

Housing Authority of the City of Laredo
Regular Board of Commissioners Meeting
Zoom Video Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84748034231>

Call in Number: 1-346-248-7799

Webinar ID: 847 4803 4231

LHA Board Room
2000 San Francisco Ave.
Laredo, Texas 78040
Friday, August 14, 2020
4:00 P.M.

NOTE: Due to recent COVID-19 health concerns, this meeting will be held by telephonic/video conferencing and the public may join via conference call number or via website provided above.

A-20-R-5

Minutes

August 14, 2020

- 1. CALL TO ORDER** Chairman Ceballos called the meeting to order at 4:06 p.m.

Chairman Ceballos stated that while they have COVID-19 they are going to try to have meetings a couple of times a month and doing things by power point and asked Ms. Mata to have the departments do it more on power point to eliminate any difficulty or challenges reading documents that are tedious to read on the screen, so they will try it and if they will need to adjust, they will adjust.

- 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** Chairman Ceballos led them in the recital of the pledge.

- 3. ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM** Ms. Alma Mata, Executive Director, proceeded with roll call and stated they had a quorum. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that Commissioner Ms. Freeman had some procedures and asked to keep her in their thoughts as she recovers from her recent procedures and stated that Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez is trying to join in the meeting.

Commissioners Present

Jose L. Ceballos, Chairman (by zoom)
Dr. Sergio D. Garza, Vice-Chairman (by zoom)
Dr. Marisela Rodriguez, Commissioner (by zoom)
Anita Guerra, Commissioner (by chat)

Commissioners Absent

Gloria Ann Freeman, Commissioner

Staff Present

Alma D. Mata, Executive Director
Melissa Ortiz, Director for Section 8
Daniel Colina, Accountant (by zoom)
Sonia Flores, Accountant (by zoom)
Valeria Cabello, Interim Procurement Officer (by zoom)
Jessica Martinez, Resident and Community Services Director (by zoom)
Christy Ramos, Administrative Assistant

Robert Peña, IT Director
Jennifer Barrientos, Finance Director (by zoom)
Ricardo De Anda, Attorney (by zoom)
Mary Gaona, LHA Consultant (by zoom)

Others Present

4. 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 the time. There will be a 3-minute limitation per speaker. (Texas Attorney General Opinion-JC-0169)

Ms. Mata stated that there were none

5. DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST FOR BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF

Chairman Ceballos asked if there are any disclosures that need to be made by the staff or the Board. There were none.

At this time Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez stated that she was joining them in the meeting.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of Minutes for Board of Commissioners meeting on June 12, 2020.

Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez moved to accept the Minutes for Board of Commissioners meeting on June 12, 2020 as recorded.

Chairman Ceballos seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

7. PRESENTATION BY CENTRAL RESIDENT COUNCIL

Ms. Mata stated that Ms. Rosie Rios was trying to get on the line, but she has not been able to get on and knows that she is attempting to do it. Chairman Ceballos stated that when she gets on it they will be able to come back to her.

8. STANDING REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS (No Action to be taken on these items).

A. Executive Director's Report

Chairman Ceballos asked Ms. Mata for the highlights on the report. Ms. Mata mentioned that she will have a power point presentation and mentioned that on the Executive Director's Report the format continues the same on the packet, but she wanted to highlight some areas for the Board given the time limits they have;

on the highlights the Public Housing PIC score is at 99.59% and the Section 8 PIC score is currently at 98.5% and mentioned that on the Section 8 Department they had brought to the Board that they had been allocated 50 vouchers that are exclusive for non-elderly disabled families and they have been able to identify 56 families that could qualify for that voucher in the current waiting list they have, however, they are looking to open the waiting list again in September in order to give themselves more of a pool for those vouchers and stated that also for Section 8, they received the second round of CARES funding which was received in the amount \$227,713.00 and stated that she is working with Ms. Gaona, Section 8 Department and Bulmaro Cruz, the Construction Department as well to allocate those funds towards projects that are related to COVID's response and preparedness. Additionally, in prior meetings, they informed the Board that they had received the Texas Homeless Network award for Rapid Rehousing Project which is in the amount of \$228,304.00 and mentioned that currently they are working with the representative from THN and HUD to finalize the project and all the paperwork needs to be submitted to them and they are in the process of finalizing partners MOU's which are with Bethany House, Scan, NeighborWorks, Workforce Solutions of South Texas and LHA; they are in the process of finalizing those MOU's and the policies together with the representatives from the awarding agency and the target funding availability is October 1, 2020 in order to start implementing the program. Chairman Ceballos asked if it was the target funding from THN. Ms. Mata stated that they have to have all the partners MOU's in place and the policies approved by them before they will allow them to start using the funds. Chairman Ceballos asked what the term is for the grant. Ms. Mata responded that she believes the term is April, 2021. Ms. Martinez stated that the funds should be available for one year. Chairman Ceballos asked if the grant was awarded in April. Ms. Mata stated that the award was received in May, 2020 when they received notification of it. Chairman Ceballos stated that his word of caution which has been with other grants, is that they are going to run out of time again because they are already 90 days in and they do not have MOU's in place yet and they only have a year to spend the money and stated that he brought it up at the last meeting and it is being pushed to October 1 and he was told it was going to start September 1 and now is gone out another month. Ms. Mata stated that they are still trying to get it for September 1, however, the partners have to have time to take the MOU's back to their Boards to get them approved. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he wants to caution Ms. Mata and Ms. Martinez that if they do not spend the money on time, they will never see another grant from THN because THN has some really firm guidelines and stated that he is mentioning it because he has been bringing it up every month and every month it gets pushed again. Ms. Mata stated that they have been in conversations with THN as well and are pending a date from them when it is supposed to be renewed so that they make sure they meet the expenditure date and are able to apply for a renewal versus having to apply for a brand new grant and stated that they know they are difficult to come by with that Agency. Chairman Ceballos stated that he does not think they should start in October; they need to do whatever they need to do to start in September because they are not going to have enough time and that they need to remember

that it is a unit cost grant, so if they do not enlist 20 clients they will not be able to spend the money on time. Ms. Mata stated that they will work with the partners to see if they can get it executed ahead of time or start executing and will reach out to THN again and mentioned that they have a standing calls with them and have another call on Monday to discuss exactly that to see if they can get started with the agencies that are ready to go and then roll in the agencies that require Board approval for their MOU.

Ms. Mata mentioned that the Census 2020 is an initiative they were tasked with trying to ensure 100% of the constituents respond to the Census and stated that Ms. Martinez is working in coordination with the local office to assist the tenants and currently they visited the sites during the rent collection period for the month of August and stated that they had some successful service that was submitted and are pending for them to provide a full report as to how many of those were submitted and are also already coordinating for the next rent period as well and will have staff at each one of the locations assisting with the Census submission and asked if anybody had any questions. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that in regards to the Census they have targets to meet and does not want that to get lost and stated that it is important that all the tenants get registered and he would like for Ms. Martinez to keep them updated on a monthly basis on the targets the Board gave her and stated that it is not going to be the Census people, but it is going to be the staff's job, Public Housing staff and everybody to get everybody registered and emphasized that he does not want it to get lost because the report does not have any actual count of how many have registered to fill the Census out, so if they do not account for it and they only have a couple months because he thinks it ends in October, so they need to start coming back with numbers over how many have actually responded to the Census. Ms. Mata stated that they will include it as a standard report together with her report.

Chairman Ceballos asked the Board if they had any questions for Ms. Mata. There were none. Ms. Mata stated that during her Executive Director Report she usually reports on the status of the IT projects and wondered if it was a good time for Mr. Peña to provide a two-minute update on the progress of the implementation of the Yardi system.

Robert Peña, IT Director, presented to the Board and stated that he is happy to announce that LHA is finally gone on with Yardi for three major programs for Public Housing, Section 8 and USDA Farm Labor and they all successfully posted rents for August 1 and now have moved to full live tasks and they will be having another round of online training for Public Housing and Section 8 during the week of August 18 – 21 which will be for four days; they will now shift the efforts towards finalizing the implementation of the Yardi suite which includes the Tenant Portal, the Landlord Portal and a procurement system and Vendor Portal; the implementation of the portals stands at 65% with a tentative full live date of October 1 of this year and the implementation of the procurement system and vendor portal has just

kicked off with a tentative live date of December 1, so they are now live with Yardi and looking forward to go live with the remaining portions.

Chairman Ceballos asked if they are meeting the timeline target that was presented to the Board. Mr. Peña stated that there was a delay and they had to readjust the timeline because COVID struck and he was asked to push it back a couple months, so they reset it for June 1 and then with other interruptions with people getting sick and the effect of the pandemia they finally agreed to go live two months later.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that it is hard to follow without a power point, so he recommended Mr. Peña for next time to put together a power point so that the Board can follow; the same one he presented to the Board previously to show the Board where he is at.

B. Unaudited Financials for the month of June 2020

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that at this time they will go to Item 8D and will come back later and cover the Unaudited Financials.

Chairman Ceballos stated that they are having problems hearing Ms. Barrientos.

Ms. Barrientos presented to the Board through power point of the financials and started with the profit they have as of June, 2020 and stated that for COCC they have a profit of about \$236,210.44; Amp 1 has \$158,657.91; Amp 3 has \$145,287.45; Amp 4 has \$19,415.18; Amp 5 has \$66,604.86; Amp 6 \$7,050.34; Section 8 has a profit of \$41,987.29 and Farm Labor has 10,857.13. Ms. Barrientos mentioned that for Revenues and Expenses they should be at 25% on the revenues and expenses, so anything above 25% in revenues is good and right now in expenses they are below 25%, so it is causing the profit in the amps and is good for the program. On LHA salaries and benefits savings they have for each of the projects and amps \$108,542 in savings and for the CFP they have Revenues of \$375,056 and expenses of \$459,631 and stated that the revenues are going to increase due to leasing; they are close to 100% in the leasing and they will see it in the next financials for July. For the LHOC they have revenues of \$7,755 and expenses of \$4,143 and for LHDC they have revenues of \$594,400 with expenses of \$5,587.

Ms. Barrientos mentioned that Commissioner Ms. Guerra requested a slide that would give all the information, so Ms. Barrientos presented the Capital Fund Grant for 2016 awarded for \$1,337,114 and stated that the obligation ended in April, 2020 and the disbursement they have to use the money by April 21, 2022, so they still have \$396,178 to expend and as of June before the work items that were still pending to finalize and they have Colonia Guadalupe electrical upgrade; at Ana Maria Lozano and Carlos Richter they have the parking asphalt sealing and the landscaping; at Senior Home they have concrete flat work and at Asherton they have the wall stripping board and for the next meeting they will allocate at Colonia

Guadalupe the parking and landscaping; they combined them with other grants, but they will present them at the next meeting.

For the 2017 CFP grant Ms. Barrientos stated that they were awarded \$1,380,645, the obligation ends in August 15, 2020 and is happy to announce that the obligation is at 90%; the disbursement end date is August 15, 2022 and they still have funds to expend in the amount of \$774,101 which includes the electrical upgrade in Colonia Guadalupe, Senior Home, Meadow Elderly RAD conversion, in Meadow Acres and South Laredo the security lighting and the sidewalk and flat work in Asherton and again the electrical upgrade is being reallocated in August, 2020 so they will have budget revision in the CFP Grant.

For the 2018 CFP Grant they have \$1,691,481, the obligation end date is May 28, 2021 and the disbursement end date is May 28, 2023 and they still have \$1,083,186 to expend; they have the HVAC for Colonia Guadalupe as well as in Amp 3 Ana Maria Lozano and Carlos Richter they have the HVAC; at Senior Home they still have to do the sewer line replacement, the restroom retrofit and electrical upgrade; at Meadow Acres and South Laredo, the gypsum board replacement and in Asherton the shower renovation, lavatory, faucets and toilet replacement as well; at Colonia Guadalupe in moving the electrical, they also had to move the HVAC.

Ms. Barrientos mentioned that for the 2019 Capital Fund Grant the obligation started April 16, 2019 and they have to complete the 90% obligation in April 15, 2020; the disbursement end date is April 15, 2020 and they were awarded \$1,696,733 which they still have to start a project.

Ms. Barrientos stated that for the Capital Grant for 2020, the obligation started March 26, 2020 and it ends March 25, 2023 and the disbursement date ends March 25, 2025; they were awarded \$1,798,213 which they still have to expend the whole amount.

Ms. Barrientos stated that the highlight she wants to present is that the revenue in COCC can improve if they are leased up more in the Public Housing units and mentioned that currently the leased up needs to be worked on in all the projects and developments, especially in Asherton which will help to get more profit in COCC.

Chairman Ceballos thanked Ms. Barrientos for mentioning the last part because he was looking at the rates and mentioned that there are some figures missing in the Public Housing occupancy reports that were compiled and stated that some of the months do not have an actual rate in the boxes and asked if they can follow up on it which needs to be updated and also to heed Ms. Barrientos' message for the Public Housing Managers to get the projects leased up so that they are not losing revenue. Chairman Ceballos thanked Ms. Barrientos again for raising that concern and for her well-prepared power point report presentation which she made it very easy to follow. Ms. Barrientos stated that she wanted to ask because Commissioner

Ms. Guerra made a recommendation to a change on the power point if Commissioner Ms. Guerra liked the way it was presented or whether she would like her to add or delete information and maybe Commissioner Ms. Guerra can follow up with her or the Board as well if they would like for her to change anything. Chairman Ceballos stated that Commissioner Ms. Guerra had already thanked Ms. Barrientos on the Chat. Commissioner Ms. Guerra stated that it looks good and thanked Ms. Barrientos.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that they will see a recap at the next meeting of those Capital Fund programs and the relocations. Chairman Ceballos thanked everybody for their reports.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that they will now go to Item 9, the Consent Agenda.

C. Community Safety and Security (Peace Officer) Program Report

D. Status and progress of ongoing construction projects. Highlights of Balcones Apartments, Ana Maria Lozano BiblioTech and COVID-19 Projects.

Ms. Mata stated that Bulmaro Cruz was in the meeting in case the Board has any questions and mentioned that currently the construction department continues to work on the Ana Maria Lozano BiblioTech project and stated that the Board has allow them to award contracts for electrical, plumbing and site work and currently the contracts are with the vendors and are waiting for them to be executed by them so that they can execute them and issue the notice to proceed so that they can start; for Los Balcones Apartments they awarded the concrete cutting which is taking place and is close to finalizing and during the Board meeting they will be requesting the Board's authorization to award the framing, electrical and plumbing for that project as well. Additionally, they added some projects related to COVID's response and those include the Senior Home, the Administrative Building in the main campus of the Housing Authority, the maintenance shop for Amp 1 which is Colonia Guadalupe maintenance shop and the Community Center in the Colonia Guadalupe as well and the former administrative office.

For Senior Home Ms. Mata stated that Bulmaro has already worked with the Architect to develop preliminary floor plans and stated that they also have an item related to the asbestos abatement at that property for this meeting; in the Administrative Building, with the Architects they have developed floor plans for the first floor for Section 8 and all the floor plans are being developed with COVID-19 in mind as well and mentioned that they are in the final phase of reviewing those floor plans and then the Architects will move on to develop the floor plans for the second floor as well. In the maintenance shop they are looking at demolishing that structure and during the environmental study they discovered asbestos there as well which is another item that is in the packet for today; the current Community Center building used to house the Family Planning,

Community Hall and currently houses the IT Department and Public Housing and that building as well during the environmental study they discovered asbestos, so they have an item for asbestos abatement there and then at the former administrative office they already performed the asbestos abatement there and they have a preliminary floor plan which needs to be reviewed with the Architect again so that they can implement the COVID-19 measures that need to take place because the preliminary floor plan they had was prior to COVID so it does not necessarily work with the precautions that they are having to take at this point. Chairman Ceballos asked to chime in to inform the Board that there is going to be some discussions about waivers that HUD is allowing, so what they are doing is pairing up COVID new money they have seen come in and stated that there is roughly under half a million dollars that is coming in for Section 8 and there is probably under \$300K coming in for Public Housing, the second round for Public Housing that has been announced, so a lot of the retrofit is to reduce staff at the buildings and the current Board room will be occupied by staff and mentioned that the COVID committee came up with an idea of clustering no more than six people that has its own circulation system, so it is what they are working on for the fall and winter assuming that the virus will still be around and they will have to continue with mitigation efforts, so it is to make them aware what will be happening and most of it will happen with COVID money and then there will be additional work that will be done through CFP Capital Fund Grant and Mary Gaona and Bulmaro are working on reprogramming some of the Capital Fund Grant that if they recall they were late on expenditures, so some of that will actually come to the Board at the next Board meeting for some of the retrofit that is happening and as they all very well know, as the Board for this mayor appointed period, they will be winding down at least for his service, so they are really looking at whatever they start hopefully completing it by the time Chairman Ceballos steps off which can be earlier depending on what the Mayor wants, but he would like to at least see the administrative campus completed and possibly other affordable housing project, but at least taken care of Colonia Guadalupe improvements, so it is just an update that it is a blend of new COVID money and some Capital Fund money that had not been used to complete the retrofit to lessen the amount of people in the building and improve the quality of the building. Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any questions and especially if Ms. Gaona had anything to add in regards to what she is working on. Ms. Gaona responded that she only wanted to inform that it will be a total with all the COVID and the CFP of \$1,018,000 that they will be working on to be able to do some projects. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that Ms. Gaona will be able to cover more at the next meeting.

Chairman Ceballos stated for the record that the asbestos is not in the plywood, it is airborne; they are finding it in the tile which is where they have been finding it in the structures, it is actually in the glue of that old vinyl tile and some in the joint component in the sheetrock; in the texture of the sheetrock which is what they saw at Russell Terrace and he wanted to make sure it is on the record, so nobody gets concerned over that and stated that it is a mitigating process; a secure process to remove it and once it gets removed they can go in there and do other work and

demolish and rehab all of it. Chairman Ceballos asked if there was anything Bulmaro wanted to add and thanked him for his work for he is stepping in and heading a lot of those projects and as they recommended in the last meeting for Bulmaro to get some help from the staff and also use the Consultants that have been contracted or procured as well. Bulmaro thanked Chairman Ceballos for his recommendations.

Chairman Ceballos asked if they were ready to go back to cover the Unaudited Financial Statements. Ms. Mata confirmed and stated that she will be sharing the financials.

9. CONSENT AGENDA: RESOLUTIONS

All of the items may be acted upon by one motion. No separate discussion or action of the items is necessary unless desired by a Commissioner.

Chairman Ceballos moved to approve the Consent Agenda, items 9A – 9D.

Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

- A. Consideration for approval to open a new bank account for the Laredo Housing Authority Rapid Rehousing Grant Program, as an internal control effort for such program.
- B. Consideration for approval to ratify the purchase of 20 laptops in response to COVID-19 in the amount of \$23,800.00 for the Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher Programs. Source available funding is the CARES Act, HUD allocated award to the agency.
- C. Consideration for approval to ratify a 1-year extension to RFQ#0190401-1 Professional Services for Annual Audit Services contract to Garza/Gonzalez & Associates in the amount of \$98,500 for FYE 03/31/2020.
- D. Consideration for approval to enter into a public use agreement with local hotels that are assisting with quarantining homeless vulnerable clients (Covid-19) and agency referrals by providing the temporary placement of a microwave and mini-refrigerator for the room, and laundry equipment to maintain isolation and reduce community infectious spread. The agency is one of multiple service providers that serve on a Covid-19 Emergency Response Committee which assists with addressing emergency housing needs of Covid 19 positive community members.

10. ACTION ITEM

- A. Presentation and discussion with possible action related to the HUD approved COVID-19 program waivers, associated time requirements for prompt use of funds, and establishing Board approval to proceed with use of any waivers.

Chairman Ceballos stated that they are going to spend only about five minutes on this item; he actually had asked to put it on to alert the Board about the waivers and mentioned that there may have some action, but it was more to keep them posted of any waivers that are being used.

Chairman Ceballos informed the Board that he had recommended the staff to not utilize the waivers unless they disclosed to the Board because it sets forth a timeline, a commitment on timelines that he thinks the Board should be advised of and although the Executive Director and Staff may feel urged to take on a waiver that may give them more time, it can come back and haunt them in an audit, so it is very important that the Board gives approval, reviews and understands what they are and it has to do with inspections and with expenditures, so it is important that the waivers come to the Board and bless them, so they can defend them at some point if they have to.

Ms. Mata mentioned that they have shared with the Board a listing of all the HUD waivers that are available and also presented them on the screen a listing of the ones she sent out and are in place currently and mentioned that Finance closed out for the Capital Fund Grant and stated that those extensions were automatic; they did not requested them, they were automatic by HUD and it changed on the system; nonetheless, she wanted to report them as using them as well and other than that she stated that Chairman Ceballos covered pretty much most of it consisting of inspections and COVID-19 related situations they want to avoid staff being involved in when it comes to answering units and things of that sort and the reduction of face to face contact with the constituents; additionally, Ms. Mata added on the slide a proposed waiver for the Board to consider and stated that she had mentioned they would bring it back at the next meeting when she spoke to Chairman Ceballos, but wonders if they would be able to take action on that waiver so that they can expedite opening the waiting list; currently the waiver allows them to open the waiting list without publishing the public notice on the newspaper; it would be sufficient to publish it on the website and on Facebook so that they can expedite opening the waiting list and help those people that are being affected through COVID-19 and losing their houses.

Chairman Ceballos stated that he would like the Board to consider entertaining it and the reason for it is that they are participants in a COVID-19 committee; COVID Homeless Provider Committee which includes Bethany House, Scan, Border Region, Holding Institute, Salvation Army, Laredo Medical Center, Doctors Hospital and they also have a number of street homeless people that are coming in COVID-19 positive and are having to house them, quarantine them, so that they do not go back and continue the spread and stated that they have talked about it before and he thinks is great, but they are going to need some permanent housing further into their recovery; some of them have issues as they would expect with substance or mental health, however, because they are in the process of being treated it is actually a good time to introduce them into housing and stated that not everybody is going to be a perfect client to move into permanent housing, but it is an opportunity to

move them in if they can open the waiting list when they have those clusters of homeless like right now there are probably four homeless that if they were open they would come in, they would get a homeless preference and they would get a move up preference because they are being treated by the agency and they will go to the top of the list and would be housed in Section 8 or Public Housing assistance which is a good opportunity; they do not always get the opportunity to open the waiting list which is good and it still requires a posting at the website and requires a message to be drawn up on the phone and if they do not, what is going to happen is that they are going to have bottlenecks of people that were helped to be quarantined that basically will return to the streets, so Chairman Ceballos thinks that it is a good opportunity that they extended this waiver to be able to get it; it had ended July 31, 2020, but they extended it to December and he thinks it is a good opportunity and asked what they all think and asked Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza in particular for his thoughts. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza stated that it is a good idea to help the homeless, especially those with some needs in particular cases; times are hard and they do not know what they are doing and asked that if they do not help them who else is going to help them, so Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza stated that he agrees with Chairman Ceballos. Chairman Ceballos stated that they have a crisis at Bruni Plaza and mentioned that they have a lot in the Agenda and they are not going to have enough time to cover everything and stated that they have plenty of them at Bruni Plaza; they probably have 16 to 20 people living at Bruni Plaza; sleeping at Bruni Plaza and he thinks that if they open the list there are going to be homeless and if they get them enrolled in an agency they are going to get two preference points and they are going to get to the top, but not everybody can get enrolled with an agency; if they are heavy on something they are not going to get that extra point, but the families with kids or individuals that are relatively ok, they should get them into permanent housing and out of that situation and help them.

Chairman Ceballos stated that he would like to make a motion to utilize this waiver for said purposes and that they terminate it and the staff bring it back when they feel that it is no longer needed and they return to the regular posting.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza moved to use this waiver to help the homeless out on the street and open the waiting list.

Chairman Ceballos seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Ceballos asked Ms. Mata if there was any other waiver she needs on the record. Ms. Mata responded that she did not and that she just wanted to let the Board know that the process for the waiting list that opened today will be the same and that the only thing that will change is the public notice just for reassurance there is not going to be any other process.

- B.** Discussion and possible action to set out a COVID-19 procurement procedure for emergency purpose pursuant to CFR 85.36 (d)(4).

Ms. Mata stated that HUD has issued a set of guidelines of frequently asked questions on how to handle the expenditure of the COVID-19 funds and mentioned that a lot of the expenditures they will be having are directly related with that and they sent them back to the CFR which indicates that if there is a public emergency they are not required to procure the typical way which is that they procure three vendors and then they award according to the procurement policies and in this case they are allowed to sole source some of the items they are trying to procure as it relates to COVID-19 because they are responding to a crisis, so it is considered an emergency which is the guidance received from HUD.

Ms. Mata stated that what she wanted to present to the Board is that currently and they will see it in the slide is that they have some restrictions as to how they post for procuring items that need to come to the Board and Ms. Mata wants to get guidance from the Board to allow them to reduce those postings and mentioned that the CFR allows them to go sole source with some of the items, but being that some of the items they are procuring are construction related to make office adaptations for staff to have reduced shared space Ms. Mata wants to make sure that the Board is supportive of a procedure they put in place today possibly so that they have a method to follow for the staff and for the agency and they are not just sole sourcing everything and wants to make sure they are being cautious with the way they are spending the funds that were allocated.

Chairman Ceballos moved to approve Item 10B as proposed and stated that just to recap, they will still be required to solicit a minimum of two bids and then to award and it is purposely being done for tiny expenditures related to COVID-19 funding.

Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

- C.** Discussion and possible action to approve the Interlocal Agreement with Webb County for Payment in Lieu of Taxes and the issuance of payment for accrued annual amounts through FYE 2020, totaling an estimated \$371,933.10

Chairman Ceballos stated that all of them are familiar with Payment in Lieu of Taxes and mentioned that they did try over an extended period of time to partner with the County and ultimately in their packet they should see a letter they sent basically deciding that given the COVID-19 reality and decreases in their cash revenues that they really could not spare to partner with us and share in those proceeds.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that the PILOT regulations require that they enter into an Interlocal Agreement with the taxing entities and they have been working agreements with different entities in the City, LISD, UISD; they have one pending with Laredo College and this was the other one, probably the one with the most escrow, with Webb County, so considering that they had been trying to work with the County on a partnership to share this and stated that they were unsuccessful, so obviously the COVID-19 reality, so Chairman Ceballos is recommending to issue

payment in that amount which will bring us current to resolve the PILOT escrow that has been accruing and mentioned that he does not think there is any other way of doing it and stated that they do have to sign an Interlocal Agreement and agree to it. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he left the agreement, a draft should be in the packet and stated that the agreement still gives them an option to work with us, but they pretty much told us in the letter to get the payment which is needed for the County public purpose. Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any questions regarding this matter and asked Mr. De Anda if he had any comments. Mr. De Anda responded that he did not have any comments and stated that Chairman Ceballos had pretty well explained it and that under the circumstances that was the correct way to do it and stated that it is hard to argue against them given what they are going through.

Chairman Ceballos moved to issue the payment and to enter into an Interlocal Agreement as stated in the action item and issue payment once that agreement is executed in the amount of \$371,933.10.

Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

- D. Discussion and possible action to award framing, plumbing, electrical and other related bias at the Balcones Apartments renovation project, as recommended by staff.**

Ms. Mata mentioned that they worked on the procurement of all the trades at Los Balcones and presented on the screen the bids that came in for the framing, plumbing and electrical bids that came in and they are recommending to award to the lowest bidder of each one of those trades and stated that they reached out to at least three vendors or contractors for each trade and the one that only has two, the framing and the plumbing, they did not get a submission from the third contractor by the date they closed those bids, so they are recommending Jesus Reyes for framing that came in at \$55,695.69; for plumbing to Orozco's Plumbing at \$45,750 and for electrical to ACDC at \$29,700 and mentioned that all those bids came in within the budget they had established for that project.

Chairman Ceballos stated that in regards to framing he had asked Bulmaro that Building 1 be sized back for square footage and asked if it was done. Bulmaro asked if the Board would authorize him to renegotiate it with Mr. Reyes. Chairman Ceballos stated that he has no problem with it, but just to make sure that they make that change because it is a significant amount of savings that would be generated and mentioned that he had the same question for the other two trades if Orozco had already been awarded or if they can still negotiate with him and on the electric they are essentially just changing the award from A&S Electric to ACDC and mentioned that he is not entirely comfortable with that and would probably not support voting for that because they are so close and recommended to find a way to negotiate with A&S Electric. Ms. Mata stated that she could negotiate with A&S and stated that they did some changes from the initial proposal because at Los

Balcones they have uncovered different needs but given the amount that he is proposing now, they are still within the budget, but they can definitely negotiate with him. Chairman Ceballos stated that this is beside the point, but ACDC is getting every project they had at the Housing Authority, even major projects and will be switching an award from an existing one and he does not want to do that and give it to that one that has been getting all the work because it does not look right and that is not his recommendation. Ms. Mata stated that they will negotiate with A&S and see if they can renegotiate with them and either way, they are within the budget for that project. Chairman Ceballos asked if the Board had any questions. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked in regards to the Bright Star vendor \$1,000 difference in the price as to what they were proposing that is so expensive. Bulmaro stated that Mr. Cantu from Bright Star Electric received all the information the other vendors received and also visited the site and said that he is a very good contractor so Bulmaro stated that after reviewing the bid he was also surprised that he came with those prices, but does not really know the reason why the price came that high. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza stated that it seems a little bit way off. Ms. Mata mentioned that they all received the same set of plans and they all visited the site and the information that was requested from them was the same for all bidders.

Chairman Ceballos moved to award the framing to Jesus Reyes and to renegotiate to the extent they can on any of the scope and also to ratify the award to Orozco Plumbing with the increased scope and allow Ms. Mata to negotiate it and then to re-award or re-ratify the award to A&S Electric and to finalize negotiations. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- E. Discussion and possible action to award environmental abatement work at AMP 1 Colonia Guadalupe for the former executive office building, community center building and maintenance shop building, as recommended by staff.**

Ms. Mata mentioned that she would like to make a correction on the Agenda item posting and stated that they need to include Senior Home as well and the former executive office building was already done which was performed previously.

Ms. Mata stated that they reached out to three vendors, but they received only two bids back; from River City Environmental and Art Abatement and as they can see there is a substantial difference in the amount which includes all the buildings mentioned, so they are \$26,300 with River City who they are recommending to award and Art Abatement came in at \$71,440. Chairman Ceballos asked Ms. Mata to repeat the buildings for the record. Ms. Mata stated that it is for the Community Center building at Colonia Guadalupe, the maintenance shop building at Colonia Guadalupe and the first floor at Senior Citizens Home.

Chairman Ceballos moved to approve award as recommended by staff. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

- F. Discussion and possible action to approve the purchase of technological equipment in response to COVID-19 in the amount of \$83,440.00 for Public Housing, Housing Choice Voucher, and BiblioTech programs. Source available funding is the Capital Fund and CARES Act, HUD allocated award to the agency.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that these are basically monies that have been allocated for COVID-19. Ms. Mata mentioned that they are purchasing a total of 56 all in one computer stations and stated that 23 of those are for BiblioTech at Ana Maria Lozano site and 33 of those are for staff replacement with the changes that are going to be happening in the buildings to conform to COVID; there is going to be a reduction of office space for some of the staff and a reduction of the desk sizes as well to try to accommodate the distancing requirement so in order to better perform their job and have the spacing they need they are shifting to all in one computer system that are also easier to relocate when they are moving staff around. Chairman Ceballos asked if she could repeat the number of computers. Ms. Mata mentioned that there are 33 staff work stations and 23 for Ana Maria Lozano BiblioTech. Chairman Ceballos asked if they were laptops or desktops. Ms. Mata responded that they are desktops.

Chairman Ceballos stated that it will be fine to buy them because they are going to have work from home situations potentially coming up which is already coming up for the staff, especially if they need to quarantine, to be able to have a laptop so that they are able to work from home when required because he thinks they will not permit them to take the desktop home, so Chairman Ceballos asked them if they can come up with a plan to do that for next meeting and stated that especially for Directors and Managers it would be very helpful to have a laptop to be able to take home and stated that there is a policy item right after this item that they will be talking about. Ms. Mata confirmed and mentioned that during the consent agenda they ratified the purchase of 20 laptops that were purchased for that purpose as well. Chairman Ceballos asked if they needed any laptops. Ms. Mata mentioned that they already had taken care of it and they received them and have started issuing them out to department heads and staff that is assigned to special assignments that require to be in communication not necessarily during regular working hours.

Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any questions for Ms. Mata. There were none. Chairman Ceballos thanked everybody that worked on this item for he knows that it takes a lot of calling, bidding and coordinating.

Chairman Ceballos moved to approve this item, for the record, and asked if there is a ratification. Ms. Mata responded that this is an action item and that they have until the 22 to hold that price.

Chairman Ceballos moved to approve this item as presented.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

- G.** Discussion and possible action to approve the Information Technology and External Access-to-Work-Files Policy to complement “work from home” needs, and approval to proceed with associated expenditures.

Chairman Ceballos stated that he asked Ms. Mata and Mr. Peña to work on a policy which is in the packet and stated that it is essentially a commutation addendum that is added to the job description and it means that Directors are required to stay in touch if they are working from home they are to stay in touch with the office and if they have jobs that requires them to stay in communication after hours, that they check their devices including the agency phones and agency laptops, so it is basically because they had an extended work from home period for the staff, they need to make sure that they are actually performing the job and the only way to perform the job is if they have the equipment they need and it is personal because they will be authorized to actually open files that have confidential information like Finance, Section 8, so they need to do that in an agency approved equipment, so Mr. Peña prepared the first draft and along with Chairman Ceballos and Ms. Mata they came up with these addendums, personal policy addendums and job descriptions addendum and then the actual IT policy and within that is the restriction that they cannot print anything at home, they cannot access it, they cannot copy it, they cannot duplicate it, but other than that when staff is working from home they really had their hands tied because they did not have equipment and they could not support the staff staying in the office, so if they have a work from home need going forward the staff will have the tools and the policy to protect the agency and in the event that there is a loss of equipment or data they will be able to track it and Robert will be able to do it, so it is just a measure and stated that communication is important because they have often times staff that disconnect after 5 p.m. and what happens is that folks that are more used to responding after 5 p.m. take care of the load, so they are spreading the load and if there is a response needed after 5 p.m. or while they are assigned to quarantine working from home and have staff in quarantine working from home doing that they will also be accountable if it happens.

Chairman Ceballos asked Ms. Mata and Robert if they had anything to add. Ms. Mata stated that she just wanted to give credit to Ms. Cruz, HR Director, for helping to develop the personnel addendums. Chairman Ceballos thanked Ms. Cruz and stated that he knows that she is doing a lot of work in putting this together and stated that he feels sorry for missing naming her and stated that he appreciates her work very much as well and asked Ms. Cruz if she had anything to add. Ms. Cruz stated that she did not.

Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any questions from the Board. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked about the protocol. Ms. Mata directed him to item 10G

of the packet where there is a Privacy Act Rules of Conduct that every employee will be required to acknowledge and it will be renewed annually.

Chairman Ceballos stated that they are introducing this policy and stated that if anybody from the staff or from the Board, as they read through the materials, thinks it cannot be approved or if they see a problem, they will bring it back and will keep improving it.

Chairman Ceballos moved to adopt the policy as presented and that they make sure staff has all the tools to be able to perform their job if they are working from home and after hours.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

- H.** Discussion and possible action related to the current COVID-19 health concerns and impacts to agency. This item may be discussed in executive session pursuant to Section 551.071 (consultation with attorneys) and 551.074 (personnel matters).

Chairman Ceballos stated that he does not think they have anything to go into executive session and mentioned that this item is more to answer any questions and stated that there is a number of staff participating in the Homeless Provider COVID Committee and mentioned that he wanted to thank Ms. Mata, Ms. Ramos, Ms. Ortiz, Ms. Martinez and Valeria who are supporting that group and stated that they have been the conveners and they have all the agencies and LHA is just part of it and their role is mainly to assist the homeless that are exiting and needing to quarantine and stated that they are hearing difficult news from the expert Consultant Waldo Lopez and from the Health Department that they do not see this subsiding and it is easily said, but they are at 200-300 cases a day; the hospital beds are reduced and it is because people are now being taken to San Antonio, so it is a misconception and they are just brazing for a potential outbreak at a homeless site and they are hoping it does not happen in a professional setting, but it could happen and stated that we are the Housing Authority and folks look to us when there is a housing issue, so Chairman Ceballos stated that he wants to thank everybody that has been involved and the Board for being supportive and mentioned that in the consent agenda they have a hotel they are working with to refer people and they have also been using Tiny Homes successfully and have started using one of the units that is vacant at Farm Labor to quarantine homeless people and stated that his biggest worry is if they were to have an outbreak at a homeless shelter and all of those folks there are going to have to vacate and would have to go to a hotel so the role this LHA group is doing is important and is not saying it because he is participating and mentioned that Ms. Mata could share that and stated that if they do not do it, they would be in bad shape because the homeless congregate where we all gas up and where we buy our goodies which is just a reality.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that the Committee suggested three weeks ago that they put together a PSA so they will be working on that which they try to keep

simple, two to three clips message, to let people know that it is real, so if anybody on the Board would like to be part of it can be part of a message to let people know that it is real and to get people to comply because they keep hearing during the new briefings that people are not heeding the medical advice and are still out there and stated that he can tell that the City and leadership seem very overwhelmed and stated that they can support that education and that education is the key and that punitiveness is not going to help, so they need to hit people with education which will be the long standing change, so they will work on that PSA and hopefully they will make some progress.

Chairman Ceballos asked Ms. Mata if there was anybody that has been part of it that would want to chime and report to the Board. Ms. Mata stated that Chairman Ceballos had covered pretty much everything very well and stated that it is instrumental that they are part of that committee because it is unfortunate that there is not anybody that is assigned to it or that is willing to take the lead in assisting the homeless population when they are leaving and going to quarantine and stated that she is glad that Chairman Ceballos convened the group and that it is working well in trying to smooth the process into getting them to quarantine quarters and hopefully open the list and assist them permanently.

Chairman Ceballos asked Ms. Mata to share the story of a client that was placed the day before. Ms. Mata mentioned that it was a female client that called them who was actually at one of the local hospitals, but tested positive and was released and she knows that the hospitals are overwhelmed and her symptoms did not required her to be admitted, so the lady was released and did not have anywhere to go because she had recently become homeless which Ms. Mata thinks was related to her testing positive and had nowhere to go, so she stayed outside Doctors Hospital and when they were ready to start the case she was at the point with a lot of emotional distress at the HEB near the emergency; having nowhere to go, she went to HEB right after she knew she had tested positive, so Ms. Mata thinks that is the reason the Housing Authority and that whole group are instrumental in making sure those cases are reduced because if we do not help them, who is going to or where are they going to go; they will just continue the spread and will be going to areas where the rest of the population is at as well and not only that, but the homeless population congregate within themselves, so if they do not take care of the ones they know are actively positive, they are going to have an outbreak in that population and it will be a lot more difficult to try to house all of them for quarantine.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that the sad part is that 75% - 80% of the homeless population are men, but when they are women they really suffer in the streets, so when they are able to help this lady really early and she does not have substance issues they probably saved her life, so that is why it is very important that they continue in that role regardless of what happens moving forward and stated he expected the lady to have some type of issue that took her into homelessness, but reality is that COVID itself is taking people into homelessness, so that is kind of

changing why people end up homeless, so it is changing the idea why people get homelessness and stated that the government is pushing additional assistance; they are expecting a next round, so they probably are going to put more vouchers and the opening of the waiting list is going to help utilize those vouchers when they come in.

Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any questions. Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez mentioned that it is a great idea and she also likes the education, being in some kind of public marketing relation and meeting with the City officials on the educational standpoint, but unfortunately there are some people that show symptoms and are still out in the public or are COVID positive, so just spreading the knowledge of what they need to do during this time will help the whole community not just the homeless population, so Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez stated that she is glad they are looking into it and stated that it is a great idea.

Chairman Ceballos stated that they posted the RFP to procure those video clips and again stated that he was really serious about anybody being interested to be part of that committee to send him a message to get included and stated that even if it cost them, the community needs the help and mentioned that he has been chiming in about education.

Chairman Ceballos asked if Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza would like to chime in. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza stated that it is a good idea and that he is glad they were able to help the homeless lady early who needed a place to be able to be in quarantine and that they saved her life.

Ms. Mata stated that she wanted to add one more thing for the Board to be aware; that today they were able to house 4 homeless individuals and one homeless family during their quarantine period. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked how large the family is; how many members in the family. Ms. Mata responded that the family consisted of five members.

Chairman Ceballos informed Attorney De Anda that for the next meeting they will try to get authorization from Rural Development and stated that Mr. De Anda has worked with them sometime back, so that they can release some units there and be able to house some people. Chairman Ceballos stated that he will be working with Mr. De Anda in that regard.

11. EXECUTIVE 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 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).

12. ACTION ON ANY EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEM

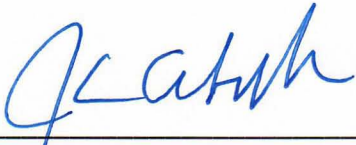
13. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Ceballos moved to adjourn the meeting.


Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 5:26



Jose L. Ceballos, Chairman



Alma D. Mata, Executive Director