

MINUTES

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

12:00PM Wednesday June 25, 2025

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

PRESIDING: Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza

Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m. Roll Call was taken, and as of 12:04 p.m. a quorum was attained.

Present: Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza

Judge Aurelio Guerra, Willacy County
Mayor John Cowen, City of Brownsville
Mayor Norma Sepulveda, City of Harlingen
Commissioner Pete Garcia, City of Weslaco
Commissioner Joey Lopez, Cameron County
Commissioner Ellie Torres, Hidalgo County
Mayor Rosa Perez, City of La Villa
Mayor Sylvia Castillo, Sullivan City
Mayor Oscar Montoya, City of Mercedes
Commissioner Edward Gonzales, City of Raymondville
Mayor Rick Guerra, City of San Benito
Mr. Ron Garza, UTRGV Edinburg
Mr. Paul Hernandez, South Texas College
Mr. Luke Lucio, TSTC
Mr. Ron Mills, Willacy Co. Nav. Dist.
Mr. Oscar Garcia, Member-at-Large
Mr. Andres Chavez, Member-at-Large
Ms. Lupita Sanchez Martinez, Grassroots Org

Absent :

Mayor Ramiro Garza, City of Edinburg
Mayor David Moreno, City of Donna
Mayor Alejandro Flores, City of Los Fresnos
Mayor Javier Villalobos, City of McAllen
Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez City of Pharr
Commissioner Marco Villegas, City of San Juan
Mr. Troy Allen, Delta Lake ID
Mr. Jim Darling, Member-at-Large

Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza moved on to Item#2: Approval of Meeting Minutes – May 28, 2025

Item #2: Consideration and ACTION for approval of May 28, 2025, meeting minutes. ***Ron Mills made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 28, 2025, meeting, with the correction to include Troy Allen in the attendance, as he was present. Ron Garza seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.***

Item #3: Public Comment – No Public Comment currently.

With no further comments and questions, Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza moved on to Item #4 Administration.

Item #4: Administration

4.A. Mr. Cruz welcomed all attendees, noting a full house and expressing appreciation for everyone taking time out of their busy schedules to attend the meeting. A special welcome was extended to the new Mayor of Sullivan City, Ms. Sylvia Castillo, attending her first board meeting. Additional acknowledgments were made for first-time attendees: Mr. Chavez, Mayor Montoya, Mayor Perez, and Mr. García. The Chair thanked them for their participation and welcomed them to the board. Mr. Cruz mentioned that Texas Gas Services will be conducting a presentation and introduced Ms. Marie Michels. Ms. Michels started off with an overview of recent and upcoming regulatory filings affecting the participating cities. The company currently serves approximately 706,000 customers across 111 Texas communities and employs over 1,000 Texans. In 2024, Texas Gas Service invested \$309 million in its operations, paid \$17.5 million in property taxes, and contributed to communities through over 1,400 employee volunteer hours and charitable efforts.

The representative discussed a pending **rate case filing** (Statement of Intent), which is expected to be officially submitted on **June 30, 2025**, with materials arriving to cities on or before that date. This filing follows an earlier **GRIP (Gas Reliability Infrastructure Program)** interim rate adjustment submitted on **April 25, 2025**, which is required annually by the Texas Railroad Commission and does not include cost of capital or other key rate components.

Key Points from the Rate Case:

- **Customer Assistance Program:** Introduction of a **residential customer assistance pilot program** offering a 25% rate discount for up to 30,000 qualifying customers.
- **Share the Warmth Expansion:** The company proposes to contribute an additional **\$2 million** to match customer donations to this existing support program.
- **Statewide Rate Consolidation:** Proposal to consolidate current rate jurisdictions into a **single statewide rate structure**, which would result in **lower rates for customers in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV)**.
- **Rate Design Changes:** Updates to customer classifications to ensure consistency across all service areas. Customers may switch between small and large classifications but must remain on the selected rate for at least 12 months.
- **Revenue Request:** The company is requesting a **\$41 million** revenue increase to recover expenses from inflation, system growth, safety investments, and compliance.

Benefits and Impacts:

- RGV residential customers would likely see **monthly bill reductions** due to alignment with statewide rates.
- Consolidation aims to reduce regulatory costs and ensure fair and consistent pricing across all regions.

Regulatory Timeline:

- **Filing Date:** June 30, 2025
- **Deadline for Cities to Suspend Rates:** August 19, 2025
- **Final Decision Date (if suspended):** November 17, 2025
- Without city action by August 19, the proposed rates may take effect by operation of law.

The presentation concluded with a reminder of available customer support programs, including LIHEAP, payment arrangements, and average payment plans to mitigate seasonal bill fluctuations. The presenter invited questions from the board. Commissioner Joey Lopez asked, Earlier, you mentioned a proposed revenue increase of \$41 million—can you clarify what that figure represents and how it will impact customers? Ms. Michels stated that it was statewide. The Commissioner Lopez asked approximately what percentage of your current total revenue does the proposed \$41 million increase represent? Ms. Michels stated that she did not have that information with her at the time. Commissioner Joey Lopez asked if \$700 million was the total revenue for the state, Ms. Michels states that \$309 million was the total that was invested. Ron Garza then asked if it was income based and Ms. Michels states, yes, the program is income-based. While I don't have the exact income thresholds, I do know that customers currently receiving state or federal assistance will most likely qualify. Mr. Cruz had a question, Regarding the merger or consolidation you mentioned—if that does not move forward as planned, what would the timeline look like moving forward? Would the company return with another rate increase request, or how would that situation be handled? Ms. Michels responds with so currently we don't have a plan to come in with another filing. Ms. Michels then goes on and states that If consolidation is not approved, we would proceed with separate rate filings for each of the three existing service areas. On a standalone basis, the Rio Grande Valley would not experience the same rate decrease that would occur under a consolidated structure. Mayor Montoya asks if they need a motion to accepting the program, Mr. Cruz states Yes, that is correct. For everyone's awareness, Texas Gas Service uses this platform to communicate important updates directly to elected officials from multiple cities. It's more efficient than visiting each city individually, which isn't always feasible due to time constraints. This meeting allows for broader outreach in a single setting. Typically, we don't provide legal counsel to engage in this process. In the past, the City of McAllen generously allowed their legal team to assist with these matters. If I'm not mistaken, Texas Gas Service usually provides reimbursement for those legal services. Ms. Michels states that any parties that choose to intervene in the rate case are legally permitted to submit their associated expenses, which will be eligible for reimbursement upon conclusion of the case. Mayor Norie Garza then asked, "When is the deadline for notifying Texas Gas Service of a city's intent to intervene in the rate case?" Ms. Michels states August 19th. Mr. Ron Garza noted that, in the past, as Mr. Manny mentioned, the City of McAllen typically took the lead on the legal process, with other cities joining the effort. It was handled as a coordinated, consolidated approach. The board then made motion to acknowledge report. Commissioner Joey Lopez made a motion and Mayor Oscar Montoya seconded that motion, upon a vote motion was carried unanimously.

With no further questions or comments, Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza moved on to 4.B Executive Director Report.

4.B. Executive Directors Report – Mr. Cruz then states that next is the Presentation by the Weslaco Area Chamber of Commerce on the Texas 1015 Destination Initiative Project. Ms. Barbara Garza, CEO of the Weslaco Area Chamber of Commerce, is present to lead the presentation and present the Chamber's request to the Council. Ms. Barbara Garza, CEO of the Weslaco Area Chamber of Commerce, presented alongside Mayor Adrian Gonzalez regarding a partnership with the Texas International Produce Association (TIPA) to install a monument statue honoring the Texas 1015 Onion, a symbol celebrated annually in Weslaco through the Texas Onion Festival. The 1015 Onion, developed locally by Dr. Leonard Pike, is recognized as Texas's state vegetable and holds significant cultural and agricultural importance to the community.

Ms. Garza explained that the proposed monument would be located at the corner of Railroad Street and Texas Boulevard, potentially on the LRGVDC property, providing a prominent and educational landmark for Weslaco and the Rio Grande Valley. The project would incur no cost to the LRGVDC, with maintenance and installation overseen by the Chamber, TIPA, and the City of Weslaco.

Mayor Gonzalez expressed enthusiasm for the project, noting its significance to the city's agricultural heritage and the opportunity to host what is planned to be the world's largest onion statue.

Ms. Garza concluded by emphasizing the educational and beautification benefits of the initiative, assuring compliance with safety and accessibility standards, and invited some questions from the council. Ms. Barbara Garza stated that the proposed statue is intended to serve as a prototype for a broader initiative. The Texas International Produce Association (TIPA) has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) seeking artists capable of designing and creating the monument. The base of the statue will feature historical information about the Texas 1015 Onion, including recognition of its developer, Dr. Leonard Pike, and Texas A&M AgriLife, in acknowledgment of their contributions. Mayor Sepulveda expressed support for the project, stating that it is a very exciting initiative for the entire region and could serve as a unique tourist attraction. She inquired about the plans for promoting the monument outside of the local area. One of the initiatives we've already been working on over the past three years is expanding the Texas Onion Festival—and it's been incredibly successful. We've seen visitors come in from all over the world, some specifically attending just to receive their free onions. Others have even arranged to ship onions from our local distributors, like Onion House and Tex-Mex Sales, to their homes after the event. So, in that sense, we're already doing a form of international marketing—not just for the festival, but for the City of Weslaco as a whole. When I first joined, the Onion Festival was held at the park and typically drew between 5,000 to 7,000 guests annually. This past year, however, we were able to track attendance of around 35,000 people. It's clearly a growing initiative, and one we're excited to continue promoting, especially in international markets.

On a lighter note, there's something about the festival spirit that even convinced me to participate in the onion-eating contest. So, mayors—if you're ever in Weslaco during the festival—you're more than welcome to join me in the contest. I'll be showing up for the free onions either way!

Mr. Cruz mentioned that the Chamber is simply seeking approval to move forward with this initiative. Nothing has been finalized yet, it's all still in the preliminary stages. Once approval is given, they'll proceed and, later, return to this group with the necessary documents—like interlocal agreements—since this will involve LRGVDC property. Mr. Cruz also emphasized the importance of having everything in legal order, especially since it will involve public engagement. All necessary documents will be brought forward in the future for the board's review and approval. For now, they're just asking for the board's consent to move ahead, unless anyone has objections.

Mr. Cruz then moved on to the Legislative Report. He noted that, as many are aware, the legislative session has officially ended. Recently, there has been a flurry of activity from Governor Abbott, who, as of June 23rd, announced the final count of bills from the 89th Regular Legislative Session: 1,155 bills were signed into law, and 28 were vetoed.

Mr. Cruz stated that he will be sending out information so everyone can access the full list—both the signed and vetoed bills—for review. He also mentioned that a special session is anticipated to begin on Monday, July 21st.

No questions or comments, Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza then moved on to Item #5 Department Reports.

Item #5: A. Community & Economic Development: Melisa Gonzalez was out so Mr. Javier Dominquez reviewed the following. Community & Economic Development had one Action item on the agenda for their department.

1. Consideration and ACTION to approve the Interlocal Agreement with Texas State University and the LRGVDC to create a Composting curriculum for the 6th – 8th graders under the SWIFR Program. Due to a curriculum development issue within Region 1, the TCEQ has approved a partnership between the LRGVDC and Texas State University for the creation of a middle school food composting curriculum. Texas State University has the necessary resources and capacity to complete the curriculum by the deadline of August 31, 2025.

The curriculum will be implemented in schools located in the cities of Mission, Raymondville, Los Fresnos, Mercedes, and Rio Hondo. The goal is to have full implementation in place by September 2025.

Mr. Javier Dominguez noted that the action item at hand is to seek your approval, allowing Mr. Cruz to move forward with signing the master agreement with the Vice President of Research at Texas State University on behalf of the LRGVDC. ***Mayor Oscar Montoya made a motion to approve the Interlocal Agreement with Texas State University and the LRGVDC to create a Composting curriculum for the 6th-8th graders under the SWIFR Program. Commissioner Edward Gonzales seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.***

Status Reports: Mr. Javier Dominguez then had two announcements. We want to inform everyone that Region M is currently accepting public comments on the draft Water Plan update. The deadline to submit comments is **July 22, 2025**. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to him or the staff at the LRGVDC Community and Economic Development Department.

Additionally, we'd like to announce that invitations have already been sent out for our **Annual Regional Small Cities Coalition Workshop**, which will also take place on **July 22, 2025**, in the **Ken Jones Boardroom**. If you're interested in attending or would like a copy of the agenda in advance, feel free to contact our team—we'll be happy to assist.

No further questions or comments, Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza moved on to B. Health and Human Services.

B. Health & Human Services: Ms. Margarita Lopez was out so Marifer Posadas would be taking her place. My name is Marifer Posadas, and I'm one of the Program Supervisors with the Area Agency on Aging. I'm filling in today for our Director, Ms. Margarita Lopez.

While there are no action items for this month, I would like to provide a follow-up on the action item from last month regarding the submission of approved letters of support and advocacy packets.

The letter of support that was approved and signed by the Board during last month's meeting has been officially distributed. The complete advocacy packets, including the signed letter, an executive summary report, and several community letters of support—were mailed and emailed to the following congressional offices:

- Senator Ted Cruz
- Senator John Cornyn
- Representative Monica De La Cruz
- Representative Vicente Gonzalez

This fulfills the Board-approved action to advocate on behalf of the agency and its programs in response to the proposed FY 2026 federal budget cuts affecting the Older Americans Act, Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS), and Adult Protective Services.

Attached to this report, you will find a copy of the letter that was sent, along with the executive summary that accompanied each advocacy package. Mr. Cruz then stated that following the effort we made, I want to take a moment to thank the staff and the Board for approving The Letter of Support . We did receive acknowledgment from at least three of the congressional offices, which is encouraging.

As part of the process, we initially emailed the letter in advance and then followed up by sending four comprehensive advocacy packages to Washington, D.C., which included the letter of support and related materials. As a result of these efforts, we've seen some movement—there has been reconsideration at the federal level regarding funding for the Older Americans Act. That funding is now expected to move forward, which is a significant step.

However, one key question remains: who will oversee and lead this initiative at the federal level? Historically, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) was responsible, but we're seeing that role diminish, especially as they begin laying off staff. While we now have a better idea of where the funds will be allocated, the administrative leadership is still unclear. Staff is actively monitoring this situation. Once we identify which agency will take on the oversight role, we'll reach out to assess their direction. It would make logical sense to engage Council of Governments that already operate Area Agencies on Aging, given their long-standing experience dating back to 1967. Starting over with a new agency would be inefficient and potentially disruptive.

To summarize, the good news is that funding for the Older Americans Act appears to be secured. The remaining issue is identifying who will administer those funds at the federal level. Mr. Ron Garza added that the central question now is not about local implementation through the COGs, but rather who will take on the administrative role at the federal level. Ms. Margarita Lopez then wanted to share a few words, in the meantime while trying to get her online due to technical difficulties Mr. Cruz added we'd also like to extend our sincere thanks to TARC—the Texas Association of Regional Councils—and to US Aging, our national affiliate. US Aging plays a key role in shaping funding, policy, and procedural matters related to aging services at the national level. They maintain close relationships with key legislators, and we've seen the impact of their advocacy firsthand. Their efforts have been instrumental, and we're optimistic that their continued work has contributed significantly to the progress we're seeing. We remain committed to leading the charge to ensure ongoing funding for vital services that support our older adults and allow us to continue meeting their needs effectively.

Ms. Lopez then wrote a few words that Mr. Javier Dominguez read: I'm pleased to share an important update: the federal administration has officially revised its proposal concerning the Older Americans Act. All programs under the Older Americans Act will now remain within a newly renamed division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—the **Administration for Children, Families, and Communities**. This means there will be **no transfer of services** to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and more importantly, **no funding cuts** to Title III programs, Title D, Title VII, SHIPs, ADRCs, or Adult Protective Services. This is a significant win for the aging network and the individuals we serve.

No further questions or comments Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza moved on to Public Safety.

C. Public Safety: Criminal Justice & Homeland Security. Mr. Cesar Merla was recognized but Mr. Cruz had an announcement before Mr. Cesar Merla presents his action item and reports, it's important to highlight that this is yet another program facing uncertainty. As many are aware, the administration has proposed phasing out FEMA, the agency responsible for funding our Homeland Security Program. This development also places other programs—such as Criminal Justice—in jeopardy, as they too rely on federal funding.

At this point, we are at a standstill. As of today, there are no new updates. In a worst-case scenario, if FEMA is dismantled, the associated grants would disappear, the department would be dissolved, and there would be no funding to continue these critical programs. However, we are actively working with our partners at both the state and federal levels to advocate for the continuation of FEMA and to secure the necessary funding to sustain these essential services.

1. Consideration and ACTION to approve Homeland Security Advisory Committee's (HSAC) Recommendation for the refund of voluntary monetary contributions to jurisdictions from the Emergency Radio Communications Fund. The Homeland Security Advisory Committee (HSAC) met on June 13 here in the boardroom to review the return of voluntary monetary contributions totaling **\$86,135.50**.

The committee recommends approval of the attached jurisdiction breakdown for the distribution of these funds. These funds were originally designated to support the continued operation of the **National Weather Service Spanish Severe Weather Notification System** throughout the service region. As shown in the attached breakdown, the proposed allocation reflects an **80% return** of the remaining balance to each contributing jurisdiction. The total amount for distribution is **\$86,135.50**, and this item requires formal approval. *Mayor Oscar Montoya made a motion to approve the Homeland Security Advisory Committee's (HSAC) Recommendation for the refund of voluntary monetary contributions to jurisdictions from the Emergency Radio Communications Fund. Commissioner Joey Lopez seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.*

Status Reports: Mr. Cesar Merla provided Just a few important announcements and updates:

1. De-Escalation Training – Tomorrow

We will be holding our De-Escalation Training for law enforcement tomorrow here at the Ken Jones Boardroom. There are still a few spots available for those who qualify. TCOLE credit will be awarded upon completion.

2. Active Shooter Training – August 12–14

Our three-day Active Shooter Training is scheduled for August 12–14, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in coordination with the Weslaco Office of Emergency Management. The training will be held at KNAPP Medical Center.

We currently have **72 individuals registered**, but there is still room, and we encourage additional participation. Please invite your emergency management personnel, law enforcement, fire officials, and even **Public Information Officers (PIOs)**. The training includes a live simulation and is highly interactive, especially valuable for PIOs who play a crucial role in messaging during such incidents.

3. LISTO RGV Conference

Despite recent developments in the news, we are moving forward with the LISTO RGV Conference as planned. Mr. Javier Dominguez and I have attended several City Commission meetings over the past few months in preparation. The finalized agenda has been provided for your review.

Registration remains open, and the fee is **\$100 per participant**. We encourage everyone to help spread the word.

No further questions or comments Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza moved on to LRGV Police Academy.

Mr. Javier Solis started off with the first action item on the agenda for his department.

1. Consideration and ACTION to amend a previous action item pertaining to the Purchase of a 2025 Chevrolet Silverado from Lake County Chevrolet in the amount of \$54,848. The LRGV Academy requests cancellation of the previous purchase order and seeks approval of a new purchase order for Caldwell County Chevrolet in the amount of \$52,407. Mr. Javier Solis states that the original vendor failed to deliver the vehicle by the deadline, so we reopened the bidding process and found a different vendor who offered a lower price. ***Commissioner Joey Lopez made a motion to approve to amend a previous Action item pertaining to the Purchase of a 2025 Chevrolet Silverado from Lake County Chevrolet in the amount of \$54,848. The LRGV Academy requests cancellation of the previous purchase order and seeks approval of a new purchase order for Caldwell County Chevrolet in the amount of \$52,407. Mayor Oscar Montoya seconded the motion, upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

Status Reports: For the month of June, we offered a total of six in-service training courses.

- **Officers Trained:** 144
- **Total Instruction Hours:** 40
- **Total Contact Hours:** 960

Upcoming Training – Fentanyl Detection Seminar (August 16–18, 2025)

We are continuing to promote the upcoming Fentanyl Detection Seminar for Police K-9 Teams, scheduled for August 16–18, 2025. As of now, 36 local police K-9 teams from the Rio Grande Valley have registered. We've also received interest from out-of-state agencies, including teams from Wichita Falls.

This seminar offers a rare opportunity for K-9 units to train with actual fentanyl, not a pseudo-substance. Several slots remain open, and we strongly encourage all agencies with K-9 units to take advantage of this unique and critical training.

Clarification on Fentanyl Training Safety – Provided by Mr. Solis

Mr. Cruz requested clarification on the safety concerns around using fentanyl in K-9 training. In response,

Mr. Solis provided the following:

In partnership with the National Narcotic Detector Dog Association (NNDDA), we developed one of the first safe training protocols for fentanyl detection back in 2021. This protocol was created in collaboration with federal agencies and has been in use by U.S. Customs since 2020—with zero incidents involving canine exposure.

The same protocol is being mirrored for this training. Due to the risks associated with fentanyl, the DEA does not typically provide the substance to local agencies, which is why most departments use pseudo-substances. However, thanks to our partnership with NNDDA, we can offer training with real fentanyl, providing more realistic and legally credible preparation.

The importance of this training lies in court credibility. After completing the seminar, K-9 handlers will receive a certification confirming that their dogs have been trained on actual fentanyl. This strengthens their ability to testify in court, something most teams currently lack.

We've implemented robust safety protocols:

- **Narcan will be on-site**
- **EMS personnel will be on standby**
- **Strict handling procedures will be enforced**

This is the first time we've hosted this training in the Rio Grande Valley, and we want to reassure all agency administrators that it is safe, well-regulated, and nationally tested.

Mission 228th Academy Update

Mr. Solis also shared an update on the **Mission 228th Police Academy**:

I'm proud to report that all cadets passed their final exam as of yesterday. They're now preparing to take the TCOLE exam next Monday. This has been a high-performing class, with excellent grades across the board. We're confident they'll succeed and look forward to seeing everyone at their graduation on July 15th at 10 a.m. at the Mission Event Center.

New Weslaco Police Academy Announcement

Lastly, we're excited to announce that we've finalized an agreement with the Weslaco Police Department to open a full-time police academy at their location.

- **Academy Start Date: September 8, 2025**

We opened the entrance exam process, and within just three days, we reached full capacity. Currently, we have 83 applications on file. Due to continued interest and several pending applications, we're adding an additional test date to accommodate more candidates. Based on the strong response so far, we anticipate a very successful turnout for the Weslaco Police Academy. This marks a major step in expanding training access in the region.

No further questions or comments from the board, Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza moved on to Rio Grande Valley Emergency communications District.

Rio Grande Valley Emergency Communications District – Mr. Joe Garcia, Assistant Director, provided a brief report on recent accomplishments and ongoing initiatives:

GIS Division Highlights (Past 6 Months):

- **77 subdivisions** completed
- **34 street name requests** processed
- **28 utility requests** addressed
- **1,534 address tickets** resolved
- Developed and implemented the **2026 Training Plan**, which has been transformed into an **interactive story map**. This allows GIS mappers to track and check off training modules as they complete them.
- A **planned meeting with ESRI** is scheduled for next month to discuss future initiatives.

9-1-1 IT Division Highlights:

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes June 25, 2025

- Conducted **MAPFLEX and Power 9-1-1 trainings** for all PSAPs in Hidalgo County.
- Rolled out **new multimedia translation features**, now live in **14 PSAPs**. This tool enables **real-time video and language translation** in over **36 languages**, enhancing communication during emergency calls.
- A **cybersecurity assessment** is currently underway to ensure continued system reliability and security.

Special Recognition:

- **Mr. Elias Martinez**, Supervisor at **Edinburg PD**, received a **Public Service Award** for his leadership in the initial launch of the multimedia translation project.

Community Engagement:

The division has led extensive public outreach efforts, including:

- School safety presentations
- Participation in memorial events
- Public safety training sessions
- Community gatherings

Photos and additional details can be found in the packet provided.

No questions or comments from board, Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza moved on to Item D Transportation Valley Metro.

D. Transportation Valley Metro: Mr. Tom Logan states that today he will have 4 action items on the agenda.

1. Consideration and ACTION to approve updated LRGVDC- Valley Metro Title VI/LEP/EJ Policy. Mr. Logan then states that they recently received a review from TxDOT, and they requested that we update our policy to reflect the current three-year cycle. This includes modifying the policy language and updating the effective dates. As a reminder, this policy must be brought before the board for re-approval every three years. **Ron Mills made a motion to approve the updated LRGVDC- Valley Metro Title VI/LEP/EJ Policy. Commissioner Ellie Torres seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.**

2. Consideration and ACTION to approve revised LRGVDC Regional Transit Service Departments Americans with Disabilities Act “ADA” Policy and Procedures. Mr. Logan stated that this was just another updated policy. **Mayor Oscar Montoya made a motion to approve the Revise LRGVDC – Regional Transit Service Departments Americans with Disabilities Act “ADA” Policy and Procedures. Commissioner Ellie Torres seconded the motion upon a vote; the motion was carried unanimously.**

3. Consideration and ACTION to approve Executive Directors, under LRGVDC Valley Metro, to initiate and submit funding applications to the RGVMPPO call for projects- Category 7 (STBG) & Category 10 (CRP). Mr. Logan then goes on to explain that We are actively advancing four key projects and are optimistic about securing the necessary funding to move them forward. Our priority is fleet replacement, as several of our heavy-duty buses have reached the end of their useful life—defined as 12 years or 500,000 miles. We are seeking funding to replace these aging vehicles. Secondly, we are requesting additional funding to complete the Harlingen Multimodal Terminal. Although we previously received some funding, it proved insufficient to fully cover the project. We did not issue four separate proposals, but we’re now seeking the support

needed to bring this terminal to completion. Our third initiative is the Weslaco Multimodal Terminal. We are requesting funding for both architectural and engineering (A&E) work, as well as construction. The environmental review and land acquisition phases have already been completed, and we are now ready to move into final design and construction. **Mayor Oscar Montoya made a motion to approve the Executive Director's, under LRGVDC Valley Metro, to initiate and submit funding applications to the RGVMPO call for Projects-Category 7 (STBG) & Category 10 (CRP). Mr. Ron Garza seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.**

4. Consideration and ACTION to approve Amendments to Federal Transit Administration Grants TX-2023-101 and TX-2023-067 for LRGVDC to add Section 5339 Federal Funding to each grant. Mr. Logan added that additional Section 5339 federal funding is being allocated to each grant to ensure the funds are fully utilized before they expire. These funds will support fleet replacement, overhauls, and general maintenance. He also noted that this is a 100% funded grant. **Mayor Oscar Montoya made a motion to approve the Amendments to Federal Transit Administration Grants TX-2023-101 and TX-2023-067 to add section 5339 federal Funding to each Grant. Commissioner Joey Lopez seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.**

Status Reports: Mr. Tom Logan states that Valley Metros' status reports are in the package for your review and if you have any questions feel free to reach out. Mr. Cruz asked Mr. Logan to give a quick update on Zapata. I'd like to express my sincere thanks to Manny and the entire team at LRGVDC for their continued support. We recently hosted a major event in Zapata County to celebrate the launch of the *Zapata Express*—a new daily transit service connecting Zapata to Laredo. The route offers five round trips each day, giving residents access to critical services like medical appointments, employment opportunities, and more.

This service has been in the regional transit plan since 2002. When Valley Metro assumed operations in 2015, the project remained a key priority. After years of planning and persistence, we were finally able to secure competitive funding from TxDOT to operate the service for an initial 24-month period.

At the request of the Zapata County Judge, the service officially launched two days ago. To encourage ridership, we're offering the first 30 days fare-free. We're also carrying out strong promotional efforts to ensure the community is aware of and benefits from this new transportation option.

We've received incredible support from the City of Laredo and Laredo El Metro. We're utilizing their downtown terminal, and they've been instrumental in helping us promote the service. The Laredo Chamber of Commerce is also actively supporting community outreach events.

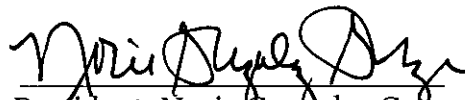
The route covers about 60 miles, with stops only in Zapata, San Ignacio, and then directly into Laredo's downtown terminal. From there, riders can easily transfer to Laredo Metro's demand-response or fixed-route services to reach destinations throughout the city. The terminal itself is centrally located, with a parking garage and a beautiful park nearby, making transfers smooth and convenient. We're excited about this milestone and look forward to keeping you updated on its progress.

No further Questions or comments, Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza then moved to Rio Grande Valley MPO.

RGVMPO - No status reports currently.

With no further questions or concerns, Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza moved on to Item #7. Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza mentioned that the next meeting wouldn't be till August 27th and reminded the Board that there is no Meeting In JULY.

Item #7: Adjourn: There being no further business to come before the board, Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza made a motion to adjourn at 1:07pm


President, Norie Gonzalez Garza

ATTEST:


Liza Alfaro, Recording Secretary