

MINUTES

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

12:00PM WEDNESDAY, February 28, 2024

HELD IN-PERSON AND VIA THE 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: Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez

- DRAFT

Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez called the meeting to order at 12:06 p.m. Roll Call was taken and a quorum was attained. They moved on to Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez

Mayor Norma Sepulveda, City of Harlingen
Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza, City of Mission
Mayor John Cowen, City of Brownsville
Commissioner JP Rodriguez, City of Weslaco
Commissioner David Garza, Cameron County
Commissioner Ellie Torres, Hidalgo County
Mayor Ramiro Garza, City of Edinburg
Commissioner Ruben Saldana, City of Mercedes
Commissioner Edward Gonzalez, City of Raymondville
Mayor Ricardo Rick Guerra City of San Benito
Mr. Ron Garza, UT Rio Grande Valley
Mr. Paul Hernandez, South Texas College
Mr. Luke Lucio, TSTC
Mr. Troy Allen, Delta Lake ID
Mr. Ronald Mills, Willacy Co Nav. Dist.
Ms. Ann Williams Cass, Member at Large
Ms. Lupita Sanchez Martinez, Grassroots Org
Judge Aurelio Guerra, Willacy County

Absent:

Jim Darling, Member at Large
Mayor J.R Garza, City of Alamo
Commissioner Betty Rodriguez, City of La Villa
Mayor Mike Carter, City of Laguna Vista
Mayor Jaime Gonzalez, City of Los Indios
Mayor Javier Villalobos, City of McAllen
Commissioner Marco "Markie" Villegas, City of San Juan
Mr. Eleazar Garcia Jr, Member-at Large

Without questions from the board, Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez moved on to Item #2.

Item #2:

Consideration and **ACTION** to Approve Meeting Minutes for January 31, 2024.

Commissioner David Garza made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes for January 31, 2024. Commissioner Ellie Torres seconded the motion and upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

Item #3: Public Comment: No Public Comment, Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez then moved on to Item #4.

Item #4: Administration

A. Consideration **RATIFICATION** of Executive Committee **ACTION** on the following item.

Approve the Cooperative Agreement between LRGVDC and Workforce Solutions on the 2023-2024 Texas Internship Initiative Program. **Ron Mills made a motion to approve the Ratification of the Executive Committee on the following item. Mayor Ramiro Garza seconded the motion and upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.**

1. Consideration and **ACTION** to Approve the Request to Establish the Regional Mobility Advisory Committee (RMAC) for Regional Transit Authority Research & Designation Purposes.

Mr. Cruz reminded the board members of the January meeting when the board recommended and instructed staff to create a committee for the purposes of researching and exploring the possibility of creating a Regional Transit Authority. Possibility options were to amend the current legislative bill and/or create a new legislative bill to include the identification of the funding resource for the RTA. In its current form, HB71, funding would not be conducive to the overall operations of a mass transportation system. **Ron Garza made a motion to approve the Request to Establish the Regional Mobility Advisory Committee (RMAC) for Regional Transit Authority Research & Designation Purposes. Commissioner JP Rodriguez seconded the motion and upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.** Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez asked if it was mandatory to participate and Mr. Cruz then replied that no it was not, it was up to each local government.

With that said Mayor Ambrosio then moved on to the Executive Director Report.

Executive Director Report: Mr. Cruz started by introducing all new hires and all promotions. After introducing new hires and Promotions he moved on to updates, The only update he had at this time was due to the continuation of the water conservation efforts the region was currently still struggling with and Mexico not meeting the US demand as per the 1944 water treaty. Resolutions have been emailed out to all cities, drainage district, and irrigation district. Mr. Sonny Hinojosa, Hidalgo County Irrigation District will be heading to Washington on March 18th to meet with legislators to acquire support.

No Comments or concerns Mayor Hernandez then moved on to Item #5 Department Reports.

Item #5: Department Reports:

A. Community & Economic Development

Melisa Gonzalez started with the Action item. She went on and gave a little history of her Action Item.

Explore RGV Website: The LRGVDC was awarded a grant by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) to enhance the area's destination and fixed assets to spur investment through increased tourism, local amusement, and job creation through the utilization of the Explore RGV website,

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mobile application, and digital media.

Since its development, several updates have been done and in January 2024 the latest updates are being conducted and should be finalized by March 2024. In 2023, the Rio Grande Valley Partnership themed their 2023 Economic Summit as “One Region, One Voice” and they believe the Explore RGV website could only enhance their efforts.

The LRGVDC has met with the RGV Partnership regarding a request for the use on loan of the Explore RGV Website for their tourism activities. A Memorandum of Agreement is being drafted for legal review and will be brought for board approval when finalized. Mr. Daniel Silva, CEO of RGV Partnership was present and provided a brief summary as well.

1. Consideration and **ACTION** to approve the Transfer of Explore RGV Resources to the RGV Partnership for the Continuation of Promoting the RGV Region. ***Mayor Ramiro Garza made a motion to approve the Transfer of Explore RGV Resources to the RGV Partnership for the Continuation of Promoting the RGV Region. Commissioner David Garza seconded the motion and upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.***

Program Status Reports

Melisa then moved on to Program Status Reports, she explained to the board the following, they met with RGV Partnership regarding the request for the use of the Explore RGV Website for their tourism activities. She also mentioned that they have been updating the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies, Staff will be conducting surveys, and public meetings to review & present the identified economic development strategies. EDA has published a Fiscal Year 2023 Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance notice for Funding Opportunities. Melisa also spoke about the Small Cities Coalition. She mentioned to the board that they will have a virtual Meeting on April 23, 2024, @ 10:00 AM. She also spoke about the Community & Economic Development Assistance Fund. She also mentioned to the board on their:

Upcoming Activities:

- April, USC Meeting in San Antonio
- May, Host Public Meeting for Discussion and Establish Regional Project Priorities and
- Regional Kick-off Meeting (for CDBG-awarded communities)

The Assistant Director of Community & Economic Development presented at the bi-annual Texas Association of Regional Councils (TARC) on February 7, 2024. The presentation was on the local Recycling Stand Alone Facilities funded through the Solid Waste program.

Water Quality Program:

Staff continue to educate the public on water quality issues with monthly themed Facebook posts. Give a thumbs up or leave a comment! Outreach efforts for this program include staff attending in-person events, and or in partnership with the AAA department. This allows for great C&ED program promotion opportunities for the community. Informational reading material and promotional items on water quality are distributed at these events.

Regional Water Resource Advisory Committee (RWRAC)

A Regional Water Resource Advisory Committee (RWRAC) hybrid meeting is scheduled for March 20, 2024, at 2:00 PM. The meeting link can be found on the LRGVDC Events Calendar.

The LRGVDC is soliciting nominations for a RWRAC committee member to serve in the ***Special***

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Purpose District – Irrigation Category. Each nominee will be selected based on their qualifications, experience, and interest. The purpose of the advisory committee is to educate, promote, foster, and coordinate community and regional planning efforts on the environmental, economic, and other social impacts of existing, new, or proposed regulations, policies, and control regarding water resources management. If you have any questions about the nomination process or committee, please contact Melisa Gonzales-Rosas. Nomination forms need to be emailed to vramos@lrgvdc.org, by March 1, 2024. Staff continue to support, provide technical assistance, outreach, and administer water projects. Information about water resources is available at <https://www.lrgvdc.org/water.html>

With no further questions or concerns, Mayor Ambrosio moved on to Health and Human Services.

B. Health and Human Services Action Items:

1. Margarita Lopez then came up to the podium and started with her Action Item for her department. Consideration and **ACTION** to Approve the Renewal Membership Applications for the Citizens Advisory Council. The following members submitted their application for re-appointment:

- Maria C. Garza (Connie)
- Dr. Kendra M. Stine
- Rogelio Fuentes
- Noe Portillo
- Rose Timmer
- Christina Botello
- Dr. Sudershan Pasupuleti
- Armando Garza
- Debra Lachico
- Dr. Lin Jiang
- Cesar Merla

Margarita explained that all appointments will be for three (3) years. These memberships will be for the terms of 20 23, 24, 25, and 25 to 26, which will then align with the area plan, which runs from 24 to 26. ***Ron Mills made a motion to Approve the Renewal Membership Applications for the Citizens Advisory Council. Troy Allen seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.***

Program Status Reports

Margarita then went on and started status reports for Health and Human Services by saying that they have also attached the Area Plan which has been submitted for their review and stated that it has been approved by HHS and explained it was approved with no issues or concerns at all. To kick off the Area Plan they have already received the UTRGV School of Public Health Interns. She also explains that they are on their 3rd round of interns in their department. Their project will be to Access the needs and the contributions of the Winter Texans, just to make sure that they are capturing those needs and that we can serve them as well. They are already on board with us today to get a feel for what we do here at the COG. Margarita then went on to mention to everyone that their LIIFE Conference is set up for March 19th, 2024, and she is happy to announce that they will have full capacity on that day. Mentioned that good things are happening, and that if anyone has any questions to reach out to her.

C. Public Safety

Criminal Justice and Homeland Security Program Action Items

1. Consideration and **ACTION** to approve the Resolutions for Statewide Emergency Radio Infrastructure
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for the calendar years of 2024-2026.

Cesar went on and let the board know that it is a two-grant cycle and the last cycle was in 2020-2022, letting them know that this is the next go-round for the region. Mayor Ambrosio asked if there were any changes or updates and Cesar answered not at this time. **Ron Mills made a motion to approve The Resolutions for Statewide Emergency Radio Infrastructure for the calendar years 2024-2026. Judge Rick Guerra seconded the motion, and upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously.**

Cesar then went on to let the Board know that the one highlight that he had for the Status report was their Ready RGV Conference taking place May 9 & 10. There is still plenty of opportunity to register, it is \$100 right now, unfortunately, we do have a good number of attendees, so far, 85 attendees, including some of our key speakers, and at the next board meeting I will have an actual diagram. Some of the Keynote speakers are Tony Pena, Emilie Prot, and Ernesto Ballesteros.

Mr. Cruz then reminded Cesar and the Executive Committee that there would be an item that unfortunately would have some stringent deadlines attached to it. Mr. Cruz then mentioned that it would be for the Homeland Security Grant Program that is currently under review. He then asked Cesar just to give them a heads-up. Cesar explained to the board that the State Homeland Security Grant Program will be releasing the funds on applications on or after the 4th of March from what they are saying. The quick turnaround is March 18th when we are trying to have our meeting on the 13th and then an Executive Committee meeting on the 15th of March to approve and submit everything. The last go around was roughly 5.7 million over. Cesar explains that they did get a lot of applications but will find out for sure who qualifies on March 4th. Cesar stated that a lot more information would follow but with a quick turnaround time.

With no questions or concerns, they moved on to the Police Academy with Javier Solis.

Police Academy Program

Javier Solis has 2 action items for the board.

1. Consideration and **ACTION** to Approve the newly created LRGVDC Interlocal Agreement Template for the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Training Reporting. Mayor Ambrosio then asked Mr. Solis what the purpose on this is for. Mr. Solis then responded so we were doing a lot of our old MOUs when we worked with other agencies. These agencies have a need, they don't have an academy number with TCOLE so they need assistance from a TCOLE provider, which we must report training for their officers. And a lot of the old inter-local MOUs, or we had their outdated, have amendment updated for several years. We wanted to go with inter-local agreements, to align ourselves a little bit more, under the Interlocal co-operation Act, Chapter 791 of the Texas Government code, since we are working with governments, it's governments working with each other. It just aligns better and spells out and defines the responsibilities of both parties agreeing. Something that wasn't done with our old MOUs. So, this is just mainly to update the local agreements with our local surrounding agencies. **Ron Mills made a motion to approve the newly created LRGVDC Interlocal Agreement Template for the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Training Reporting. Troy Allen seconded the motion, and upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously.**

2. Consideration and **ACTION** to Approve the newly created LRGVDC Interlocal Agreement Template for Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) Training Sites and Facilities. Mr. Solis Started and explained to the Board the following: The Lower Rio Grande Valley Academy has identified a need to expand satellite locations to conduct Texas Commission on Law Enforcement training throughout the region. A new Interlocal Agreement was created to standardize better and define the roles of the parties entering the agreements set forth by the Interlocal Cooperation Act, Chapter 791, Texas Government

Code. Commissioner David Garza then asked Mr. Solis how long the agreements were good for, Mr. Solis answered they were good for 2 years. Then went on and stated that they are automatic renewals if the parties agree to remain with the interlocal to continue. **Ron Mills made a motion to approve the newly created LRGVDC Interlocal Agreement Template for Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) Training Sites and Facilities. Ramiro Garza seconded the motion, and upon vote, the motion was carried unanimously.**

The one highlight that I do wish to provide the executive board with is that we have finalized our cooperative extensions for a basic peace officer course academy, with the city of Harlingen, which is coming back to the Lower Rio Grande Valley Academy. And, with Mission Texas as well.

No further Comments or concerns they then moved on to Rio Grande Valley Emergency Communication District, With Dennis Moreno

Program Status Reports

GIS Division:

Our GIS Data Hub is now our primary website and can be found at www.rgv911.org. The GIS team has uploaded several informational maps that other public entities and the public can readily download. This data has streamlined our general information request process. Following our GeoSpatial Strategic plan. We have begun our Soft Launch of Rubicon, using it for in-office ticketing. The full launch is scheduled to be in effect in March 2024; at that time, the public can initiate an address request via our website. On February 5-6, RGV9-1-1 staff attended the Building Web Apps with ArcGIS Experience Builder Training Course. Staff learned to transition from the ArcGIS Web-App builder to the new ArcGIS Experience builder. All our web applications will be converted into Experience builder apps.

9-1-1 Information Technology:

The 9-1-1 | Information Technology team has completed our first quarter maintenance cycle at all 17 PSAPs, going through the various 9-1-1 equipment, checking for any issues, basic upkeep, inventory assessments, and keeping up with the PSAP staff and any concerns, they may need taken care of to keep operations in optimal running order. In addition, our 911 team is scheduled to assist our Public Education /Community Engagement Coordinator, Maribel Alonzo, with her ongoing goal of keeping our telecommunicators in the loop on all educational opportunities. March will see the team holding six (6) Power 911 half-day training sessions to keep PSAP staff updated on the latest software enhancements, dispatcher functionality, and best practices, providing an educational, fun, and engaging classroom experience. In addition to the Power 911 in-house training at our RGVECD headquarters, we will also be reaching out at the 2024 All-Hazards Conference, hosting a seminar on the "Basics of Disaster Recovery for the PSAP," continuing a working group of PSAP leaders in highlighting preparation, planning, implementation, and recovery best practices in the event a major weather event or Disaster affects 911 call taking operations. Lastly, we will schedule our quarterly PSAP committee group meeting with all the PSAP supervisors in the coming weeks and hold said meeting in April to headline this year's series of meetings. We will continue throughout the year to help address any concerns and update them on projects that directly affect them. Our continuing goal is to ensure our 9-1-1 call delivery systems are in optimal working order to maintain 99.9% operational efficiency to serve our public safety partners and the community.

With No Further Comments or concerns, they then moved to Item D Valley Metro

D. Transportation Action Item:

Mr. Tom Logan stated that next year the contract with TxDOT will not be renewed and that they would need to do it this new way through procurement. Mayor Ambrosio asked what had happened with TxDot and Mr. Logan responded that they didn't want to follow up with the process and renew the contract. **Ron Mills made a motion to approve a Cooperative Purchasing Agreement between LRGVDC-Valley Metro and Washington State Department of Enterprise Services for the procurement of transit buses and refurbishment. Commissioner Ellie Torres seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.**

The Department of Enterprise Services has developed this suite of transit bus contracts. This transit bus contract features a variety of transit buses and cutaway buses for transit agency needs. This contract does not include school buses. Heavy duty buses are available in 30 ft, 35 ft, 40 ft, 45 ft, and 60 ft models with diesel, compressed natural gas, hybrid, electric, and hydrogen propulsion systems. Light and medium are body-on-chassis/cutaway style buses that can be configured in a variety of styles and number of passengers and wheelchairs. Also available, the refits/refurbishment category is for services to repair and replace component systems of mass transit buses to sustain and extend the usable life.

Notice to purchasers on use of FTA funds: National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 Section 5323(u) limits the use of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds and in some circumstances local funds, to procure rolling stock from certain transit vehicle manufacturers. This complies with FTA guidance, for more information, the FTA has published a FAQ page regarding the use of funds on rolling stock contracts.

This contract is a State Cooperative Purchasing Schedule Contract under Section 3019 of the FAST Act and is compliant with FTA Guidelines. The state of Washington, through DES, has contracted with Contractors to provide transit buses and related equipment to multiple participants, including transit organizations from other states.

Program Status Reports

Mr. Logan Started the program status reports by letting the board know about the Ridership reports. He explained that the Ridership for the year to date is 377,000. He explained that they continue to see a huge increase in ridership, across all our systems, UTRGV, STC, and Valley Metro. Mr. Logan then introduced Mr. Emmanuel Escobedo, our program Project Management Specialist, who's going to be reporting and presenting on the Hidalgo County Active Transportation Plan. Mr. Escobedo then came up and explained the presentation to the board. Mr. Escobedo then explained the Bike & Hike Trail going from McAllen to San Juan. Mr. Cruz then explained to the board that he would highly encourage everyone's participation. This plan will identify current and future potential, hiking, and bike trails on all sorts of multimodal transportation resources. He also wanted to thank Hidalgo County because Hidalgo County funded the entire plan for the city's of Hidalgo County.

With no further comments or concerns, they then moved on to RGVMPPO.

Rio Grande Valley MPO Status Reports

Luis Diaz shared with the board, for the upcoming meeting right after this one he explained we're going to be presenting the 5310 program overviews. This program is intended to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities, by providing funds for capital and operating expenses that expand transportation mobility options. We went ahead and combined for 2022 and 2023, which was a total of \$1,596,012. What's being presented at our policy board after this meeting is a resolution and, on that resolution, the distribution of funds has already been selected. We had a scoring process that identified these three different awardees, well, two Metro McAllen, which will be awarded for our Mobility Management Program, and that's \$120,000. We have Metro McAllen, they're going to be doing a

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paratransit vehicle purchase and cut always, and they were awarded a million dollars and \$75,000 for that. And the third one was Valley Metro. So, Valley Metro was awarded for Hardware software mobility and Rolling Stock Project, 400 to one thousand dollars, So, that's the whole expenditure, and that'll be up for approval. Also, I wanted to share that we're going to be going under public involvement, so public involvement starts on March 1, and through March 31st, we've already identified some locations for public involvement. The first one will be on March 14th, and it'll be here in the Ken Jones boardroom lobby. The second one is at the conference that AAA's hosting the 2024 LIIFE Conference on March 19th.

No further Comments or Concerns they then moved on to Item 6 Executive Session.

Item #6 Executive Session

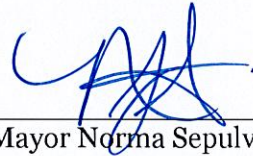
- A. Consultation with Legal counsel under Section 551.071 of the Texas Government Code regarding a complaint received against an employee.

The board then returned at 1:14 pm, No questions and no action was taken at this time for Executive Session Action Item.

- B. Reconvene into an Open Session to Consider **ACTION**, if any on items Related to the Executive Session as described above. **No Action was taken at this time.**

Item #7 New & Unfinished Business

There being no further business to come before the board, Mayor Hernandez made a motion to adjourn at 1:14 pm



Mayor Norma Sepulveda

ATTEST:



Liza Alfaro, Recording Secretary

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