Mr. Rick Carrera, Valley Metro Director was recognized to report on the following:

1. Consideration and **ACTION** to Approve Updated LRGVDC Transit Service Department's Background Check Policy

Mr. Carrera stated that Valley Metro Transit Service Department's Background Check Policy implements a background check policy application to all current and future employees, regardless of employment status, such as a temporary employee. These policy updates are needed to comply with state and federal regulations, the changes were noted in red font in the draft policy provided in the meeting packet. ***Mr. Ron Mills made a motion to approve the updated LRGVDC Transit Service Department's Background Check Policy as presented. Mayor Rick Salinas seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

Valley Metro Status Reports

Mr. Carrera stated that the Ridership Report is included in the meeting packet.

Rio Grande Valley MPO Status Report

No status report was available at this time.

Item 6. – New or Unfinished Business

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Darling *adjourned the meeting at 12:56 pm.*



Mayor Ambrosio "Amos" Hernandez, President

ATTEST:



Deborah Morales, Recording Secretary