

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

Zoom Video Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82864935806>

Call in Number: 1-346-248-7799

Webinar ID: 830 8603 7409

LHA Board Room

2000 San Francisco Ave.

Laredo, Texas 78040

Friday, July 23, 2021

12:00 P.M.

**Board of Commissioners**

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

Dr. Marisela Rodriguez Tijerina, Commissioner  
Gloria Ann Freeman, Resident Commissioner

**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-21-R-8**

**Minutes**

**July 23, 2021**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Ceballos called the meeting to order at 12:06 p.m. which was held in person and via zoom.

**2. INVOCATION PRAYER**

Commissioner Gloria Freeman led them in prayer: "Dear God, at this time in the crossroads in our lives, in our community, in our civilization, please shower us with your blessings and protect us from all seen and unseen dangers and evils; we pray that you protect the fire fighters, the first responders and everybody in the medical field that is doing such a tremendous job to contain and combat all these different natural disasters that are going on throughout the world; please give our community leaders the insight and the voice to do the correct, right and just thing on all the votes that they do and protect everybody that continues to fight COVID apart from other medical infirmities, in Jesus name we pray, Amen."

Chairman Ceballos thanked Commissioner Ms. Freeman.

**3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** Chairman Jose L. Ceballos led them in the recital of the pledge.

**4. ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

At this time Chairman Ceballos thanked Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza for running the meeting and also Mrs. Gaona for the accommodations and stated that he will pass it on to Mrs. Gaona and then Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza will take over the meeting and Chairman Ceballos will stay on the meeting through the end of it.

Mrs. Gaona proceeded with roll call and mentioned that Commissioner Dr. Marisela Rodriguez Tijerina would not be able to join them today. Mrs. Gaona stated that they had a quorum

**Commissioners Present**

Jose L. Ceballos, Chairman (by zoom)  
Dr. Sergio D. Garza, Vice-Chairman  
Anita Guerra, Commissioner  
Gloria Ann Freeman, Resident Commissioner

**Commissioners Absent**

Dr. Marisela Rodriguez Tijerina, Commissioner

**Staff Present**

Mary Gaona, Executive Director  
Christy Ramos, Administrative Assistant  
Robert Peña, Director of IT  
Bulmaro Cruz, Director of Construction Projects  
Jennifer Barrientos, Director of Finance  
Diana Cruz, Director of HR  
Melissa Ortiz, Director of Section 8  
Jessica Martinez, Interim Director of Housing Management  
Valeria Cabello, Procurement Officer  
Alejandro Jimenez, Assistant to IT Director  
Ricardo De Anda, Attorney

**Others Present**

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

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza stated that there were no citizens comments.

**6. DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST FOR BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF**

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza stated that there were no disclosures of conflict of interest.

**7. PRESENTATION BY CENTRAL RESIDENT COUNCIL**

Mrs. Gaona informed that they spoke to Mrs. Rios, Central Resident Council President, and stated that she had no comments.

## **8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A.** Approval of Minutes for Board of Commissioners meeting on June 25, 2021.

**Chairman Jose L. Ceballos moved to approve minutes for Board of Commissioners meeting on June 25, 2021 as drafted by staff.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

## **9. STANDING REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS (No Action to be taken on these items)**

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

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that in lieu of the standing reports item and before they go to the action items, he would like to spend some minutes discussing their COVID realities which have been changing recently on a day to day basis and stated that he knows they adopted a masking and a vaccination policy the last meeting they had and they discussed it fully in executive session and mentioned that the policy itself is extensive and a well thought out policy that protects our staff, protects our tenants, protects our public, our guests and our contractors, however, he knows that they are still battling in terms of impressing upon the staff to get vaccinated and mentioned that he thinks that there is a remaining few persons that continue to show or to express a reluctance in getting vaccinated, so Chairman Ceballos stated that he wants to specifically speak to them and mentioned that they continue to encourage them to get vaccinated and mentioned that statistically what is happening now is that a lot of the folks that are ending up with complications are those that are unvaccinated and in addition, he thinks that beyond their health which is of most importance to all of them, they want all their employees to be safe and they know that perhaps there are reservations over the vaccine and many things and stated that what he has asked Mrs. Gaona and what he understands has been happening is that they consult our Public Health Expert at a very individual and private level to avail themselves of the latest and mentioned that Dr. Lopez is an Epidemiologist who knows and has studied this with them for quite a while through this COVID and Chairman Ceballos wants to impress on them, before the Agency takes on something more critical in terms of a policy, that they take that step to get vaccinated and stated that it is very important and that administratively, the Executive Director has to address their position in terms of their function and stated that he is speaking to those persons that may be present or online, to please get vaccinated and stated that there are measures that the Agency passed two weeks ago or several weeks ago on the vaccination policy that will require them to protect their tenants besides protecting the staff which is very important for them; therefore, they are going to

continue to protect their tenants and they are going to continue to protect staff members, so Chairman Ceballos stated that he wants to make sure for those that are still reluctant, whether it be because of fear or because of concerns of the vaccine, to please avail themselves of any benefit that the Agency provides to them to reach a point of making that decision to get vaccinated and not only to them, but to everybody that works with each other and that sees their tenants and mentioned that they cannot expose the Public Housing or Section 8 tenants to the virus if they can control it and mentioned that it is very difficult to control and now they are hearing that the Delta variant is fiercer in its impact to the body and they are still yet to define where it is going to take them as a community, as a state and as a country.

Chairman Ceballos stated that he wants to make sure that all staff members understand and also the Board and the contractors that it is very important that they adhere to reasonable policies that protect all of them. Chairman Ceballos stated that those are his comments and mentioned that he just wants to make sure as well for the Executive Director that they continue in a supportive role for everybody involved, but at the same time that they do not, for a lack of an administrative procedure, lapse in exposing folks that can't be and should not be exposed, particularly their disabled and their elderly and mentioned that more than 30% of their units are elderly units; therefore, it is very important that everybody takes it seriously and that as they move forward, it is looking like they would go back to some distancing restrictions and masking which is conjectural on his part and he thinks that they are going to get there in a short while and stated that what they are seeing, which the newspaper reported today too, is that it continuous and hopefully it does not, so they would be in a better place.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza stated that he has some friends that are kind of reluctant due to the side effects and he said that even the flu shot which has been around for over 100 years has side effects and stated that he has taken the flu shot and has gotten side effects once in a while, but most of the time he has not and mentioned that he did not get any side effects with the COVID shot, though everyone is different in that sense and he tells his friends that the occurrence is the worst, but his concern now is in regards to the 70 cases of the variant here in Laredo or in Webb County which is kind of frightening already and mentioned that he has heard that with this variant, they cannot really tell until it starts attacking the lungs, so they cannot tell that they have it. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked what they are exactly doing for the amps, if they are motivating them to get vaccinated and what exactly is taking place. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that since day one, they continue to ask and motivate them to get vaccinated and stated that they sent out flyers and notices and when there are vaccination drives, they also send those notices out. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that she has personally spoken to staff, on a one-on-one basis, to try to offer the opportunity to get vaccinated and also like Chairman Ceballos says, to speak to our Health Consultant and added that they will continue doing that.

## 10. ACTION ITEM

- A. Discussion and possible action to award RFP #21-0701-1 Colonia Guadalupe Administrative Campus Parking Lot and authorize the Executive Director to finalize negotiations and contract(s) with the selected firm(s).

Mrs. Gaona presented to the Board and stated that based on the best overall value to the Agency, staff recommendation is that the Board authorize negotiations with Midas Contractors LLC and if an agreement is not reached, that they may proceed to the second proposer. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked if there was any discussion on the floor by the Board members. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he had a question for Mrs. Gaona and asked her if she would reassure everyone that submitted a bid bond for the submission. Mrs. Gaona confirmed. Chairman Ceballos stated that he attended the pre-bid or pre-proposal conference and he wants to personally thank everybody that entertained and stated that he knows that not everybody that attended submitted a proposal, but wants to thank them for wanting to do business with the Housing Authority and also for their time in preparing the packages and submitting the packages on-line and on paper and wants to thank them personally for their efforts and also wants to continue to encourage them in submitting for additional projects and he mentioned to them and to the group that was present that they will have other projects along the way and he would encourage the Director, their team and the Board that they be diversified on how they award, when all things are fair, obviously there is a scoring criteria, but that they give as many contractors an opportunity to work with the Housing Authority, so Chairman Ceballos stated that he appreciates everybody that took the time to respond.

**Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza moved to award RFP #21-0701-1 Colonia Guadalupe Administrative Campus Parking Lot to Midas Contractors LLC.**

**Commissioner Ms. Freeman seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

Chairman Ceballos stated that he would like to put in the record for Mrs. Gaona to read, because he knows that for a contractor, he would want to know where the pricing was, so Chairman Ceballos asked Mrs. Gaona if she would read the pricing component of the proposals for all of the proponents. Mrs. Gaona stated that for Midas Contractors LLC it was \$279,775.00; for Quantum Building it was \$339,680.00 and for Gilmar Construction it was \$384,970.10. Chairman Ceballos asked that if the motion they approved in this case ends up being the one that has the lowest pricing. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza confirmed. Chairman Ceballos asked if they included the ability to go to the second party if they cannot reach an agreement with the first party. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza and Mrs. Gaona responded that they had not. Chairman Ceballos asked Mrs. Gaona if they need to do it. Mrs. Gaona confirmed.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza moved to award contract RFP #21-0701-1 Colonia Guadalupe Administrative Campus Parking Lot to the lowest bidder with the understanding that if the Executive Director cannot finalize negotiations with the lowest bidder, they would go with the second lowest bidder in this case. Chairman Ceballos stated that technically it is not the lowest bidder and mentioned that it happens to be the lowest bidder and stated that it is a proposal and that it is not based on the amount and that it just so happens that the scoring ends up being that it is the lowest bidder and stated that Mr. De Anda can correct him if he is wrong and mentioned that he does not think it is a bid proposal, but a request for proposal.

**Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza moved to award RFP #21-0701-1 Colonia Guadalupe Administrative Campus Parking Lot, based on the best overall value to the Agency, staff recommendation is that the Board of Commissioners authorize negotiations with Midas Contractors LLC and if an agreement is not reached, they will go to the second proposer.**

**Commissioner Ms. Guerra and Chairman Ceballos seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- B.** Discussion and possible action to approve a 1-year extension to RFQ#19-0401-1 Professional Services for Annual Audit Services contract with Garza/Gonzalez & Associates in the amount of \$98,500 for FYE 03/31/2021. The current contract LHA1904011 has a term of up to five years, from May 20, 2019 to May 19, 2023. This is the third annual option for extension of work.

**Commissioner Ms. Guerra moved to award contract RFQ #19-0401-1 Professional Services for Annual Audit Services to Garza/Gonzalez & Associates. Commissioner Ms. Freeman seconded the Motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- C.** Discussion and possible action to extend the feasibility and negotiation period for ninety (90) additional days, in consideration for the possible acquisition of the real estate property located at 920 Salinas Ave., Laredo, Texas, consistent with the terms in the real estate sales contract dated November 11, 2019. This item may be addressed in executive session pursuant to Texas Government Code Sections 551.071 (consultation with attorneys) and 551.072 (deliberations about real property).

Mrs. Gaona mentioned that she and Chairman Ceballos met with Fernando Cantu and are requesting to extend the feasibility and negotiation period for additional 90 days to continue looking at this property to see if it is feasible and possibly take off. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked Chairman Ceballos if this was the building he had seen with him and had walked with him at one time. Chairman Ceballos stated that it was correct and that if they take action on this item, he would like for the action to include that they continue under the same terms as the original earnest money contract which they can opt out of the feasibility at any time for an option

fee of the \$10K earnest money on it and that the owner has agreed that they continue with the same terms and stated that it is still going to be a very difficult project and the reason they would like a little bit more time is because they understand that if they do not find a solution for rehabilitating the building, it may end up being demolished, so they will report back if they get the numbers to work and stated that they are going to give it one more look.

**Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza moved to extend the feasibility and negotiation period of 90 additional days in consideration for the possible acquisition of the real estate property located at 920 Salinas Ave., Laredo, Texas.**

**Commissioner Ms. Freeman seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he is not sure if Mrs. Gaona stated the amounts on item 10A of what she is negotiating and stated that they would want to put that on the record and asked if they stated the amounts they are going to negotiate. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza responded that they had not stated the amounts. Chairman Ceballos mentioned to Mr. De Anda that for record purposes, he would like them to state at least the bid component amounts for the contractors and mentioned to Mrs. Gaona that he understands that they are negotiating with the lowest cost which is one component of the proposal and he wants to make sure it is on the record. Mrs. Gaona confirmed. Chairman Ceballos asked Mrs. Gaona if she could read the proponents' cost component for the proposal. Mr. De Anda stated that for the record, they should call the item again.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza stated that they would go back to item 10A Discussion and possible action to award RFP #21-0701-1 Colonia Guadalupe Administrative Campus Parking Lot and authorize the Executive Director to finalize negotiations and contract(s) with selected firm(s).

**Chairman Ceballos moved to go back to item 10A.**

**Commissioner Guerra seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

## **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**

Commissioner Ms. Guerra moved to adjourn the meeting.  
Commissioner Ms. Freeman seconded the motion.  
Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.



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Jose L. Ceballos, Chairman



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Mary Gaona, Executive Director