

LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL



AGENDA ANNUAL ELECTION MEETING

LRGVDC Main Campus, 301 W. Railroad Street, Building B, Weslaco, TX 78596

Wednesday, May 29, 2024, 12:00 pm

GoToMeeting Video Conference & In-Person

Audio Access is Available by Calling: +1 (646) 749-3122 Access Code: 717-153-789

Presiding: Mayor Norma Sepulveda, President

Item #1: Call to Order

- A. Roll Call**
- B. Invocation**
- C. Pledge of Allegiance**

Item #2: Consider Approval of January 31, 2024, Meeting Minutes..... President

ACTION ITEM

Item #3: Report on Caucus Results to Seat New Board Members..... President

- A. Three (3) Directors Representing Member Cities with Population from 10,000-24,999
- B. Three (3) Directors Representing Member Cities with a Population under 10,000
- C. Two (2) Directors Representing Educational Institutions
- D. Two (2) Directors Representing Special Governmental Units
- E. One (1) Director Representing Grassroots Organizations

Item #4: Act on Recommendations of Nominating Committee.....President

- A. Election of Five Members-at-Large to Serve on General Membership for the 2024-2025 Term

ACTION ITEM

- B. Election of Officers for the 2024-2025 Term

ACTION ITEM

Item #5: New or Unfinished Business..... President

Item #6: Adjourn..... President

ITEM #2.

MINUTES

MINUTES

MEETING OF THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL BOARD OF DIRECTORS, GENERAL MEMBERSHIP, & CORPORATION

12:00 PM WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31, 2024

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

- DRAFT -

Mr. Jim Darling, Board Secretary called the meeting to order at 12:06 pm. Roll call was taken for both the Board and Membership and a quorum of both entities was attained.

Chairman Darling moved to item #2: Consideration and Action to Approve Meeting Minutes.

A. Annual Elections Meeting of May 31, 2023

Commissioner David Garza made a motion to approve the Annual Elections Meeting Minutes from May 31, 2023, as presented. Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

B. Board of Directors Meeting of December 13, 2023

Troy Allen made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2023, Board of Directors meeting as presented. Commissioner David Garza seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.

Upon conclusion of action on the minutes, Chairman Darling moved to Item 3: Public Comment, there being none, he moved to Item 4: Administration.

1. Consideration and **ACTION** to approve Resolution 2024-01 to Honor David Suarez.

Jim Darling started by briefly going over the Resolution. Mr. David Suarez has faithfully served the people of the Rio Grande Valley as a member and officer on the Executive Board with distinction for 7 years, since 2015; and, Mr. David Suarez has moved the LRGVDC & Region forward in several areas, including response to the pandemic, improving public health and safety, supporting economic growth, protecting our environment, and supporting and continuing to advance our transportation resources and services; and Mr. David Suarez's tenure has been defined by his calm, steady, and collaborative leadership style, along with his commitment to inspiring public confidence in local government. The Board of Directors thanks Mr. David Suarez for this dedicated service and wishes him well as he continues to represent our community and the Rio Grande Valley. ***Troy Allen made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-01 Honoring David Suarez. Commissioner David Garza seconded the motion and upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.***

Mr. Cruz then let everyone know that he would make sure Mr. David Suarez would receive his much-deserved plaque. And, again, on behalf of the Staff and directors we want to thank the previous Mayor, David Suarez, for his dedication, and his public service, and we wish him well.

2. Consideration and **GENERAL MEMBERSHIP ACTION** on FY 2024 Annual Report & Budget.

Mr. Cruz then goes on to explain to the board that he knows it's quite an extensive annual report that we have for you, but the annual report offers the general membership and board of directors and its members and the public, a detailed outline of the LRGVDC, organization structure, and programmatic responsibilities. The Annual Report outlines The LRGVDC 2024 performance goals and 2024 budgets for the current year as well as productivity from the previous year of 2023. It's a recommendation coming from the LRGVDC Budget Committee, which met on January 10 to review and approve the annual report and budget. I'll be happy to answer any questions if there are any. Jim Darling mentioned that the Budget keeps growing every year, we're unique in that we are considered a zero-budget entity in other words we're supposed to spend all the money the state gives us and we don't get any more during the budget year and there are some reconciliations but unusual, from most of our local government type budgets. And we must deal with it so, it's grown quite a bit since I've been around. ***Troy Allen made a motion to approve the GENERAL MEMBERSHIP ACTION. Frank Morales seconded the motion and upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.***

With no further comments or concerns, Jim Darling then moved on to the Next Action Item C.

3. Consideration and **ACTION** to Accept the Quarterly and Annual Investment Reports. ***Troy Allen made a motion to approve and Adopt the Annual Investment Report and Accept the Quarterly Investment. Commissioner David Garza seconded the motion and upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.***

DURING THE TIME AFTER FINANCE PRESENTED THEIR ACTION ITEM. THE COMPUTER IN KEN JONES BOARD ROOM FROZE AND THE AUDIO WENT OUT. HOWEVER QUORUM WAS MAINTAINED.

With no questions or comments. Jim Darling then moved on to Item #4

Executive Director Report.

A. Executive Director Report: Mr. Cruz started by introducing all-new Hires.

Mr. Cruz moved on to Presentation and Update on the progress and research related to the establishment of a Regional Transit Authority as stipulated by House Bill 71, ratified in 2019. Tom Logan and Javier Dominguez started with the presentation and amongst the board were questions and concerns about the presentation taking place. (It was hard to hear or understand due to the audio being down). Judge Richard Cortez from Hidalgo County wanted to thank everyone for the hard work and the service that you do. We have 254 counties in the State of Texas. I believe that Hidalgo County is now the seventh most populous county in the state of Texas. Unfortunately, we also have a minimum of 27.4% or more people in poverty. Our people need to have a way of transportation for them to go to work, to look for health care, and a lot of other things. As you well know, the highway system is already being very taxed, subject to a thorough, complete study to make

sure, that we're fair and equitable in finance and anything for the public good, which is always an issue. We're not going to solve this problem by ignoring the problem, we're going to solve the problem by addressing the problem and seeing what the best way for us is to move forward. Corpus Christi has a transit authority, and Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, and other people have a transit authority. Well, why do they have a transit authority? it provides a service. We don't know if we in the Rio Grande Valley need a transit authority, we don't know what the best way is to finance it. We don't know what the best way is to allocate the cost of it. But unless we study the situation, and come together, then it's not going to solve the problem. We need rail access. Suppose you talk to the economic development people. In that case, they're going to tell you that we can't compete with other parts of Texas, much less other parts of the United States because we need real big companies. We can't compete with other people if we don't have access to water. We can't compete with other people who want to have access to energy. We can compete with other people to bring the jobs that we need to provide the quality of life that would be unless we address all those issues, this is a long-term solution; this is not going to happen tomorrow. As bridge owner of McAllen and Pharr, I would be very upset, too, if you're going to put the cost on bridges that don't belong to anybody other than to those cities. So, I can certainly see any opposition to those cities because that's not fair and equitable. I want to leave here with you all to get a very clear understanding that I believe that it is in the best interest of the Rio Grande Valley to pursue a very good study to see if this regional transit authority works best for us. We will never know the answer until it's studied thoroughly, and not prejudge anything until we can prejudge. Javier then went on to let BOD know that, if I may, I just want to conclude by saying that I think if anything, this discussion proves, perhaps, we can work that out with the messaging, but proves the reason for coming to you today, is because that not very many of the board members knew that there was a bill to begin with. And so, bringing this up to light and getting this feedback from you, really helps us in directing us to the point that you, as a board, would wish for us to proceed. Our effort today was just to show you the bill as it states, and if we take your feedback and move forward with it, we're all on board, and we appreciate your honest and open suggestions and feedback. Ms. Ann Cass then had something to say as well, she just wanted to point out that, on your very first step, in having public meetings, it is so important that they be bilingual. We had a meeting of about 150 colonia residents with the rural transportation staff. They were hesitant to speak in Spanish. I had to hire a translator. That's one of the issues that the people have is that people, when they call it, no one can help them in Spanish, and so please, when you have those public meetings, I would say put a note there that you provide translation for people.

In the Interest time due to it running long, the president requested to address only Action Items.

Item #5: Department Reports:

Community & Economic Development ACTION ITEMS.

1. Consideration and **ACTION** to approve Regional Small Cities Coalition (RSCC) Elections of officers for 2024. As per the RSCC Bylaws, the Advisory Committee shall consist of a chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. Chair: Mayor Yvette Cabrera, City of Granjeno, Vice Chair: Celina Gonzales, City of Primera Secretary: Mayor Jose Solis, City of Lyford. ***Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez made a motion to approve the Regional Small Cities Coalition (RSCC) Elections of Officers for 2024. As per RSCC Bylaws, the Advisory Committee shall consist of the chair, vice-chair, and Secretary. Commissioner David Garza seconded the motion and upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.***

2. Consideration and **ACTION** to Approve the 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 Texas Department of Agriculture Commissioner. USC Representative: Ben Medina City of Rio Hondo. USC Alternate: Jared Hockema, City of Port Isabel. ***Mayor Oscar Montoya made a motion to approve the 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 Texas Department of Agriculture Commissioner. Commissioner David Garza seconded the motion and upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.***

Program Status Reports

Due to limited time, Mrs. Melisa Gonzalez did not go through all the status reports for her department. But informed the members that they were in the packet for the review

Health and Human Services Action Items:

Mrs. Margarita Lopez came up with one Action item on her agenda.

1. Consideration and **ACTION** to approve the Citizens Advisory Council Membership Appointment for Maria Elia Lopez. ***Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez made a motion to Approve Citizens Advisory Council Membership Appointment for Maria Elia Lopez, Mayor Oscar Montoya seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.***

Program Status Reports

Status reports are also in the packet and in the interest of time they were not presented to the Board at this time.

Public Safety

Mr. Cesar was recognized. Mr. Merla explained that all items could be addressed at the same time as one or individually. The board members decided to take one action for all items. Mr. Merla proceeded to address all items.

Criminal Justice and Homeland Security Program Action Items.

1. Consideration and **ACTION** to approve resolutions for FY 2024-25 Homeland Security Grant Funding.
2. Consideration and **ACTION** to approve the resolution for FY 2024-25 Coordinator for the Regional Fire Academy.
3. Consideration and **ACTION** to approve the resolution for FY 2023-2024 Coordinator for the Regional Fire Academy. The dates are being updated to match updated grant policies as recommended by the Governor's Public Safety Office.
4. Consideration and **ACTION** to approve the Homeland Security Advisory Committee (HSAC) recommendation to accept score sheets for HSGD FY 2024-2025 grant projects.

5. Consideration and **ACTION** to approve the Criminal Justice Advisory Committee recommendation to accept score sheets for CJD FY 2024-2025 grant projects.

6. Consideration and **ACTION** to approve the Criminal Justice Advisory Council (CJAC) membership renewals.

All action Items for Criminal Justice and Homeland Security were all approved at the same time. ***Mayor Oscar Montoya made a motion to approve all Action Items for Criminal Justice and Homeland Security. Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.***

After all Action Items were complete and approved Jim Darling and all BOD moved on to Item #6.

All staff and the public stepped out of the room and the BOD continued to the Executive Session.

Item #6 Executive Session

A. Personnel Matters under Section 551-074 (I) to deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer or employee RE: Executive Director Annual Performance Evaluation.

B. Reconvene into an Open Session to Consider ACTION, if any on the items Related to the Executive Session as described above. ***Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez made a motion to Approve Reconvene into an Open Session to Consider Action if any on the items Related to the Executive Session as described above, Mayor Oscar Montoya seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.***

Item #7 New & Unfinished Business

Jim Darling, Chair

ATTEST:

Liza Alfaro, Recording Secretary

ITEM #3.

REPORT ON
CAUCUS RESULTS

Annual Election Meeting
Wednesday, May 29, 2024

Item # 3: **Report of the Caucus Results to Seat Board Members** President

A. Three (3) Directors Representing Member Cities with Population from 10,000-24,999

CITY	DESIGNEE	COUNTY
ALAMO	Mayor J.R Garza	Hidalgo
DONNA	Mayor David Garza	Hidalgo
RAYMONDVILLE	Commissioner Edward Gonzalez	Willacy

B. Three (3) Directors Representing member Cities with a population under 10,000

CITY	DESIGNEE	COUNTY
LOS FRESNOS	Mayor Alejandro Flores	Cameron
SAN PERLITA	Mayor George Guadiana	Willacy
SULLIVAN CITY	Mayor Alma Salinas	Hidalgo

C. Two (2) Directors representing Educational Institutions

INSTITUTION	DESIGNEE	COUNTY
SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE	Mr. Paul Hernandez	Hidalgo
TEXAS STATE TECHNICAL COLLEGE	Mr. Luke Lucio	Cameron

D. Two (2) Directors Representing Special Governmental Units

INSTITUTION	DESIGNEE	COUNTY
DELTA LAKE IRRIGATION DISTRICT	Mr. Troy Allen	Hidalgo
WILLACY COUNTY NAVIGATION DISTRICT	Mr. Ron Mills	Willacy

E. One (1) Director Representing Grassroots organizations

INSTITUTION	DESIGNEE	COUNTY
GRASSROOTS	Ms. Lupita Sanchez Martinez	Cameron

ITEM #4.

NOMINATING
COMMITTEE
RECOMMENDATIONS

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council Annual
Election Meeting

May 29, 2024

Item #4:

Act on Recommendations from Nominating Committee..... Mayor Norma Sepulveda

- A. Election of Five (5) Members-at-Large to Serve on General Membership for the 2024-2025 term.

The Nominating Committee met on Wednesday, May 9, 2024, via GoTo Meeting and in person and nominate individuals to be considered as - large Members of the LRGVDC General Membership.

The nominees are as follows:

NAME	CITY	COUNTY
Ms. Ann Cass	McAllen	Hidalgo
Mr. David Penoli	McAllen	Hidalgo
Mayor Pro-tern Rene Estrada	Combes	Cameron
Mr. Jim Darling	McAllen	Hidalgo
VACANT		

-ACTION ITEM

Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
Annual Elections Meeting

May 29, 2024

Item #4:

Act on Recommendations from Nominating Committee.....Mayor Norma Sepulveda
Committee Chair

B. Election of Officers for 2024-2025 Term

The Nominating Committee recommends the following slate of officers for the
2024-2025 term:

OFFICE	NAME	COUNTY
President	Mayor Norma Sepulveda	Cameron
1st Vice President	Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza	Hidalgo
2nd Vice President	Judge Aurelio Guerra	Willacy
Secretary	Mayor John Cowen	Cameron
Treasurer	Mayor Ramiro Garza	Hidalgo

ACTION ITEM