

MINUTES

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

12:00 PM WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30, 2022

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: IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT JIM DARLING

President Aurelio Guerra was unable to attend in-person, however Immediate Past President Jim Darling was present in-person and agreed to chair in his stead. Chairman Darling called the meeting to order at 12:11 pm, however a quorum was not yet present. It was the consensus of the Board to hear non-action items until a quorum was attained.

Chairman Darling then moved to Item 3: Public Comment and/or Report from Legislative Delegation. There were no requests to make public comments and no reports from the Legislative Delegation. He then moved to Item 4: Administration and recognized Executive Director Manuel Cruz to address the following:

A. Executive Director Report

1. Introduction of New Staff Members

Mr. Cruz informed the Board that five (5) new staff members have recently joined the LRGVDC:

- Mr. Rene Perez, Program Supervisor for Criminal Justice and Homeland Security
- Mr. Darrick Fuentes, System Support Specialist for RGVECD 9-1-1
- Mr. Juan Esquivel, System Support Specialist for RGVECD 9-1-1
- Mr. Ronnie Hall, System Support Specialist RGVECD 9-1-1
- Ms. Margarita Lopez, Interim Director for Area Agency on Aging

Chairman Darling then moved to item 5: Department Reports and recognized Mr. Rick Carrera, Director of Community & Economic Development to give his department's program status reports.

Mr. Carrera informed the Board that he and Mr. Cruz had the opportunity to meet with EDA Deputy Secretary Alejandra Castillo last month and were able to participate in a roundtable discussion on workforce issues. This productive Roundtable meeting was hosted by UTRGV at their Brownsville campus. At the end of April, he and staff are scheduled to attend the Southwest EDA Annual meeting in Houston.

Regarding the COVID-19 Resiliency Study, consultants have been hired and their outreach efforts will begin in 2-4 weeks. Mr. Carrera expressed the importance of this outreach to make sure the public is heard in terms of what they experienced during the pandemic.

The Disadvantaged Business Enterprise workshop was a success with at least 20 participants that are interested in doing local contracting. This workshop served two purposes:

- Many of the contracts in place require that Disadvantaged Businesses are sought and identified to do business with.

- And doing business with Disadvantaged Businesses is part of the COVID-19 Resiliency activities in terms of recovery from the pandemic and disaster related setbacks.

Mr. Carrera informed the Board that he and his staff had the pleasure of celebrating with the City of Alamo during the grand opening of their new recycling center.

Mr. Carrera announced that the next Region M meeting is scheduled for next week, on April 6, 2022, at 10:30 am. Chairman Darling noted that the 6th 5-year Cycle of Regional Water Planning has begun and encouraged entities that have a water supply operation to include any projects in the 2026 Rio Grande Regional Water Plan. Only those projects that are in the Plan will be eligible for funding from the Texas Water Development Board. Chairman Darling stated that the combined reservoir level is now below 40%, and most Water Conservation plans are triggered when the reservoirs are below 50%. He cautioned those entities to be sure they are in compliance with their Water Conservation and Drought Contingency Plans.

Mr. Carrera reminded the Board that the next Regional Water Resource Advisory Committee (RWRAC) meeting is scheduled for April 20 at 10:00 am, and staff is gearing up for the next Road-to-Recycling Tire Collection Event scheduled for Saturday, May 28, 2022.

By 12:26 pm more Board Members had arrived, roll call was taken, and a quorum of the Board was attained. Chairman Darling then moved to item 2 - Consideration and Action to Approve Meeting Minutes (February 23, 2022). ***Mayor Rick Salinas made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of February 23, 2022, as presented. Councilwoman Norie Garza seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

Upon conclusion of action Chairman Darling moved to item 4. A. Consideration and Action to Approve R4 Management, LLC, DBA EZ Testing Now to Use LRGVDC North Parking Lot as a COVID-19 Testing Site.

Mr. Cruz was recognized and informed the Board that EZ Testing Now has establish a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with Hidalgo County to set up testing sites in the county. Staff requests approval to allow EZ Testing Now to use LRGVDC's far north parking lot (Property ID #321689) as a testing site to administer free COVID-19 Rapid & PCR tests. The tests administered will be for the public as it relates to the provision of additional COVID testing programs to individuals and families of the community that have been directly or indirectly impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency. This serves a public purpose for the health, safety, and well-being of the residents of the community, subject to procurement and legal review, if required. Chairman Darling asked how long they would use this space. Mr. Cruz stated that length of time would be stipulated in the pending MOU with the LRGVDC, and he anticipates their use for about 1 year with the option to terminate if needed. ***Mayor David Suarez made a motion to approve R4 Management, LLC, DBA EZ Testing Now to use LRGVDC's north parking lot as a COVID-19 testing site. Mayor Rick Salinas seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

A. Community & Economic Development

Director Rick Carrera was recognized to address the following:

Program Action Item

1. Consideration and Action to Approve Resolution 2022-01 Proclaiming April as National Fair Housing Month and Supporting the Awareness of Fair Housing

Mr. Carrera informed the Board that the principals 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. ***Mr. Ronald Mills made a motion to approve Resolution 2022-01 as presented. Mr. Richard Sanchez***

seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

2. Consideration and Action to Approve Nomination of an Elected or Appointed Official of a Non-entitlement Community to be Considered for Appointment to the Unified Scoring Committee (USC) by the Agriculture Commissioner

Mr. Carrera informed the Board that the USC is responsible for determining objective scoring factors for all regions in accordance with the requirements of this section and the current TxCDBG Action Plan. The USC must establish the numerical value of points assigned to each scoring factor as described in the Committee Guidelines provided by the department. The Regional representative for the last biennium was Mayor Rick Salinas of Lyford. The members of the Regional Small Cities Coalition were polled, and the feedback received was unanimously in favor of keeping Mayor Salinas as the regional representative. **Commissioner Edward Gonzales made a motion to approve the nomination of Mayor Rick Salinas of Lyford to the USC. Mr. Ronald Mills seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

3. Consideration and Action to Approve Solid Waste Sub-Grantee Applications for Funding Year 2022-2023

On March 8, 2022, the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) met to score, and rank submitted applications for funding year 2022-2023. Six (6) applications were received, however, three (3) of those applications were not complete and/or not submitted by the designated deadline. The three (3) applications that were complete and submitted on time are:

Entity	Funding Amount	Score
Fiscal Year 2022		
1. City of Weslaco	\$24,375.00	83.07
2. City of Harlingen	\$23,625.00	80.07
Fiscal Year 2023		
3. City of Mission	\$25,000.00	77.69

Mr. Carrera stated that Board approval is needed to finalize this process. **Councilwoman Norie Garza made a motion to approve the Solid Waste Sub-grantee applications for funding year 2022-2023 as presented. Mayor Jorge Ledezma seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

4. Consideration and Action to Approve Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) Nomination to Fill Private Sector Vacancy

Mr. Carrera reported that at their March 8, 2022, SWAC meeting, the Committee selected Mr. Jaime Diez with Valley Tire Recycling to fill the vacancy in the Private Sector category, and that this nomination requires Board approval. **Mayor Rick Salinas made a motion to approve the SWAC nomination to fill the Private Sector vacancy on the committee. Commissioner Nurith Galonsky seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

B. Health & Human Services

Chairman Darling informed the Board that Mr. Jose "Joe" Gonzalez has announced his retirement. He has been with the LRGVDC since June 19, 1980, and will retire on April 29, 2022, which is just shy of 42 years. Chairman Darling congratulated Mr. Gonzalez on his retirement and thanked him for so many years of service. Mr. Gonzalez then address the following items:

Area Agency on Aging Program Action Item

1. Consideration and Action to Approve Contractors for Direct Purchase Services Pool

Mr. Gonzalez informed the Board that the Advisory Council recommends approval to add contractors to the Area Agency on Aging’s contractor pool. Case Managers will utilize these contractors to purchase services such as residential repairs, medications, homemaker, and respite care for their clients. The list of service providers is as follows:

APPLICANT	SERVICES	RATE Hourly Rate
Faith Primary Home Care LLC	Homemaker	AAA: \$13.13 Standard: \$13.50
Adorable Primary Home Care Inc.	Homemaker Respite	AAA: \$13.10 Standard: \$15.00 AAA: \$13.10 Standard: \$15.00

Mr. Ronald Mills made a motion to approve the Direct Purchase Service Pool Contractors as presented. Mayor Jorge Ledezma seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Upon conclusion of action, Mr. Gonzalez introduced Ms. Margarita Lopez, Interim Director for Area Agency on Aging. Ms. Lopez briefed the Board on her past experience and her plans moving forward with the LRGVDC and Area Agency on Aging.

Program Status Reports

Upon conclusion of action, Mr. Gonzalez stated that the status report on Annual Appropriations for FY 2022 was in the meeting packet for review.

C. Public Safety

Program Action Items

Executive Director Manuel Cruz was recognized to address the following items:

1. Consideration and Action to Approve Homeland Security Advisory Committee (HSAC) Prioritization List of FY 2022-23 Homeland Security Grants Division Regional Grant Application

Mr. Cruz informed the Board that the HSAC met on March 21 and recommends approval of the prioritization list for the FY 2022-23 Homeland Security Grants Division regional grant applications. He explained in detail the things that the committee considered when making these recommendations. Upon conclusion of discussion, ***Mr. Ronald Mills made a motion to approve the Homeland Security grant applications prioritization list as presented. Commissioner Nurith Galonsky seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

Program Status Reports

Mr. Cruz stated that the status reports were available for review in the meeting packet.

Chairman Darling asked how the move to 5G wireless technology could affect low-income households regarding 9-1-1 service if they still have 4G technology or even a landline. After some discussion, Chairman Darling requested that a report on this topic be included on the April Board Meeting agenda.

D. Transportation

Valley Metro Director Maribel Contreras was recognized to report on the following items:

Program Status Reports

Ms. Contreras gave the ridership report for the month of February and noted an increase of 115% from the previous month. She reported that the current COVID-19 precautionary measures will continue, and that staff received information from the FTA that the mask requirement has been extended until April 18, 2022.

In answer to questions from the Board regarding implementation of the new fares, Ms. Contreras stated that the public was made aware of the new fare structure with placards in the busses, fares posted on Valley Metro's webpage, and on social media, the new fares will be in place this Friday, April 1, 2022. A report on ridership and fares collected will be included in the April Board Meeting information.

Ms. Contreras concluded her report with the Regional Transportation Coordination Plan has been completed, was approved by the Board last month and was submitted to TxDOT in February.

RGVMPO Status Report

There was no report 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 12:54 pm.

ATTEST:


Deborah Morales, Recording Secretary


Judge Aurelio Guerra, President