

MINUTES

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

12:00 PM WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 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 12:13 pm. Roll Call was taken, and a quorum had not yet been attained. It was the consensus of those present to hear non-action items until more members were present.

Chairman Darling moved to Item 3. Public Comment, there being no public comments, Chairman Darling moved to Item 5. A. Community & Economic Development status report on the reservoir levels. Chairman Darling reported that the combined U.S. Ownership of Amistad and Falcon Reservoirs was 28.37% as of March 13, 2023, which does not include the recent rains the region has experienced. Chairman Darling cautioned municipalities to monitor the reservoir levels and to activate water conservation protocols if the level drops below 25%.

The record reflects the arrival of Mayor Rick Salinas and Commissioner Jacob Howell, with their presence, a quorum was attained, and Chairman Darling moved to Item 2. Consideration and Action to Approve Meeting Minutes (February 22, 2023). *Commissioner David Garza made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2023, Board of Directors meeting as presented. Mr. Troy Allen seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.*

Upon conclusion of action on the minutes, Chairman Darling moved to Item 4. Administration and recognized Executive Director Manuel Cruz to address the following:

A. Consideration and Action to Approve Grant from American Flood Coalition (tabled 2/22/2023)

Mr. Eleazar Garcia, Jr. made a motion to remove this item from the table. Commissioner David Garza seconded and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Troy Allen then moved to take no action on the grant from the American Flood Coalition and to remove this item from the agenda. Commissioner David Garza seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Ratification of Executive Committee Action on Regional Water Resource Advisory Committee (RWRAC) Recommendation for LRGVDC's Acceptance of a Grant from the American Flood Coalition

Mr. Cruz reminded the Board that this item was introduced at the last meeting. After hearing the presentation and asking questions, the Board decided to table it, and refer it to the RWRAC for their recommendation. At their March 7, 2023, meeting the RWRAC heard the presentation and unanimously approved to capitalize on this opportunity. Their recommendation was that the LRGVDC conduct a pre-conference training/workshop at 10:00 am on Sunday, May 21, 2023, during the Stormwater Task Force Stormwater Planning & Management Conference scheduled for the week of May 21-26, 2023. Staff

requested Executive Committee approval in order to expedite the planning process for this event, and they unanimously approved the RWRAC recommendation. **Commissioner David Garza made a motion to ratify the Executive Committee Action on the RWRAC recommendation for the LRGVDC's acceptance of a grant from the American Flood Coalition. Mr. Eleazar Garcia Jr. seconded and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

C. Ratification of Executive Committee Action on Homeland Security Advisory Committee Priority Recommendations

Mr. Cruz stated that the Homeland Security Advisory Committee (HSAC) met on March 2, 2023, and recommended approval of the prioritization list for FY 2023-24 Homeland Security Grants Division Regional Grant Applications. As per the FY 2023 Interlocal Agreement, Homeland Security prioritizations are due 14 calendar days from the date they were batched out from the Public Safety Office (PSO). All applications were batched out on March 6, 2023, and were due to be turned into the PSO once the local governing body approved the prioritization lists no later than March 20, 2023. Action by the Executive Committee was necessary in order to meet this deadline and the Executive Committee unanimously approved the priority recommendation as presented. **Councilman Johnny Garcia made a motion to ratify the Executive Committee action. Mr. Troy Allen seconded, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

D. Consideration and Action to Approve Updates to LRGVDC Personnel Policy Manual Reflecting Changes to Utilize New Payroll and Human Resources Time Management System

Mr. Cruz informed the Board that as per guidance set forth by state and federal funding agencies, the updates to the LRGVDC Personnel Policy Manual reflect changes to utilize the newly installed payroll and human resources time management system. These changes are necessary for the LRGVDC to remain in compliance. The LRGVDC Payroll and Human Resources Policy will provide clear guidance and additional resources for LRGVDC employees as well as funding agencies on LRGVDC payroll methods. Revisions were made to section 6.02: Work Time Reporting which was provided for review as an attachment in the meeting packet. **Mr. Eleazar Garcia, Jr. made a motion to approve the updates to the LRGVDC Personnel Policy Manual as presented. Mr. Troy Allen seconded, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

E. Presentation from Rio Grande Valley Humane Society

Mr. Cruz thanked Mayor Norma Sepulveda for recommending that the Board hear a presentation from the Rio Grande Valley Humane Society (RGVHS). He then recognized Mr. Luis Quintanilla, Executive Director of the RGVHS, who thanked the Board for the opportunity to talk about animals in the Valley. Mr. Quintanilla introduced Ms. Lillian Kim, the RGVHS Board President who accompanied him today. He informed the Board that for three years the RGVHS in partnership with the City of Harlingen has been the only no-kill shelter in the RGV and that their work is not possible without crucial partnerships. He stated that now they are partnered with two cities; the City of Mission partnered with the RGVHS in February. Their mission is to save as many animals as they possibly can, while serving as many people as possible. It is common knowledge that the RGV has a dog overpopulation problem that is exacerbated due to the region's lack of resources that larger markets have. The goal of the RGVHS is to unite the region and attract more investments and more veterinary care which the Valley sorely needs. In the past couple of years, the RGVHS has worked to unite as many cities as possible for one cause: to bring that investment down to the RGV because Valley citizens need and want it. Mr. Quintanilla was pleased to announce that this summer the RGVHS will have their first full-time veterinarian on staff to bring the much-needed low-cost resources to our communities. They will continue the spay/neuter work to slowly and steadily decrease the stray pet population, the call volume of the region's animal control officers, decrease the burden on city governments, and eventually the pet overpopulation issue will go down. They are working diligently with their city partners to resolve this issue and want to put the Rio Grande Valley on the Map for all the right reasons. Mr. Quintanilla feels this is possible through a regional, collaborative approach. The RGVHS

relies heavily on donations and Mr. Quintanilla invited the Board to attend their annual gala that is scheduled for Saturday, April 8, 2023, at the Harlingen Convention Center; there they plan to raise awareness and raise funds for the cause.

Mr. Cruz stated that the LRGVDC has been involved with regional animal care issues in the past. The Regional Animal Care Coalition was active most recently in 2019, but of course was curtailed when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Efforts to resume meetings and discussions on the critical matter of animals not receiving proper veterinary care and the related astronomical costs to cities and counties were the key factors that were brought up in 2019. Mr. Quintanilla stated that the solution may take time, but he is confident that the RGV can do it together. Upon conclusion of his presentation, Mr. Quintanilla thanked the Board for the opportunity to share the RGVHS message.

Upon conclusion of the RGVHS presentation, it was the consensus of the Board to hear all remaining action items next, and Chairman Darling moved to Item #5 Department Reports.

A. Community & Economic Development

Program Action Items

1. Consideration and Action to Approve Regional Small Cities Coalition (RSCC) Election of Officers for 2023

Ms. Sarah Dierlam, Assistant Executive Director was recognized and informed the Board that as per RSCC Bylaws, officers shall be elected annually and may be reappointed to multiple terms without term limits. At the March 9, 2023, RSCC meeting, the committee recommended Sullivan City Mayor Alma Salinas for Chair, Granjeno Mayor Yvette Cabrera for Vice Chair, and Primera City Manager Celina Gonzalez as Secretary. This recommendation requires Board approval. ***Mayor Rick Salinas made a motion to approve the slate of officers for 2023 as presented. Mr. Eleazar Garcia, Jr. seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

2. Consideration and Action to Approve Resolution 2023-01 Proclaiming April as National Fair Housing Month and Supporting the Awareness of Fair Housing

Ms. Dierlam stated that the principles of fair housing are not only national law and national policy, but a fundamental human concept and entitlement for all Americans. National Fair Housing Month in April provides an opportunity for all Americans to recognize that complete success in the goal of equal housing opportunity can only be accomplished with the help and cooperation of all Americans.

Commissioner David Garza made a motion to approve resolution 2023-01 as presented. Mr. Eleazar Garcia, Jr. seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Dierlam stated that there are a few programmatic updates she would like to share. She thanked the City of Alamo for their hospitality at the last Regional Small Cities Coalition meeting, and the next meeting is scheduled for June 8, 2023, in Laguna Vista. She announced that the 2023 Road-to-Recycling event is scheduled for Saturday, April 22, 2023, and the deadline to submit an application to have a collection location is Friday, March 31, 2023. She informed the Board that the full status reports are available in the meeting packet for review.

Chairman Darling next moved to Transportation Department action items and recognized Director of Regional Transit Rick Carrera to address the following:

D. Transportation

Valley Metro Action Items

1. Consideration and Action to Approve Procurement of Four (4) New Mobile Vehicle Lifts for Harlingen Maintenance Facility

Mr. Carrera informed the Board that the requested mobile vehicle lifts will be used at the Harlingen Maintenance Facility and the purchase will be made through a State of Texas Multiple Awards Schedule (TXMAS contract) at the estimated cost of \$63,015.64. **Commissioner David Garza made a motion to approve the procurement of four (4) new mobile vehicle lifts for the Harlingen Maintenance Facility as presented. Mr. Troy Allen seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

2. Consideration and Action to Approve Amendment to Operating Policies and Procedures

Mr. Carrera informed the Board that the RGV Metro Express with Sunday service requires support staff to be available if needed. The On-Call policy will allow employees to receive proper compensation for the assignment when receiving that call on a weekend or Sunday. Staff requests approval of an amendment to the Operating Policies and Procedures, Section 2 – Employee Expectations and Conduct that includes information pertaining to On-Call time and attendance. **Mayor Rick Salinas made a motion to approve the amendment to the Operating Policies and Procedures as requested. Mayor Rick Guerra seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Carrera stated that the full status report is available in the meeting packet for review.

Upon conclusion of action items, Chairman Darling moved to Item 4. F. Executive Director Report and recognized Mr. Cruz to address the following:

1. Introduction of New Staff Member

Mr. Jorge Zamora joined Valley Metro as a Vehicle Driver II, and Ms. Klarissa Gonzalez joined the RGVMPPO as a Planner I.

2. Updates on Regional News, Funding Opportunities, Trainings, and Legislation

Mr. Cruz provided a written report in the meeting packet that has updates on several legislative bills that affect the LRGVDC. He encouraged the Board to become familiar with these bills and briefly summarized a few of the bills. He informed the Board that HB 1505 proposes the continuation of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for 12 more years. Senate Bill 271 is related to state agencies and local government security incident procedures. HB 2473 is on the horizon and would modernize the enabling statute for 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Network. HB 101 relates to membership of the Texas Transportation Commission that will ensure people placed on this committee have the necessary credentials. According to the Texas Department of Transportation, there have been 68 commissioners appointed to the commission and only four (4) have been from the border. HB 3805 relates to program categories in the Unified Transportation Program; Mr. Cruz noted that these two bills do not impact the budget and there is no cost related to them. He stated that all these bills are being introduced and might affect councils of government in one way or another and he wanted the Board to be aware of them.

Upon conclusion of the Legislative Update, Mr. Cruz announced that next week, the second week of April, is National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week. He encouraged Board Members to visit their local PSAPs and thank the unsung heroes who are the first responders to the first responders. RGV9-1-1 staff will celebrate Telecommunicators Week by delivering care packages directly to the PSAP call takers.

B. Health & Human Services

Program Status Reports

Ms. Margarita Lopez, Director of Health & Human Services, was recognized and informed the Board that the detailed status reports were included in the meeting packet. She highlighted the 2023 LIIFE (Leadership – Inclusions & Independence Family Support - Empowerment Conference) that took place on March 22, 2023. The event was a success and had a larger than expected turnout, so much so that they will search for a larger venue for next year's event. Ms. Lopez also highlighted the Care Transition Intervention (CTI) program that provides coaches in hospitals that help patients aged 60 and above transition back home. The coaches help patients to get services like transportation to follow up appointments, to get their prescriptions, etc. so they can avoid going back to the hospital within 30 days. The Area Agency on Aging currently provides CTI Coaches at six hospitals and Ms. Lopez was happy to announce that they are working toward placing coaches to serve our local Veterans hospital.

C. Public Safety

Program Status Reports

Mr. Rene Perez, CJD/HLS Program Supervisor was recognized and stated that no action was required for his programs this month and his detailed status report was in the meeting packet for review. He highlighted that his programs have partnered with the Department of Homeland Security for the upcoming Cyber Incident Management Workshop scheduled for April 20, 2023, and the Communications Interoperability Tabletop Exercise scheduled for April 27, 2023.

Mr. Gilbert Luna, Regional Police Academy Assistant Director was recognized and stated that no action was required for the RPA this month and that the program status reports were in the meeting packet for review. He noted that the Edinburg Day Academy is scheduled to start next week, and another night academy is scheduled to start the second week of May. The Mission Day Academy and the Weslaco Night Academy are scheduled to graduate in July.

Mr. Joe Garcia, RGV9-1-1 Assistant Director was recognized and informed the Board that the detailed program status reports were in the meeting packet for review. He highlighted that the GIS Team has uploaded several public access maps to <https://www.rgv911.org/>. The Community Engagement team has attended several events in both Hidalgo and Willacy Counties including the RGV Police Canine Competition, the Willacy County Human Trafficking Awareness Event, and Career Day for McAllen ISD. He added that the IT Team has implemented proactive maintenance initiatives to ensure that all 9-1-1 equipment is maintained in all their managed facilities. The IT Team attended a week-long Viper 7 hardware/software infrastructure training that covered all the skills necessary to maintain our 9-1-1 call delivery system and apps. He noted that the call volume report is in the meeting packet for review.


Upon conclusion of the Public Safety status reports, Chairman Darling moved to RGVMPD and recognized RGVMPD Assistant Director Luis Diaz. Mr. Diaz informed the Board that staff are currently conducting public involvement for the 25-year Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) which is from 2020 to 2045. The MTP includes all the projects across the region that are transportation related within their Plan. Public involvement is for 30 days, from March 20 – April 20.

Item 6. - New or Unfinished Business

Commissioner David Garza was recognized and stated that last week Governor Abbott announced that he has appointed Mr. Alex Mead from Mission to the Texas Transportation Commission. Commissioner Garza stated it has been over 30 years since anyone from this area has served in that capacity. It took a lot of regional involvement to make this happen and Mr. Mead will be a great asset not only for the Rio Grande Valley but for

the South Texas region as a whole. Commissioner Garza knows that the consolidation of the three former MPOs into the united RGVMPPO, which is now the 5th largest metropolitan area, had a huge role in this appointment and hopes Mr. Mead will be able to come to an LRGVDC Board of Directors meeting to introduce himself.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Darling called for a motion to adjourn. ***Mr. Ron Mills made a motion to adjourn; Councilman Johnny Garcia seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:07 pm.***

for 
→ Mayor Ambrosio "Amos" Hernandez, President

ATTEST:


Deborah Morales, Recording Secretary