

Meeting Minutes

Of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Academy Advisory Committee

Initiated & chaired from: LRGVDC Campus – 301 W Railroad St. Weslaco, TX 78596

Held in-person on Tuesday, November 5, 2025, at 2:00 P.M.

Building Location: Building B – Small Board Room

Presiding: Lieutenant Jesus Ortega

ITEM #1 – CALL TO ORDER

Training Coordinator, Javier Solis, called the meeting to order. Roll Call was taken by Staff Aillen Rodriguez, and a quorum was attained.

ITEM #2 – ROLL CALL NAME

Name	Agency/Organization	Attendance
Assistant Chief Michael	Edinburg, Police Department - Voting Member	Present
Lieutenant Jesus Ortega	Hidalgo Police Department - Voting Member	Not Present
Chief Robert McGinnis	Elsa Police Department - Voting Member	Present
Daisy Lopez	Friendship of Women Inc – Voting Member	Present
Gloria Ocampo	Friendship of Women Inc – Voting Member	Present
Laura Soule	Tropical Texas Behavioral – Voting Member	Present
Ronald D. Mills	Port of Mansfield – Board Appointee	Not Present
Alvino Flores	Weslaco Police Department – Non-Voting Member	Present
Manuel Cruz	LRGVDC, Executive Director	Present
Javier Solis	Asst. Director/Training Coordinator	Present
Rolando Perez	Training & Development Specialist	Present
Sara Casares	Project Management Specialist	Present
Aillen Rodriguez	Administrative Assistant	Present

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ITEM # 3 – PUBLIC COMMENTS

Trainer Coordinator turned it over to Chief Robert McGinnis. Chief McGinnis moves on to Item number 3: Public comments. Trainer Coordinator Javier Solis states that no one signed up for public comments.

Chief McGinnis moved on to Item #4

ITEM #4 – APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Consideration and Action to approve the meeting minutes from the LRGV Academy Advisory Committee Meeting on June 24, 2025. Assistant Chief Michael Cerda made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes for June 24, 2025. Gloria Ocampo seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

ITEM #5 – TRAINING COORDINATOR REPORT

Training Coordinator Javier Solis presents the End of Year Police Officer Report, detailing the total number of police officers who have graduated from January 1, 2025, to the present. Mr. Solis reports that the police academy has conducted four academies' three graduations, with one Academy currently in session at the Weslaco Police Department.

Additionally, he mentions that this year, out of 56 cadets who attended the academy, 55 have successfully obtained their Texas Police License. The academy achieved a pass **rate of 98.21%**, meeting the state's requirements. The ongoing academy will be included in next year's report, with a total of four academies held in 2025.

Mr. Solis presented the in-service report covering January 2025 to the present date. The academy conducted a total of **108 in-service courses**, reaching **1,406 officers**. The total contact hours amounted to **14,126**. Still, several in-service sessions are planned for the remainder of the year. Mr. Solis also updated the board on the forthcoming training calendar for in-service programs.

Mr. Solis also provided an update on the (MOU) with Weslaco and Rio Grande City. This marks the first graduation in Starr County, with 17 out of 18 officers completing the program. Mr. Solis also briefed on the future academy plan for Rio Grande City.

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ITEM # 7 – OLD OR NEW BUSINESS ITEM

Training Coordinator Javier Solis provides an update on advisory board vacancies. Vice Chair, Usvaldo Zamora, did not complete the advisory board training, resulting in non-compliance and creating a vacancy for Willacy County. Cameron County Chief Robert Lopez from Port Isabel has resigned from his position. Opening a vacancy for Cameron County.

Training Coordinator Javier Solis introduces Chief James Harris from the Primera Police Department and Tom Huchen, who oversees Emergency Management, both representing Cameron County, as candidates for the advisory board.

James Harris introduces himself, sharing that he became the Chief of the Primera Police Department in January, bringing with him 36 years of law enforcement experience. Previously serving as Chief of Police in Los Fresnos from 2004 to 2017, before retiring and joining the National Guard. Highlights that the Advisory Primera is focused on expanding new facilities and mentions his qualifications as a TCOLE instructor, firearms instructor, emergency vehicle operation instructor, CPR trainer, and mental health advocate. Additionally, he provides an update on communication with the LRGV Academy, suggesting the potential for collaboration in the future. James Harris emphasizes that, if given the chance, Primera PD will be an asset to both the board and the academy, enabling an increase in the number of officers patrolling the streets.

Following the induction of Tom Huchen, Emergency Management Coordinator, brings a wealth of experience with 37 years in law enforcement. He retired as a lieutenant from the Harlingen Police Department and began his career with the Los Indios Police Department, as well as serving in the Cameron County Fire Marshals Association. Tom has also taught at the Harlingen Night Academy through the LRGV Police Academy. He offers his assistance to Cameron County police departments as needed, particularly regarding future police academy locations. Additionally, he serves on several development council boards and is a member of the Red Cross board. He humbly expresses his desire to serve on the LRGV Academy Advisory Board.

Mr. Cruz, LRGV Director, suggests doing a closed session to vote.

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ITEM #6 – ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A. Consideration & Action for final approval of the Basic Corrections Course

Mr. Solis provides an update on the recent approval of the basic corrections course and the objectives aimed at engaging high school students. Following obtaining approval of the final curriculum.

Mr. Solis outlines that the course will be structured as a **part-time program** totaling **120 hours**, divided into **6 weeks**. Participants will follow a **4-hour daily schedule**. The correction officers facilitating the course will be full-time employees, enabling them to conduct sessions in the evening. Briefing on goals, certifying correction officers, and reducing temporary licenses.

Daisy Lopez makes a motion to approve the final approval of the basic corrections course. Gloria Ocampo seconds the motion, and upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

B. Consideration & Action to approve amendments to the LRGV Academy Cadet Handbook

Project Management Sara Casares provides a concise overview of the revised manual to align with Texas Veterans Commission requirements:

1. **Page 2:** The title for Procedure 6 has been changed; previously, Procedures 4 and 6 shared the title “Requires Supplies.” Procedure 6 is now correctly labeled as “Academic Achievement Standards.”
2. **Page 3:** A new regulation, “Retention of Records, Grades, and Transcripts,” has been introduced, with the earlier bullet 6.14 relocated to 6.15.
3. **Page 10:** The GI Bill trademark has been appended to the end of section 3.6, under Veteran Education Benefits.
4. **Page 12:** Instructions for locating the live calendar have been included.
5. **Page 13:** The Prior Credit Clause has been added under Procedure 6.0, titled Academic Achievement Standards.
6. The manual now includes a section on the retention of records, grades, and transcripts.
7. The previous section 6.14, concerning academic achievement recognition, has been moved to 6.15.
8. Daisy Lopez makes a motion to approve amendments to the LRGV Academy Cadet Handbook. Gloria Ocampo seconds the motion, and upon a vote, the motion was carried

Trainer Coordinator Javier Solis addresses the decision to remove Ronald Mills, who represented Willacy County, from the LRGV Academy Advisory Board. According to the bylaws, if a member misses three consecutive meetings, we are obligated to take action and remove that individual. Consequently, Ronald Mills has indeed missed three executive meetings.

Gloria Ocampo motioned to remove Ronald Mills from the LRGV Board of Directors, seconded by Daisy Lopez, and upon a vote, the motion was carried

Mr. Solis announces an open LRGV Academy Advisory Board position and introduces Commissioner Ernesto Garcia, who is the elected County Commissioner for Precinct 4 in Willacy County. With over 30 years of experience as a retired State Police Officer, State Game Warden, and Chief Jail Investigator, he has also converted three prisons into jails. Garcia expresses interest in joining the Advisory Committee, particularly regarding the jail aspect of the academy, and questions Zamora's removal. Solis provides a briefing on the bylaws. Mr. Ernesto continues to express his interest in joining the Advisory Board and is particularly interested in the jail side of the academy.

Mr. Solis discusses our two open positions for Ex-Officio Members, who will serve as non-voting members. He introduces Chief Joseph Trevino from the Palmview Police Department, who has been with the department for three years. With 23 years of law enforcement experience, he has actively engaged with the LRGV Police Academy's sponsorship programs focused on recruitment and retention. Currently, he serves as the President of the South Texas Police Chiefs Association for the next two years. In this role, he has facilitated the expansion of their reach to the six counties represented within the Texas Police Chiefs Association Region 12 in South Texas. If allowed to serve on the LRGV Advisory Board, he believes it would foster a fruitful collaboration with the LRGV Academy.

Gloria Ocampo motioned for a closed session. Daisy Lopez seconded, and upon a vote, the motion was carried. LRGV Academy Advisor Board went into closed session.

Chief Rober McGinnis opens session at 3:06 PM

Motion for Chief Trevino and Chief Perez to the ex-official position. Daisy Lopez motioned, seconded by Assistant Chief Michael Cerda, and upon a vote, the motion was carried.

Motion for appointing Ernesto Garcia for the Willacy County Board of Directors, Assistant Chief Michael Cerda motion seconded by Daisy Lopez, and upon a vote, the motion was carried.

Motion for Cameron County Voting Member Tom Hugens, Gloria Ocampo, motion seconded by Daisy Lopez, and upon a vote, the motion was carried.

Chief McGinnis then moves on to the second order of new business, a vice chair position open. Mr. Michael Cerda nominated Chief Robert McGinnis second by Daisy Lopez, and upon a vote, the motion was carried.

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ITEM # 8 – ADJOURN

Chairman Lieutenant Robert McGinnis moves to adjourn the meeting. Daisy Lopez makes a motion to adjourn the meeting. Assistant Chief Michael Cerda seconds the motion, and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously. Chief McGinnis adjourns the meeting at 3:29 P.M.