

# MINUTES

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

12:00 PM WEDNESDAY, MAY 31, 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: PRESIDENT AMBROSIO "AMOS" HERNANDEZ

President Ambrosio Hernandez called the meeting to order at 12:24 pm. Roll Call was taken, and a quorum was declared. He then moved to item 2. Consideration and Action to Approve Meeting Minutes (April 26, 2023). *Mayor Oscar Montoya made a motion to approve the minutes from April 26, 2023, as presented. Ms. Lupita Sanchez seconded, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.*

President Hernandez next moved to item 3. - Public Comment, there being none he moved to item 4. Administration and recognized Mr. Manuel Cruz, Executive Director to address the following:

#### 4. A. - Consideration and Action on Recommendations from Nominating Committee

##### 1. Selection of Five (5) Persons for Election as Members-at-large to the General Membership

NAME	CITY	COUNTY
Ms. Helen Ramirez	Brownsville	Cameron
Mr. Chris Gonzalez	Mission	Hidalgo
Mr. Sergio Contreras	Mission	Hidalgo
Mr. Eleazar Garcia, Jr.	Raymondville	Willacy
VACANT		

*Mayor Javier Villalobos nominated Mr. Rick Salinas from Lyford to fill the vacancy; Mayor David Suarez seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously, the final slate of members-at-large selected by the Board of Directors is as follows:*

NAME	CITY	COUNTY
<i>Ms. Helen Ramirez</i>	<i>Brownsville</i>	<i>Cameron</i>
<i>Mr. Chris Gonzalez</i>	<i>Mission</i>	<i>Hidalgo</i>
<i>Mr. Sergio Contreras</i>	<i>Mission</i>	<i>Hidalgo</i>
<i>Mr. Eleazar Garcia, Jr.</i>	<i>Raymondville</i>	<i>Willacy</i>
<i>Mr. Rick Salinas</i>	<i>Lyford</i>	<i>Willacy</i>

##### 2. Selection of Three (3) Members-at-Large to be Elected to the 2023-2024 Board of Directors

The Nominating Committee recommends the following individuals to fill the three (3) at-large seats on the Board of Directors for 2023-2024:

NAME	CITY	COUNTY
Mr. Jim Darling	McAllen	Hidalgo
Mr. Eleazar Garcia, Jr.	Raymondville	Willacy
Ms. Ann Williams Cass	McAllen	Hidalgo

*Commissioner David Garza made a motion to approve the slate of the three (3) members-at-large as presented and recommended by the Nominating Committee to serve on the Board of Director. Commissioner Abiel Flores seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.*

President Hernandez next moved to Item 4. B. – Board Member Recognition. Mr. Manuel Cruz was recognized and stated that he has a plaque for former Brownsville Mayor Trey Mendez in recognition of his four (4) years of service on the LRGVDC Board of Directors and Executive Committee. Mr. Mendez was not present; however, Mr. Cruz will present his plaque in person at the earliest opportunity. Mr. Cruz next presented a gavel plaque to President Ambrosio “Amos” Hernandez for his year of leadership, hard work, and dedication for his service as Board President this past year. President Hernandez thanked his colleagues and LRGVDC staff for this recognition.

President Hernandez next moved to item 4. C. – Executive Director Report and recognized Mr. Cruz. Mr. Cruz stated that as many here may already be aware, our region has been designated as the Broadband South Texas Regional Working Group (STRWG). The Regional Working Group coverage map was displayed on the screen and Mr. Cruz pointed out that the STRWG region is quite large, it extends from Eagle Pass down to Brownsville and up to Corpus Christi. Mr. Cruz informed the Board that he has been appointed Co-Chair along with Ms. Emily Martinez, Director of Regional Economic Development for Coastal Bend Council of Governments (CBCOG). Mr. Cruz extended an invitation for Board Members to volunteer and/or recommend additional members to join the STRWG. The memo with information on this invitation that was recently emailed to the Board was also provided in the meeting packet as a reference.

Mr. Cruz next introduced Mr. Cesar Merla, formerly of the Health & Human Service Department, and now the Assistant Director of CJD/HLS in the Public Safety Department, the return of Mr. Tom Logan as the Interim Director of Valley Metro, Mr. Hector Martinez who is now an Accounting Tech with the Valley Metro Department, and Mr. John Gonzales, Mr. Juan Murillo, and Mr. Alfredo Sanchez who are all now Vehicle Drivers with Valley Metro.

Mr. Cruz stated that a report of Legislative Bills that the Texas Association of Regional Councils (TARC) is tracking is available for review in the meeting packet.

Mr. Cruz thanked the Regional Water Resource Advisory Committee (RWRAC), the Board of Directors, the Stormwater Task Force, and sponsors: COSTEP, Island Metro, American Flood Coalition, Guzman and Munoz, MGV, and LRGVDC staff from Area Agency on Aging, Community & Economic Development, and the RGV9-1-1 District for the success of the Elected Officials Retreat. The retreat was held in conjunction with the Stormwater Management & Planning Conference held May 21-26 at the South Padre island Convention Center. The Elected Officials Workshop was scheduled on Wednesday, May 24 during which the “Lightning Round” was held. There were many 10-minute presentations by local, state, and federal agencies that highlighted various aspects of flood mitigation and recovery on which they focused. Mr. Jim Darling, Commissioner David Garza, and Judge Aurelio Guerra all commented on the success of this event.

Upon conclusion of Administration items, President Hernandez moved to Item 5. - Department Reports,

A. Community and Economic Development Department

Program Action Item

1. Consideration and Action to Approve Professional Service Agreement for Economic Development Administration (EDA) Grant Administration

Mr. Cruz was recognized and informed the Board that staff requests approval of the agreement by and between the LRGV Economic Development District and Harlingen EDC. The LRGVDC will provide grant administration services specified in Part II Scope of Services of the Professional Service Agreement to the Harlingen EDC for their award from the EDA on their Industrial Park at Roosevelt in

Harlingen for Commercial and Community Benefits Project. ***Councilman Johnny Garcia made a motion to approve the Professional Service Agreement for Economic Development Administration grant administration as presented. Mayor Rick Guerra seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

2. Update on Economic Recovery & Resiliency Plan

Mr. Cruz was recognized and reminded the Board that back in December 2021 the LRGVDC issued a Request For Proposals (RFP) to identify a professional consultant firm to complete an Economic Recovery & Resiliency Plan. The firm of Thomas P. Miller and Associates (TMPA) was hired to complete this plan and staff was able to use funding support from the Federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) via the CARES Act Recovery Assistant grant to help the region respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and other disasters. The Scope of Work outlined in the plan was to enable the LRGVDC to develop a recovery and resiliency plan that will help the region anticipate, mitigate, and respond to future economic disruptions. The Plan has been completed and is being provided for review as a status update. Staff will use this in conjunction with the upcoming Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) as required by the EDA. The plan in its entirety will be available for review and/or download on lrgvdc.org. No action needed.

Program Status Reports

The monthly status reports are in the meeting packet for review. Mr. Jim Darling was recognized and gave the reservoir level report noting that currently the reservoirs are now *up* from the levels reported a year ago.

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 Subrecipients' Request for Proposals (RFP) Timeline for Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Ms. Lopez informed the Board that subrecipient contracts are funded under Title III of the Older Americans Act as amended and as per the State General Revenue (SGR) funds timeline. ***Commissioner David Garza made a motion to approve the Subrecipients' RFP timeline for fiscal year 2023-2024 as presented. Mr. Troy Allen seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

Program Status Reports

Ms. Lopez summarize the program services staff provided during the month of April. Additionally, she was happy to report that staff receive notice that the LRGVDC Area Agency on Aging is now second in the State of Texas for providing specialized services for veterans.

C. Public Safety

Program Status Reports

Mr. Cesar Merla, CJD/HLS Assistant Director noted that the status reports were in the meeting packet for review, and he highlighted the Cybersecurity Incident Workshop hosted by staff on April 20. A total of 65 Cybersecurity IT professionals gathered in this room bringing awareness of this issue and highlighting the important of cybersecurity.

The status reports for the Regional Police Academy and the RGV9-1-1 District are available for review in

the meeting packet.

D. Transportation

Valley Metro Status Reports

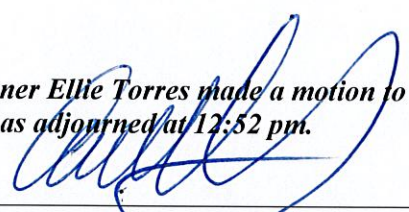
Mr. Tom Logan, Interim Director of Valley Metro was recognized and provided the Ridership Report for April which shows 63,632 passenger rides which is a slight increase from the previous month. The Regional Transportation Advisory Panel (RTAP) continues to meet with stakeholders to discuss the 5-Year Plan. Outreach efforts continue by informing the public about transportation services that are available throughout the Valley; not only with Valley Metro, but also with Metro McAllen, Brownsville Metro, and Island Metro.

Rio Grande Valley MPO Status Report

Mr. Andrew Canon, RGVMPPO Executive Director was recognized and informed the Board that today is the deadline to submit applications for Transportation Alternatives grant program. He added that the new Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) has been placed on this afternoon's Policy Board agenda for consideration of approval. This would provide \$26 million over the next four (4) years for projects such as truck parking, trail systems, replacing street lighting and traffic control devices with energy-efficient alternatives, and other things of that nature that will reduce the carbon footprint. Lastly, Mr. Canon announced that a Meet & Greet is scheduled for tomorrow, June 1, from 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm at the Pharr District Office and encouraged Board Members to attend.

Item 6. – New or Unfinished Business

There being no further business to come before the Board, *Commissioner Ellie Torres made a motion to adjourned, Commissioner David Garza seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:52 pm.*

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Ambrosio "Amos" Hernandez, President

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Deborah Morales, Recording Secretary