

# **Housing Authority of the City of Laredo**

Board of Commissioner Meeting  
Judge Oscar Liendo Community Hall  
2000 San Francisco Ave.  
Laredo, Texas 78040  
Monday March 28, 2016  
11:00 a.m.

**A-16-R-2**

## **Minutes**

**March 28, 2016**

1. **CALL TO ORDER** Chairman Ceballos called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
3. **ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM** Roll call and declaration of quorum by Melissa Ortiz, Acting/Interim Executive Director/Secretary

### **Commissioners Present**

Jose L. Ceballos, Chairman  
Dr. Sergio Garza, Vice-Chairman

Gina Magallanes, Commissioner

### **Commissioners Absent**

John Solis, Commissioner  
Joe Aranda, Commissioner

### **Staff Present**

Melissa Ortiz, Acting/Interim Executive Director  
Bulmaro Cruz, Director of Public Housing  
Orlando Guerrero, Interim Director of Finance  
Jose Collazo, Resident Services Coordinator  
Robert Peña, MIS Coordinator  
Cynthia Cortez, Section 8 Supervisor  
Melinda Gavilanes, CQI Section 8  
Maria de Lourdes Hernandez, Asst. Dir. of Public Housing  
Alma Mata, Administrative Assistant  
Christy Ramos, Administrative Clerk

### **Others Present**

Attorney Doug Poneck  
Attorney Carlos Flores  
Elizabeth Martinez  
Rosa Perez, Central Resident Council

4. **CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS** No Comments.
5. **CITIZENS COMMENTS**

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

**6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

- A.** Approval of minutes for Board of Commissioners meeting on March 16, 2016.

Chairman Ceballos asked that the language on the minutes be corrected to reflect that he was not requesting motions to be approved but calling for a motion.

**Chairman Ceballos called for a motion.**

**Vice-Chairman Garza motioned to approve minutes with corrections**

**Commissioner Magallanes seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

**7. PRESENTATION BY CENTRAL RESIDENT COUNCIL**

Ms. Rosa Perez stated that there were no comments other than that the Central Resident Council Board elections would take place the following day at 10:30.

**Chairman Ceballos motioned to entertain agenda Item 9.**

**Vice-Chairman Garza seconded the motion,**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

**8. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT, including presentation of waiting list reports.**

**9. PERSONNEL ITEM:**

Discussion and possible action related to the grievance requested by Elizabeth Martinez. This item may be discussed in Executive Closed Session, pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.074 (personnel matters).

**Chairman Ceballos motioned to enter into Executive Session.**

**Commissioner Magallanes seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

Board entered into Executive Session at 11:58 a.m.

Board returned from Executive Session at 1:05 p.m.

No action was taken during Executive Session.

**Chairman Ceballos motioned to deny the Grievance for Elizabeth Martinez.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

**10. PRESENTATIONS (No action to be taken on these items)**

- A.** Presentation of the Housing Authority of the City of Laredo Audited Financial Statement for Fiscal Year Ending 03/31/2015, by Leal and Carter P.C.

Auditor presented the board with an Audited Financial Statement Report, Letter to the Board, and a Management letter. He stated that the Audit is to attest that statements are in accordance to local government, the accounting principles in which they are based on according to local

government, that these are consistently applied each year, and compliance with major portions of your contract with rendering agency. They also indicate if there are any disagreements with management in which case there weren't.

**B. Presentation of Unaudited Financial Statements as of January 2016.**

Ms. Ortiz presented the Unaudited Financial Statements as of January 2016. She stated that all the accounts are healthy with the exception of MOD 4, a cash management program where you are funded at the end of the year depending if you are short or over based on HAP.

Chairman Ceballos asked why Asherton was making so much revenue.

Ms. Ortiz stated that the rents had been raised some time ago and that tenants had adjusted well.

Chairman Ceballos asked that the board look at the Bank Account Listing for an overview of the account statuses.

## **11. ACTION ITEMS**

**A. Discussion and possible action to approve the proposed Operating Budgets and related Organizational Structure for Fiscal Year ending March 31, 2017 for the Housing Authority of the City of Laredo's Central Office Cost Center, Assets Management Projects 1-6, Farm Labor Project, and the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher.**

Ms. Ortiz stated that revisions were made to the budget and positions had to be removed. She stated that the position for Economic Self Sufficiency, Section 8 Clerk, 4 maintenance position to alleviate the budget constraints. She stated that the budget for AMP 4 was still strained and \$60,000.00 was being moved from AMP 1 & 2 each totaling \$120,000.00 to AMP 4.

Chairman Ceballos asked where the proposed staff reduction would occur from.

Ms. Ortiz responded from AMP 5, AMP 4, AMP 2 and AMP 1.

Chairman Ceballos asked how the selection will be made.

Ms. Ortiz stated that it would be based on last one in, first one out basis.

Ms. Ortiz stated that the ESS coordinator position would also be removed.

Chairman Ceballos asked who would absorb that position or if the agency just could not afford them.

Ms. Ortiz responded that the position would be absorbed by the Resident Services Coordinator as it had been in previous years.

Chairman Ceballos asked if Public Housing Management was involved in making the selection.

Ms. Ortiz replied yes, they had been involved and had come to an agreement in the selection.



Chairman Ceballos asked why there was a need to reduce staff.

Ms. Ortiz responded that the budget did not allow for these positions based on the budget constraints.

Chairman Ceballos asked how the positions were being afforded before.

Ms. Ortiz stated that they were being paid out of reserves and several positions were absorbed by COCC because the AMPs could not afford them.

Vice-Chairman Garza asked what ESS stood for and what role did it fulfill.

Ms. Ortiz responded Economic Self Sufficiency and it served to help residents transition out of the program with GED classes, job training and placement and resources of that sort.

Vice-Chairman Garza asked if the services were being provided and what the success rate was.

Mr. Collazo stated that prior to having an ESS Coordinator such services were already being provided through his program and his department could absorb the position.

Chairman Ceballos asked how the AMPs have a positive net balance and if COCC funds are having to be transferred to support the operating expenses.

Ms. Ortiz responded no, what is happening is that administrative fees are not being charged to the AMP if their budget is strained to allow them to operate.

Chairman Ceballos asked if PILOT is being budgeted fully paid at \$255,000.00.

Ms. Ortiz responded yes.

Chairman Ceballos stated that if staff is to be impacted by layoff or reclassification that they receive a 45 day notice and be allowed to apply for any positions available.

He also stated that in his opinion the Section 8 staff is underpaid at a rate of \$9-\$11 and suggested that in the near future a salary comparability study take place. He asked when the last one was conducted.

Ms. Ortiz responded in 2005.

**Chairman Ceballos called for a motion.**

**Vice-Chairman Garza motioned to approve Item 11A**

**Chairman Ceballos seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- B.** Discussion and possible action to approve the write-off of non-collectable amounts of \$18,121.10 for vacated units from October 1, 2015 through March 31, 2016.

Ms. Ortiz stated that agency is requesting to write off any owed debt to the agency from vacated units to lower the receivables at each AMP and avoid it affecting the PHAS score.

Vice-Chairman Garza asked why there were tenants are allowed to reach such high amounts before they are evicted.

Mr. Cruz stated that some of these cases are currently in litigation therefor the amount owed to the authority is building up.

Chairman Ceballos asked who is representing the authority.

Ms. Ortiz replied Atty. Christina Mendiola Perez.

Chairman Ceballos stated that he was unaware that the authority was retaining another attorney and asked that the engagement letter be provided for the board's review.

Ms. Ortiz stated that she assists only with tenant cases.

**Chairman Ceballos motioned to approve Item 11B with the clarification that one of the AMP2 tenants is in litigation.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- C. Discussion and possible action to authorize Executive Director to fill certain vacant management positions. This item may be discussed in Executive Closed Session, pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.074 (personnel matters)

**Chairman Ceballos motioned to enter into Executive Session and entertained Items 11C, 12A, 12B, and 12C.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

Board entered into Executive Session at 1:34 p.m.

Board returned from executive session at 2:20 p.m.

No action was taken in Executive Session.

**Chairman Ceballos motioned to offer Norma Ybarra the position of Section 8 Administrator and Gabriel Muñoz the position of Human Resource Manager subject to negotiations in terms of salary and benefits with Executive Director under Item 11C.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

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

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

- A. Discussion with legal counsel related to agency expenditures and administrative actions currently being reviewed and audited.

- B. Discussion with legal counsel related to ongoing legal matters resulting from action of Board of Commissioners actions from December 2015.
- C. Discussion with legal counsel related to the Metro Litigation.

No action was taken during Executive Session.

### 13. ADJOURNMENT

**Chairman Ceballos called for a motion.**  
**Vice-Chairman Garza motioned to adjourn.**  
**Chairman Ceballos seconded the motion.**  
**Motion passed unanimously.**

**Meeting adjourned at 2:22 p.m.**



Jose L. Ceballos  
Board Chairman



Melissa Ortiz  
Acting/Interim Executive Director