

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

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84400118092>

Call in Number: 1-346-248-7799

Webinar ID: 844 0010 8092

LHA Board Room  
2000 San Francisco Ave.

Laredo, Texas 78040

Friday, August 27, 2021

3:00 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 in person with telephonic/video conferencing options. The public may join in-person, via conference call number or via weblink provided above.

**A-21-R-8**

**Minutes**

**August 27, 2021**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Ceballos called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

**2. INVOCATION PRAYER**

Commissioner Gloria Ann Freeman led them in prayer: "Heavenly Father, shower us with your blessings as we pray; we pray for the homelessness caused by fire, flood, illness, financial instability, eviction and terrorism; we pray for those afflicted with mental illness, we pray for those who go to bed hungry, that they might find sustenance; we pray for those affected by COVID and their families for strength; we pray for the community, the family friends and all those affected by the death of U. S. Marine David Lee Espinoza who was killed In Kabul, Afghanistan this week; we pray for everyone that is suffering due to all the natural disasters throughout our planet; we pray for all administrators, teachers and students returning to school and lastly, we pray that you protect and guide everyone present and their families. Thank you for all the positive and removing the negative from our lives, in your name we pray, Amen." Chairman Ceballos thanked Commissioner Ms. Freeman for the great prayer.

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

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

Mrs. Gaona proceeded with roll call and mentioned that Commissioner Ms. Guerra will be a little late. Mrs. Gaona stated that they had a quorum.

**Commissioners Present**

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

**Commissioners Absent**

**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  
Melissa Ortiz, Director of Section 8  
Jessica Martinez, Interim Director of Housing Management  
Diana Cruz, Human Resource Manager  
Valeria Cabello, Procurement Officer  
Alejandro Jimenez, Assistant 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)

Chairman Ceballos stated that there were no citizens comments.

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

Chairman Ceballos stated that there were no disclosures of conflict of interest.

**7. PRESENTATION BY CENTRAL RESIDENT COUNCIL**

Mrs. Gaona mentioned that they spoke to Ms. Rios who has been having a medical appointment and stated that Ms. Rios advised her that she would be retiring and will continue to sit on the resident council, but she will be retiring from her position with the agency. Chairman Ceballos asked if they expect her to return for reports. Mrs. Gaona confirmed.



## **8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. Approval of Minutes for Board of Commissioners meeting on July 23, 2021.**

**Commissioner Ms. Freeman moved to approve minutes for Board of Commissioners meeting on July 23, 2021 as written.**

**Chairman Jose L. Ceballos seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

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

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that no action would be taken on this item and stated that these are to be presented by the Director and the Finance Director as well and other staff.

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

Ms. Gaona presented and stated that the PIC score is 98.87% for public housing and the lease up is at 93% and the Section 8 PIC score is at 100.31%; HAP utilization is at 99%, HCV lease up is at 97.5 and in regards to the emergency housing vouchers she mentioned that they were allocated 85 vouchers, they have 22 referrals received and 13 vouchers issued and in Rapid Rehousing they have 12 families that have been assisted. Chairman Ceballos asked Mrs. Gaona if she would speak about the occupancy level. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that currently from January through August they are at 93% average and for January through December 2020, they were at 94% average. Mrs. Gaona stated that they currently continue to work with staff and right now for September she is projecting for it to come in at 95% and will continue to work with the families trying to bring them in and mentioned that staff has advised her that they already have two more vacant units and they continue to lease up and they continue to have vacant units.

Chairman Ceballos stated that essentially what the Board should be aware is that there is this undetermined, undefined pattern and based on what Mrs. Gaona has been telling him, they are seeing more than the usual turn over and they are also seeing a lot of folks that are coming up the list and they decide not to move in which is nontraditional although in the past that may have occurred where people, usually the people that have waited the longest are the easier ones to stay, some of these folks may not be aged on the waiting list, so they decide that they do not want to live in a certain area or they do not like the unit and they pass up the opportunity to be in public housing. Chairman Ceballos stated that ultimately the leasing levels need to be at a certain level and that the other thing the directors shared with him is the concern particularly for this project that is showing its age, of course it has shown its age now for decades, but it is becoming more difficult to lease the units because of the heat and the conditions, although it is regionally, its always been hot, but he thinks that the alternative for people out there in the market may be better than living in a unit that needs HVAC, air condition.



Chairman Ceballos mentioned that the point is that they are going to continue to struggle to keep people coming and said that he thinks people are coming to apply, but they are going to keep losing people that will choose not to come into public housing which is not a bad thing; it just means more work for the staff and as that occurs and if it does not subsidize, they are going to have a conversation with HUD which is the other point the Board needs to be aware, HUD has inquired as to that pattern, so they are going to have a conversation with them and stated that he does not know if it is a regional issue or if it is a COVID reality issue or it may just be a local issue, but if it is not, then they need to dedicate resources and the Director needs to be strategic on how she dedicates resources to address that pattern because HUD will have requirements based on a percentage level, so if they are barely keeping at 94, 93, or 95 percent, they need a different kind of system to have that pipeline be more successful and stated that he made a suggestion earlier in the week that maybe they look at providing what the private market does which are some incentives for people to come in like providing an air conditioner which would be very meaningful; it is an expense, but they could keep it as an asset, but it is maybe something that if they cannot afford to go get the bedrooms' air condition, they may have to start thinking about providing that instead of seeing them walk away and the lease rate going down. Chairman Ceballos asked Mrs. Gaona if she would like to comment on it. Mrs. Gaona stated that she just wanted to add in regards to her discussion with HUD, that Texas state wide is at 94.5% and that she does not know, but when she came back in November, it was a surprise to her based on prior years history, so she thought that maybe it was due to COVID, but they have seen a lot of people since they recently opened the waiting list, people got on both waiting lists, public housing and Section 8, so they see the unit and say that they will just wait for Section 8.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked Mr. De Anda if they could talk about it in executive session. Mr. De Anda responded that it has to be in open session. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza mentioned, with all due respect, that he thinks that if they need housing, they need housing, so how would they want to get on the Section 8 waiting list if they need a place to stay regardless. Chairman Ceballos stated that it could be that they want air conditioning. Vice-Chairman stated that he understands obviously for Laredo and said that he grew up without air conditioning, but now that he has it, he can't live without it.

Chairman Ceballos stated for the record that Commissioner Ms. Guerra joined the meeting at this time, 12:28 p.m.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that his point to Mrs. Gaona and the staff and if other staff members joined and that he hopes they join future meetings because these discussions are important to them and mentioned that if this is a long standing trend, they cannot keep up with the same system and expect that it is going to change the result; they need to change the strategy and he knows that it is hard for the people that have been running public housing for many years, but if it is not working, they have to change it because otherwise they are going to find themselves doing all the work trying to recruit a tenant and then they show them the unit that they would say no and mentioned that producing links that show the video of the unit so they will not lose time because it is no good and does nobody any service to lose or waste time; if it is a COVID trend, it is probably greater than them, it still means that they have to adjust the leasing strategy, but it may be that if they do not change it, it is like the employment issue they



are facing overall, some industries cannot get enough employees and others are doing great and mentioned that in regards to Vice-Chairman's observation that if they need housing, they do and it could be that case too.

Commissioner Ms. Freeman mentioned that if it is a statewide trend they are looking at, maybe they should have dialogue with different housing authorities and find out what they are trying to do to bring their numbers up so they can follow suit. Chairman Ceballos stated that he agreed and would impress on Mrs. Gaona to not wait too long, it is a long-standing pattern and unless they have staffing problematic issues; if they do not have that, it has gone on quite a bit and stated that traditionally it has been 98%. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that it has always been their goal to be at 98% and that she had never seen it at 91%, but they have not been at 98% since April of 2019. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza mentioned that there are other housing authorities that have units as old as they do and wonders what they are doing. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that they are not the only ones and that in reality some of the rental stock that is out there is not as good as the public housing stock and stated that they will have a conversation with HUD to see what they are finding with other housing authorities, so he agrees with Commissioner Ms. Freeman that they should maybe form a little consortium of housing authorities and see how they tackle the issue. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he wanted Mrs. Gaona to have an opportunity to talk about it because they kind of run through those reports for other priorities, mostly COVID, kind of quickly, but thinks that this is going to end up related to all of that because even if they had some staff that maybe was not performing or was not getting out there enough, in two years, they would have already cycle through that. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that she wants to emphasize to the Board that they feel like they are going to hit 98% and then they do rounds and find two vacant units or find a family member that reported a death and somebody else is going to the nursing home, so it is just a trend that they had not seen for a long time and it may be also because residents are aging. Chairman Ceballos asked if they had determined that because that could be determined if they lost folks that are aging. Mrs. Gaona confirmed.

Mrs. Gaona continued with her report and stated that in the community security and safety program they had several domestic violence that raised the flag and what got their attention and they are looking into the six she had pointed out at Ana Maria Lozano which are being reviewed.

Chairman Ceballos asked Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza if he wanted to pull an item out of consent agenda; they could pull the item later and mentioned that Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza had a question about the Police Department regarding security. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza mentioned that he knows the police are helping out but had a question about them reporting what is going on. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that before they were not reporting, but now Mrs. Gaona has required for them to report with their time sheets, any incident that occurs during their rounds out there, so they do report that and then they communicate with them to review the cases and the families that are involved. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked if they are all over the amps. Mrs. Gaona confirmed and stated that they also assign them to different tasks the agency has. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked if they have a protocol they follow for the different amps. Mrs. Gaona responded that if they are at Guadalupe today at 5 p.m. everybody knows at that time that it is where they are, so that is why they do different routes in different areas because they



will know where they are stopping, so they changed that. Chairman Ceballos stated, for the Board to know, that he asked Mrs. Gaona to allow the officers to use the facilities and mentioned that one of the things the officers always struggle with is finding a restroom, so if they have some officers working at the facilities, make sure that they have access to facilities, particularly like the BiblioTechs that are set up that way where they have common areas, so it would be great.

Mrs. Gaona informed in regards to Rapid Rehousing and mentioned that they have nine families and are currently at their capacity there with nine families, two individuals and one elderly and they have the renewal for next year, so they are going to continue with that funding and they are working with those individuals through emergency housing vouchers after this program. Chairman Ceballos asked Mrs. Gaona if it is working the way it was envisioned or whether it has been difficult. Mrs. Gaona responded that the difficult part is finding the units and for them to maintain them and mentioned that Ms. Garcia has done an amazing job working with the landlords and working with the clientele. Chairman Ceballos stated that if the private market does not create the units, they would need to create the units which is what Mrs. Gaona has been telling them recently and asked what is the demand whether one bedroom or two bedrooms. Mrs. Gaona responded that the demand they have seen of the emergency vouchers is nine families and two individuals, so it is a mix, but in the emergency vouchers where they are trying to address the street homeless, that is a one bedroom. Chairman Ceballos stated that he hopes they can have like a session where they would just talk about the homelessness initiatives because they increased it, so for the Board to know the nuts and bolts of that and mentioned that he knows they are moving fast with other potential projects, so it would be good if they can maybe take in lieu of one meeting, focus on this. Mrs. Gaona responded that it would be great. Chairman Ceballos asked what the target goal is for Rapid Rehousing in terms of families, like how many families. Mrs. Gaona responded that it is eight, but based on the funding and the rent, they can do more and said that she had the staff project through the end of the grant how many families we could assist which is how they met their capacity already.

Mrs. Gaona mentioned that they were awarded 85 emergency housing vouchers and they currently have 22 certifications that they have received and 13 vouchers that have been issued; it is where they are having their partners locating units for these vouchers. Chairman Ceballos asked Mrs. Gaona if she would inform the Board when this program will expire or renew. Mrs. Gaona responded that it goes through 2023 and that the funding is there allocated and after that they will do a review and if there is still funding, they would keep it, but if not, they can roll it, but the actual voucher needs to be utilized; if she does not have the 85 vouchers that have been utilized in Section 8, if they only have 82, that is all that they would be able to carry forward. Chairman Ceballos asked if it would be September 2023. Mrs. Gaona confirmed. Commissioner Ms. Freeman asked if they have one more year to use them all up. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that it would be to lease them and that they have two years.

Mrs. Gaona stated that Bulmaro Cruz will present in regards to construction. Mr. Cruz showed them the work for Los Balcones, apartment no. 1, the kitchen cabinets have been installed, ceiling and boards have been painted; apartment no. 2, again flooring and kitchen cabinets have been installed, these pictures have been taken on Tuesday and they should be in place by today; apartments 7, finish cabinets are being installed; apartments 9 is painting.



Mr. Cruz also showed them the work at Ana Maria Lozano BiblioTech, the flooring and painting. Chairman Ceballos asked if they had any questions for Bulmaro and asked him if he could give them the target dates. Mr. Cruz mentioned that for Ana Maria Lozano he was estimating for the middle of September. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza mentioned that Ana Maria Lozano looks very attractive and congratulated Mr. Cruz and also stated that it calls the attention when people drive by. Chairman Ceballos asked Mr. Cruz if the estimate date is September 15. Mr. Cruz stated that it is the date he is shooting for. Chairman Ceballos then asked the date for the Balcones Apartments. Mr. Cruz mentioned that it is the end of September. Mrs. Gaona stated that they got the electrical and the irrigation at Ana Maria Lozano passed today. Chairman Ceballos thanked them for their work.

**B. Unaudited Financials for the month of July 2021.**

Jennifer Barrientos presented the July 2021 Unaudited Financials for the agency and presented the highlights for the revenues, expenses and mentioned that they net profit in all properties including Section 8 and Farm Labor and mentioned that the majority of the revenue and expenses are in order in all our properties.

Ms. Barrientos also presented on the Laredo Housing Facilities Corporation which is Russell Terrace and Bernal Sunrise Courts revenues and expenses and mentioned that it is positive with revenues; Laredo Housing Opportunities Corporation which is River Bank and Casa Verde revenues and expenses where they had higher revenues and the Laredo Housing Development Corporation which is the O'Kane Apartments revenues and expenses as well. In regards to Section 8, she mentioned that at the last meeting they requested a slide incorporated on the Section 8 HCV program, so she presented it and asked if they wanted her to change something or add information for the next board meeting and presented the current units under ACC and the current units leased with a total of 1,770 allocated to them and used 1,614 for July 2021 and leasing is at 91%.

Ms. Barrientos also presented the LHA salary and benefits savings through all the properties with a total as of July 2021 of \$139,406. Chairman Ceballos asked Ms. Barrientos to go back to the slide she modified and asked what they were shooting for there; Ms. Barrientos responded at 100% for the leasing. Chairman Ceballos asked if they were going to get there. Mrs. Barrientos responded that they have an agenda action item and hopefully they will get there; the leasing of budget authority, they usually do the budget authority because with SEMAP it is either or the leasing they reach the 98% or if they use the funding. Chairman Ceballos asked what was the minimum for high performer. Ms. Barrientos responded that it is 98% for either or and stated that yes, that they will be getting it and asked if they wanted something more specific. Chairman Ceballos stated that it is fine.

Ms. Barrientos presented the Capital Grant 2016 and mentioned that they have disbursement end date for October 12, 2022 for \$81,680 and showed the items that are in progress and stated that they have until October 12, 2022; for 2017 they have up to February 15, 2023 to expend \$430,140 which are in progress as well. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked if it was BiblioTech. Ms. Barrientos confirmed. For 2018 they have the disbursement up to November 28, 2023; the



remaining \$897,727 which are items they are in progress or will be working on as well; 2019 Capital Fund Grant is \$1,696,733 and they still have to spend \$1,470,070 and they have until October 15, 2024 and presented the items which are in progress or working on. Chairman Ceballos asked if environmental was cleared already. Ms. Barrientos mentioned that it is cleared up to 2021, so they are working on the 2022 grant; on the obligation end date they have to be at 90% in September 25, 2023 and to use the funding by September 25, 2025, they were awarded of \$1,798,213 and they still need to expend \$1,618,392. Ms. Barrientos stated that the grant they just got a couple of months ago, needs to be at 90% in February 22, 2023, they need to expend the funds of \$1,900,414 by February 22, 2025. Chairman Ceballos asked Mrs. Gaona if there were any adjustments. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that they scheduled a meeting to review the capital Fund, so they will be reviewing that and if they need to, they will come back to the Board with any changes.

Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any questions for Ms. Barrientos and asked if everything is in the black. Both Mrs. Gaona and Ms. Barrientos confirmed.

## **10. CONSENT AGENDA**

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

Chairman Ceballos asked the Commissioners to look at each of the consent agenda items and mentioned that he thinks they spoke about the police department earlier and said that there was no action and asked them if they need to pull anything out. Commissioner Ms. Guerra mentioned that she would like for them to look at item 10C. Chairman Ceballos stated that they will pull out Item 10C to discuss it.

**Chairman Ceballos moved to accept all the items in the consent agenda in block except for item 10C which they will pull out and discuss it after the vote and approved Items 10A, 10B, 10D, 10E, 10F, 10G, 10H, and 10I.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

In regards to item 10C, Consideration to authorize the Executive Director to extend the contract with Securitas Security Services USA, Inc. for an additional year, as allowable by Contract No. LHA 2019-0801-1, effective September 25, 2021 through September 24, 2022. This represents the third year of the contract maximum permissible of 5 years.

Commissioner Ms. Guerra stated that if they are satisfied with the services which she is not sure, she would recommend to continue with it, but she is not sure if they are thinking of something different. Mrs. Gaona stated that when they met with residents, because of COVID, they were kind of concerned because they feel that the security guard is an authority vs just the regular staff which they could potentially look at in the future, not right now, but potentially looking at doing something different. Chairman Ceballos asked how many employees they have from through the company. Mrs. Gaona responded that it is about five. Chairman Ceballos asked if they were just there or if they would do other things. Mrs. Gaona responded that it



was just there. Commissioner Ms. Guerra asked if it was 24/7. Mrs. Gaona confirmed and stated that they also do the on call at night for all the properties. Commissioner Ms. Guerra mentioned that if they are satisfied and would like to continue, it would be fine. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he had this concern which he had expressed to Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza recently, that he thinks they get paid very low wages and that they have a contract negotiated amount and asked Ms. Barrientos inform them in this regard. Ms. Barrientos mentioned that when she talked to them, they were trying to increasing the contract by \$.50 which they said is going to go to the officers directly and nothing to the company. Chairman Ceballos asked how much an officer is making. Ms. Barrientos responded that it is \$14.99. Chairman Ceballos asked if they pay the officers \$14; Ms. Barrientos responded that they do not know, that they charge by the hour. Chairman Ceballos stated that he just wants to make sure because they have a floor for our baseline for our staff. Mrs. Gaona mentioned it is \$12, and Chairman Ceballos stated that they shoot for that range of \$12 an hour for the security staff, especially there because it is not easy; it may look easy, but it is not an easy job so, it would be to work that with the company and of course, to have it pass through. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that considering that they will do the \$.50, it would go to the employee. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked that if there is a concern or something goes wrong, if they will call a security and report it to them. Mrs. Gaona confirmed and stated that there is 24-hour call center there at Senior Home, so if something happens at Colonia Guadalupe; they call and the security guard answers there and they dispatch the foreman or they call Mrs. Gaona or Mrs. Martinez, so they take all the calls. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked if there is a lot of action on that and a lot of calls. Mrs. Gaona responded that it all depends on what is going on, the weather or sometimes there is no electricity sometimes, they will call to let them know, so it depends on the activity that is going on, but any emergency work orders go through on weekends. Chairman Ceballos asked if they are under the same policy in terms of vaccination. Mrs. Gaona confirmed. Chairman Ceballos stated that it is very important and that they will talk about that later. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he thinks there is no action on this and asked if they are good with it and then stated that there needs to be action.

**Chairman Ceballos moved to authorize the Executive Director as expressed in this item, to extend the contract the contract with Securitas for an additional year as detailed from September 25, 2021, this year, through September 24, 2022.**

**Commissioner Ms. Guerra and Commissioner Dr. Garza seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- A.** Consideration to authorize the Executive Director to renew the contracts with the off-duty Laredo Police Department officers for the purpose of providing onsite safety and security services, under the "community-policing" philosophy and approach, at LHA-owned housing developments, effective September 9, 2021 through September 8, 2022.
- B.** Consideration to authorize the Executive Director to extend contract LHA 2019-0718-1 with HR&A Advisors, Inc. through March 31, 2022.
- C.** Consideration to authorize the Executive Director to extend the contract with Securitas Security Services USA, Inc. for an additional year, as allowable by Contract No. LHA 2019-0801-1, effective September 25, 2021 through September 24, 2022. This represents the third



year of the contract maximum permissible of 5 years.

- D. Consideration to authorize the Executive Director to extend the contract with Civil Engineering Consultants (CEC) for an additional year, as allowable by Contract No. LHA 180423-4(A), effective October 27, 2021 through October 26, 2022. This represents the fourth year of the contract maximum permissible of 5 years.
- E. Consideration to authorize the Executive Director to renew the Commercial Liability and Commercial Property Insurances for the Housing Authority of the City of Laredo effective October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022.
- F. Consideration to authorize the Executive Director to renew the Commercial Liability and Excess Liability Insurances for the Laredo Housing Facilities Corporation effective September 22, 2021 through September 21, 2022.
- G. Consideration to authorize a travel request of staff for REAC training in San Antonio, Texas on September 13 – 14, 2021.
- H. Consideration to authorize a travel request of staff and/or Board for the Texas Homeless Network Conference in Houston, Texas on Oct. 3 – 8, 2021.
- I. Consideration to ratify the approval of Change Order #1 and #2 to A & S Electric contract LHA 2020-0810-1 for Los Balcones Apartments. Funding is available from Laredo Housing Development Corporation funding source.

## **11. ACTION ITEM**

- A. Discussion and possible action to award RFP #21-0811-1 COVID-19 Public Health and Safety Project, which includes modernizing the housing programs offices available to the public as well as staff offices to better respond to recent public health needs and concerns, and authorize the Executive Director to finalize negotiations and contract(s) with the selected firm (s).

Mrs. Gaona stated that they received two bidders, the information was provided to the Board, they have Quantum Construction and Midas Construction and mentioned that staff is recommending that the Board authorize negotiations with Quantum Construction and that if an agreement is not reached, they may proceed to the second proposer. Chairman Ceballos asked if there were questions or comments and if both were Section 3. Mrs. Gaona confirmed. Chairman Ceballos thanked both respondents and stated that they know them both and that they do existing work for the agency and thanked them for their time in preparing the proposals and mentioned that they are both very good firms and that he thinks that anytime they create competition, the agency benefits, the committee has to make a recommendation and in this case the recommendation from cost comes from the Executive Director, so 50 points came from her and Chairman Ceballos



asked Mrs. Gaona to inform the Board how she scored the cost effectiveness for each. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that on the points for Quantum, she gave them 41 points based on the value and compared their bid to the budget and for Midas, it was 38 points.

**Chairman Ceballos moved to approve item 11A based on the recommendation to initiate negotiations with Quantum Construction, the highest scoring proponent and if they do not reach an agreement with them, to go ahead and authorize the Executive Director to negotiate with Midas Contractors as the second proposer and finalize agreements with either one.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- B. Discussion and possible action to award RFP #21-0811-2 Roofing Repair & Replacement Services and authorize the Executive Director to finalize negotiations and contract(s) with the selected firm(s).**

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that it is for the South Laredo Public Housing Development. Mrs. Gaona stated that for this item they had two bidders; Midas Contractors and A&A National Roofing and staff is recommending that the Board authorize to initiate negotiations with A&A National Roofing and if an agreement is not reached, they may proceed with the second proposer. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that Mrs. Gaona would need to explain it because she has an 87 and an 85.67 and asked if she is recommending for the higher. Mrs. Gaona confirmed. Chairman Ceballos stated that Mrs. Gaona is recommending to award to A&A National Roofing at 87 points. Mrs. Gaona confirmed. Mr. De Anda asked Mrs. Gaona if the damages were caused by a storm and if it is being covered by the insurance carrier and how was the negotiation with them in respect to covering our property. Mrs. Gaona confirmed and stated that they have not gotten there. Mr. De Anda asked if they filed a claim and they have not approved it yet. Mrs. Gaona confirmed and mentioned that they were sent an amount, but they need to proceed with the proposals they received. Mr. De Anda asked her to let him know how it goes. Mrs. Gaona confirmed. Chairman Ceballos thanked both proposers for their time and their interest in continuing to work for the agency and obviously the points in both solicitations are very close and they know that both are competent companies and are grateful for their continued interest and asked if there were any comments or questions. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked if they will be negotiating with A&A National Roofing. Chairman Ceballos asked if they are recommending them. Mrs. Gaona confirmed. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked that if they say no, if they will go with Midas. Mrs. Gaona confirmed.

**Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza moved to award RFP #21-0811-2 Roofing Repair & Replacement Services and authorize the Executive Director to finalize negotiations with A&A National Roofing and if there is no agreement with them, then would go with Midas Contractors LLC.**

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



**Motion passed unanimously.**

- C. Discussion and possible action to create and fund an agency-wide emergency response team (LHA ERT) that would designate leadership, team members, structure, resources and effectuate a timely response to agency-determined emergencies – such as boil water notice, power outage, natural disaster, public health-related crisis or similar community emergency. This team would be activated and compensated to assist at the request of the Executive Director or the Board of Commissioners.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he asked Mrs. Gaona to include this item which is the result of a number of emergencies where they activated the staff and other community members to help them which has been very trying and they hope it would not continue, but the likelihood is that it may continue and it is very difficult for anyone of them to get a call to assemble a team to go get water to Senior Home and go get water to all the sites and as it happened with the last water boil which was during a holiday, he has pressed to whoever would listen that can help them is that the notices have been coming on weekends and it is very difficult for locations and venues such as ours where 30% of the housing units are elderly and they have to dispatch the staff to go deliver drinking water to the tenants and not to mention the polar vortex which he thinks all of them heard that, so what Chairman Ceballos is proposing is to create an incentive program to know who and to invite the staff to join it and compensate them to be basically on this call, emergency call team with a structure of training so that people know where resources are so that they keep fresh drinking water, bottled water at our warehouse at all times so that they don't have to go to Carrizo Springs, Zapata or wherever to go drag some cases of water, but that also the Executive Director would have the resources to be able to call on people that are already willing to do it, that they know that if there is an emergency, they have signed up for it and they are going to get compensated.

Chairman Ceballos stated that he does not have a structure for it and wondered if Mrs. Gaona had enough time to come up with a structure. Mrs. Gaona responded that she had spoken to some of the staff and brought it up to them for them to sit down and develop a variety of individuals from different areas because they all have different locations and different expertise, like in Senior Home they have the staff that are dedicated there who are experts at the systems and somebody else coming in would not be able to assist them, so Mrs. Gaona has started the structure and asking staff to give her feedback on who she can reach out to. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that it is the kind of action that does not require a P.O. and they are able to say that here is a card to go get the water because that is the challenge too and he knows that some of the maintenance staff does not want to be on call, but when they see this is mission driven, they may change their mind and if they are going to get compensated handsomely for a day or two worth of work, they may want to do it and stated that some of them are doing it for free, so that may also turn out people to join the team. Chairman Ceballos mentioned



to Mr. De Anda that there is a lot of pride in the Senior Citizens group too and sometimes it is not always about money, it could be about recognition, wearing a certain flag and being recognized for it and actually the team at Senior Home, all of them from the security to the volunteers and the palomitas and everybody including the consultants, Mr. De Anda and Mrs. Gaona have done a great job and mentioned that their vaccination rate was higher than the City's average much earlier which he thinks is the work of everybody involved and asked if there were any comments or suggestions from the Board.

Commissioner Ms. Freeman mentioned that as a senior and as a person on food stamps, the State of Texas is giving everybody the maximum amount of food stamps and said that she cannot use tap water at all now, so every time she goes to the store, she buys two packages of bottled water and says that she can understand the people at Senior Home, but those people also have the resources to buy the water and said: *"me acabe un paquete, dejame ir a comprar otro,"* so that is what Commissioner Ms. Freeman said she does, every time she goes to the store. Chairman Ceballos stated that she is the perfect chair for the committee. Commissioner Ms. Freeman mentioned that she feels that they need to support the residents. Chairman Ceballos stated that not to create more entitlement. Commissioner Ms. Freeman responded: exactly, because people are sitting there with their hands crossed waiting for a handout and it has gotten to a point. Chairman Ceballos stated that Senior Home is an exception because there are a lot of homebound community members there and said that he agrees and that they prepared a pantry and they are hardly using the pantry, so they were pretty well prepared. Commissioner Ms. Freeman confirmed.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he does not know the demographics of the ones that live at Carlos Richter, they do have a lot of them at Carlos Richter and is sure that there are plenty of homebound residents and mentioned that Commissioner Ms. Freeman's point is well made, not to create another entitlement program and have everybody expecting water and stated that they are not doing water for the average household. Chairman Ceballos stated that it has been other things like loss of pressure at Senior Home and there is a team that has to go respond and among those is Bulmaro Cruz who always gets that call because he has a lot of experience and they do not compensate him more because he is an exempt employee and he is got to go, but maybe now it will be a way to compensate that effort.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that Commissioner Ms. Freeman is very much welcomed to join the masterplan of that team. Commissioner Ms. Freeman stated that if they need her to go ahead and call her. Chairman Ceballos stated that Mrs. Gaona is going to call her. Mr. De Anda mentioned that in a worse situation like if a hurricane comes up the Rio Grande and knocks the power supply and they cannot get water off the tap, they should have that in mind and could have a committee that moves ahead that says that if that happens, what would they prepare for that. Commissioner Ms. Freeman stated that they got hurricane on



the Gulf right now. Mr. De Anda mentioned that it makes sense to have a look at the whole organization and stated that they sort of look at pieces of it like the work they have done at the Senior Citizens Home, the generator and stuff like that, sort of looking ahead in case they may need a generator, so they can do the same thing with water and food for example, emergency supply of food. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that it is hard work and that the Food Bank has food and said that who would be willing to give up their Saturday and Sunday to go pick up and physically exert themselves to deliver the stuff and the Executive Director is going to decide who she is going to call. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that her first call is to Ms. Barrientos and her second to Christy and then Bulmaro and then depending on the situation and mentioned that they are very responsive, but they do struggle at times, especially if it is a holiday or a weekend like some of these last events have happened and a lot of the staff is out of town, they were not expecting for that to happen, but they were very responsive and they were paid the extra hours that they worked and documented a little extra to thank them for coming in on a Saturday and for walking because the all walked the projects to deliver water, but it is hard sometimes to depend on the same people. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he hopes Mrs. Gaona would invite new team members that might be interested and asked them what would be a true incentive whether if it is really money or something else or a day off.

Commissioner Ms. Freeman asked what their contingency is if they get the blowbacks from the hurricane, if they have a shelter because the Civic Center is gone which would have been the closest area. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that the City has traditionally gone on bigger incidents like the vortex when they opened the Arena and were calling Housing to see if they had anybody to go and made the announcement multiple times, but nobody wanted to go, so Chairman Ceballos stated that he would lean on the City leadership and their emergency team who have been very good and they for sure with Senior Citizens, they tied in with them very closely from dispatching the medics to do assessments and a lot of different things, so that would be the initial plan and if that failed, they would have to assemble again a response team from Housing. Commissioner Ms. Freeman asked if they would want to send their residents out there with all of Laredo going out there and the way COVID is right now. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that not all of Laredo was showing up, there were only four people, when he got the call, they said that there were four people there in the cots. Commissioner Ms. Guerra mentioned that they got a family, friends and neighbors. Chairman Ceballos stated that their residents did not want to leave the warmth of their space during the vortex and mentioned that he does not know they would assemble their own big operation because they are not suited for that and not experienced to handle that and would like to see whoever would handle that, one or two leaders that would get trained for response and said that he is sure the city has available training for that. Commissioner Ms. Freeman mentioned she thinks that a lot of them do not want to leave their homes out of fear because even her daughter, when the power went out during the winter, the section she resides had all the utilities, the two-block section she lives at had all the utilities and said that she opened her home



and nobody went, even her daughter, but she was afraid that people would break in and so did a lot of other people who were afraid to leave their homes. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he thinks they found another volunteer, two Board members. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza stated that he would volunteer.

**Chairman Jose L. Ceballos moved to have the Executive Director initiate and come back with restructure and resourcing at the next meeting.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- D.** Discussion and possible action to approve a revision to the 2021 Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program Payment Standards effective September 1, 2021 using the Fair Market Rents and utilizing the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's COVID-19 Statutory and Regulatory Waiver for the HCV program HCV-7 Increase Payment Standard and adopt Resolution No. 21-R-08, as recommended by staff.

Mrs. Melissa Ortiz, Section 8 Director, presented to the Board and mentioned that they are presenting the revision to the 2021 payment standards that were approved in January, 2021 as part of the HUD COVID 19 statutory and regulatory waiver, they are proposing to utilize the HCV-7 Increase in Payment Standard or they may increase the payment standards at any time after the effective day of the increase in the payments rather than waiting until the next annual recertification; the revised payment standards will increase from 92% - 95% of the FMR to 100% of the FMR, effective September 1, 2021. Mrs. Ortiz stated that it will increase the HAP expenses for the calendar year by \$141K. Chairman Ceballos asked if it relates to being a high performer. Mrs. Ortiz responded that they will still be a high performer, if they do not, they will still be at 98% in the HAP utilization as well as in the lease up, but this will put them at 100.37% because they will go over with what they gave them for the calendar year. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that they will be utilizing some of the reserves so it won't get recaptured. Chairman Ceballos asked if they would be able to sustain it for next year. Mrs. Gaona confirmed and stated that they already projected it for next year. Mrs. Ortiz mentioned that payment cost will increase by \$22 and mentioned that they are currently at \$516 and will go up to \$538. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that they currently have about 60 some vouchers that are out searching that have not been able to find a unit. Chairman Ceballos asked how many vouchers. Mrs. Gaona responded that it was 61 vouchers. Chairman Ceballos stated that it is very unusual. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that they have not been able to find units and that they are hoping that this may help them. Chairman Ceballos stated that if they do not see anything improving and are still at 61 in 30 days, if they would want to come back and raise some more because they can go up to 120. Mrs. Gaona confirmed. Chairman Ceballos asked them if they were sure this is what they want now or if they need more of an increase and also asked when the waivers would end. Mrs. Gaona responded that it will be in December. Chairman Ceballos stated that any adjustments would have to be made in between now and



December other than next fiscal year. Mrs. Gaona confirmed. Ms. Barrientos stated January 1. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that they will do the review on January 1. Chairman Ceballos asked that the other option would be to over house them and they would carry the difference, that somehow, they would have to pay for the difference and if they do not know the answer, he suggested they may want to research it, so if they find a three bedroom and they qualify for a two bedroom, so how would they handle that transaction so that they would not have 60 vouchers and 60 families unassisted, so they may to research that to see how it can be possible. Mrs. Gaona stated that there is a waiver right now and it is just for this time. Chairman Ceballos asked if it is to over house and if they would want to read that and bring this item back because maybe they would want to adopt it with that in mind and said that 61 is a lot of units and mentioned that he is not trying to diverge what they are trying to do. Mrs. Gaona stated that they can disapprove it and come back. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that they will not come back for 30 days and said that they are going to have more items, that they can research it and if they think they would want to do that and asked if they know the analysis of the bedroom sizes that are being searched for. Mrs. Ortiz stated that she did not have that. Chairman Ceballos stated that they will vote on it and they can go research and to just generate that report and if they do not find it, they will not bring it back and asked Mr. De Anda if they can bring it back as long as they are still in the meeting even though they did not list that particular waiver. Mr. De Anda confirmed.

Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any comments or questions for Mrs. Ortiz and if there was a motion on this item approving the proposed payment standard revision.

**Chairman Jose L. Ceballos moved to approve the Revision to the 2021 Section 8 Voucher Payment Standards effective September 1, 2021 for the purpose of increasing the utilization and also noting that they have a hardship of people finding units based on the payment standard.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- E.** Discussion with possible action to authorize the solicitation of separate Request for Qualifications from qualified individuals and or firms for 1) an affordable and assisted housing consultant, advisor, and/or agent and 2) for a development partner – for potential developments of Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, Mixed-Financed, RAD (Rental Assistance Demonstration), Project-Based Voucher, or similar other affordable housing projects.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that in the last 30 days he and Mrs. Gaona have been solicited to provide testimony for two tax credit applications in this current round in Austin and the two applications with two different developers were being appealed for technical issues in the applications. Chairman Ceballos provided testimony at least in one and Mrs. Gaona participated at another TDHDA meeting



which he did not think she commented, but she was there and joined in, so neither of those applications were actually funded, however, there is a note that they have not had a tax credit such as Casa Verde, Clarks Crossing or River Bank in Laredo for a while since the Casa Verde apartments were done, so very likely Laredo will see a tax credit deal and this is put in for the Board to consider recruiting a consultant advisor and also potentially considering a developer partner anticipating that the developers that are involved with those two deals that did not get funded this round will probably seek another application next year and maybe future ones since Laredo has not seen one and mentioned that his observations from the meeting in providing comment to the TDHDA board is that Laredo is primed to receive and that they being Housing Authority, they need to take a look at this program and whether is them that develop it down the road or not, he thinks that the Housing Authority needs to look at it.

Chairman Ceballos stated that they can discuss it now and make any adjustments and mentioned that what they have learned from the Casa Verde and Russell Terrace project is that sometimes it does not work to have your advisor consultant be the developer because they have their conflict and then make decisions that affect both sides and particularly on the financial side where the developer is going to make money off of it, so that is why it is separated that way and mentioned that they can go into executive session to discuss further, but he thinks that it is important that they feel comfortable with the arrangement and stated that he already has his preference and he thinks all of them were involved with saving Russell Terrace, so it is going to be very important that they really understand how it takes off so that they do not end up with a consultant advisor that wants to be on a project and make money from a project and then takes the Board and the Agency in a bad direction.

Chairman Ceballos stated that some folks may say, and they have, is that they are going to have a problem finding experienced tax credit consultants because the reason they are in the business is to make money, so they may have a challenge finding a consultant, but that is going to be the reality that they may choose to take and accept; blending both or having them be both would probably not be advisable, so that is the way the item is written already and that is the initial conversation which does not mean that they are not going to do anything; it just means that if they get approached and the other thing is that if they do not initiate this process and then they decide in December to entertain a deal, these developers or competitors and then there is more where they can have a partner instead of competing in the same region; they can actually be building off each other expertise and it will be just like the RFQ; it will be an RFQ and the Board will consider who to partner with or who not to do a deal with or whatever, but he found himself on a last minute call literally from a Friday to a Monday that he got the call to provide some need testimony for a project and said that they are going to apply again, at least that was what they told them and he finds himself now advocating for a project that he has nothing to do with, except that he knows the meaning of affordable housing to Laredo and the population. Chairman Ceballos



asked for any thoughts from the Board or from Mr. De Anda as well and if Mrs. Gaona would like to add anything. Mrs. Gaona stated that for her is just the need for affordable housing and just like there were talking about those 61 people looking for housing and mentioned that she thinks that they do need and are tasked with that. Chairman Ceballos stated that it maybe beyond their service and that Colonia Guadalupe is going to have to be rebuilt; they had an exercise that started last year with a couple of units which he thought could be retrofitted in an easier fashion, but no way, it is too difficult; it is better to rebuild those just like Russell Terrace, so for the future , the Housing Authority staff, he told Mrs. Gaona really needs to get used to being in construction for the next 15 years and mentioned that they have Colonia Guadalupe, Carlos Ricther and some of the other ones and that even Ana Maria Lozano does not have air conditioning, so Chairman Ceballos thinks that for the next 10-15 years and even for Russell Terrace, it took them forever to build and said that they are going to build around people too; for Colonia Guadalupe it is going to be like Russell Terrace; it is going to be in phases and said where will they move 200 some families, they are not going to move them; it is a hardship, but Housing Authority needs to prepare for that.

Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina asked in regards to when they ask for qualifications, if they are asking for two different firms: one that can do the consulting and advising and another that can be a development partner or can the firm, if it is able to do both or if there would be a conflict. Chairman Ceballos stated that she is getting to the critical question and mentioned that the Board can decide that they need to be different, that they cannot do both, they are either a consultant or a developer or they can decide that they completely trust a person and they want the person to be both and that he does not think this Board is there for their experience which is what they are saying, so they could decide it now or they could decide it later, but at some point they are going to have to make that decision and if they do it prescriptible here and would say to put out the RFQ and indicate on there that if you are a consultant, you cannot be a developer, so if the Board wants to do that and integrate it, they can do it now; if they want to go into executive session and discuss it with the attorney or attorneys, they can do that, but for Chairman Ceballos, he likes having the clarity and the lack of conflict with this one; the consultant does not have a financial interest to make a project work and he likes that it is cleaner and mentioned that he has been told: good luck finding a consultant with the expertise which is ok, so if they do not get a project because they are learning, it would be fine; they want to compete at the best level, but not at the risk of being conflicted again and pushing through things in a way that can be very problematic as they have learned from prior issues. Commissioner Ms. Guerra mentioned that she agrees with Chairman Ceballos and to try at least the way he would like to do it separate and that if they do not try it, they will never know.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza mentioned that after what they through which was not the Board's fault, they should have precaution. Chairman Ceballos stated that one



of the things of the developer partner that comes in, if they decide to do it with a developer, frankly, it should be a staff expert that can do it and would know the subject matter, like his job back in the day when he was the developer guy, he never packaged the applications, but he was that filter and the Housing Authority needs that, so if they know that they are going to have a tax credit application for the next three, four or five years and said that they are 1000 or 1200 units in terms of demand and supply and they are under that; they need 1000 new affordable housing units which means that they should be applying for tax credits every year and should maybe create a position that develops that expert and to do it now that they will have this developer to pair up and maybe they get a project this year or maybe they do not and he thinks that it is what Brownsville has done and they say that they have been successful in developing a model where they are doing it. They hired and they work with private firms, but they are in a much greater leadership role than when you just hand it off to a developer and good luck and mentioned that there are good developers, not to get him wrong, no one disputes that, but it takes a while to develop relationships with the good ones.

Chairman Ceballos asked Commissioner Rodriguez Tijerina if he had answered her question. Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina confirmed and stated that she prefers separate firms coming in to do the two different tasks, but if they need legal advice, she would then suggest they go into executive session. Chairman Ceballos stated that one of the things he would like for the Board to consider which they can do it publicly too because he thinks that anybody might go and want to read the minutes on how this Board feels about developers which they should, they may want to read the minutes. Chairman Ceballos stated that they should leave it as the Board may, unless they want to say no, then to go ahead and integrate it now and tell staff to separate them and put language in there that you are a consultant and will not be eligible to become a developer, so if they want to do that now, they prepare to do it now and they can do that now and said that he does not have a problem with it and mentioned that the only thing that could happened is if they have this super developer that walks in and you wish he was your consultant, but you cannot make him your consultant because he has an interest in the project and he wants to be your developer.

Chairman Ceballos stated that his best advice to the agency is to develop a person, to invest the money and said that they have 400 or 500 units that need to be redeveloped, half the stock at least to be developed with somebody with expertise that follows the Board meetings, that learns the rules, that works with different developers, so it is up to the Board if they want to prescribe it, they can or if they want to leave it to decide later how they put out the RFQ. Commissioner Ms. Freeman asked if he was talking about getting somebody inhouse and training them or soliciting for the position. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he suggests the soliciting is up to the Executive Director and he is suggesting to create a position and they can do it later, but he is asking if they want to go ahead and fix the fact that if the person is a consultant, the person cannot be a developer and they can do that now by how they vote on it or they can do it later when they



actually have people proposing and then take action; they just tell them in the RFQ that they may decide that they cannot be both, but if they are ready to do it, to go ahead and do it and make it clear in the RFP and say that they have two, but they cannot be both.

Commissioner Ms. Freeman mentioned that they should do it now and they would be already aware that there is no discussion, that it is what it is and to take it or leave it. Chairman Ceballos confirmed and said that it is a good point. Commissioner Ms. Freeman mentioned that she was on the inside looking in last time with Casa Verde and that she was not on the Board yet, but they could still see that there were issues. Chairman Ceballos stated that they were on the inside too. Chairman Ceballos stated that their experience was not a good one for sure and that being the ones to salvage the project, they had nothing to do it and maneuvered with all the issues and mentioned that Commissioner Ms. Freeman was there and that she provided the testimony to the Board that saved the deal.

Chairman Ceballos stated that it sounds like the Board would like to prescribe it now, that they be separate and independent roles and asked Mrs. Gaona if she had anything to add before they vote and Mr. De Anda if he concurs. Mr. De Anda confirmed and stated that in fact, it makes sense to have the consultant who can tap them on the shoulder and say it is what they are interested in, that way they would be looking at their interest with respect to those types of projects. Chairman Ceballos agreed.

**Chairman Jose L. Ceballos moved to authorize the Executive Director to 1) solicit two separate proposals and attach credit consultant advisor and or agent and 2) a separate RFQ for a development partner which would have financial interest in any other projects named on the agenda item that includes tax credit, mixed finance, RAD, project-based voucher and that it be explicitly prescribed in the RFQ that they cannot serve in both roles.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- F. Discussion and possible action to authorize the solicitation of Request for Qualifications from qualified individuals and/or firms to provide architectural and engineering design services for a permanent supportive housing project located at 1500 East Calton Road.**

Mrs. Gaona presented to the Board and mentioned that they have a permanent supportive housing subcommittee that has met for three or four meetings and they have been discussing the airport property that the Housing Authority owns at 1500 East Calton Road and the committee agreed to submit a request to the City for \$4.2M to support this project and they have also reached out to Falcon International Bank to see if they would be interested and they have shown interest in the project and are finalizing making the unit mix and the bedroom distribution



on the project, so she brought it to the Board to see if they can go out for qualifications for architectural and engineering design services.

Chairman Ceballos informed that the City of Laredo will be getting some federal funds that are COVID related that apply to the Home Program which is a housing HUD designated program which is a long-standing program; the City usually gets about \$250K a year and they are going to get probably about \$4M or \$4.2M, so essentially, they are requesting that the City utilize those funds for this project which essentially is the third of the cost of the project. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza serves in the subcommittee and the property is located right next to Border Region, the soccer field and stated that the only reason why he would accelerate the architectural engineering in discussions with the City is because by all indications, the City is saying that borrowing any other request, they are the only folks requesting the money; they are not assuring Housing is going to get it, but they are saying that if Housing wants to get some of the soft expenses side, the professional services moving or the site ready, they could do that and even if they get the award, it is going to take a few months before they actually see if they allow them to get contracted, so they expect that it will have the same terms that usually Home funds have which is two to three years, but the objective is to recruit an architectural firm because they have already done a lot of master planning, they probably would not pay the amount of fees that they would normally pay, similar to what they did at Russell Terrace that they used the same foot print, pretty much the same floor plan with a few adjustments, so it is the purpose of bringing this now because if they do not do this now, then they will be in a place where they need to rush to present something to the City and will be paying for it because they cannot pay for anything that Housing would have expended until the City actually awards them and they have a contract. Chairman Ceballos asked Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza if he had anything from his side on the committee. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza mentioned that he did not and mentioned that they had discussions and everyone has given their opinion and they have made awareness on different things, depending on MHMR and the veterans and stated that it has been good.

Chairman Ceballos stated that it is contemplated at 100 units which is the way he envisioned by talking to the architect that is on the planning team; they would design two or three types of buildings and then, they could incrementally design based on all the factors: financing, City funding, art commitment and design how many of those buildings they will build and what Chairman Ceballos shared before is that anything under 60 units is actually too small to actually pay for even an apartment manager, so it is going to be anything between 80 and 100 units and mentioned that it is permanent supportive housing, so the idea is that Border Region is right there, the VA is in walking distance about half a block, Texas Rehab is right there, Gateway is a block away and the Hospital is about 2 blocks away.



Chairman Ceballos mentioned that in terms of master planning the site, it is still conceptual and he hopes that probably by early next week they would give Rick the planning team mix that says they want so many one bedroom, two bedrooms, three bedrooms, so that he can finish out the building types. Commissioner Ms. Freeman asked if they are looking at one or two stories. Chairman Ceballos responded that it would be two stories and stated that the subcommittee meetings are open to anyone that wants to be part of that.

**Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza moved to authorize the Executive Director to solicit a request for qualifications for qualified individuals and/or firms to provide architectural and engineering design services for a permanent supportive housing project located at 1500 East Calton Road.**

**Chairman Ceballos seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- G.** Discussion and possible action in consideration of updates to the COVID Operational Policies and Vaccination and Mask Requirement (Resolution No. 21-R-07) or other matters related thereto. This item may be discussed in closed session pursuant to Texas Government Code, Section 551.071 (consultation with attorneys) and Section 551.074 (personnel matters).

Chairman Ceballos stated that this is a standing item they put in to see if they had any updates and mentioned that he is going to lean on Mr. De Anda to speak on whether he thinks they should be updating anything based on the recently passed executive orders at the state level. Mr. De Anda mentioned that he had an update in regards to the executive orders. Chairman Ceballos asked if he would like to go into executive session. Mr. De Anda confirmed.

**Chairman Ceballos moved to go into Executive Session at 4:31 p.m.**

**Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza, Commissioner Ms. Guerra and Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

Chairman Ceballos stated that the Board is going into Executive Session with Mr. De Anda and Mrs. Gaona.

## **12. 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 4:31 p.m.**

**The Board reconvened from Executive Session at 5:17 p.m.**

### **13. ACTION ON ANY EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEM**

Chairman Ceballos stated that there was no action taken in Executive Session.

Chairman Ceballos stated that they are not entertaining action on item 11G and mentioned that they directed the Attorney and the Executive Director to work on an update of the policy that reflects the current legal aspects that are out there and of course the fact that they have now a fully approved vaccine and also acknowledging that there is the potential need for boosters and integrating those elements into the update and then they can reconvene once the new resolution is drafted, for the Board to entertain it.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that they would entertain a change or an update on item 11D related to the Housing Choice Voucher, Discussion and possible action to approve a revision to the 2021 Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher and stated for the record, that they are having a problem finding one- bedroom units in the city and mentioned that one suggestion he made to Mrs. Gaona, is to try to classify them as two-bedrooms and stated that there are 24 active tenants or waiting list participants that are looking for a one-bedroom and said that they know that there are no 24 one-bedroom units in our city, so Chairman Ceballos stated that the suggestion, subject to HUD's approval, is to try to find two-bedrooms and lease them as one-bedroom and increase the payment standard to the 120% level, subject to HUD's approval and comments on that action; if it is not permissible by then, they would go back to the original plan. Mrs. Gaona confirmed.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that what they will really do is pay more for a one-bedroom unit and that they can allow to find a two-bedroom which is at a higher rate; it is over housing and mentioned that he does not remember the rate, but said that there is a rate that speaks to it, and he is sure that once they have time to find it and talk to HUD about it, it will get clear.

**Chairman Jose L. Ceballos made a motion to that effect, as discussed above.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

### **14. ADJOURNMENT**

**Chairman Jose L. Ceballos moved to adjourn the meeting.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

**Meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.**

  
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Jose L. Ceballos, Chairman

  
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Mary Gaona, Executive Director