

Housing Authority of the City of Laredo
Regular Board of Commissioners Meeting

Zoom Video Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82748531985>

Call in Number: 1-346-248-7799

Webinar ID: 827 4853 1985

LHA Board Room

2000 San Francisco Ave.

Laredo, Texas 78040

Thursday, October 29, 2020

12:00 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-9

Minutes

October 29, 2020

- 1. CALL TO ORDER** Chairman Ceballos called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m.
- 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 that they have a quorum.

Commissioners Present

Jose L. Ceballos, Chairman

Dr. Sergio D. Garza, Vice-Chairman (by zoom)

Anita Guerra, Commissioner (by zoom)

Dr. Marisela Rodriguez Tijerina, Commissioner (by zoom)

Gloria Ann Freeman, Resident Commissioner (by zoom)

Commissioners Absent

Staff Present

Alma D. Mata, Executive Director

Christy Ramos, Administrative Assistant

Robert Peña, Director of IT

Melissa Ortiz, Director of Section 8 (by zoom)

Bulmaro Cruz, Director of Construction Projects Department (by zoom)

Diana Cruz, Human Resource Manager (by zoom)

Valeria Cabello, Interim Procurement Officer (by zoom)

Jessica Martinez, Director of Community and Economic Development (by zoom)

Sara Vicharelli, Interim Director of Housing Management (by zoom)

Jennifer Barrientos, Director of Finance (by zoom)

Ricardo De Anda, Attorney (by zoom)

Mary Gaona, LHA Consultant

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)

There were no citizens comments.

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

Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any disclosures or conflicts of interest for the Board of Commissioners and staff or anybody on zoom. There were no disclosures of conflicts of interest.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Ceballos stated that they have in their packets the minutes for the September 9th and September 24th meeting and mentioned that as they go through them to think in terms of timing, they have an item that is going to take most of the meeting, so he is going to make it kind of concise in terms of the agenda items he thinks can be dealt with later and or perhaps have minimal discussion.

- A. Approval of Minutes for Board of Commissioners Meeting on September 9, 2020
- B. Approval of Minutes for Board of Commissioners Meeting on September 24, 2020

Chairman Jose L. Ceballos moved to adopt the minutes as presented.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

7. PRESENTATION BY CENTRAL RESIDENT COUNCIL

Ms. Martinez presented on behalf of the Central Resident Council and stated that they have been having meetings with the Resident Councils and mentioned that they are preparing for the PHA Annual Plan & Five-Year Plan and are having a meeting on Monday to present any new items and they are also getting ready to do the Resident Council boards at each location; they have not had one in South Laredo, so they are going to be picking out the community there and also in Colonia Guadalupe. In regards to the food program Ms. Martinez informed that they are still with the Food Bank and are going through that training and stated that everything is good and they are just waiting for the Food Bank approval.

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

Chairman Ceballos stated for the record that if there are any questions to let them know and mentioned that for the most part, what they heard a couple of weeks ago is still ongoing and stated that the report is in their packet.

- A. Executive Director's Report to include status of Census 2020, Rapid Rehousing Grant Program, and ongoing construction projects.

9. ACTION ITEM

- A. Discussion and possible action to authorize the Executive Director to participate in the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Initiative, as provided in Notice PIH 2019-20 (HA), and execute any necessary documents.

Ms. Mata stated that throughout 2020, they were approached by the child protective services and the HUD field office to discuss this item they had meetings throughout the year related to this initiative which in essence allows for foster kids or youths that are exiting the system that become homeless or are at risk of becoming homelessness to receive a tenant protection voucher through the Section 8 program to house them for a period of up to two years and in those two years they can work with the Housing Authority and other service agencies to try to secure permanent housing.

Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any questions on this item. There were none.

Chairman Jose L. Ceballos moved to authorize the Executive Director to participate in this program which is extremely beneficial and stated that looking at homelessness is a good thing.

Both Commissioner Ms. Freeman and Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina stated for the record that she joined the meeting and Chairman Ceballos stated for the record that Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina had joined the meeting a few minutes ago and that she is in favor of this item.

- B. Discussion and possible action to renew, effective October 30, 2020, the Qualified Professional Technical Consultant Services Contract with Civil Engineering Consultants (CEC) for an additional year, as allowable by Contract No. 180423-4(A).

Chairman Ceballos stated that, as the Board knows, all the professional service contracts have an option to renew annually up to five years as is permitted by HUD and this is one of those the Executive Director is recommending to extend and stated that it is a civil engineering firm.

Commissioner Ms. Freeman moved to approve the extension or the continuation of the service contract to the Civil Engineering Consultants.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Ceballos stated that they will see all of these contracts come up and that all of the attorneys are going to have their five year anniversary in the next 90 days, between now and the spring sometime; they will see those RFP's go out, so they will keep seeing those annually.

- C.** Discussion and possible action to approve the write-off of non-collectable amounts for vacated units from April 1, 2020 through September 30, 2020 in the amount of \$2,112.00 as recommended by staff.

Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any questions on this item; there were none.

Chairman Jose L. Ceballos moved to approve this item.

Commissioner Ms. Freeman seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

- D.** Discussion and possible action to authorize the purchase of five replacement fleet vehicles in the amount of \$119,835.00, as recommended by staff.

Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any questions or anything Ms. Mata would like to add. Ms. Mata stated that all the information is in their packet and informed them that this is to replace vehicles that were brought to the Board to be retired. Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any questions from the Board. Commissioner Ms. Freeman asked how they would decide to change vehicles, if it was rotation because of the amount of the years they used them, the mileage on them or how many times they are breaking down. Ms. Mata responded that it is a combination of all of those and stated that they did an evaluation of all the fleet and they established that there are some vehicles that are either extremely outdated or in dire need of repairs, so based on that and in consultation with Ms. Gaona, they identified the vehicles that needed to be retired and identified the vehicles that will be used for replacements that fit the needs of the developments.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that they eventually will have a fleet management policy that will give them a guide for the future in terms of mileage and the number of years and that Ms. Mata and Ms. Gaona began that work and they are very close to coming back with the policy which will be very conservative in terms of the length of years because they have some vehicles that are just extremely aged and even if they adopted the policy, they could not afford to implement it, so they have to do this so just keep in mind that there should be a policy coming at some point.

Commissioner Ms. Freeman asked what they would do with the retired vehicles. Ms. Mata responded that typically they would do an auction for the vehicles which will be advertised in the newspaper and stated that they come to the Board to get authorization to do that as well.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza moved to authorize the Executive Director to replace the five vehicles in the amount of \$119,835.00

Commissioner Ms. Guerra seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Ceballos stated for the record that Commissioner Ms. Guerra was joining the meeting and seconded the motion for this item.

- E. 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 there is anything new from what they heard a couple of weeks ago, only just to mention that they continue to have very strict implementation of the safeguards particularly at Senior Home and stated that they expect and are seeing an uptick of cases as everybody knows and all of the air conditioner systems for staff buildings have already been done as far as the improvements, that is going well; it will just be a matter of the staff adhering to policies and asked if there were any questions or comments on this item.

Commissioner Ms. Freeman stated that she thinks that they need to advise the residents in regards to the policies they put in place on COVID-19 which need to be refreshed because she has seen a lot of parties at Russell Terrace with more than the limit that the City is allowing for the pandemic. Chairman Ceballos agreed and stated that it would be great if they can assure that this happens. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked if there was a security guard for Russell Terrace because if there is, then they are not doing their job. Commissioner Ms. Guerra stated that maybe they can set aside some hours to do that and also have PD provide some education and remind people that it is for their safety. Chairman Ceballos stated that he thinks they can do several things and mentioned that they have a COVID Specialist now that could help as well and now they also have social media and they could also get with the Police team to keep an eye and enforce which would not be a big problem for them to do that. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked if there were some patrols at Russell Terrace. Chairman Ceballos responded that they do and that they could rotate projects and can assure that it happens and stated that they can assign them.

- F. Discussion and possible action related to the annual evaluation and any appointment action related to the Executive Director position. This item may be discussed in Executive Session, pursuant to Section 551.074 (personnel matters).

**Chairman Ceballos moved to go into Executive Session.
Commissioner Ms. Freeman seconded the motion.
Motion passed unanimously.**

10. 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).

The Board went into Executive Session at 12:19 p.m.

The Board reconvened from Executive Session at 1:26 p.m.

11. ACTION ON ANY EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEM

There was no action taken in Executive Session.

Chairman Ceballos stated that in reference to Item 9F, he would move to accept the resignation of Ms. Mata as presented in the notice to Chairman Ceballos dated October 29, 2020.

**Commissioner Ms. Freeman seconded the motion.
Motion carried unanimously.**

**Chairman Ceballos stated that pursuant to the same item, he would like to make a motion to appoint Ms. Mary Gaona as the permanent Executive Director subject to contract negotiations for her employment contract which will be effective Monday, November 2, 2020. Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina seconded the motion.
Motion passed unanimously.**

12. ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 1:28 p.m.



Jose L. Ceballos, Chairman



Mary Gaona, Executive Director