

**Housing Authority of the City of Laredo**  
Regular  
Board of Commissioners Meeting  
LHA Board Room  
2000 San Francisco Ave.  
Laredo, Texas 78040  
Friday, July 20, 2018  
3:15 p.m.

**A-18-R-6**

**Minutes**

**July 20, 2018**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** Chairman Ceballos welcomed everybody present and called the meeting to order at 3:16 p.m.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** Chairman Ceballos led them in the recital of the pledge.
3. **ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM** Ms. Mary Gaona, Executive Director, proceeded with roll call. Ms. Gaona stated that they were not able to get in contact with Commissioner Ms. Alvarez.

**Commissioners Present**

Jose L. Ceballos, Chairman  
Dr. Sergio D. Garza, Vice-Chairman  
Dr. Marisela Rodriguez, Commissioner  
Anita Guerra, Commissioner

**Commissioners Absent**

Marcela Alvarez, Commissioner

Chairman Ceballos stated that they had a quorum and would proceed with the meeting.

**Staff Present**

Mary Gaona, Executive Director  
Christy Ramos, Administrative Assistant  
Jose Collazo, Special Projects Coordinator  
Bulmaro Cruz, Project Specific Manager  
Mary De La Rosa, Interim Human Resource Assistant  
Rosie Ortiz, Property Manager  
Melissa Ortiz, Director of Compliance and Quality Assurance  
Griselda Resendez, Property Manager  
Monica Rivera, Property Manager  
Esmie Leyva, Property Manager  
Alfonso Trevino, Jr., Project Specific Manager  
Eduardo Palacios, Project Specific Manager  
Bertha Galvan, Director of Section 8  
Alma D. Mata, Interim Director of Community & Economic Development  
Roberto Peña, Director of IT  
Frank Lopez, Procurement Officer

Jennifer Barrientos, Interim Finance Director  
Rafael Vidaurri, Director of Housing Management  
Leticia Sosa, Office Clerk  
Attorney Ricardo De Anda  
Attorney Doug Poneck

**Others Present**

Rosie Rios, Central Resident Council President  
Yolanda Martinez, Central R. Council  
Ignacio Hinojosa  
Ricardo Ramos  
Angel Mendoza  
Mario Chavez

**4. CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

Chairman Ceballos stated that they had a long agenda and would reserve any comments in regards to this item.

**5. CITIZENS COMMENTS**

This is the opportunity for visitors and guests to address the Board of Commissioners on any issue. The Board may not discuss any presented issue, nor may any action be taken on any issues at this time. There will be a 3-minute limitation per speaker. (Texas Attorney General Opinion-JC-0169)

Chairman Ceballos stated that there were no public comments.

**6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. Approval of minutes for Board of Commissioners meeting on May 25, 2018.**

Chairman Ceballos thanked Ms. Sosa for the very long minutes which consisted of less pages than before, but it was still 20 pages with a lot of detail and mentioned that it does help because he had recently read some of the previous minutes and it had helped him remember what actions they had taken and also the discussions and stated that he assumed the minutes had been prepared by Ms. Sosa. Ms. Sosa confirmed.

Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any comments.

**Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez moved to approve the minutes.**

**Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

**7. PRESENTATION BY CENTRAL RESIDENT COUNCIL**

Ms. Rosie Rios, President of the Central Resident Council, presented to the Board and thanked them for inviting them to the Board meeting and mentioned that the next Central Resident Council meeting would take place July 30, 2018 and stated that she hoped somebody from Laredo Housing would preside the meeting. Ms. Rios stated that they were aware there had been some changes in Laredo Housing; therefore, they were hoping somebody would be able to preside at the next Central Resident Council meeting and she thanked the Board of Commissioners.

Chairman Ceballos thanked Ms. Rios for her presentation.

## **8. PRESENTATIONS (No Action to be taken)**

### **A. Executive Director's Report**

Ms. Gaona mentioned that they would see in the Executive Director's Report that they had several trainings for the staff and they would also see the waiting list for Public Housing which had 807 people and for Farm Labor they still had nine vacancies and stated that they continue doing outreach in order for the property manager to be able to see how they would address it. In regards to the accounts receivable for the month ending June 30, 2018, Ms. Gaona mentioned that they had two properties in litigation with big amounts and stated that they would be addressing one of them by the end of the month, so they would be doing better. In reference to the waiting list for Section 8 Ms. Gaona stated that they currently had 120 people on the waiting list and were adding to it by going to Zapata on Mondays and they were also going to Asherton.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked how they would advertise in Zapata that there is a waiting list and mentioned that he had heard of a family that was in dire need and found out through one of the teachers that a student was acting up. Ms. Gaona mentioned that they would advertise in the newspaper and also when they go to Zapata they would post announcements. Chairman Ceballos asked Ms. Gaona to explain and provide some background on how they had arrived at starting going to Zapata. Ms. Gaona stated that they got a complaint and the Judge from Zapata reached out to Laredo Housing to see if they could go back to doing 118 vouchers that are dedicated to Zapata, so they went to Zapata and met with the Judge and it was agreed that the Judge would provide them with the space. Before they had been going to the public library, but the problem there was when they open the waiting list, they would have a lot of people applying that would be from out of town, not really residents from Zapata, so they had not had enough people to fill the waiting list. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked how they had been meeting in the library because he had been working in Zapata for 15 years and he would go to the library, which he mentioned is a beautiful library, but he never saw anybody in the Library. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that the Judge gave them the space. Commissioner Ms. Guerra asked if the space was at the Courthouse. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza mentioned that it was actually on Highway 81 going towards Roma. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that the space they have now is at a Community Center in a small office building next to the DPS office.

Bertha Galvan, Interim Section 8 Administrator, stated that the office in Zapata is located next to the DPS office, the address being 607 Highway 83 and the manager is Laura Garza and mentioned that the waiting list is open every Monday, so the residents of Zapata are more than welcome to apply in person and stated that a staff member is there in the office. Chairman Ceballos stated that the waiting list is minimum and asked whether the need was not there and how long had they been at the office since they went to Zapata. Ms. Galvan responded that it had been two months and said that if they had applicants, they would issue the vouchers at that moment because they have the vouchers available. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked if he would provide them with the name of the person, if they would look into it. Chairman Ceballos stated that that they could since the person is a resident of Zapata and the vouchers belong in Zapata County. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza stated that the person has been living in Zapata for a long time. Chairman Ceballos stated that they have used 30 vouchers out of the 118, so they have capacity.

Ms. Gaona mentioned that the new persons that were hired in the month of June were Valeria Cabello who is the BiblioTech lab technician and three gentlemen that were hired temporarily for the Russell Terrace Project.

In reference to Finance Ms. Gaona mentioned that the audited financials for March, 2017 were approved through REAC and staff was preparing for the March, 2018 audit, working on the financials from April through June and closeouts. Ms. Gaona also mentioned that staff had interviewed and selected a final applicant for Board approval for the accountant position.

In reference to the reorganization Ms. Gaona stated that letters had been sent on May 21, 2018 to the employees affected and they were given the opportunity to apply for alternate positions available within the agency and mentioned that vacant positions had been posted at the same time and they were in the process of making final selections. Ms. Gaona stated that staff evaluations had been performed and salary adjustments had been made where merited and goals were developed for several staff members. Chairman Ceballos asked if evaluations were 100% and if everyone was evaluated. Ms. Gaona confirmed.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that they had an item that discusses the reorganization and stated that he would like to bring it up after the Executive Director's report.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza stated that he had a question in regards to the financial audit being accepted that it was mentioned it was accepted by REAC, but it was not mentioned that it had been after the third revision submission and asked why after a third revision submission and what had happened that it took three times to submit the report. Ms. Gaona mentioned that there were difficulties between the auditing firm and the REAC advisor that was approving; there were disagreements in the way items were being reported, so they were going back and forth and finally on the third time Ms. Barrientos advise them how it needed to be done. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked what had happened the second time that they did not do it, if they had refused to do it or whether



they had submitted the same report again and it got denied again. Chairman Ceballos asked Ms. Gaona to give them an example, so there would be an understanding of what had happened and mentioned that it was unusual to have three revisions. Ms. Barrientos stated that they would usually do the FDS reporting by line items. Chairman Ceballos asked her if she could describe what FDS was because he wanted to make sure they understood. Ms. Barrientos stated that it meant Financial Data Schedule reporting and what the auditors would do was put it under another line item, so they would ask from HUD why they had put it there and they would just give an explanation, so it would not change, but had an explanation why they put it where they first reported it, so there would be discrepancies when they reported to HUD and they would just change it, it was just clarification or explanation on why they were doing it. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza stated that he thought it should not have to happen and stated that the first time they should have wanted to impress the people on what they were doing, but it had taken three times and said that it was not Ms. Barrientos' fault and she should realize that. Ms. Barrientos stated that she was not involved the first time, it was until the second time and third submission, so it was just reporting what the REAC auditor would see and wanted clarification and said that maybe a number was reported in a different place than it should have been. Commissioner Ms. Guerra asked if it was done by LHA staff. Ms. Barrientos responded that it could have been LHA staff because they are the ones that would input it, but still they had to verify the information and they could have sent it back advising that it was wrong. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that it was not usual to get rejected more than once and stated that the item would be coming up because they would be voting on renewing to do the next audit, so they would suggest that they update their REAC training and the notifications on how to proceed if they would keep them and added that there were other things in finance that Ms. Barrientos had been working through, Ms. Gaona and others in the team related to the lack of closing of the books that the auditors would probably have a lot to say, but it also showed that they received information without assuring that the accounting books had been closed properly for several or a couple of years so there were other things that as of that date Chairman Ceballos had asked earlier whether they had balanced or had still not balanced and stated that they needed to conclude that, so everything is in place, but the accounting in terms of how they classify expenses and where they were booked and stated that funding was obviously secured and in place and he would not want to mislead, but it has to do how they are posting that is not allowing them to balance and it needs to be concluded; if it would not be concluded, it would be an adjustment entry that would need to happen so they would be able to close the year and stated that it had been going on for so long trying to get to a solid closure. Ms. Gaona mentioned that she had come into LHA in February and did not know what they were doing or if they knew they needed to do that. Chairman Ceballos stated that it was a good question and stated that to his experience three tries was too much and mentioned that it was not the staff's fault.

Ms. Gaona mentioned that in reference to Casa Verde as of June 29, 2018 they had 120 units occupied, 14 already pre leased and 30 vacancies and in regards to Russell Terrace she stated that they were currently working on phase 1 which consisted of 21 duplexes with 42 units and it showed the percentage of completion in the packets. Ms. Gaona

stated that on Los Balcones they had a tentative closing date, they would be closing that day or Monday morning, so they would get that finalized quickly. In reference to the 820 Price project, they were in the process of executing the architect's work authorization to bring it for the Board's approval as far as the design.

Ms. Gaona stated that on the BiblioTech MOU there had not been a change and mentioned that they had a BiblioTech report in the packet. Chairman Ceballos asked if they had set a tentative date for the ribbon cutting ceremony at Casa Verde. Ms. Gaona mentioned that they were considering August 7, 2018, but they tried to confirm with Ms. Nelly Vielma who had asked them to give her some time till Monday to confirm, so tentatively they had it scheduled for August 7. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that they would do a combined Casa Verde/BiblioTech grand opening type and stated that he would like for Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza and Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez, who are involved in education, to actively participate in the ceremony for BiblioTech in particular and maybe they would work with Alma and Monica in the planning of the ceremony. Chairman Ceballos asked about the time for the ceremony. They mentioned it was scheduled at 10:00 a.m. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that the hard work of getting services from third party providers was still ongoing and they still had a lot of work to do to get it going, but at least in regards to the facility, he had asked if everything was in place and he was advised that it was, so he mentioned that it looks really nice for anybody that would be interested in going to take a look. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza stated that the sign looks really nice at night.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he wanted to make a comment to the Commissioners on Russell Terrace about a story that ran in El Mañana newspaper about the quality of Russell Terrace and stated that he had already mentioned before how it was superior not standard quality and said that they would be having a meeting with the tenants if not next week, it would be the following week and he believed that it might have been just two or three people that perhaps were not pleased with the relocation effort, so they had been doing updates with the tenants and would continue updating them on relocation and construction and would have the architect cover the items he described being superior than standard and will talk about fencing and the dogs again and said that prior to what ran in the paper and about the people that had been at those meetings he thought they had been very successful at the meetings and stated that they had brought back the pet policy and conceded on the dog deposit for elderly and disabled, but unfortunately what ran in the newspaper was very negative and for all that they had done for Russell Terrace Chairman Ceballos thought it was unfair what ran in the newspaper, so he asked Ms. Gaona, Alma and Monica who are working on marketing to focus on a more proactive effort to get our story out and stated that there were other people in the meeting that might need to hear that Russell Terrace is being built to last decades using different construction material and stated that for those who knew construction or even if they did not, they are using 30-year roof and 2 X 10 rafters for the roof, also copper plumbing which today nobody puts copper anymore and it is high cost, not so much to them due to it being so many units and mentioned that it is plastic now what they use, something called PEX; they are also putting low maintenance tubs for the showers which are one piece and easy to maintain, the design includes more

windows than we probably have in our homes, the cabinets are prefab which are excellent, great cabinets. Chairman Ceballos suggested they could talk to Frank Lopez if they had time after the meeting about how they put quality in it. The timeframe had an illusion that was delayed, but actually they set their own timeframe for the project and the contractor set his own timeline and they were a little bit behind because they have quality control and they have an inspector looking at quality and said to rest assured that the quality will be there, so he listed all those items and will show the tenants what a standard house gets, a 20 year composite shingle roof, and what they will be getting and the last thing was that they will do a comparison. He also mentioned that those are rental units, no longer public housing, they are section 8 units, so the tenants will have to start understanding that and stated that he had been saying that at every meeting and he thought more needed to be said by others in the Agency with the politeness and everything that should come with the way they would treat anybody they deal with, so they need to be clear and mentioned that the fencing had come up and residents would like to see the fencing the way it was before, but he will not support any change that deals with fencing the way it was before and stated that those units, including public housing were not meant to be permanent housing and thinks that consequently people stay because they had promoted the idea that folks can stay forever; some should stay as long as they need to get back up, whether it would be due to a job, a divorce, or whatever challenge and the elderly and disabled can stay as long as they desire and stated that it is what the program is for, but in fairness, he wanted to make sure that they were aware and at least hear the side of the staff that has been meeting with them.

In regards to relocation Chairman Ceballos stated that they have somebody dedicated just to relocating them and are accommodating them as best as they can which was what they had to do for some to preserve them in their schools and the community and said that he would take any questions anybody might have. The reason they had met the last time was because the residents saw Chairman Ceballos at the construction site and they asked him for a special meeting with him and two people that were there at the meeting, maybe just one that left early, might have been the person that was mentioned in the newspaper, so she left early because there were many people asking him questions and he was trying to answer their questions and mentioned that there are people that have four dogs or three dogs, way too many dogs, and what he said at the meeting and asked that anybody present that was at the meeting to feel comfortable to come to the microphone and chat with the Board and stated that what they had said at that meeting was that they would accommodate them and mentioned that there was somebody that has an autistic child and at first she was a little apprehensive about what she was hearing and then Chairman Ceballos said they could build a kennel for them so that the child does not go through the struggle; they will not build a kennel for everybody, but in that case it was very reasonable because the child had grown accustomed to having a pet, so they should accommodate them. They also talked about defining what the kennel would look like and mentioned that they would not build a kennel for four dogs, they have to be reasonable and in fairness he wants to make sure that when they read those stories, they will also need to get their story out, they would also talk to the folks that had been meeting with the staff. The one lady that left the meeting, unfortunately was unhappy, she has four dogs, so she has that to deal



with and they need to engage so that they would start addressing their issues because grievances would be difficult to manage if they are not brought to the people that can help, so they will have another meeting and will go through the different topics.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned he thought they had an excellent meeting, but unfortunately one or two people disagreed and stated that some people applauded when they were talking about putting some structure to fencing and to pets which is always a sensitive topic, but unfortunately they need to have parameters. Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any questions or comments. Ms. Gaona mentioned that the only thing he had not touched base was about the English/Spanish part of the meetings and said that the majority of the meeting was conducted in Spanish. Chairman Ceballos stated he thought he had mentioned that in an e-mail and said that they translate in the meetings and they double in length and try to run the meetings as bilingual as possible which had always been the case, so when anybody would say that he runs the meetings in English, it would be completely not true, they make every effort to accommodate and mentioned that Spanish is his first language, so that would not be the issue and stated that the particular meeting was bilingual.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked about the closing for Los Balcones. Ms. Gaona mentioned that they were going to close that day, but not all the paperwork was submitted; therefore, they would for sure close by the following Monday. Chairman Ceballos stated that there was a legal issue that had come up for the seller. Ms. Mata mentioned that there were some liens on the property which would be cleared and they were doing some edits that were requested on the paper work, so they would be able to close on Monday.

Chairman Ceballos moved to bring Items 9K and 9L up for consideration together in case they would need to go to executive session he would like to take both items together and mentioned that the items were to address any questions they might have that might need clarification and asked Ms. Gaona to provide an update on item 9K as to where they were in the reorganization and then to address any questions.

Ms. Gaona stated that as she had mentioned earlier on the reorganization, letters had been mailed, staff had been reshuffled, property managers had been moved around, some maintenance staff had been changed from different properties, Mr. Vidaurri and his staff were in the process of hiring any resource center coordinators, property managers and maintenance staff. In the Finance Department they had lost the accountant and were in the process of filling that position, for the Director of Economic Development position they have three applicants and would be reviewing them with the Commissioners.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he had asked Ms. Gaona to bring both job descriptions for the after school coordinators and asked if she would describe for the after school coordinators, for the record, since it had caught the media, what was the difference between the prior job description and the current job description. Ms. Gaona responded that the main difference was on the site based services, they



would be conducting more educational programs and the initiative was to try to bring all the programs they currently offer in the BiblioTech area to come to the sites for the children to be able to benefit from all those programs. In the prior job description it was a lot more of just the feeding services, the meal plans, the recruitments for the Kids Café program, so they had gone away from more of the educational programs, so that was the change from the old job description to the new one.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that the department went from Special Projects department to Property Management site. Ms. Gaona confirmed. Chairman Ceballos stated that it was part of the minutes that he went back and read and mentioned that the idea had originated from him which was to increase the enrichment activities at the halls and not just feeding them because they have computers that they can put to use, so in reference of what ran in the media and the newspaper, Chairman Ceballos stated that he was interviewed and he clarified the situation as best as he could, so on the language aspect, both descriptions say bilingual, so for Chairman Ceballos it is not necessarily a language issue, but the fact that if they would assist someone that is going to school, they need to have certain level of proficiency and they have staff that might not have that level of proficiency, but the one thing that was very striking was that when the media report came, actually a group went to the Mayor accompanied by a former Chairman of the Housing Authority and Chairman Ceballos did not receive a request to meet nor Ms. Gaona received a request to meet, so it was a month after the letter that it was a language issue, but it was not a language issue, it was a restructure that changed the scope of work for people and the requirements and mentioned that what was striking to him was that no one of the after school centers had applied a month in, so how would they even begin addressing someone's skills, abilities, educational record or interest to make themselves better at a job; how would they address a grievance if they had not received one, so he mentioned that it was important to set the record straight and stated that after the story ran a few people applied and Ms. Gaona could share with them when that occurred, but ultimately none of the Commissioners would hire in that level, it would end up being a recommendation from Mr. Vidaurri to the Director and if the staff think that those coordinators can do the job, they have a job description and if they decide they can do the job, all he would ask would be for them to make sure that they fulfill the job so that they would not be dealing with issues later with not being able to assist with homework later and said that the system being installed in the BiblioTech is a little more sophisticated than the traditional computer lab, it has resource libraries and other things, but nothing said that it will happen immediately, it would take time for it to happen.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that what did not seem logic or fair was that the grievances were not being addressed with them or with the Director and that the minute they would apply they could say they would want to keep the job and could ask what they could do in order to keep the job and the answer would have been that actually their job no longer existed, but there is this other job that essentially is the same function plus this other and the director would begin to work with them at an individual level to see if that could even happen, but to not provide the opportunity and go public is not a good course to take, so he stated that those were his comments and asked if

there were any questions beyond getting into individual people or positions because if they would do that they would have to do it in executive session and he just wanted to provide that background.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked who would help Mr. Vidaurri with interviewing the applicants when they apply, if it would be only one person or a committee of at least three persons.

Rafael Vidaurri, Director of Housing Management, mentioned that it had been both himself and Jessica Martinez who had been conducting the interviews and going through the applications and mentioned that Ms. Martinez was not present at the meeting. Chairman Ceballos asked if he would then make a recommendation to Ms. Gaona and if it was in writing. Mr. Vidaurri confirmed. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked if after interviewing there would be a tie, who would break the tie, if they had the same amount of points at the interview, how would they choose one person over the other. Chairman Ceballos asked if they had consensus all the time. Mr. Vidaurri confirmed. Commissioner Ms. Guerra asked if they had a set of questions. Mr. Vidaurri responded that they had a set of questions and they also looked at experience and education. Chairman Ceballos asked how they would handle a tie if it would happen, if he would go to the Director or what would he do. Mr. Vidaurri responded that in that case he would go to the Director for a third opinion. Chairman Ceballos asked Ms. Gaona what the policy ultimately said about addressing a recommendation. Ms. Gaona responded that she would review and decide if she would need to do a final interview. Chairman Ceballos asked if the policy said she would do the hiring. Ms. Gaona confirmed. Chairman Ceballos stated that ultimately it would lay with Ms. Gaona and if she would disagree with the recommendation she would ultimately be the one to hire. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza mentioned that with all due respect, he felt that if there would be tie, Ms. Gaona must interview both persons because how would she make a decision if would not see or hear them. Chairman Ceballos asked how many of the persons in the after school program that had been impacted had applied and how many had been interviewed. Mr. Vidaurri responded that three had applied, but two had been interviewed. Ms. Gaona stated that there had been at least 6 persons that had applied. Mr. Vidaurri mentioned that out of those they had interviewed two. Chairman Ceballos asked if they had considered the rest of those who had applied. Ms. Gaona mentioned that from the first group Mr. Vidaurri had already made his selection to interview and those applicants had not applied yet, there had only been one, so they would be in the second round that Mr. Vidaurri will probably select because he had already started doing his interviews.

Alma Mata, Director of Community and Economic Development, stated that she wanted to clarify Jessica Martinez' role in interviewing and said that Ms. Martinez was only looking at applicants based on the fact that she is developing the program because she has helped develop the program for BiblioTech which will be implemented at the resource centers, however, Mr. Vidaurri is involved in the interviews as well because the people that will be employed will report to the AMP Managers. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked what she meant when she said Ms. Martinez implemented the program. Ms.

Mata responded that Ms. Martinez is developing in conjunction with Mr. Vidaurri the program that will take place at each of the different sites to include BiblioTech. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that Ms. Martinez would develop programming for each of the sites, but that person reports to the site manager, so she might do the scheduling of activities or assisting but the implementation would happen at the sites. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza stated that he was not happy with it. Chairman Ceballos asked him what he would like. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza stated that he would discuss it privately in executive session.

Jennifer Barrientos, Interim Finance Director, mentioned that in the organizational chart Ms. Martinez role is the coordinator for the program and will provide materials and programs to be used at the resource centers, so she would be the person giving the curriculum to the resource center coordinators, but the Managers will also be in charge of that property. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza explained where he was coming from by giving an example as if Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez would be the Dean and his boss, who would say that she would want him to teach a particular curriculum, but she knows he has the expertise in the particular area, she would not have him teach biology when she knows his expertise is bilingual education, so his concern was whether they really know what they would be recommending, the training and the expertise in the particular area.

Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez mentioned that with any reorganization, in her experience being a worker for 18 to 20 years of her life, that the important thing to let the public know was that with whatever agency, whether it would be public or private, there is always a mission and a purpose of what the agency adheres to and with that there is also a strategic plan as far as how to adhere to that mission, so when initiatives are created or ideas are generated to meet more of that mission, that is where reorganization occurs and it is not a negative thing, sometimes structure needs to be adjusted so that the right players would be in the right unit and make sure that the mission is followed through and as Chairman Ceballos said, sometimes the players do not have the strengths anymore due to the new initiative, but it does not mean to do away completely with those employees, but to find out what their strengths are and if their strengths fall into another unit then that is where those people should go or not, but unfortunately when people do not meet the qualifications, when units have a different priority, and mentioned that she would imagine there are job descriptions, so they just need to make sure that the employees do follow or meet the job descriptions regardless of the qualifications or whatever is preferred or required out of those job descriptions and then they would just make sure that those applicants meet those expectations so that the unit works productively and efficiently and again it goes back to the mission making sure that those job descriptions are followed through with what the initiative is to make sure that the mission is completed.

Jose Collazo, Special Projects Coordinator, mentioned that he wanted to clarify two things: First of all that the policies state that they do not have to, but they can hire residents with lower qualifications for the job and said that he had been working with Housing for 20 years with different site coordinators and they had closed about five or



six grants and stated that Chairman Ceballos knew how many grants he had closed for him without any problems and gave an example, an old case and stated that they could ask SCAN, TAMIU or Mr. Gonzalez how they had helped kids do their science projects, they had cases of domestic violence and even child protective services too and stated that he was not saying education was bad, but it could be added like they would add curtains, tables and other things. He also mentioned that he had always been very truthful and did not like for people to lie and stated that when they had said that 100% of the people had been evaluated, he said not a 100% people had been evaluated for a raise and said that they were not treated right, that posting had to be made for employment and they had hired three persons the same day, they did the application and there was no opportunity to get hired and asked if he was wrong. Chairman Ceballos asked about what and said Mr. Collazo was wrong about several things, but would let him finish. Mr. Collazo asked if he had ever been a bad employee. Chairman Ceballos responded that he was not going to evaluate him in front of everybody, that it was something they could not do and that as the Board it was not their function. Mr. Collazo mentioned that Commissioner Marcela Alvarez had left more than four months before and had made a resignation letter and they still say that they have not contacted her and said that it was bad. He said they had it bad before and he was hoping that it would be a good thing for them and stated that he was not asking to get his job back, he just wanted them to see his point. He said in reference to the employees he had and who are residents, for one of them it was the first job she had and was evaluated and that employee had grown as Mr. Collazo did too and said that he grew in his job because he was a resident and at that time he would not have been able to come to the front and talk to them and stated that Ms. Gaona and Chairman Ceballos knew how he worked, another lady employee had been through depression and now she was good because that was the point of the program, a cycle, being a resident, getting to work, pay rent and said that most of them were already out of housing and had bought a house, just as he did and he thanked them for it. Mr. Collazo said that it was the program and they could add to it because at the beginning there were only four computers, no Kids Café, no services, but they added and added and now they have ESL classes and get them books and they also have tutoring and said that he had proof. Mr. Collazo asked Chairman Ceballos if he had ever gone to any of the sites by himself and talked to the children and said that it was very sad and he thanked them.

Chairman Ceballos thanked Mr. Collazo for his comments and asked if anybody had any additional comments and mentioned that there will obviously be a change in what the program will do and he would not necessarily clarify everything that was stated and there were somethings that were obviously not accurate including the allusion to the Commissioner, but the program evolves and one thing was correct, at its origin, the program was a grandfathered grant to help develop residents and that mission does not change, they still have that opportunity that residents can come in and develop and he went back to what was very revealing too about where the grievance started and referenced as to how they would begin if somebody would come to them and would say what they would need to do to keep their job, that 30 days out, did not occur and to Chairman Ceballos the opportunity was provided and it was not being channeled because there was an assumption in some of the statements that were made that there



was now something different that they should add on and stated that they were always adding on which is a natural occurrence in every program, but to think that they would keep it at a certain level because they have certain employees, the Board had decided that it would not be the case, they will continue to add and in fact BiblioTech is an add on and is a good model that has its gaps and deficiencies too, that needs to be analyzed, but digital library was not something they were doing eight or ten years ago, it is something new, but the first thing is when they are trying to be resourceful would be to go to the folks that can help you and to him the staff lost 30 good days because it got in the media and actually there were more applicants that came in and there was probably more interest in the jobs because they are paying more; it was something they added, now they are paying \$12.00 an hour and he asked how much they were being paid before, if it was minimum wage. Ms. Gaona mentioned it was \$8.50 an hour before. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that it was \$3.50 more, so they are always adding on and the idea that somehow they would be sacrificing opportunities for tenants is not so, it is still present and Mr. Collazo was not provided an opportunity to address somebody's interest, actually that day was probably an opportunity, but he knows Ms. Gaona was not provided an opportunity and when he first learned about the Mayor meeting with a group of people that were disgruntled about the language issue he asked Ms. Gaona if any had talked to her or had gone in to see her and Ms. Gaona told him no. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza mentioned that it was in the news and he got a phone call that night.

Mr. Collazo mentioned that they were saying they had not talked to Ms. Gaona and stated that first it began with the December party when Chairman Ceballos approached their table and talked to them in English and stated that they get intimidated when they see Chairman Ceballos and they did not answer and then Chairman Ceballos walked up to Melissa Ortiz and stated that they did not speak English. Mr. Collazo stated that he went to Ms. Gaona office when she called him and she had asked him: Jose, cuales son los que hablan Ingles and he asked Ms. Gaona if it was true. Ms. Gaona responded that yes, it was when they were working on the new job descriptions. Chairman Ceballos instructed Mr. Collazo not to ask any questions to anybody, to just make his comments so they could be cordial to each other. Mr. Collazo stated that how would the site coordinators would go if later on they had a meeting with all his staff and they were informed of the qualifications and were being told you need this and this to qualify. Chairman Ceballos asked if he was speaking for them and if he encourage them not to come and apply. Mr. Collazo responded that he was speaking because of what he was hearing was going on at the meeting and stated that Chairman Ceballos knew who Mr. Collazo was, that he did not like to lie to the public and does not like to be in the middle of anything and said that he had attended all the events and that there were a lot of pictures of all the events, but he does not come out in the pictures. Chairman Ceballos stated that the best advice the staff could have received was to engage immediately once they got the letter. Mr. Collazo asked with whom. Chairman Ceballos stated that it would have been with Human Resources. Chairman Ceballos stated that they would not be getting into an agreement and he did not want to engage and for Mr. Collazo to wrap up his comments. Mr. Collazo mentioned that he had requested a letter of recommendation and a copy of his file on June 6 and there was no response to his e-mail which he had sent to Ms. Gaona and to his supervisor, Mr. Vidaurri who never

responded. Chairman Ceballos asked if Mr. Collazo was still an employee. Mr. Collazo responded that he was. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he was sure he would get a copy of whatever would be permissible. Mr. Collazo mentioned he had to request it through public records and mentioned that he had been working for 21 years and thought they should have responded to his e-mails to just say they would give him a letter or not, anything, just to respond to his e-mail and added that he had never disrespected Chairman Ceballos nor Ms. Gaona and stated that if Chairman Ceballos would call him at any time, he would answer and if Ms. Gaona or anybody would e-mail him, he would answer right away and stated that it was very bad and that it was the way he was being rewarded and said that it was a simple request for a letter of recommendation, then he thanked Chairman Ceballos. Chairman Ceballos thanked Mr. Collazo for his comments.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza stated that he had a question and referred to Mr. Collazo mentioning about ESL classes and asked what type of curriculum they had for the ESL classes. Mr. Collazo responded that they had classes from 8 in the morning to 12 noon on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays and another class on Tuesdays and Thursdays and said that the room was always occupied by ESL classes and when the room was remodeled, they lost a lot of students, so they moved the ESL classes to the Ana Maria Lozano project where classes were still going on and stated that LCC was providing the ESL classes. Mr. Collazo mentioned that he had just provided an MOU for LCC on Monday of that week and to date he had not received a response and stated that four or five months ago he had provided an MOU for the Central Resident Council for residents participation which is required by the auditors and was supposed to be signed by Ms. Gaona in March or the latest in April; he had given it to Mr. Rafael Vidaurri, but there was no answer. Mr. Collazo stated that he had always followed procedures and at times when there were events and they were not invited, he went by the chain of command, but it fell on him because he organized the event, but had to go by the chain of command and said that if they would not see him at their office there was nothing he could do.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked if the ESL classes when they first started in that building were with the curriculum offered by LCC and also asked if they had sign-in sheets to prove that people had attended the ESL classes. Mr. Collazo confirmed and mentioned they had an MOU with LCC and they also had ESL classes at Meadow, Russell and South Laredo. Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez asked who they were dealing with in LCC for the ESL classes. Mr. Collazo responded that it was with Ms. Morales and when Ms. Morales left it was Ms. Sanchez and stated that there was currently an MOU and added that anything that would be requested from him, his department had worked on it, they would work on setting up for events or meetings in the community halls, setting up and removing chairs as needed, they would do what others do not want to do and at the end of the events, they would put everything away and stated that on a Senior Citizens proclamation event, he asked Ms. Gaona, but it was late and she sent Mr. Vidaurri, Mr. Collazo stated that he gave Mr. Vidaurri his place and stated that he did not get in the picture because first of all because he was not in agreement with the picture for it was senior citizens day and if they were to see the picture, they would see no senior citizens

in the picture, so that is what Mr. Collazo sees in the picture. He also mentioned that when they invited children and resident councils to some events, they would come out in the pictures, but are not invited to dinner and Mr. Collazo would take the children home and to Chick-Fil-A because they would not be invited to participate during the dinner, so he would always solve those problems for administration to look good and said that he always protected administration and stated that his loyalty would always be to the person in charge at LHA. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza thanked Mr. Collazo.

Chairman Ceballos moved to go into executive session to discuss specific staffing issues under Item K and also discuss Item L Discussion and possible action related to any management positions and hiring recommendations by the Executive Director.

**Chairman Ceballos moved to go into executive session.**

**Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

Chairman Ceballos stated for the record that he would like for the attorneys and Ms. Gaona to go in and Mr. Vidaurri would go in after they comment.

**Commissioners went into Executive Session at 4:17 p.m.**

**Commissioners reconvened from Executive Session at 5:32 p.m.**

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that there was no action taken in executive session.

In reference to Item K as it relates to the site-based management reorganization and related staffing Chairman Ceballos moved that staff would continue to fill the resource center coordinators and asked Ms. Rios if she had something to add and Ms. Rios mentioned that what she had in mind had already been covered by Mr. Collazo.

Chairman Ceballos stated that he would make a motion that staff continue to fill the resource center coordinators with the best qualified candidates as described in the job description and that they would also allow for an additional period of transition, without the promise of a job, for six positions to assist the resource center coordinators with the condition that they agree to further their education through an ESL adult basic education initiative program as well as No. 2 a computer literacy program or class to be developed by the Executive Director and the last thing would be to also connect them with the workforce department in the event that they would find placement and also to further develop themselves through the workforce and an example of that would be if they had somebody that perhaps would just need a little help in terms of language proficiency that Mr. Vidaurri and others would work with the group to actually receive some assistance from folks that do it every day along with an instructor that would help them and if they would put time in with workforce to get an opportunity to move ahead, so for that period it would be an additional four months or a total of six months from the date of their notice and it would only be for six positions in the afterschool program.



Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any additional comments or questions and also asked Ms. Gaona if she had all that. Ms. Gaona confirmed.

**Chairman Ceballos moved to approve Item K as discussed.**

**Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

On Item L discussion and possible action related to any management position hiring recommendation by the Executive Director requiring Board consultation. Chairman Ceballos asked Ms. Gaona to make her recommendation. Ms. Gaona stated that for the accounting position, they were recommending Brandon Reyes. Chairman Ceballos asked if there was motion to approve.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza moved to approve Ms. Gaona's recommendation.

Chairman Ceballos asked Ms. Barrientos if she had any comments to make because it was her department and stated that he knew she was involved in the interview process. Ms. Barrientos, Interim Finance Director, stated that they had interviewed Mr. Reyes, a first interview was with some members of the Finance Department and a second interview was with Ms. Gaona. Chairman Ceballos asked if Ms. Barrientos felt good with the selection. Ms. Barrientos confirmed. Chairman Ceballos stated that for Ms. Barrientos' knowledge, he had been pressuring Ms. Gaona to kind of help her so that they would have more capacity in the department and hopefully she would understand why he would do it and also would encourage them to help themselves in filling the positions and wished her and Mr. Reyes good luck in carrying out the duties of the department.

**Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza moved to approve Ms. Gaona's recommendation.**

**Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

Chairman Ceballos stated that they would go back to Item 9A.

## **9. ACTION ITEMS**

- A. Discussion and possible action relating to the Project Based-Voucher contract with NeighborWorks Laredo, its terms, and contract period.**

Chairman Ceballos stated that he would abstain himself from this item and asked Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza to proceed with leading on this item.

**Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza moved to award the Project Based-Voucher contract to NeighborWorks with its terms and contract period.**

**Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed.**

**Chairman Ceballos abstained.**



Attorney Poneck asked if he would be allowed to do clarification in reference to the item on the reorganization. Chairman Ceballos confirmed. Mr. Poneck mentioned that there was a misunderstanding about having to do evaluations in anticipation of doing a reorganization and stated that they did not have to do evaluations, that it would not be a performance based decision, they would essentially be looking at what programs they would have and what would make sense for the organization and said that it was not about whether somebody had done a good job or not; it was more of whether it would make sense the way it is structured and he wanted to put it on the record for them and the other issue was about recommendation letters that many folks would think that when they are leaving they should get a recommendation letter from the employer, but unfortunately there is always a risk for employers that if they were to issue recommendation letters that they would be accused of engaging in unlawful favoritism or discrimination by either doing it for some employees and not for others or describing things frankly that the departing employee would feel inaccurate, so out of caution, employers are advised, very generally, to just issue what is called letters of service or some neutral letter that basically tells the next employer that the person worked for the organization from this date to this date and the positions the person held without making a value judgement or statement regarding the employee which would be done as a precaution against someone thinking there would be a motive on how the letter would be written and stated that he wanted to put it on the record because there was a lot of stuff being said and he wanted to make sure at least that the community would know. Chairman Ceballos stated that he agreed with Mr. Poneck.

Chairman Ceballos stated that he wanted to speak about what was said at the podium over the staffing being evaluated 100% or not 100% and asked Ms. Gaona to please clarify it for the record. Ms. Gaona stated that she wanted to clarify for the record that the people that were affected by the reorg were not evaluated due to the reorg; everybody else that would get the merit increase or go through the evaluation was evaluated, but people affected with the reorg had not or new positions had not been evaluated. Attorney Poneck mentioned that when they do the reorg, they do not have to evaluate those employees.

- B. Discussion and possible action clarifying and ratifying the action taken on September 20, 2017 to include assistance for security deposits and for currently homeless clients being newly admitted into and assisted by the Low Income Public Housing Program.

Jennifer Barrientos, Interim Finance Director, presented to the Board and stated that on September 20, 2017 she had come before the Board for the Section 8 department asking for help for the homeless referrals they had with MOUs from participating certified agencies and the Board approved the item she presented and would want to ratify it to include the security deposit and to include also for people being admitted to Public Housing program and mentioned that they still had the \$15,000.00 per year available each September and as of the date of the meeting they had spent \$11,000.00. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he thought they had brought it back for deposits. Ms. Barrientos responded that they had not brought the item back and that it was only for

utility deposits, so it would now include Public Housing and they would share the \$15,000.00 per year. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that the budget would stay the same, that they would just expand it to include Public Housing and security deposits. Ms. Barrientos confirmed and Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any questions.

**Chairman Ceballos moved to approve item 9B as presented.**

**Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- C. Discussion and possible action to approve a one-year extension to Garza/Gonzalez & Associates to conduct the Independent Audit Services for Fiscal Year ending March 31, 2018.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that they had discussed this item earlier and they had some concerns that the auditor is struggling to meet the certifications obviously as evidenced by needing three tries and stated that because of timing he would motion and said that he believed they could do good work, but they had some concerns over that, so he would make a motion to approve the request to continue. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza stated that he would like to add that they would give the Executive Director the right to put out an RFQ and recommend someone that would be consistent with the policies that need to be followed and adhered to for the future. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he was sure they had the ability to do it either they get training or not and asked Ms. Gaona when they would post the RFQ in order to get ahead of next year audit. Ms. Gaona responded that they would need to post in the next month or so in order to have a decision by the end of the year.

Chairman Ceballos recommended that the RFQ would have something explicit to have engaged over the track record, so they would compare with the staff when they get the proposals and asked if it was an amendment, if Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza wanted to make it part of the motion. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza confirmed, so Chairman Ceballos stated that he would accept it as part of the motion. Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez asked if they could repeat the motion. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that the motion was to approve a one-year extension to carry out the audit for fiscal year ending March 31, 2018, but the amendment would be to also include authorizing the Executive Director to initiate an RFQ process as soon as possible to procure the next year's auditing firm.

**Chairman Ceballos moved to approve Item 9C as amended.**

**Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza mentioned that he was curious about the background in regards to the charges, for 2018 it stated \$84,000.00 and asked if it was the amount they would be charging. Ms. Gaona stated that it was the estimate, so Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza said that how it could be if in 2017 they had charged \$105,603.00 and in 2016 it was \$108,050.00, so they went down by \$3,000.00 and he did not think they would go down by such a huge amount. Chairman Ceballos asked Ms. Barrientos if she would

explain it and stated that he thought they had been given additional work. Ms. Barrientos mentioned that they had been given additional work and said that it was also based on the hours they would put in and stated that they would provide an invoice stating the amount of hours and what they worked on. Chairman Ceballos asked Ms. Barrientos just to report back to Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza why the difference because he remembered they were given additional work and to please just confirm it. Ms. Barrientos stated that she had the documentation and could show it to Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza at the end of the meeting. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza mentioned it would be fine. Chairman Ceballos stated that it was probably higher than the previous auditor. Ms. Gaona confirmed. Ms. Barrientos stated that they would keep an eye on the hours. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that they had given the auditors a couple of additional tasks and just wanted Ms. Barrientos to confirm it.

- D. Discussion and possible action to adopt and implement the Smoke-Free Public Housing Policy and Smoke-Free Lease Revision Effective July 30, 2018 and adopt Resolution No. 18-R-11.

Rafael Vidaurri III, Director Housing Management, presented to the Board and stated that they were at the last stage with regards to the adoption of the policy and mentioned that some of the main points on the item were that it would apply to the tenants, visitors, guests, employees as well as contractors, so it would be for everyone and smoking will be prohibited within all common areas within 25 ft. of any structure as well as inside any dwellings or any LHA building and it will also include electronic cigarettes as well, not just the regular cigarettes. Chairman Ceballos asked if there was a lease addendum. Mr. Vidaurri confirmed that it would include a lease addendum and for the new tenants coming in it would be signed immediately and for the existing tenants it would be a 60-day time frame for them to visit with the project manager to sign it.

Chairman Ceballos asked if he could make sure it would be added to the Russell Terrace agenda. Mr. Vidaurri confirmed and stated that with regards to some major dates they followed, back in February they had distributed surveys to all the tenants, each individual house had received a survey saying that it was coming and they got some feedback and they met with people from the State Department of Health Services who gave them some advice with regards to implementation. During February, Mr. Vidaurri and some staff attended all the resident council meetings to advise them that it was coming and on May 20, 2018 they advised that the actual smoke free policy and the addendum was available for their review and inspection and all households got it. On June 28, 2018 all managers attended a workshop that was done on line with the University of Texas at El Paso for implementation as well as enforcement and after that they were ready to go, they just needed approval from the Board to get it started July 31 and stated that they were in full compliance with all the dates and deadlines.

Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez asked if they would post any signs in the properties. Mr. Vidaurri stated that it was a good question and said that he had a sample of the signs they plan to purchase because they would need to post and it would be in English and

Spanish which provides the description of the 25ft., so they would be purchasing the signs pretty soon. Chairman Ceballos asked if there was a motion to approve.

**Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez moved to approve Item 9D.**

**Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- E.** Discussion and possible action to award RFP No. LHA2018\_0323\_1HQS Housing Inspection Services, and authorize the Executive Director to finalize negotiations and contract with the recommended proposer.

Ms. Gaona presented to the Board and mentioned they had bids from Bortex which are for inspections Section 8 staff cannot do, so he is certified and the only respondent to this item. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he would abstain from the item because he would usually use him as an inspector too. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked if they were ready to motion. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he had some comments but he would not be able to make them.

**Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza motion to award Item 9E to Bortex the only proposer.**

**Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed.**

**Chairman Ceballos abstained.**

- F.** Discussion and possible action to award RFP No. LHA2017\_1217\_1, On-Call professional Construction Inspection Services, and authorize the Executive Director to finalize any negotiations and contract with the top evaluated proposer or proposers.

Ms. Gaona presented to the Board and mentioned that they were bringing the item back for the reason that sometimes they would want to be able to negotiate with Do-Rite Inspection Services being that sometimes Bortex would not be available, so they would like to be able to negotiate with them to be able to have the inspections at the construction site. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he would also abstain from this item as well. Attorney Poneck mentioned that they would have access to two proposers.

**Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza moved to approve Item 9F and add Do-Rite.**

**Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed.**

**Chairman Ceballos abstained.**

- G.** Discussion and possible action to award RFP No. 180423-3 Qualified Professional Consultants, and authorize the Executive Director to finalize negotiations and contract with the top recommended firms.

Ms. Gaona presented to the Board and stated that staff was recommending to go with True Casa Consulting for grant writing services. Chairman Ceballos asked if they were



only doing grant writing services or if they were also doing other housing development consulting. Ms. Gaona responded that it would be another item.

Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez moved to approve Item 9G as recommended. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he was part of their interview and stated that he was very happy with their expertise and said that they actually have a social service background and stated that he thought they would do a good job and added that he would second Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez' motion and asked if there was any additional discussion.

**Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez moved to approve Item 9G as recommended by staff. Chairman Ceballos seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- H. Discussion and possible action to award RFQ No. 180423-4 Qualified Professional Technical Consultants, and authorize the Executive Director to finalize negotiations and contract with the top recommended firm for each technical area of concentration.

Ms. Gaona presented to the Board and mentioned that for Qualified Professional Technical Consultants, for Civil Engineering, staff was recommending for the Board of Commissioners to authorize to negotiate with CEC Civil Engineering with the intention to reach an agreement that would be fair and reasonable to both parties. Chairman Ceballos asked if it would be separate from surveying. Ms. Gaona confirmed. Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any questions. Ms. Gaona asked if they could also add the land surveying. Chairman Ceballos asked if they would recommend the same firm. Ms. Gaona confirmed. Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any questions or comments.

**Chairman Ceballos moved to award Item 9H as discussed and recommended by staff to CEC Civil Engineering for land surveying and for civil engineering.**

**Commissioner Ms. Guerra seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

Ms. Gaona mentioned that for No. 3, structural engineering, staff was recommending to authorize the Executive Director to open negotiations with Synergy Structural Engineering. Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez moved to award to Synergy Structural Engineering. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that, to be clear, the points relate to the evaluation of the RFQ's, not to the totals and said correct. Ms. Gaona confirmed he was correct. Chairman Ceballos asked that for the future not to set up a table where the total does not reflect the ranking they put on the form because he thought it was confusing, it kind of indented the total. Ms. Gaona mentioned that the top were the minimum qualifications and stated that she had discussed it with Frank Lopez. Chairman Ceballos stated that if they would not indent the total, it would be fine, but if the total is indented, it kind of leads to believe that the criteria would be points and he did not think it was reflected and stated that the RFQ has certain criteria they are familiar with and he wanted to make sure that it was understood and stated that he seconded the motion to award to Synergy Structural Engineering and asked if there was any additional discussion.

**Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez moved to award the structural engineering to Synergy Structural Engineering.**

**Chairman Ceballos seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

For the mechanical, electrical and plumbing engineering staff was recommending to go with EED Engineering, Inc.

**Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez moved to award the mechanical, electrical and plumbing engineering to EED Engineering, Inc.**

**Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

Ms. Gaona mentioned that for the environmental and the geo technical and materials testing staff recommended having the ability to negotiate with O'Connor Engineering and also with Terracon Consultants because sometimes with grant deadlines they would be restrained to time limits and they would like to have the ability to call one firm or the other.

**Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza moved to award the environmental and the geo technical and materials testing as recommended by staff.**

**Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- I. Discussion and possible action to award RFQ No. 190603-01 Qualified Professional Consultants, and authorize the Executive Director to finalize negotiations and contract with the top recommended firm for the two consulting areas of concentration.

Ms. Gaona mentioned that for project manager staff was recommending to go with Do-Rite Inspections for the construction project management services and to go with Bronner Optimizing Government for the leadership and strategic process and performance management. Chairman Ceballos asked if there were other proponents for project manager. Ms. Gaona responded that there were not. Chairman Ceballos asked Frank Lopez if he would clarify the scope of work. Mr. Lopez mentioned that for scope No. 1, which was project manager, they had Bronner Optimizing Government at 88. Chairman Ceballos asked if they had also applied for construction. Mr. Lopez confirmed. Chairman Ceballos stated that the difference was that one was local and the other was not and asked Mr. Lopez to provide the variation. Mr. Lopez responded that it was the availability and also the experience, specifically in reference to construction project manager. Chairman Ceballos asked if they would assign them a project. Ms. Gaona responded that they just wanted to have them available for future projects. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that Bronner was the strategic planning firm and stated they had done Brownsville and asked if they were also interested in construction. Ms. Gaona confirmed. Chairman Ceballos stated that he was surprised they were also interested in construction.

Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez asked whether it would be best to have one doing the two scopes because the way she would see it was that scope 1 would be the project manager and the next one would be the strategic process and wondered if it would be best to have the same one doing both. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that it was one of his comments because Do-Rite only does construction and Bronner, the strategic planner would be someone that would help them broadly from a high level from the Board to the Executive Director and Directors crafting a strategic plan and also doing a performance measure type system for an agency which Do-Rite cannot do, he is a construction manager, but Paradox is a strategic planner, not in construction. Mr. Lopez mentioned that they did a little bit less of experience in their proposal and in their qualifications with a little bit less of experience in project management, but mostly it was Do-Rite that specifically focused in that area.

Chairman Ceballos asked Ms. Mata if she wanted to make a comment. Ms. Mata confirmed and stated that Bronner submitted for both scopes of work, however, the scope of work for the construction manager, it was not really written towards construction, it was more for project manager in general, not construction; therefore, they recommended for it to be awarded to somebody else. Chairman Ceballos asked Ms. Gaona for the recommendations. Ms. Gaona responded that for the project manager to go with Do-Rite Inspections and for the leadership and strategic process performance management to go with Bronner.

Chairman Ceballos asked if they had interviewed all three and if they had talked to them on the strategic side. Ms. Gaona confirmed. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that it was the person doing the succession plan and mentioned they had some problems getting respondents because it had been on the works for so long. Mr. Lopez confirmed. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he was glad they had three responses and asked if there were any questions or a motion to accept the recommendations.

**Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez moved to approve Item 9I as recommended by staff.**  
**Commissioner Anita Guerra seconded the motion.**  
**Motion passed unanimously.**

Chairman Ceballos stated that his comment, which he had already mentioned to Ms. Gaona, for all of those who are involved on RFQ's was to completely migrate to digital and stated that the box they had received for the meeting was an amazing box, it was just too much, so he asked everybody to ask their proponents to submit digitally and to come up with a system that complies with HUD; the proposals they had in the box was a lot and if they could work towards that, he would appreciate it and stated he thought it could be done and that Robert already had an idea on how it would be done. Robert confirmed.

- J. Discussion and possible action to award QSP (Quotation for Small Purchase) for the Carlos Richter soffit and fascia board repairs and exterior painting.

Ms. Gaona mentioned that it was an item that was approved during the budget process as one of the non-routine items for Carlos Richter Courts and the Manager at that property took it as approved prior to going through the procurement process and stated that they had the three bids and were bringing it back before the Board to ratify it and said that the job was about 90% complete. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that it was a misunderstanding and that everything has to go through a process and they know, but they just needed to ratify it and stated that the work activity was approved by the Board, but the procurement of it did not come back to the Board although the process was followed, that it was bidden. Attorney Poneck was asked if he saw anything that needed to be put on the record further. Mr. Poneck said no. Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any comments or questions. Chairman Ceballos moved to approve ratifying the activity and indicated, for the record, that the activity was approved at a Board meeting and that the procurement process was followed although it did not go back to the Board for approval prior to the meeting. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza stated that they need to be careful in the future about these situations and stated that he appreciated the Manager at Carlos Richter taking charge, but they needed to be reminded. Ms. Gaona stated that finance staff, Ms. Barrientos and Frank Lopez had met with Mr. Vidaurri and had a class with them in regards to the procedures. Chairman Ceballos stated that he thought internal control worked because it got addressed at the point that it was identified and it speaks about internal control falling in place and stated that he had asked about the approval and the approval was not there for payment until it is duly taken care of and acknowledged and stated that fortunately it was an activity they had approved under the budgeting process, so it was Chairman Ceballos motion to proceed with ratifying the Carlos Richter soffit and fascia board repairs and exterior painting item.

**Chairman Ceballos moved to approve Item 9J as discussed.**

**Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- K. Update discussion and possible action on the agency's site-based management reorganization and related staffing.
- L. Discussion and possible action related to any management-positions hiring recommendations by the Executive, requiring Board consultation.

#### **10. EXECUTIVE CLOSED SESSION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE**

The Board of Commissioners for the Housing Authority of the City of Laredo reserve the right to adjourn into Executive Closed Session at any time during the course of this meeting to discuss any of the matters listed on the posted agenda, above, as authorized by the Texas Government Code, including Sections 551.071 (consultation with attorneys), 551.072 (deliberations about real property), 551.073 (deliberations about gifts and donations), 551.074 (personnel matters), 551.076 (deliberations about security devices), and 551.086 (economic development).

#### **11. ACTION ON ANY CLOSED SESSION ITEM**



## 12. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Ceballos moved to adjourn the meeting.  
Commissioner Anita Guerra seconded the motion.  
Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 6:06 p.m.

  
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Jose L. Ceballos, Board Chairman  
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Mary Gaona, Executive Director