

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

Zoom Video Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89421682498>

Call in Number: 1-346-248-7799

Webinar ID: 894 2168 2498

LHA Board Room

2000 San Francisco Ave.

Laredo, Texas 78040

Friday, October 22, 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

**“The Board of Commissioners will convene for a Board meeting for discussion on the following matters (NOTE: A quorum of the Board will be physically present at this location, but up to two other Commissioners may attend by video conferencing, as permitted by Tex. Gov’t Code Section 551.127)”**

**A-21-R-10**

**Minutes**

**October 22, 2021**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Jose L. Ceballos called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. and mentioned that Mr. Poneck is joining them on line and that it is good to see him and Mr. Poneck mentioned that it is good to see everyone again.

**2. INVOCATION PRAYER**

Commissioner Gloria Ann Freeman led them in prayer: “Heavenly Father, protect us and guide us as we make decisions that will affect everybody in this part of our lives; we pray for the 17 Americans that are kidnapped in Haiti; we pray for our first responders that are fighting fires throughout the world, the flooding and the bad weather that has affected in the world and humanity in general and we ask that you pray for them; we pray for our city, state and federal leadership, that they make the right decisions, that they use their hearts not only their heads in the decisions they make and we pray for unity and protection for the community through our COVID pandemic and any other malady that comes through this season, in Jesus name we pray, Amen.” Chairman Ceballos thanked Commissioner Ms. Freeman for the 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 is on her way to the meeting. Chairman Ceballos stated that they have a quorum and mentioned that Mr. Ricardo De Anda is also present as well as some staff

##### Commissioners Present

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

##### Commissioners Absent

##### Staff Present

Mary Gaona, Executive Director  
Christy Ramos, Administrative Assistant  
Robert Peña, Director of IT  
Jennifer Barrientos, Director of Finance  
Melissa Ortiz, Director of Section 8  
Jessica Martinez, Interim Director of Housing Management  
Valeria Cabello, Procurement Officer  
Alejandro Jimenez, Assistant to IT Director  
Laura Villalobos (by zoom)  
Ricardo De Anda, Attorney  
Doug Poneck, Attorney (by zoom)

##### Others Present

Chairman Ceballos stated that they should not have an extended meeting today, but they do have the directors' evaluation that needs to be scheduled because the anniversary just passed, so he would like to schedule that as an independent meeting in 30 days and they will get with Mrs. Gaona to schedule it.

#### 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

There were no disclosures.



## **7. PRESENTATION BY CENTRAL RESIDENT COUNCIL**

Mrs. Gaona mentioned that Ms. Rios is out of town visiting family and she would be back next week and stated that she has been participating in the residents meetings for the Five-Year Plan.

## **8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A.** Approval of Minutes for Board of Commissioners meeting on September 24, 2021.

**Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina moved to approve the minutes for Board of Commissioners meeting on September 24, 2021.**

**Commissioner Ms. Freeman 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, Emergency Response Program and ongoing construction projects.

Mrs. Gaona informed that for September 1<sup>st</sup>, Public Housing PIC score was at 98.87% and lease up was at 97.50%; Section 8 PIC score was 101.58%, HAP utilization was at 103.10 % and the lease up was 98.9% and in regards to the emergency vouchers, they have assisted 19 families and have 62 vouchers out searching and they received a total of 91 certifications from Bethany House. In the Rapid Rehousing Program, they already have 14 families enrolled and they have three that are in the process of being assisted by November 1, 2021 and presented the comparison from August to September on the PH leasing and mentioned that they continue to push to get to 99% or 100% lease up on all the units and stated that they are very close; they have four units in Colonia Guadalupe currently and have three that are going to be leased before the end of the month and mentioned that they have one at Senior Home and that they are still requiring the COVID testing and vaccine there which has been delaying the process a little bit; it is just to make sure that they bring back the COVID results before they move in.

Mrs. Gaona mentioned that they are still struggling in Asherton and stated that she will be working with Mrs. Martinez and Ms. Guzman to try to resolve how they can address those vacancies. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he was thinking about visiting with HUD about repositioning that assistance and maybe bringing it into Section 8, but he does not know how that would do in terms of revenue, but maybe they can explore that. Mrs. Gaona stated that they do not have that many vouchers out there either that can be used, but they need to think of different options for that property. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza stated that it is going to be hard, period, unless someone decides to move over there all of the sudden, but that is the challenge for those small towns.

Chairman Ceballos asked Mrs. Gaona how much incentivizing they have done at Colonia Guadalupe or at any of the other properties. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that at Colonia



Guadalupe it has just been changing or making the unit more appealing like putting new cabinets and assisted with two security deposits. Chairman Ceballos asked about air conditioners. Mrs. Gaona responded that no air conditioners, that nobody has asked yet. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that the staff knows they are ready to do that. Mrs. Gaona confirmed that they do.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned to Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza that they are having problems leasing Colonia Guadalupe and that he might already be aware because they discussed that at a meeting he probably attended via zoom. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked Mrs. Gaona about the deadline to get to the 99% or 100% in the units, if it is by the end of the month. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that they need to have it at the first of the month for it to count; even if they lease it on the second or the third day of the month, it will not count for her numbers and stated that they are scored based on the number of units leased at the first of the month for all the properties and she directed them to the slide showing April through March which is their fiscal year and mentioned that it is April, but it is on the first and stated that right now in October, they were up and they only had three or four vacancies, but they did not have a lease on the first, so that is the challenging part that even if they get a unit on the 30<sup>th</sup> or the 28<sup>th</sup> of the prior month, if they do not turn it around by the 1<sup>st</sup>, it does not count towards the utilization. Chairman Ceballos asked that if they are going to be adding some trees to Park Street and along IH-35. Mrs. Gaona confirmed.

Commissioner Ms. Freeman asked if the issue is not getting them leased out by the 1<sup>st</sup> because the checks come in on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that if they turn in the unit by the 28<sup>th</sup>, by the time they turn it around, they have the family coming and do all the process; some of them tell us right away onsite that they will take it and they can start the paperwork, but some will say we will let you know tomorrow. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that they just had one at Carlos Richter; the person was next in line and said that she was going to go and told them she would be there tomorrow and she did not; she then went the following day, saw the unit and asked if she could let them know the following day because her child is in a certain school and did not want to move, she was going to be on a voucher, but she just turned it down because of the school. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that since they have vouchers, they have that option to opt out; if they did not have vouchers, they would be missing if they would say no to public housing, but right now, there are vouchers, so they are on both lists; it is the advantage for them which is not a bad thing for them, they should have a good choice.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he was curious about the domestic violence items and wondered if they are dealing with them on the lease side. Mrs. Gaona confirmed and stated that they just got the report right before they were sending out the packets, so they have not gone to make contact with the individuals and mentioned that she was telling Christy that they get the report and it has been a little confusing, so she wanted to get clarification from the Board as to exactly what it is that they want to see on the report because some of it or a lot of it is not actually related to the property, but she said for example, something that happened on the street, if they want her to put it as other or remove it completely from the report. Chairman Ceballos stated that his preference is for her to show them everything and maybe segregate those that apply because he thinks that it depicts what is happening



as a neighborhood; otherwise, they do not get the full picture and asked the Board if they all agree and how they would like to see it. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza suggested to have a check-up list to include everything. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that a lot of them were concerned on her discussions about the high numbers of the other column, so she wanted to make sure that it is all they want to see and how they want it presented. Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina mentioned that she agrees that it is useful and stated that she never looks at it as to say that housing is not doing their part because a lot of it is beyond their control in regards to what goes on in the households, but thinks that maybe they could add, once she reviews it, something that they can do like on a dark area, add more lighting and then maybe add that to the report what Mrs. Gaona would think could be a support the Board could provide. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that they have had human smuggling cases here which is one of the things that occur in our community and is not representative of Public Housing, but this will pick that up. Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina mentioned that if they need to form a stronger partnership with law enforcement, that is what they would expect in the report. Chairman Ceballos mentioned to Mrs. Gaona that it answers her question and suggested her to flag or if she should like to say that those are Public Housing impacted or lease related cases, she could, but he would not take anything out because he thinks it gives them a good picture of what is happening.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that Commissioner Ms. Anita Guerra was joining the meeting at this time.

Chairman Ceballos asked if they had the slide on IT. Mrs. Gaona stated that they do not. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he wanted to find out on the IT projects internet switch over and the LHA portal which seem to be on pause and he does not know if the columns represent months and asked if someone could speak about that. Robert Peña, Director of IT, presented to the Board and stated that the portal has a listing of the projects and mentioned that red means they are paused; yellow means they are late and green means they are on time and white means they have not kicked off yet. Mr. Peña mentioned that the LHA employee portal was a project that he was putting together at home as a side project. Chairman Ceballos asked if it was not related to our proprietary system. Mr. Peña mentioned that it was an entirely home project and with the implementation of Yardi, it kind of got delayed and in regards to the internet switchover where they were going to switch over from the current Spectrum contract that they have right now and once they switch over to the new building, they are going to get an upgraded contract. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that it was all he wanted to see because every time that he sees red, he wants to discuss it and mentioned that those are added things Mr. Peña is doing to better the Agency. Mr. Peña mentioned that he was just trying to put something together. Vice-Chairman asked what it means the 90% internet switch over and if it is almost there. Mr. Peña mentioned that it means that they are just waiting to the move over to the building, but as far as the contracting of equipment, the power ball, it is already there; they already got the fiber connection, so they just need to do the actual switch over, so that is where it is at, but essentially is stalled while the other project gets finished. Chairman Ceballos asked Mr. Peña in regards to the cloud backup if he could tell the Board what he is backing up. Mr. Peña stated that the cloud back up is when they have the data backup system, they want to have some data onsite, but really the safest place to have their data is not at their



location, they need to have it off the premises in case of a disaster, a fire, a flood or something like that, so what they are doing is looking at different vendors to see what they can find that would give them an option for backing their data and said that it is a long term story and that their data retention goes between seven and ten years and all the data has to be retained permanently, so he recommended to not rely on mechanical devices that are on site; they are looking for a vendor to upload it and save it on their resources, that way if they would have an electrical short or last time they had a flood, so that would prevent damage to the system, so they can still recover the data and not lose anything. Chairman Ceballos thanked Mr. Peña for his presentation.

Chairman Ceballos informed the Board that the building that is being renovated is where the IT department will move with their rack systems which will be kind of the emergency center, so if they ever lose power again like they did this year and now they will have a generator for the IT system and actually for the entire building, so the executive emergency team will operate out of there and obviously be able to use systems and they will have in the campus a Wi-Fi system for our staff off of that, so it is just lessons learned about not relying completely on our utility system and mentioned that they are excited about seeing that building being finished for what it is going to mean if they actually have an emergency and right now if they lose the system, they would not get paid, so at least they will be able to cut checks and get paid; that sounds the alarm, so everybody should be for that building and everybody should help finish it before the next polar vortex and wondered if anybody had thought about that, but it is a reality that they were very lucky that they had electricity here and had they been downtown, it would have been a different story. Chairman Ceballos asked if they had any comments on this item. There were none.

Mrs. Gaona mentioned that in regards to Rapid Rehousing they had already mentioned the number of families assisted and the only other thing is that they got renewed for the 2020 grant which is going to be \$234,136 and said that they have two items on the agenda that refer to the application and the renewal of this grant, they submitted an application for the 2021 RRH grant competition. Chairman Ceballos asked which staff works in this department. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that right now it is Stephanie Garcia and Elizabeth Aguilar assists her and they want to add an emergency housing voucher individual to partner up because they are stretching Stephanie to do the emergency housing vouchers as well. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that there were only 12 clients. Commissioner Ms. Freeman asked if the third person could be like a floater depending on the load. Mrs. Gaona confirmed and mentioned that right now the challenging part on those 85 vouchers is housing them and keeping them housed. Chairman Ceballos stated that he thinks they are going to see more money in this area from HUD going forward and mentioned that he envisions that. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that on the emergency vouchers they had 19 housed and six are pending inspections right now and they have started to put everybody else that is coming in on the waiting list hoping that all 62 individuals find a unit.

Mrs. Gaona mentioned that Bulmaro Cruz is out and she would give the update on Los Balcones and mentioned that the back building already has all the tile and the cabinets and also showed the bedrooms, the closets and the fans and said that everything is up on those units and mentioned that the air condition units are also going in as they speak; they already



started on the back and are moving to the front units and also showed the exterior of the back building. Mrs. Gaona also presented the exterior of Ana Maria Lozano. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza mentioned that the building calls for attention as they are driving and that it is well done. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that the back side of the screen front is very visible to Springfield; he thinks that they will have to kind of screen that somehow; where the ornamental block is, it looks great from the front, but from the side, some vines on pots would help because he said that the brick behind the light pole, from the back they can see the tubing; it is just a feature; it looks very nice, but if they are driving from Springfield they get to see the tubing and mentioned to the Board that this is getting close to being done and stated that he anticipates that they may even have the next Board meeting there so that they can see it and feel it and mentioned that they can set the date for the ribbon cutting and said that he is not in any rush for the ribbon cutting and that they have not worked on the permanent plaque that will go up on that building and obviously for temperature reasons, it is barely getting cool, so maybe they can put a date on that, maybe at the next Board meeting and mentioned that they will be open before they actually do the official ceremony which is fine and said that they did that with the other site. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked about the tables for the kids. Mrs. Martinez mentioned that it is very similar furniture to the Casa Verde and Russell Terrace which is upgraded and updated, but the desks and the computer desks are different from what they used at Casa Verde and Russell Terrace. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that 90% of what they used is all the same which is part of the standard. Mrs. Martinez confirmed.

Mrs. Gaona mentioned that the internet is going to be installed already and also the alarm, so they are going to have Robert Peña setting up all the computers; they did not want to do that until we were able to secure the building.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that they have not finalized the ribbon cutting and stated that he thinks plaques are very important; they do leave some memorial particularly the Russell Terrace one, so he may ask some of them to chime in on how to lay it out and what message they should put on, particularly the Russell Terrace one which has not been finalized and Mrs. Martinez has been asking him, but COVID got in the way and they just put it off, so they need to finalize both and he would like their input on the message on who needs to be named for posterity and stated that the plaque that was there from when it was built is a very nice plaque and there is history behind the names that are there, so he mentioned that they will circulate it and they should feel free to chime in. Commissioner Ms. Guerra asked what he had in mind. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that what they had been doing traditionally is not a generic message, but a message about them being a community vehicle to deliver, kind of like the Tiny Home message, a community builds this project for the community and it is a bunch of partners, individually, but it is also groups and stated that Russell Terrace was a little different in that it required the distinction of a dispute, so to speak; there was a fight which was to keep that development or community in place and maybe because they are coming to the end of their term with the Mayor and maybe that is why those thoughts are coming from him, but he thinks it is important to be representative as they have to open both centers and stated that they have not opened Russell Terrace, so they will have that ribbon cutting at some point too, but he thinks that putting the right message and leaving that for what it means to the residents and even for



the kids that live there too who are almost six years older than when they met them and little did they know that they could have been going to a different elementary school if they had not done what they did, so they will circulate the draft and all of them can chime in and they will get both of them done at the same time, if possible.

Chairman Ceballos asked Mrs. Gaona if she had any other items on her report. Mrs. Gaona confirmed and mentioned that they did an emergency response communication team and they wanted to know if any Board of Commissioners wanted to be added to their tree for emergency response, so they left two blank Commissioners on top; they have their lead staff and they tried to have somebody from each area depending on what the emergency relates to. Chairman Ceballos asked Mrs. Gaona if they are bringing back the incentive program or if they already have it. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that they talked to different individuals and the majority of them just said that they just want to get paid which is the standard process or maybe get time off that does not affect their overtime because sometimes they work that night or two days and if it is in the same pay period, they cannot get a day off; it affects the hours worked, so they talked about that and or gift cards or anything that they can get, but other than that, they can do another incentive.

Chairman Ceballos asked if everyone is familiar with this team; not Commissioner Ms. Freeman. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that it is being set up and said that what traditionally happens when they have a crisis when they lose water or they lose power, sometimes he gets the call or sometimes Mrs. Gaona will get it and it comes through the phone line and Mrs. Gaona has to assemble a response team and said that what has happened is that it is typically the same people that respond and if they are not in town, they are scrambling to build a team and said that the latest one was the water shortage, so they have to go find water and by the time they react as the Housing Authority, there is not any water, so in the past they actually had to travel and Ms. Mata decided that somebody had to travel to get water from Carrizo Springs or wherever they went or to Zapata to bring back water and then take it to the elderly households to at least assure that they had drinking water because in their experience, the city does not give proper notice; they get it on a Saturday or a Sunday at 7 PM, so they have to really be their own resource and suggested to Mrs. Gaona to put a policy in place and to have their own team, but to compensate them and to let them choose; if they do not require them to be, at least reward those that want to be part and to know that if they get that call, that Central Laredo does not have water and it has been over a day, they are going to have to assure that they have pallets of water somewhere and that they have generators that have been working and maintained and stated that probably the biggest pressure is when he calls and may say if they can go to Senior Home to bring water; he would just say it; it is easy for him to say that and he may show up, but he is not the person doing the work, so it is a way to reward the staff and he also thinks that there are persons that want to do it, he would think, so if they are saying they are going to have which is all talk right now, but that they are going to have a heavy, rough winter again, so they got that on themselves and this team is probably going to set up all that to be ready.

Commissioner Ms. Freeman stated that she feels that they should teach their residents how to start an emergency kit with the candles, the burners and water that is kept maybe in a



milk crate for emergencies and have something for everything in there and even silver blankets, the foil blankets because they do keep them a lot warmer which she has experienced. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that Russell Terrace had heat and Colonia Guadalupe had heat, but Senior Home did not have heat, so every project is different and hopefully the team will be able to bring down what they need to have at that location. Mrs. Gaona asked if anybody from the Board would like to volunteer. Commissioner Ms. Freeman stated that if nobody would want to, she will. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza stated that he would love to, but has a brother to worry about and just can't leave him by himself during these emergencies. Chairman Ceballos stated that they could sign him up and said that he would help whenever he can and mentioned that he was just joking and did not lift his hand. Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina mentioned that she would like to offer, but she is already on another emergency team, but she could certainly help with the planning and mentioned that a lot of it is developing check lists and making sure they have the supplies, being proactive rather than reacting. Commissioner Ms. Guerra mentioned that it is like Commissioner Ms. Freeman said, to prepare them and maybe through the resident council checking on them if they have their kit for winter or for summer. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that it is probably something the team can do and mentioned that when they had the COVID emergency they came up with signage they did not have and Valeria made flyers and got them printed and the whole team got activated, but the problem is when they go to the same team, so his message to the team that is formed is to be diverse because they are going to get tired and they should not assume that it is going to be a one or two day emergency and said that they did two days at Senior Home and they were tired; they had not slept much more than a couple hours, so even though they may build some redundancy, they have some very good maintenance staff people that are not going to quit on them, but they need a break too if it is the same people; the residents can help and there are some stipends that probably would be permissible to use to get residents to be part of the team and they may want to look at that because he cannot think of more of a community service than the safety measure, so they have resources there to activate and he thinks that the residents will come and help, they always do.

Chairman Ceballos thanked Mrs. Gaona for setting it up and mentioned that he is glad that there is structure and hopefully on the next meeting maybe they can officialize a policy that allows her to use resources that way. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that they have started with the water and they have purchased that and some of it is at Senior Home just to make it easier that it is already onsite there.

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

Jennifer Barrientos, Director of Finance, presented to the Board and stated that she is happy to report that they have net profit in all the programs; Public Housing, COCC and also in Section 8 and Farm Labor as well. Chairman Ceballos asked Ms. Barrientos about a huge net cash flow he saw in Carlos Richter and wonders what is happening at that amp that they are making more cash there. Ms. Barrientos responded that some of it has to do with staffing and salary savings and said that they also have savings on materials. Chairman Ceballos stated that it is good because they still have a few sidewalks to build. Ms. Barrientos mentioned that they are at half of the fiscal year and they should be at 50% on



the revenues and expenses and stated that it varies on the revenue due to different sources coming in which are HUD or tenants; usually in the past they had more income coming in due to the late fees which they are going to start doing because due to COVID and HUD regulations they could not charge any late fees, but that was a source for them to generate some revenue, so they will be seeing that in the future.

For the Laredo Housing Facilities Corporation which is Russell Terrace and the Bernal Sunrise Court, she is happy to inform that they have revenue net profit in that PFC and for Laredo Housing Opportunities Corporation which is River Banks and Casa Verde as well as the Laredo Housing Development Corporation which is the O'Kane Apartments.

Ms. Barrientos mentioned that for the Section 8 Choice Voucher Program for September 2021 leasing overview, currently they have a total of 1,770 allocated and leased they have 1,643 and the total budget authority for the calendar year is \$9,940,121 and HAP expenses of \$869K and they are at 92% leasing and year to date they are at \$7,340,588.

In regards to the salary and benefits savings Ms. Barrientos mentioned that for the six months they have \$191,436. Chairman Ceballos stated that it is a lot. Ms. Barrientos mentioned that they also projected overtime, but they have not used it. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked how that was accomplished. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that people do not want to work. Ms. Barrientos mentioned that it shows where they are at and they are not always at 100% so, they are not in the negative and they have savings as well. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked about the \$4,000 and if someone is not working in Asherton. Ms. Barrientos and Mrs. Gaona mentioned that it is Worker's Compensation. Commissioner Ms. Guerra asked about Colonia Guadalupe and Russell Terrace being even or balanced out. Ms. Barrientos mentioned that she did not want to say that they are in the negative; they overspent for the six months. Commissioner Ms. Freeman asked how they would fix the overspending. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that on Ana Maria Lozano, when she was reviewing it with Ms. Barrientos, they had a gentleman that had been assisting over there, but in the payroll system, he was never transferred to Ana Maria Lozano; he was still at Colonia Guadalupe because he was originally hired at Colonia Guadalupe, but it is payroll work that needs to be done in HR because it was not done and that is why they were seeing that happening. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked that when they do the paperwork to transfer him to Ana Maria Lozano if they would get the money from Ana Maria Lozano and give credit to Colonia Guadalupe for the money they used. Ms. Barrientos confirmed. Commissioner Ms. Freeman mentioned that it is just not reflected there. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza mentioned that it will until the paperwork is done. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he hopes HUD would let them use some savings to better the operations, but if they do not use it, it will stay in reserves and mentioned that they all already know that. Commissioner Ms. Guerra asked if they may recapture it. Chairman Ceballos stated that it just stays in the property reserves which are not accessible mostly, except right now during COVID which they will talk about. Ms. Barrientos mentioned that they limit on what they allow it to be use if for. Commissioner Ms. Guerra asked if it stays there forever. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that they used it for the Russell Terrace construction and stated that it does not stay with HUD; it stays here with the property. Mrs. Gaona stated that sometimes they do, that in 2011 they took some back. Chairman Ceballos asked if they did. Mrs. Gaona



confirmed. Commissioner Ms. Guerra mentioned that in the county they want salary savings, but said that there it is different because that is federal funds. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that actually those are the scares housing authorities have. Commissioner Ms. Guerra asked if it is to recapture. Chairman Ceballos confirmed and said that they would force them to operate from reserves and fund them less and remembered they fund a certain percentage level, so they can change it and force them to operate on reserves, so even though they think is theirs, it is only theirs based on policy, but it can change.

Ms. Barrientos mentioned that in regards to Capital Fund, they have the disbursement on October 12, 2022 for the 2016 and stated that they have remaining \$38,814; they have the landscaping and surface run-off grading for October, so they are at a lower amount and almost fully expended on that grant. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza stated that they have to expend the amount. Ms. Barrientos stated that the disbursement date is the limit which is the October 12 date and mentioned that with COVID they extended all the grants they were already using or that were awarded, for an additional year; for 2017, the disbursement end date or to expend is February 15, 2022 and they should be done by the end of the year; for 2018, the disbursement end date is November 28, 2023 and mentioned that they still have \$723K to expend and presented the items they are still working to complete in the property; the 2019 disbursement end date is October 15, 2024 which is a fairly new grant and they have \$1,348,855 still pending and presented the items that are still pending and in progress; for 2020 the obligation end date is September 25, 2023 and mentioned that on the obligation end date she mentioned that they have to be 90% obligated which means that they already have contracts in place and that the work is going to get done by September 25, 2023 and the disbursement date ends September 25, 2025 and stated that they were awarded \$1,798,213 and they still have \$1,618,392; for 2021 they are doing the environmentals and mentioned that they were awarded \$1,900,414.

Ms. Barrientos asked if there were any questions. There were none. Chairman Ceballos thanked Ms. Barrientos and stated that it was a good job with the presentation and also that it is very clear and mentioned that he has some comments, but he thinks they have an agenda item and he wants to speak about the master plan for the campus and the utilization of some COVID funds for that purpose, but will leave them for that item that is also included in the agenda, so he will discuss it when they get to the item.

## **10. CONSENT AGENDA**

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

- A.** Consideration to approve of writing-off non-collectable amounts for vacated Public Housing, Russell Terrace, Meadow Elderly and Farm Labor units from April 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021, as recommended by staff.
- B.** Consideration to authorize the Executive Director to extend the contract with Nava Group, LLC for an additional year, as allowable by Contract No. 2020-0510-1, effective December



28, 2021 through December 27, 2022. This represents the second year of the maximum contract permissible of 5 years.

- C. Consideration to authorize the Executive Director to execute partner agency Memorandums of Understanding with Serving Children and Adolescents in Need (SCAN), Workforce Solutions of South Texas, Border Region Behavioral Health Center and Bethany House of Laredo as it relates to the Rapid Rehousing Continuum of Care Rapid Rehousing 2021 Grant Application.

**Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina moved to adopt consent agenda items as presented. Chairman Jose L. Ceballos seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.**

## **11. ACTION ITEM**

- A. Presentation and discussion with possible action relating to new rules for Public Meetings via telephone and videoconferencing in Texas and their application to agency meetings.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he asked Attorney Poneck about this and stated that the City Council had a long-extended conversation of it and said that he also went to another public meeting at the Regional Mobility Authority where they also had a presentation on what the changes are, so he just wanted to have the Board and the staff go through that and asked Mr. Poneck to present this item.

Mr. Poneck mentioned that he will present four slides to the Board even though he was asked to provide two slides and mentioned that on the first slide he mentioned that the Open Meeting Act as they know they are a governmental body and are required by the Open Meeting Act to post the agenda and meet in person; generally that is the way it has always worked and then, of course they had COVID come along which was a very unusual situation and the Governor exercised emergency authority in a number of ways with regards to the requirements to meet in person and during the period of COVID he lifted or waived the requirements to meet in person and allowed for a quick use of technology like zoom and so forth to have remote meetings and have them kind of all of them get on the same bus to learn together how to use the technology to have the meetings and as they know, it was sometimes easy and sometimes hard, but for whatever reason, it does not seem consistent with the fact that the Governor is still able to exercise emergency authority; effective September 1, the Governor ceased allowing waivers of the in person requirement and that will basically return to what the Open Meetings Act used to be right before COVID, so as of September 1, all the requirements they were used to adhering to prior COVID are back in place with no waivers.

In regards to the next slide, Mr. Poneck mentioned that there are two ways that the Open Meetings Act used to and still does allow for remote meetings, but they



are not as friendly as the period they were just in with COVID; the one way is telephone conferencing and it allows telephone conferencing, but for limited purposes as they can see on the slide, if they meet the requirements: 1. an emergency of public necessity exists within the meeting of the statute and would tell that right now being in COVID does not qualify as that exception; it could, it is arguably that it does, but he does not believe that is what the Governor has intended and completely thinks that it will be taking risks if they did that, so assuming that there is an emergency and he would say that the current interpretation would be like an unusual calamity that happens in the community or some building that burned down and they need to act rapidly; they can quickly, if they could not meet in person, they could have a telephone conversation for that, so if there is an emergency upon necessity and 2. the convenience at one location of a quorum is difficult or impossible, so that is a pretty unusual situation that will occur or 3. that the meeting is held by an Advisory Board, but they are not an Advisory Board; they make policy, they decide and approve contracts; they do all the kinds of things a full staff governmental board can do, so they are not an Advisory Board, a board that advises the Board of Regents of a UT system or something like that, so long story short, telephone conferencing meetings are not going to be an option for their regular meetings or special meetings; it is only in a rare circumstance that there is an emergency at any of the other departments there.

The next two slides Mr. Poneck mentioned that they are about video conferencing which is sort of what he is doing and said that he can do it because he is not a board member and he is only a service provider, so he can communicate remotely, but they as Board members have to meet certain requirements, so video conferencing is permitted, but unlike telephone conferencing, video conferencing is not limited to emergency circumstances; it authorizes the Board member or employee to participate remotely to a video conference calling; there is live video and audio fee and a remote participant is broadcast live at the meeting if he complies with other provisions of the section, so the zoom type thing like he is doing would seem to qualify with that and he believes that everybody is working with that assumption and he will explain that in a little bit and mentioned that for all governmental bodies like Housing Authority video conference meetings are permitted only if a full quorum of governmental bodies is physically present at one location and in that instance, a notice must specify that location as well as the intended hour for presence; the agenda ideally would have language to the public at 2000 San Francisco or wherever the address; they are announcing the public that it is where a quorum of your Board is physically going to be present, so there is no full Board remote meeting under video conferencing; it will only apply to a number that is less than a quorum that is not physically present, so they first have to have a physical presence of the Board quorum so this Board is three out of five; the location where the presiding member is physically present must be open to the public during the course of the meeting, so the other requirement is that not only do they need to have a quorum there, but one of their quorum has to be the presiding member; there could be a scenario where Mr. Ceballos cannot attend



the meeting in person and would say to Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza if he can run the meeting and Chairman Ceballos will still be calling in, but will not be the presiding officer, so he thinks that it will probably pass the snow test if they had to use that, but the expectation is that they are going to have the quorum, that the presiding officer at the meeting is physically present; the meeting location with the quorum and presiding member present as well as the virtual location which a member participates must have two way audio and video communication with each other location during the meeting, so again, what they are doing now should qualify to meet that requirement and mentioned that they can see and hear him and he can see and hear all of them; if there was another person doing the same thing, same requirement, they would all have to be able to see and hear each other and mentioned that while speaking, each participant space must be clearly visible and the voice audible to each other participant and the members of the public in attendance at the location with the quorum of members present as the location right now and any other location of the meeting that is open to the public, so practically speaking, they are really talking mostly about the public at their location being able to see them, not only all of them, but also anybody that is remote, but the face must be clearly visible at all times and would tell them that during the COVID period there will be times, he is sure has seen the Board members turn off their camera because they have to go and do something at the other part of the room and will turn the camera back on when he is not there; if they do that under this environment, they are not considered as being present for that portion if they do that, so they have to be always on, at least visually and then if they are talking, also orally.

In regards to the last slide, Mr. Poneck mentioned that each portion of the meeting must be visible enough to the public at the meeting location with the formal presiding officer present and at anytime that the meeting is no longer visible and audible to the public, the meeting must be recessed until the problem is resolved and the meeting must be adjourned if the problem is not resolved within six hours, so again, they are very strict with requirements with regards to maintaining visible and audible images; the department of information resources is required to specify minimum standards for audio and vision signals required at a video conference meeting and the quality of the signals at each location of the meeting must receive those standards. Mr. Poneck mentioned that this law has been around for a while and said that they probably know of an experience and asked how many times they attended a meeting or watched a Board meeting of City Council or any kind of meeting like that where there was a member that was using video conferencing to be present or considered present and mentioned that in his experience, it was virtually non-existent; it was extremely rare and stated that part of the reason was because it was a logistical issue of getting the equipment to be set up in such a way that the technical requirements would be met, so this video conferencing option was of very little use and fast forwarding to where they are now with the zoom technology improvements and all the other kinds of telecommunication improvements, he thinks that the accepted standard now is that every one of these different kinds of communication vehicles needs to be



standard so they do not have the technical issue they used to have when this law was originally passed, but frankly speaking, Boards rarely used the existing video conferencing requirements for that reason and said that he was referring to: generally speaking, a remote participation shall be counted as present for all purposes, however, if the audio or video communication is lost or any portion of the meeting, the remote participant is considered absent during that time, so they have to stay on visually and audible; should this occur, the governmental body may continue the meeting only as follows: 1. If the meeting is being held by a statewide body or one that extends to three or more counties and must continue to be a quorum participating in the meeting, so he left that in there because he knows they are not a state, but he frankly did not recall where their jurisdiction extended to and he assumed that it extends honestly to the city limits and then to the ETJ. Chairman Ceballos mentioned it is three counties. Mr. Poneck mentioned that it does extend, so they would qualify and they can continue the meeting if let's say he is a board member and is remotely calling in and the signal drops off, the rest of them can continue the meeting even if he cannot participate, he would be absent and 2. If the meeting is held by another governmental body and the quorum must be present at the meeting location, so those are the requirements in those scenarios and lastly, the governmental body must at least make an audio recording of the meeting and the recording available to the public, so they have to be recording the meetings and have them available to the members of the public as per a copy of the video. Mr. Poneck mentioned that the law also permits the governmental body to allow a member of the public to testify at a meeting from a remote location by videoconference call, so it is possible to have another person to call in. Mr. Poneck stated that wants to say something about employees, that sometimes the laws are drafter in a way that leave a question unknowingly unanswered, so this process that he just described and as they heard, is all about board members and said that there is language in there that kind of suggests that the requirement of being present really even extends to the employees and knows it has been a big statement about that one way or the other and he thinks that it is probably reasonable to expect that this really is meant just for the board members, so if they have a situation where an employee maybe has to call in for some reason, he believes that they have to probably rationalize that and would say that there is language there that even employees do not get the benefit of it and mentioned that he is not an employee, so he can do it; service providers who are not employees clearly can do what he is doing today and stated that two board members out of the five of them could call in just like they did by zoom, but to just keep in mind all the requirements they went through for the whole meeting.

Chairman Ceballos thanked Mr. Poneck and asked if there were any questions or comments.

Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina mentioned to Mr. Poneck that just to be clear because she has gone through it over and over and mentioned that if three of them would be present as a quorum, and she and Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza would be on zoom, the moment Commissioner Ms. Guerra would leave, the meeting ends



because there is no longer a quorum physically present which is the important thing and also in regards to zoom, they are clear that they would be voting in favor or not, the moment they turn off the camera, at that moment they are not present anymore. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that it was the most striking thing for him because he has seen public meetings that do not have the folk's face and asked if this is law or if it is executive order. Mr. Poneck stated that this is law; it is the existing Open Meetings Act that has been on the books for years. Commissioner Ms. Guerra asked if everything went back September 1. Mr. Poneck stated that everything went back to what it was before COVID effective September 1, so there are no special waivers or exceptions anymore like they did during COVID. Chairman Ceballos asked about his comment about staff or employees, if Mrs. Gaona would say that she is going to be in Harlingen and will be calling in, if that is a gray area leaning towards what is not permissible based on what Mr. Poneck was saying. Mr. Poneck would say not to have that expectation of having all the staff remote and stated that he will look at it more clearly if they would like, but he does not like the fact that the language suggests that, but as they know and as he has described, it is all about quorums and what is expected of Board members, so to him it is a sloppy treatment of that issue as it seems to suggest that even employees cannot be remote.

Commissioner Ms. Freeman mentioned that she had several hypothetical questions and asked if they had a satellite office in Zapata County and if the meeting was also being held at that conference room and there were tied in, she asked how it would work out, if it would be a legal meeting even though the quorum is in a different city. Mr. Poneck responded that they have to have only one quorum location, so wherever the quorum is going to be, that is the home base for the meeting and everybody else can be remote; the other two board members can be remote from whatever location, but they have to have a quorum in one location no matter what location they choose. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked if an employee from Zapata County that needs to be in the meeting does not have to be here physically present, but they can be through video in Zapata, someone from Zapata to join the meeting, can they be there in Zapata, do they have to travel to Laredo or can they be through video conferencing to attend the meeting. Mr. Poneck mentioned that he believes they can probably videoconference, but his concern is the way the language the statute reads, unfortunately, it does include that employees can just be virtual just like the Board members under limited circumstances and he thinks it is reasonable to expect that they can be, but he cautions that they go head on into that interpretation because of the language which he thinks is unfortunately not clear in the statute, so he does not know what their practice or experience has been so far, if they had employees attending in person primarily or what they have been doing. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that actually during COVID most of the employees were on zoom from their offices. Mr. Poneck asked if as of September 1. Chairman Ceballos stated that as of September 1, it actually has been both because they try to keep the Board room not as congested and he asked Mrs. Gaona to just keep it light which may have been before September 1, but he thinks that the practice is still in place.



Mr. Poneck stated that if they want to have the practice of having people attend in person lightly as needed, that is fine; it is never going to be an issue, the issue is more if they have a lot of people videoconferencing and asked if they have a lot of the employees' videoconferencing since September 1 and also asked if this was the first personal meeting. Chairman Ceballos stated that it is not and that the directors have been here, but said that he can see if they have a resurgence of the pandemic and it will still be in place, they will probably encourage them not to come into the room for everybody's safety. Mr. Poneck stated that he thinks if they find themselves going into a scenario that they need people to be somehow present, but they do not want them to be physically present, he suggested to cross that bridge at that time, but if what they have been doing is bringing the essential people to the meeting and they attend and do their stuff and then they dismiss them or whatever, Mr. Poneck stated that they are going to be fine to do that for sure.

Commissioner Ms. Guerra asked if she were to be out of town in the Texas hill country, what would be the standard, if she would be on video and audio, but if it poor quality, if she should not be on. Mr. Poneck stated that right now he is using his phone for this zoom and believes that he is in compliance with the requirements of zoom; it meets the technical requirements of the state and he is just using a small device to communicate and they can hear him and see him, so as long as they are doing that, it should not be a problem, but if they are saying that they can only use an old fashion telephone to call in, they could not do that; it has to be visual and audible. Commissioner Ms. Guerra asked if it is poor quality because she is in the hill country. Chairman Ceballos stated that the minute they do not see her, she is out. Chairman Ceballos stated that what he has seen people do is that they turn their video off so they can come in better, but in that case in public meetings they cannot do that. Mr. Poneck stated that as a Texan, he is frustrated with the State for not having updated that section of the law; there were two or three bills he would say that were kind of pushed not very strongly at the state level and mentioned that Texas used to be a place that as a proud Texan he would say that would be fairly cutting edge in a lot of things that it would do like this kind of stuff and said that this was to him an easy opportunity to go to the next level of sophistication for the Board, to for example, given the option to the Board to do a zoom meeting like they all learned to do on those occasions they think it may work and mentioned that there was a concern that the public sometimes gets kept out of it and said that he thinks that they have seen no complaints from the public, that they are not been told things or that they have been kept in the dark, but sadly in reality, they just did not really take it up as they should have, so what they are stuck with in his view is a little bit antiquated law that just still happens to be on the books, so if they wish to use it, it is there, but it is not as sensible as the old law used to be or as the waiver rules were for this COVID period.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that they have other items on the agenda, but he knows that one thing that has come up for him with the city government which is going to impact them eventually is when somebody wants to make a comment on



line and they cannot anymore, they have to show up in person and for him, he would prefer to go online, submit his comment and not be waiting in a room full of people for his turn and he thinks that the City went back to allowing online comments, but for a while they were not allowing online comments anymore and said that here they have not addressed that which will be another day, but if someone shows up or says that they want to make a comment, they would have to take it on zoom; they do not provide an online option and mentioned that it does not address that. Mr. Poneck said that it was a good question or issue and for them to know that it does not prevent them from doing that so, certainly if they want to add that as an option going forward, he thinks there is nothing to stand in the way of that.

Chairman Ceballos thanked Mr. Poneck and stated that it was very helpful.

- B.** Discussion and possible action to end the feasibility and negotiation of the real estate property located at 920 Salinas Ave. Laredo, Texas.

Chairman Ceballos stated that they have not really made any progress on this item and mentioned that he would like to make a motion to go ahead and end this period and authorize their attorney to settle out with the seller and said that this is the old St. Anthony that some of them visited. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that there were two things: 1. they have not had ready access to the property since they last saw it and does not know if there is still the motivation from the seller where it was before and 2. they are probably not in a place where they can make this property work based on the extent of the investment required.

Commissioner Ms. Freeman stated that she has a comment with that patio bar truck restaurant they are having next door that would probably be an issue with residents there if the next-door neighbor is able to continue with that type of business there. Chairman Ceballos stated that it is true although there are some sound insinuation designs and materials that would probably make it ok to live next door to a beer garden and it costs money to do that so, that would be adding more cost to do that and it is not really for them to deal with, but there has been a push to get this property demolished and it is something the seller will have to deal with because it had gone to the historical landmark board at the City for demolishing which is very sad and it is one of several reasons why they were entertaining it; in the first place, it is to try to preserve that property which is a 1918 or 1920 property and it is just very expensive to restore. Commissioner Ms. Freeman mentioned that it does have revolutionary history attached to it. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that Commissioner Ms. Freeman probably knows more than he does and stated that they have an earnest money contract that they have an extension for, but they have not really heard back many details from the seller which is where they are at and unless the Board wants them to continue on the feasibility. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza who knows the property and has walked the property with Chairman Ceballos seconded the motion. Chairman Ceballos stated that if something changes and there would be a different motivation from



the seller, Mr. De Anda is going to talk to the seller, they will bring it back, but for now this is where they are.

**Chairman Ceballos moved to authorize the Attorney to settle out with the seller regarding the property at 920 Salinas.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

**C. Discussion and possible action to approve the employee parking designation policy.**

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that they are working on the new parking lot and that probably in between this and next meeting they hope that the parking lot will be ready for use and maybe close to the next meeting, but in any case, they want to adopt a policy that allows the Executive Director and team to actually have a process for designating parking spaces and also his personal preference is that there will not be an option of parking elsewhere in the development and mentioned that he jokes about it, but it has happened to him that his truck has been hit because staff parks on the side and this particular roadway can only carry two; there are only three lanes, one is a parking lane and the other two are thoroughfares and the minute somebody parks on the other side, they are literally going head on and it has happened to him twice, so he takes this item very seriously and it is important too for the tenants for them not to park in the spaces that they need, so for implementation it is important that they are making the expense of providing staff parking and bicycle parking if they want it, at no cost and they should use it based on the assignment.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza mentioned about the selection policy and asked how they are going to make that decision. Chairman Ceballos stated that it is the write up on the screen and in the packet and mentioned that it is broad enough to say what they just said based on some assignment and mentioned that Mrs. Gaona was trying to work through the language that if they do not have enough handicapped spaces, she will do the best she can to provide that and in the rewrite up, Chairman Ceballos kind of tried to do that and what he offered in the write up is that they are only going to have enough as they have and wondered whether the attorneys think it is sufficient.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked how they will know where they should park. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that parking spaces will be assigned and asked to go to the masterplan. Commissioner Ms. Guerra asked if there are enough parking spaces for all the employees. Chairman Ceballos responded that there are more than enough parking spaces for the employees, but there is not a lot more for guests which is something they are going to talk about and mentioned that it is a pretty large parking lot and said to keep in mind that they had 30 spaces before for employees and that staff was having to park everywhere and maybe they had more because they have some on the sides and mentioned that on the left side of



that dotted red line or broken line is visitor parking and everything else is staff parking and it may look a little different at the end of it based on where folks go and mentioned that the Board will be assigned parking spaces, so that when they come there will be actually a parking space for them to park and mentioned that it is not completely defined where it will go.

Commissioner Ms. Freeman asked if there will not be a division. Chairman Ceballos stated that there will be and that there will be probably some planters, so that employees side will have an electronic entry gate and the visitors public parking will just have access and mentioned that there will be some planters so that the public cannot get across to the employee parking and showed them the area that is supposed to be temporary divisions and mentioned that they cannot drive through there and if they needed more customer parking or client parking, they would stretch over, so when somebody gets hired, their space will be based on HR as opposed to parking where they would be obstructing traffic.

Commissioner Ms. Guerra mentioned that she thought the initiative was going to be by lottery. Mrs. Gaona confirmed. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that it is still kind of fluid because when Mrs. Gaona did the roster, there really is not much parking and asked how many spaces were for public and mentioned that it is 20 some spaces, not even 30 and right now like when they had the inner summit events, they filled that room and they had 12 or maybe more and stated that they have community meetings where they are going to need parking and will have to work through it, but the staff will have designated parking.

Commissioner Ms. Freeman stated that she was under the impression that it was going to be totally segregated like with a wrought iron fence or something where the employee would be offered security once they entered the parking lot because they have seen recently many domestic cases ending in death and actually they need to offer the employees security once they come in and get out of their cars so that they can be protected.

Chairman Ceballos stated that the whole campus is an open campus and that the idea is that they share with the residents as opposed to doing what they had been doing which is building barriers and it is opening it up and mentioned that when they would be going into the parking lot to spot 64, they will go to 72 and will not be able to pass so, that will need an adjustment because the car cannot turn and they will lose one parking spot which is an oversight because they need to be able to get out, but in any case he mentioned that there is no way for cars to cut across; if an employee wanted to leave through San Francisco, they have to exit through San Jorge which is the way it has been designed.

Commissioner Ms. Freeman stated that she now understands and that she reading the picture wrong in regards to the lines for planters. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he calls them planters, but that they can be traffic barriers, things that they can just move; if they would need two more spaces, they move it over



which is something they need to think about and maybe they do not issue out parking spaces 4, 5, 6 or 7 so they can grow that way or spaces 4, 5, 34 and 35 and leave those as kind of empty to grow out and said that he is sure that there will be a final plan which they can bring back to the board and stated that his comment is that he wanted to show them the rest of the master plan and talk to them about the parking area across from the police station which he mentioned that half of it is taken up by the police department whose office is across the street and when the Board comes in, when there are meetings Chairman Ceballos gets a space, but some people have to drive around to get a space and stated that they may have the area in the back as additional parking because if they have that conferencing meeting center, they will not fit.

Commissioner Ms. Freeman asked what the employee belonging center means. Chairman Ceballos responded that an employee belonging center is a concept that they had to have a place for employees to work outside of their cubicle or their office; it is kind of a millennium way of belonging; it is a way to preserve the employees that perhaps are not as structured as some of them that come from the generation of xers and prior that worked in an office and that in order to keep the employees, they have to keep up with the times and stated that it has not been laid out yet, but when they first started crafting it, that is what they came up with and mentioned that if they would envision that room, it would be a place where they could go work and it would be more of a lounge setting. Commissioner Ms. Freeman mentioned that they would network with each other. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that if they wanted to have partner meetings, they will do it in a way that instead of sitting at a conference table, they would come in and sit on those chairs like from the conference, from the summit and similar to maybe what the College has in its library where they have those pockets of meeting areas that are nontraditional, so Chairman Ceballos stated that it has not been conceived in terms of its layout and design.

Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina asked if there could be more parking. Chairman Ceballos stated that the area she was referring is the phase 2 plaza and mentioned that there could be parking there and that they are going to do some very basic walkways until they actually get a full sense of how all of that is going to roll out and also pointed to the maintenance shop that is going to be demolished maybe as early as next week, so they will get the sense of space there and also obviously another space he referred to in the area which he thinks is probably better and of quicker access.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that when they look for meeting rooms, it is either at the College, La Posada and the Inner City, so when they are having partnership meetings, they are having them here and they make it work, but it is really not conducive to safe distancing and it is not conducive to openness and said that they need to get to a point where they actually have a decent size meeting room for what they do and for the leadership that they want to play in the community and mentioned that for summit meetings, for the last few meetings they could not find



availability; the Posada did not have availability and that was all they had and he thinks that they need to get to a point where they are activating as soon as they get the staff back into their two story building, some part of that conference meeting space and if it means a large area or they could have larger meetings, he thinks that they need to do that and stated that they are going to run out of time to utilize their property reserves with this COVID waiver, but there is probably room and said that it is the item that is on the agenda.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that what they did with COVID is that they entered a segmentation strategy as a Board and decided to parcel out the staff; not have more than six people generally in one space; they did the best they could and separated people and then they started using COVID money to start the retrofits and mentioned that if they have another pandemic, they are going to try to do the same thing; they improved some quality air circulation, so the segmentation strategy has led to the campus development aside from just them needing to do it; they segmented the staff, but they still have one segment that they are now addressing which is their meeting space and it is very important because that is probably the riskier space where they have people coming from other networks that are coming to visit them, so there is a parking and then there is a meeting space concern and stated that yes, in any case, they need to look at additional parking as opposed to creating more green areas and mentioned that plaza no. 2 can be a really nice green area and maybe they ought to do an optional parking there if they needed to and do an option behind what they are calling the belonging center.

Chairman Ceballos stated that they do not have a final placement for the BiblioTech at this site; they need to decide that and showed them the place it could be at or upstairs or it could be both, so they need to work through that.

Chairman Ceballos asked Mrs. Gaona if she had anything to add that he did not cover. Mrs. Gaona responded that they just need to finalize the funding and also just to look at how they would do the maintenance shop and if they need any of those parking stalls that are there. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that those are existing stalls on the right and they actually go all the way to where they see the trees, but since they are going to have like a meeting room, he asked the architect to put some trees there as opposed to street curve parking and stated that in the initial phase of this campus buildout, they will be basically defining the walkways and the curve set up to the streets which means that those parking spots which the police department requested, at least six continuous parking spots on the street, they currently show them gone; if they look next to the belonging center, they are gone, so they need to put those back, at least six. Chairman Ceballos stated that he was really taken aback; he thought they had a lot more parking spaces and asked how many were for public visitors. Mrs. Gaona responded that there are 20 and three that are handicapped. Chairman Ceballos stated that it is not really a lot and asked if they had a Section 8 event, if they would fill them.



Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina stated that personally she loves the green, but it creates a lot of problems with maintenance and operation and eventually will destroy the buildings if they get a bad storm, so if they really need parking, she would eliminate that part and add more parking and that they need to look at the functional rather than the esthetic. Chairman Ceballos stated that he is in complete agreement and mentioned that he also thinks that it is very heavy on walkway space and that it is very expensive and does not think that the staff spends a lot of time, does not know about the millenniums, walking around and stated that they will make a blend and that Mrs. Gaona needs to be part of that design and it needs to come back to her for approval. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that there is another item and said that they can deal with the policy first and then continue this conversation on the next item.

Chairman Ceballos asked if there is any input on the write up for the parking policy. Commissioner Ms. Guerra asked if they could see it. Chairman Ceballos confirmed and mentioned that the last sentence there is something he added and stated that he wants to see a dedicated visitor veteran parking spot and also each employee veteran to have their own dedicated spot on the front somewhere towards the front of the parking closer to the building, just a gesture, and then an employee of the quarter and if they all want to make changes, they are all welcome to do that on the policy and stated that it is something that came from him which he thought was appropriate and mentioned that at the current time they only have two veterans. They asked if anybody else does that. Commissioner Ms. Freeman mentioned that Dr. Ike's is the only one. Commissioner Ms. Guerra mentioned that the city does too at the little library where the Inner-City pool is at has designated veterans parking spaces. Chairman Ceballos stated that it is the least they can do for somebody that served the country, to give them a dedicated veteran space and mentioned that it is not in the plan, but they will bring it back and stated that the other thing that is not in the plan is a flag.

Commissioner Ms. Guerra asked if they knew who the veterans are and from which war the two veteran employees are. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that they are in maintenance and asked if anybody knew from which war and said that they are young people; therefore, it is probably Iraq.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked how many handicapped parking spaces they are going to have. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that they have three in the visitor's area and two in the employee area. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked if the handicapped parking space for the visitor or the employee should be close to the building. Chairman Ceballos stated that they are. Commissioner Ms. Guerra asked how they would be designated. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that it would be by space count and that they could always do more. Commissioner Ms. Guerra said that she would think so, because it is an elderly population and they serve handicapped elderly and maybe they can do more. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that there is a way of designing it so that they can keep adding to it as the need and also asked about the van accessible parking and to go to the master plan. Chairman Ceballos



stated that the van accessible spaces are the ones that are a little trickier because they require one full car space, but they could keep adding and mentioned that the count would do it and stated that Edward Ochoa is doing the layout design and he is basically putting one van accessible on each of the sides and they can add if they want to add more.

Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina moved to approve the employee parking designation policy with the contingency of trying to maximize the parking spaces in the plan. Chairman Ceballos stated that he will second that motion and mentioned that they will not finalize the plan until they all are good with the full parking plan and it will come back, but at least this will be kind of finalized, but the rest of it will come back including the walkway set up.

Chairman Ceballos asked if there was any additional discussion. Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina stated that not with the contingency, but with the intent to maximize the parking. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that her comments as well as his comments are noted for Mrs. Gaona, that esthetic is important, but it is not good to have a minimum capacity of 100 if they cannot park enough of that, so he mentioned that Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina's comments are noted and said that they had been thinking about how to do it, so they will work through it.

**Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina moved to approve the employee parking designation policy as discussed above.**

**Chairman Ceballos seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- D. Discussion and possible action to authorize Executive Director to renew the lease agreements with Webb County for the Springfield Acres Head Start Center located at the Ana Maria Lozano Development and Magic Corner located at the South Laredo Development as a month-to-month.

Mrs. Gaona mentioned that they had discussions with Ms. Oliveros with the Webb County Head Start who informed them that the two locations are not being utilized as Head Start; they are not utilizing the Magic Corner in South Laredo for anything at all and Springfield Acres they want to continue using it for one staff person to report there. Chairman Ceballos stated that he had a conversation with Ms. Oliveros who basically explained that she is combining staffing locations and that also there has been some changes on how they implement the Head Start; they are going out to the school systems which is great and he thinks it is probably something she has been working on for a while, so they talked about relocating the trailer at Lozano and agreed that as she works through this reintegration, they will work with her and she stated that she had it appraised and mentioned that there are some regulatory things that she needs to go through, so they will work with her to get it out of the site. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that the up side of it is that they will not have the childcare traffic at the BiblioTech which is good.



Chairman Ceballos moved to authorize the Executive Director to enter into a month-to-month agreement with Head Start.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion.

Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any questions, discussion or comments. Commissioner Ms. Freeman asked if they would be putting a deadline or timeline on it. Chairman Ceballos stated that he would prefer not to and mentioned that Ms. Oliveros had said it would not be more than 6 to 8 months and that it may be sooner and stated that they are making a little bit of money off of the lease and said that it is on the packet and that it really does not hurt them to wait and asked Mrs. Gaona how much they are making. Mrs. Gaona responded that it is \$650 monthly at Springfield and \$550 monthly at Magic Corner. Chairman Ceballos stated that maybe they would have wanted to get the trailer out before BiblioTech, but it is fine and really all she is wanting is for her funding source to release her and give her the opportunity to dispose of it, sell it or transfer it to a non-profit.

Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any additional comments. There were no comments.

**Chairman Ceballos moved to authorize the Executive Director to enter into a month-to-month agreement with Head Start as discussed above.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

- E. Discussion and possible action to authorize the Executive Director to commit \$4,500 as a cash commitment for the Continuum of Care Rapid Rehousing 2020 Grant Renewal and for the 2021 Grant Application.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that Mrs. Gaona wants for it to be on the record that the renewal for 2020 occurred, but it occurred in posterity and it has already happened and he knows that she was concerned for that and he does not think she needs to be concerned and that the Board expected that renewal to occur, so he just informs the Board that the renewal has occurred and that the outlay here depends on how many folks get assisted with some sort of security deposit and stated that this funding is coming from one of the non-profits and mentioned that they typically do not do a cash commitment from non-profits unless they have to, so that this is one of those programs.

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

**Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza moved to approve item 11E.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**



- F. Discussion and possible action to approve the Colonia Guadalupe Campus Service Segmentation Master Plan and authorize the use of property operating reserve funding, as permitted under PIH Notice 2020-24, for purposes of preparing, preventing and responding to COVID-19 and the potential of future events by segmenting staffs', tenant's and visitors' areas of congregation and locations into various buildings and outdoor spaces throughout the campus. The scope of work includes electrical service upgrade, HVAC upgrade, outdoor sidewalk/walkways, shade canopies, parking improvements, lighting, landscaping and irrigation, and any related demolishing required.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that this is a very broad item and that he personally wrote it and stated that Mrs. Gaona sent him the notice and reminded him that the COVID waiver is going to expire in December and that as they are thinking about segmenting and doing the parking lot, there is an opportunity to utilize some of the reserves to meet the segmentation interest which he spoke about earlier, so Chairman Ceballos suggested that they include anything that may come up as they build the walkway; they need to demolish it and may need some lighting along the way and they also need some electrical upgrades to address on the campus and mentioned that they do not have a proposed budget for it, but Mrs. Gaona can come back with that soon, but at least it will give her some opportunity to dedicate some funds for that purpose and said that this waiver goes through the end of this year and if they get additional time; then, there will probably be more that they will probably be able to use from property reserves.

Chairman Ceballos asked Mrs. Gaona if she had any more comments. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that the reason she wanted to bring it up to the Board is that in case they are presenting the financials and maybe some issues may have come up in regards to the demolition and if she does not have a proposed budget for it, she would go directly to their cash reserves that they would have, any excess they may have or any savings and then come back to the Board for a budget amendment on the use of that.

Chairman Ceballos stated that the construction has obviously been tough and has not moved as fast as they would have wanted it to, but he thinks that with this other building being demolished, they should be able to at least build walkways leading to this building and to the other two and mentioned that they probably will not get to the parking area on the other side, but they will try and stated that if HUD extends that notice; then, they will have more time.

Chairman Ceballos asked if anybody had any questions on this item and mentioned that they will probably need to share the next revision of the master plan with them pretty quickly so they will all be advised over what could get built and they could provide feedback for Mrs. Gaona if she needs it. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that they have operating reserves, ongoing cash which is not reserves, so Mrs. Gaona should be ok for what she needs to get done. Mrs. Gaona confirmed and mentioned that she just wanted to make sure that the Board understands that



if she uses it now, she may need to come back with a budget revision because they will see that on the financials. Chairman Ceballos stated that instead of showing them on the red, she will need an action item. Mrs. Gaona confirmed. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he hopes she would not get to the red. Mrs. Gaona stated that she will not, but that it will show on the particular line item and said that like Mrs. Barrientos mentioned that they should be at 50% this month and she might be at 75% instead of the 50% because she has not come to the Board with the final budget amendment that she will come let say in January.

Chairman Ceballos moved that they proceed in this fashion and mentioned that besides segmenting and improving the buildings, he does not know what else they can do to utilize this opportunity with the COVID funds and the COVID notice, but they will do the best they can.

**Chairman Ceballos moved to approve item 11F as stated above.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he knows that there are still some monies coming down and there is a likelihood that it would get extended and if it does, they need to be prepared with the plan to utilize it so that they do not lose that opportunity.

- G. Discussion and possible action related to possible changes to the organizational structure and filling of management positions. This item may be discussed in Executive Session, pursuant to Section 551.071 (consultation with attorneys) and 551.074 (personnel matters).

Mrs. Gaona mentioned that she would like to get authorization from the Board to Commissioner to promote Kayla Moreno from Assistant Property Manager to Public Housing Manager. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that it is one of the Public Housing sites. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that she will be going to AMP 3 - Ana Maria Lozano and Carlos Richter properties and added that she has been with the Housing Authority since March of 2021 and mentioned that she is graduating this December. Chairman Ceballos asked if it was for an Associates or Bachelor's degree. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that it is a Bachelor's and that she would like to continue and pursue her Masters, but has mentioned that it will not affect her work schedule. Chairman Ceballos asked when the tuition plans are due. Mrs. Gaona responded that it is December for April. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that the Board will see those in December. Chairman Ceballos asked if they have the option to go into executive session; if it is necessary for a property manager and asked if they are good. They confirmed.

**Chairman Ceballos moved to approve the recommendation.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**



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

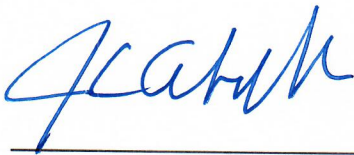
The Board of Commissioners for the Housing Authority of the City of Laredo reserve the right to adjourn into Executive Session at any time during the course of this meeting to discuss any of the matters listed on the posted agenda, above, as authorized by the Texas Government Code, including Sections 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).

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

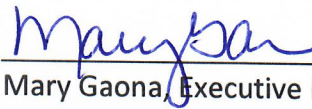
**14. ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Jose L. Ceballos moved to adjourn the meeting.  
Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion.  
Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 1:49 p.m.



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Jose L. Ceballos, Chairman



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Mary Gaona, Executive Director