

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

Zoom Video Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88304084156>

Call in Number: 1-346-248-7799

Webinar ID: 883 0408 4156

LHA Board Room

2000 San Francisco Ave.

Laredo, Texas 78040

Friday, November 19, 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-11**

**Minutes**

**November 19, 2021**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Jose L. Ceballos called the meeting to order at 12:06 p.m.

**2. INVOCATION PRAYER**

Commissioner Ms. Freeman led them in prayer: “Heavenly Father today we thank you for all the blessings you have bestowed on us; we pray for our community, our state, our country and our planet that we may be able to heal from all illness, natural and manmade; we pray for Kenosha and Georgia, that you may blanket them with peace in their hearts; we pray that you protect all the first responders as they endanger their lives trying to save their patients; we pray for our Canadian neighbors in the path of the floods; we pray for those asking for asylum in our borders and in Belarus; we pray for peace, that there may be a stop to the launch of space test and that Russia’s President acknowledge the land space treaty signed by his predecessor and our President years ago; we pray for those that continue to be affected by COVID and their families; we pray that you protect all travelers throughout this holiday season and lastly, we pray that you bless everyone at this meeting with peace, health and love throughout this holiday season, in Jesus name we pray, Amen.”

Chairman Ceballos thanked Commissioner Ms. Freeman for the prayer and stated that it was very nice.

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

Chairman Ceballos thanked everyone present at the meeting and stated that the meeting has very few items on the agenda, so they will spend as much time as they think they need on each and said that on the agenda they have the master planning of the campus, so they will talk about that at length if they need to and discuss any opportunities, they have to expedite that work to move it ahead.

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

Chairman Ceballos asked Mrs. Gaona to proceed with roll call and mentioned, for the record, that Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza is joining the meeting at this time and that he knows he is on his way to take care of something, so if he needs to leave, for him to feel free to do so and not to be concerned for the meeting because they do have a quorum as required and added that Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina will not be able to join them due to a personal commitment. Mrs. Gaona stated that they have a quorum.

**Commissioners Present**

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

**Commissioners Absent**

Dr. Marisela Rodríguez Tijerina

**Staff Present**

Mary Gaona, Executive Director  
Christy Ramos, Administrative Assistant  
Robert Peña, Director of IT  
Jennifer Barrientos, Director of Finance  
Jessica Martinez, Interim Director of Housing Management  
Valeria Cabello, Procurement Officer  
Alejandro Jimenez, Assistant Director of IT  
Bulmaro Cruz, Director of Construction Projects  
Ricardo De Anda, Attorney  
Doug Poneck, Attorney

**Others Present**

Rosie Ríos, Central Resident Council President

**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**

Chairman Ceballos stated that Attorney Ricardo De Anda is present.

Ms. Rosie Rios, Central Resident Council President, presented to the Board and stated that it is a blessing to be able to start the projects again and that they have the report on the colonias ready to present it. Chairman Ceballos thanked Ms. Rios for attending the meeting and stated that he knows that the city started opening the recreation centers and asked Mrs. Gaona for the agency plans. Mrs. Gaona stated that she wanted to discuss with the Board to possibly wait to see what actually happens once they open and then look at their policy to see what they can do to reopen.

Chairman Ceballos asked Mr. De Anda if he had any advice they should be thinking about and mentioned that it is not an action item to reopen. Mr. De Anda mentioned that other than meeting with Dr. Lopez, he does not have any specific advice. Chairman Ceballos asked Mrs. Gaona to assemble a committee meeting for next week which is a short week. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he does not feel an urgency to open the centers, but feels that it is time they start considering it and prepare because there will be the need to do it; right now, the kids are in school, but will be on vacations so, they need to start talking about it.

Chairman Ceballos thanked Mrs. Rios for attending the meeting and for the time she has been coordinating the Central Resident Council.

## **8. PUBLIC HEARING: To receive public comments and input, and close the public hearing period.**

Presentation and public comments on the proposed Agency Annual Plan and Public Housing Five-Year Action Plan for fiscal years 2022-2026, under the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act/Housing reform Act of 1998.

Mrs. Gaona presented the current projects they have ongoing that have been approved for 2018 through 2021 which are up on the screen and were also included in the packets and stated that the ones in red are items they have started and the rest, they still have not begun those projects and she also presented the 2022 – 2025 items which were there from last year and they just included the 2026. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that for 2026 they continue with the HVAC, the restroom renovations and the kitchen cabinets at Colonia Guadalupe; at Ana Maria Lozano and Carlos Richter they added concrete flat work, flooring, security lighting and landscaping; for Senior Home they added some exterior renovations, security camera and some parking; for Meadow Acres and South Laredo they added the administrative and community modernization.

In Asherton they have the kitchen cabinets, security lighting and landscaping. Chairman Ceballos asked Mrs. Gaona when will they do the BiblioTech at Carlos Richter. Mrs. Gaona responded that it is in 2018 and added some in 2021 to complete it which will be the next BiblioTech and then they added the one for Meadow and South Laredo.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he asked Mrs. Gaona earlier before the meeting about the new items for 2022 and forward which are new items that the Board has not seen. Mrs. Gaona responded that 2022-2025 were there last year and the only items are 2026 that the Board did not see last year. Chairman Ceballos asked if 2022 is awarded. Mrs. Gaona responded that it is not yet.

Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any questions and mentioned that he wanted to suggest because it feels really far the last time they talked about this comprehensive planning and that maybe not to rush into the workshop, but maybe between now and the end of the fiscal year when they are doing the budget, maybe they will do another workshop to see if the Board wants to do changes. Mrs. Gaona confirmed and mentioned that once they get the award for 2022, they usually go back to the Board and present and said that they are hoping to see an increase from what they are estimating because it is always just an estimation, so once they get the actual award, they will go back to the Board and hopefully when they do that, they can do the review. Chairman Ceballos asked if Mrs. Gaona could work with the different departments to not have meeting items between now and March and maybe to just do the budget and this and not have other items so they can have like two hours; one hour for budget and one hour for the plan which would be 2022 forward. Mrs. Gaona confirmed.

Chairman Ceballos asked Ms. Barrientos if she had anything to add. Ms. Barrientos stated that she did not. Chairman Ceballos asked if anybody had any questions and mentioned that the items in red are the changes they made over the course of the last meeting. Mrs. Gaona stated that those were the changes they started on because they felt they needed them. Chairman Ceballos stated that they have not discussed the BiblioTech and that it is something they need to think through and they can discuss it with the campus discussion to see where that is going to end up and how much space they really need, that kind of discussion. Commissioner Ms. Guerra mentioned that they can review it when it is awarded. Chairman Ceballos confirmed and stated that it will be 2022 and forward; they placed some items which he thinks need to be discussed more fully because they are connected and mentioned that as they have learned, they cannot complete generally one improvement in one year, so they can see that bathroom renovation in Senior Home and said that he wishes they could speed that up with that particular building, so that is what he needs to study to see if they can bump some of the Senior Home up.

Commissioner Ms. Guerra asked if they want to do that now. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he thinks they need to think about it some more because even if they would do it now, they do not have the award, so it does not have any impact. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that those are items they would have the Board consider once they get the final funding for 2022, any item in 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026 that they want to move up to 2022. Chairman Ceballos stated that they already have 2021, so for the first four funding years, they are already sitting on that money and they do not need to worry about which is in motion. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that

she just wanted information from the Board on those items if they are thinking as well as the residents that they need those items right now, it is already in the planning; it is included and they just need to bid it out and work on those, so 2021 has already been awarded and they are working on the environmental to get the clearance to start, but 2022 is the one they are really waiting to see how much funding they get.

Chairman Ceballos mencionó que hablaría en Español para los residentes y les informó que lo que están aprobando es el plan de 5 años que ya conocen y que cada año se le va agregando un año por el que va pasando y mencionó que hay ciertos proyectos que no se pueden cumplir con un solo año por el costo, entonces se van programando en base a varios años y mencionó que hay dos cosas grandes que le preocupan: 1. El proyecto de Senior Home que tiene muchas necesidades de equipo, desde el equipo eléctrico que lo están llevando a cabo ya, pero no lo van a hacer todo de un jalón y los problemas de drenaje que tienen allí, así que ese edificio necesita una inversión grande y el 2do. tema es Colonia Guadalupe, al igual que la Colonia Carlos Richter, esas dos colonias ya están llegando al punto de lo que hicieron en Russell Terrace o algo similar sea necesario llevar a cabo en esas dos colonias y además terminar Russell Terrace en el futuro.

Chairman Ceballos mencionó que él siente que se debe invertir en cuestión de estudios y arquitectura en esa área para empezar el tema de convertir, el cual HUD le llama repositonar los recursos, para empezar a planear la Colonia Guadalupe y agregó que ya hicieron un estudio en una vivienda sobre lo eléctrico y se dieron cuenta que no es factible y que no es muy posible hacer una conversión de las unidades, agregarle la electricidad y luego el clima e instalación para lavadora y secadora, así que lo que menciona Chairman Ceballos es que modernizar la Colonia Guadalupe no es práctico, no es eficiente y no se puede hacer a un costo razonable y al fin de cuenta, tendrían que reconstruir Colonia Guadalupe y posiblemente Carlos Richter no sea igual porque tiene diferente arquitectura y allí quizá la remodelación sería sacar todo lo de adentro, plomería y todo, y volver a reconstruirlo dentro de las paredes, lo cual no se puede hacer en Colonia Guadalupe y es un tema que los residentes necesitan empezar a platicar porque Chairman Ceballos no sabe si él va a estar presente para la construcción y probablemente no va a estar presente cuando todo eso se lleve a cabo, pero esa es su visión y mencionó que lo que pudieron haber hecho en Russell Terrace, lo cual es una plática larga pero hay que empezarla, en Russell Terrace pudieron haberlo renovado como lo hicieron en las 28 casas que renovaron por dentro lo cual se puede hacer en Carlos Richter pero en Colonia Guadalupe no se puede hacer y piensa que cuando empiezan a gastar y hacer el diseño, inmediatamente se dan cuenta que va a costar más tumbar y quebrar concreto que lo que cuesta hacerlo nuevo; entonces, la realidad de cómo se tiene que hacer va a ser el debate en el futuro para la administración que este a cargo y se preguntó como lo van a hacer y agregó que lo que aprendieron en Russell Terrace, lo cual cree que la comunidad ya lo vió y lo aceptó, es un buen producto; no lo hicieron como se hacía en los años 50 pero van a durar mucho tiempo y lo deben hacer aunque no sabe si el estará entonces o no, pero mencionó que lo que aprendieron fue que es costoso y es un dolor de cabeza, pero si se puede construir sin mover a todo mundo y fue lo que aprendieron, que si se puede. La Sra. Ríos mencionó que lo importante sería que el plan se empezara ahorita. Chairman Ceballos mencionó que esa sería la indicación que se le daría a la Sra. Gaona, que inicie a trabajar en eso para que quien sigue después de ellos, le dé continuidad y se tiene que empezar por escrito, en estudios, en administración y

luego ya empiezan la evaluación que tienen que hacer, lo cual le pediría a los miembros de la mesa directiva y a los residentes que evalúen costos y ver hacia dónde va a ir el dinero y no meter más dinero, pero tampoco hacer lo que se hizo en Russell Terrace, que no le invirtieron nada, eso no van a hacer y si hay un problema, se corrige y no decir que ya no le inviertan en el baño porque lo van a tumbar después, sino hacerlo como debe ser y eso es una plática que va a incluir mucho detalle, pero la realidad para quien sigue es que Colonia Guadalupe es la colonia más antigua en Laredo, la más complicada y que tiene también más presencia en la ciudad junto a la carretera Interestatal 35; se puede reconstruir en fases y no se tiene que correr a la gente y mencionó que no se dejen que los corran cuando él ya no esté y les dijo que se pueden defender y que ya se comprobó en Russell Terrace que lo pueden hacer en fases y afirmó que fue una molestia, fue difícil y en realidad fue menos costoso que algo nuevo, pero dijo que se refiere a que trabajen en ese plan para el futuro y recomendó a la Sra. Gaona y a los miembros de la mesa directiva que se aseguren que haya un plan y preguntó cómo se podría renovar aquí; mencionó que ellos tienen el equipo para decirle a los que vienen en el futuro como se podría hacer. La Sra. Ríos mencionó que sería lograr que aprueben el plan antes de que eso suceda y para que siga la continuidad.

Chairman Ceballos mencionó que la cuestión es que deben mejorar la calidad de vida de los niños y residentes porque tenerlos sin el aire central es aceptar esa falta de calidad de vida, así que tienen que llegar a un nivel de que los niños tengan sus comodidades como las tiene cualquier otro niño y mencionó que esa es la meta y que va a haber situaciones en ese plan que van a decir que cierto dinero no lo van a gastar porque se tiene que poner en planeación y los residentes van a decir que lo necesitan, así que van a tener que pensar y decidir lo que quieren y decidir donde lo van a poner y mencionó que lo que el trata de decir en esta junta es que hay dos proyectos grandes: el proyecto del centro, el edificio para personas mayores que es un edificio viejo con infraestructura vieja y Colonia Guadalupe y hasta cierto grado Carlos Richter pero no tanto, aquí en Colonia Guadalupe el costo de una unidad se multiplica por 272 y aparte la infraestructura y mencionó que el nuevo estacionamiento que se está haciendo para esta área tiene una línea de agua de tres pulgadas por en medio y preguntó qué hacer, si la dejan allí al cabo nunca se va a romper, así que tienen que planear para el futuro porque no la van a mover pero quien les dice que si empiezan a moverle que puede pasar, porque les pasó en Russell Terrace y luego viene la ciudad y les dice que tienen que reemplazar todas las entradas del drenaje y entonces van para atrás a hacer alrededor de 80 o más entradas, lo cual es muy costoso y les platica eso porque los residentes de Russell Terrace ya lo vivieron y ellos saben que todo eso sucedió, al igual que va a pasar aquí, y van a salir cosas más viejas porque cuando empiezan a escarbar, se van a encontrar más; entonces, son temas que hoy es la primera vez que lo hablan pero es un buen momento porque anteriormente querían tumbar aquí y ya andaban con propuestas y no había ninguna conversación con el residente sobre como lo iban a hacer y lo bueno ahora es que la Comisionada Sra. Freeman les puede informar cuales fueron los dolores de cabeza y también decirles de que cuidarse, por ejemplo, que van a mover 100 familias, lo cual no es tan fácil y cuando dicen que van a empezar con 25 o 50 casas, les crean, pero cuando vengan con un cuento de que van a mover 100 al mismo tiempo, ellos como residentes les van a decir que les muestren como lo van a hacer y mencionó que tienen que planear eso.

Chairman Ceballos mencionó que él siente que su función antes de salir de la mesa directiva es dejar ese plan, de perdido un plan para que las mesas directivas de los residentes les ayuden a los residentes y el otro dilema de preocupación es sobre las personas de edad avanzada; entre más porcentaje haya, más porcentaje va creciendo de personas de edad avanzada, lo cual significa que es más difícil moverlos porque a veces no tienen el apoyo de que un familiar venga y los cuide porque ellos no se pueden cuidar al 100% y mencionó que es una plática que se debe llevar a nivel de la mesa central y empujar también a quien esté en la administración a que empiece con eso porque mencionó que él era de los que pensaban que las convertirían y se preguntaba porque las iban tumbar y mencionó que hay personas que no les gusta el diseño, pero a él si le gusta y hay otras personas que si les gusta y a lo mejor habrá tecnología donde se pueden renovar como están pero ahorita si le preguntan, de acuerdo a lo que el vió, es muy difícil y les va a costar más renovar como están y además no son térmicas lo cual es uno de los problemas más grandes porque antes no se construía con el aislamiento y lo térmico que ahora se requiere. La Sra. Ríos mencionó que ya tuvieron la experiencia del año pasado del frío tan terrible que tuvieron.

Chairman Ceballos mencionó que lo que aprendieron fue que las colonias más viejas aguantaron más porque tenían diversificación de energía y tenían gas, igualmente aquí, pueden poner agua a calentar y no se van a morir de frío, pero en las modernas es diferente y lo que les pasó en el centro fue distinto pero aquí y en Russell Terrace estaban bien, entre comillas estaban bien, y eso es lo que hay que aprender y dijo que la decisión del crédito de tener gas se le debe a la Sra. Gaona porque ellos ya habían sacado el gas de Russell Terrace pero ella recomendó que se dejara el gas lo cual ayudo mucho y ya aprendieron y mencionó que él no tiene gas en su casa y si se va la luz, se morirían de frío. Ricardo De Anda preguntó cómo distribuyen gas si no hay electricidad. Chairman Ceballos mencionó que sería de gas natural y que hay equipo que trabaja con gas propio. Commissioner Ms. Freeman mentioned that they have re-designed a lot to go into solar because she has seen the plates and assumes those are solar and said that it worked and mentioned that they did not lose gas service. Chairman Ceballos mencionó que, si se va el gas, tienen luz, así que tendrían algo. La Sra. Ríos mencionó que el año pasado se fue la luz y el gas y después el agua se congelo y mencionó que parece que se hizo una inversión de un generador grande en una compañía por lo cual eso no debe volver a pasar. Chairman Ceballos mencionó que después de eso también faltó el agua y dijo que era una buena pregunta la del abogado De Anda porque hay algunas plantas de gas natural que la energía que usan es de luz y dijo que también se dieron cuenta y aprendieron durante ese friazo que decidieron apagar ciertas áreas por un rato y prendían otras áreas y luego irían alternando por áreas, pero cuando se dieron cuenta que la gente entro en pánico cargando energía, ya no pudieron meter la energía y dejaron a Senior Home sin luz y luego veían que en la siguiente cuadra había luz pero no había gente adentro pero era el circuito de la área, así que aprendieron bastante y lo otro que también aprendieron es que a veces tienen que gritar o exigir, porque él se comunicó con uno de los representantes que conoce de la compañía AEP pero no le puso presión porque no pensó y nadie pensó lo que iba a pasar, así que la próxima vez hay que hablar y decir que allí tienen 120 personas de edad avanzada y tienen un elevador que es lo único que usan para bajar y por lo tanto tiene que funcionar, así que mencionó que ya tienen un plan, si acaso la compañía de electricidad no responde, ellos van a tener un plan para la energía. La Sra. Ríos mencionó que necesitarían un buen generador. Chairman Ceballos mencionó que tuvieron mucha suerte que el generador que tenían era nuevo y solo hicieron un

ajuste y calentaron el primer piso, pero parecía una eternidad y fueron solo dos días, pero se sintió como si hubieran sido muchos más.

Chairman Ceballos mencionó que se dirige a los concilios de los residentes para que ahora que empiecen más abiertamente, empiecen a platicar esos temas. La Sra. Ríos mencionó que sería para concientizar a los residentes sobre los cambios que van a ocurrir.

Chairman Ceballos preguntó si había algún comentario o algún cambio y preguntó a la Sra. Gaona que necesitaba de la Mesa Directiva. Mrs. Gaona responded that she would like input from the Board and then they will come back at the December meeting to finalize it and also for approval. Chairman Ceballos asked Mrs. Gaona if she needed a motion.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that there is no motion needed on this item and that it will come back for action to close the public hearing at a later date.

Mrs. Gaona stated, for the record, that Mr. Doug Poneck was joining the meeting at this time. Chairman Ceballos welcomed Mr. Poneck and asked him if he got to hear the conversation about Colonia Guadalupe. Mr. Poneck responded that he got to hear most of it, but would need most of it translated. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that they all know Mr. Poneck speaks fluent Spanish.

## **9. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A.** Approval of Minutes for Board of Commissioners meeting on October 22, 2021.

**Commissioner Ms. Freeman moved to approve the minutes for Board of Commissioners meeting on October 22, 2021 as written.**

**Chairman Ceballos seconded the motion.**

**Motion passed unanimously.**

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

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

Mrs. Gaona informed that for Public Housing they have a PIC score of 98.53% and the lease up is at 99.08%; for Section 8 the PIC score is 102.67% and the HAP utilization is at 104% and the lease up is at 99.40%.

In regards to the emergency housing vouchers Mrs. Gaona informed that they have 85 allocated and they received 91 certifications and they have 45 individuals still searching and 36 families have already been assisted; they currently have four units that need to pass inspection and in Rapid Rehousing they currently have 18 families assisted which is their max. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that it is the cap. Mrs. Gaona confirmed.



Mrs. Gaona stated that they received the new 2020 grant, so they will be looking at that and mentioned that they saw a little increase, so they may be able to bring in one or two additional families, but it will be until February.

Chairman Ceballos asked Mrs. Gaona if in Casa Verde they addressed the paint project. Mrs. Gaona responded that they are still waiting on that and stated that they have not brought in the material, so they are still waiting on the material. Chairman Ceballos also asked about the bus shelter. Mrs. Gaona responded that the City does not have any more funding for it, so that it is a conversation they need to have with the property to see if they can include it. Chairman Ceballos asked if they would want to fabricate it or if they do not want to get into that world of fabricating it themselves. Mrs. Gaona stated that she is not sure if they will allow it and that she already started conversations with them and is still trying to see if they will cover it and mentioned that she wants to have a conversation with the Councilman. Chairman Ceballos stated that they should have enough money in that property to cover it, so for the Board to know, Chairman Ceballos mentioned that Casa Verde does not have a bus shelter for the bus transportation and they have elderly people, students and anybody waiting in the sun and stated that they had a project where they were going to work with the City with the last Councilmember to get it built and put a bike rack and mentioned that the last time they were there to check a paint issue, he noticed a lady that was literally on the shade of the pole, so he mentioned that they need to do better and that they should do better and said that somehow it all fell through the cracks and mentioned that the other day he drove by, he saw a student sitting on the bench, so they really need to get that done and he thinks that the easiest thing is to tell the property to buy it and install it and force the issue on the city because just like us, they probably have other 30 requests of people wanting bus shelters. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that the Rotary Club built bus shelters and people got upset because they built a bunch through the Next Generation Rotary; they went out and built them as group and people were saying that those were not acceptable build outs, but they built them and stated that it just takes political will to get permission to do it and mentioned that they sell them made; they are just pricy, but at this point it is probably better and faster for everyone.

Commissioner Ms. Freeman asked if they needed to make a motion on it. Chairman Ceballos responded that they do not and that it is one of the tax credit properties and that it is not on the agenda; therefore, they cannot make a motion.

In regards to Rapid Rehousing Mrs. Gaona informed that they submitted the 2021 and stated that they ranked in the tier one and right now they are hoping to get that funding for 2021.

For their Emergency Housing vouchers Mrs. Gaona mentioned that they got a dashboard sent out and on that dashboard for the San Antonio Field office, Laredo was at the highest utilization of the emergency housing vouchers at 36.47%

Mrs. Gaona informed that for Balcones they are at 80.22% as they can see in the pictures and also mentioned that they have the new flooring going in. Chairman Ceballos asked Bulmaro Cruz if he is happy with the product. Mr. Cruz responded that the color

combination looks very nice. Chairman Ceballos asked if the HVAC was Carrier or Rudd. Mr. Cruz responded that it is Goodman. Chairman Ceballos stated that it looks nice. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that they got approximately 56 bottles or cans of stucco. Mr. Cruz mentioned that there were 36; they were supposed to deliver 40, but they just delivered 36 and they are waiting for the rest. Chairman Ceballos stated that it is the back building. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that the stucco will hopefully start going on with the material that came in. Commissioner Ms. Freeman stated that the façade totally changes the building.

Mrs. Gaona informed that they are 100% complete on Ana Maria Lozano and they are just waiting for the fire inspector to go back and do the inspection for the certificate of occupancy and hopefully they will have the CO by next week and will start looking to move into the property. Chairman Ceballos asked if they added the heavier crushed granite. Mrs. Gaona confirmed.

Chairman Ceballos asked in regards to any word on the signage and mentioned that they may want to switch vendors if they have not heard from them because they may have some problem that they have not told them about. Mrs. Jessica Martinez stated that she had already started searching for another vendor and mentioned that for now she would bear with Quarter Mile who are having delays in material and designers and mentioned that she has contacted Signs Inn who previously worked with them for BiblioTech. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that they will talk about dates and stuff in a little bit, so they will cover some of the timing. Chairman Ceballos asked if the new carpet is coming in soon. Mrs. Gaona responded that it is already here, but she did not want to change it until they get the CO because they are going to do the inspection and as soon as that happens, they will go ahead and start, but stated that the carpet is in. Chairman Ceballos asked if they are upgrading the original carpet that came in for the meeting rooms which looks a little too low grade commercial, so they went to carpet tiles and it will make a big difference and said that the current carpet has had good performance which has been there probably for about four years. Mrs. Gaona stated that they will do that as soon as they get the CO.

Mrs. Gaona also presented the former executive building and mentioned that the sheet rock is up and they have started the tape and float and mentioned that the middle section pouring of the parking lot has been scheduled for Wednesday and the demo of the maintenance shop has started. Chairman Ceballos stated that it is his favorite project and that it is going to change the whole face of that block and asked if there were any questions or comments for Mrs. Gaona. There were none. Chairman Ceballos thanked Mrs. Gaona for her report.

## **11. ACTION ITEM**

**Chairman Ceballos moved to go to item 11B first at this time.**

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

**Motion passed unanimously.**

**A. Presentation with possible action relating to the LHA Campus Masterplan.**

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he asked Mrs. Gaona to put this item because he thought they would have time to cover it since they had a short agenda and stated that it does not have to require any action since the Board already voted to give Mrs. Gaona authorization on particular scopes including sidewalks, electrical, lighting and that kind of stuff and he wanted Mrs. Gaona to cover what her and some of the staff is envisioning as a roll out after the parking lot for the sidewalk improvements, he would start by saying and then will hand it over to Mrs. Gaona that tearing down the maintenance shop gives a different perspective, at least to him of what they should be thinking about or what they would like to see as a campus, just the walkability for the staff or guests and how they want to create the direction, so he is glad that it is now gone and they can actually get that sense.

Mrs. Gaona mentioned that if they look at the screen, the pink is really what she is projecting to be looking at in the next week or two to try to work the parking lot sidewalk from the parking lot to where the 4,368 line is, that is going to be done and is part of the parking lot, so they are going to have that sidewalk and then they want to complete that sidewalk coming down and complete the front on San Francisco; Chairman Ceballos stated that they are looking at the Belonging Center, so that everyone knows where they are. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that she wants to do the San Francisco area and the interior and hopefully they will be able to clean out the area of the former executive office to be able to complete that sidewalk and the maintenance shop should be going for permitting hopefully next week and they can go and start that section. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that she did not want to work on the sidewalks in these next couple weeks until they finalize that work there on what is going to be demolished, but she wants to finish that connectivity of sidewalks.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that what they should think about is when somebody is driving up to the location and they will not be able to park in that area anymore; they will see the cop cars there or personal cars for the police officers and they may end up finding one or two empty spaces and park there, so they need to envision how they would walk to get to the main door and if they are driving, what signage they would want to direct them which is what Chairman Ceballos thinks they need to practice and study and mentioned that everything is going to have a ramp around and they should be able to go around the block and find a sidewalk that can carry them if they are in a wheelchair or are handicapped, so everything needs to be accessible.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that the Board asked him last time about the Belonging Center which he envisions and described it as a place where the staff can lounge and still work and stated that with all the things they are hearing with the younger folks about is where they can work and not be in a fixed place, but still not work from home which was the whole vision of it when it first started a couple of years ago when they were planning it and mentioned that it does not have to be that and said that that room and the upstairs can be the BiblioTech, it can continue being meeting rooms or it can be many things and recommended that as

they are doing that, if they have an opportunity, to walk into the former executive office which is kind of an open concept design and it can be anything; they designed it that way, so it can be any department and thinks that it is the healthy way to do it now and if the staff does not care for a Belonging Center, it needs to be communicated to them and said that some of the staff cared for it at some point, if they perform more in an outdoor setting, around trees, to say it because they only get to do it especially when they are pouring sidewalks and fix structures. Commissioner Ms. Guerra mentioned that she would think about when they may want to meet outside and that during COVID people were meeting outside and wondered if that area can be flexible and mentioned that at the courthouse they were meeting between the courthouse and the parking lot or on the sidewalk at one point during COVID and said that the agency usually has special events at different sites and stated that this area would be fine for a BiblioTech because they need to locate it and also said that it would be nice to have everybody together if possible because with certain big organizations that have different locations they try to tribalize everybody together. Chairman Ceballos stated that they have tribalism them by floors. Commissioner Ms. Guerra asked where that would be. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that it would here and that actually it is by windows; some have a window and some do not have a window and he asked the staff, by show of hands, who would care for a Belonging Center, if they care if they have a belonging center, a place where they would work, lounge and have meetings with external partners, but is not in front of their desks or a conference table and asked if it would matter. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that it does not matter. Commissioner Guerra mentioned that it would be putting people on the spot. Chairman Ceballos stated that this is it because they are making the decision now. Mrs. Martinez mentioned about having a meeting space where they can meet with third parties. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that they all are going to have conference rooms and asked if that was sufficient. Commissioner Ms. Guerra suggested something like a break room, but adjacent to their work area would be nice because when they are walking all the way down the campus and they would have to walk back. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza mentioned about the Belonging Center and stated that they could have something outside, that they should do something outside where they would have tables outside and with the Covid cases again, they could be outside at a distance. Chairman Ceballos mentioned to Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza that he saw that nobody raised their hand for a Belonging Center, so Chairman Ceballos stated that he must have been dreaming of it all by himself and stated that he is going to call it a beef up break room and asked for them to raise their hand if they want a beef up break room and said that everybody raised their hand and mentioned that to him, it would a place where they would have some nice coffee and they can lounge and stated that maybe they do not work from home and maybe the policy does not allow it, but they would have like a mix where they can go, a place to have coffee and bring the laptop and work from there for the next two to three hours and stated that he is not convincing people, but it is ok. Commissioner Ms. Freeman stated that she thinks a breakroom setting is outstanding because if they work on a special project like Christmas and they have two people from one department and two people from

another and they want to go and relax while they are putting the gifts for the resident kids together, the Blue Santa or Easter baskets, she thinks that area would be perfect for it because it is open. Chairman Ceballos stated that it would be a multipurpose room. Commissioner Ms. Freeman stated that she thinks they do not think they need it, but they will be asking for something like that if they do not get it. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that before he came to the meeting he got a call from somebody that is asking for a meeting room, which happens quite a bit, for a room for 20 people and mentioned that it was Annie's List Training and Engagement, so it is the room for that kind of meeting and of course it is not outfitted, it has coffee and a refrigerator, but it can be that, not just for them but for a community partner, so Chairman Ceballos mentioned that they will rename it and said that he has a list of articles if anybody wants to read about what is supposed to be the employment trend in keeping and retaining employees which is the basis for providing these different type of spaces and stated that he agrees with Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza and the rest of the Board that they need to plan for an outdoor workability space and hangout space too. Commissioner Ms. Guerra mentioned about something that would be covered or with a roof.

Mrs. Gaona mentioned that they had discussed the parking where it says phase two or the executive parking at the end and stated that she talked to Rick, the Architect, about the pole, so they will be looking at that area again. Chairman Ceballos suggested that when Mrs. Gaona has meetings with the Architect and his assistant, to do it on site so that does not happen. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that they are meeting today onsite. Chairman Ceballos asked if they know of a date when the parking lot will actually be usable and if they have set that date. Mrs. Gaona responded that they do not have a date yet, but that it should be around the first week in December. Chairman Ceballos asked if it would be the first week in December to use it. Mrs. Gaona stated that it is what she would like. Chairman Ceballos recommended to consider the perimeter landscaping because cars go into the perimeter area when they park so they would need to have the landscaping done and mentioned that the assignment needs to be firmed up. Mrs. Gaona confirmed.

Chairman Ceballos asked for anything from a high level stand point that they would like to see in the campus that is not there and stated that most of what they are doing is honestly clean up, probably 60% of the work is clean up because they just added on and asked if anybody wanted to make comments to the Board, people that are present, on what they are doing, or from the staff and stated that they trust the team, except that there was a pole in the middle of the driveway and said that they are a good team and that thanks to their biddings, they have a lot of options with different teams and said to Ms. Cabello that as much as it seems frustrating, they do have options and mentioned that there are some out there that do not have subs and mentioned that he was telling Mrs. Gaona earlier in the week that it is different and that they heard it from Luis yesterday that there is a little bit of a slowdown on the residential side that is happening in Texas and other places and he knows that the Fort Worth area is now slowing down which is why

he thinks they are seeing subcontractors have a little bit of availability right now, but does not know what next year will bring, but they are going to have more subs than they used to.

Chairman Ceballos asked if they need anything else discussed or if they need any action. Mrs. Gaona stated that she just wants to make sure where they are going to put the BiblioTech and how they are going to design it and to start thinking about it for the next stage of it. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that it is going to be a funding decision and when they move back when the two story gets done and if they would have the money to demo and retrofit the space on the other side or if they need to work on this building. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that she just thought that building because of the design it would be hard to get all the network for BiblioTech. Chairman Ceballos stated that Mrs. Gaona is suggesting somewhere else and mentioned that the only somewhere else is that other building. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that it would be his decision and that it is a conversation they need to start. Commissioner Ms. Freeman asked that if they think the kids would use the BiblioTech if it would be a bigger area for them because she would go in when it was at the other end and they only had six computers by the wall and there was only one or two, maybe three being used and asked if they would promote it so that they will be utilizing the area that would be built for them instead of going somewhere else. Mrs. Gaona stated that they will definitely promote it once they decide the area.

Chairman Ceballos referred them to look at the layout for the building and mentioned that what they have in print is Mario Jasso's layout and mentioned that there is one that shows an entry on the north side of the parking lot and stated that the idea was to kind of have meeting conference spaces on the left side of the building and stated that the building is roughly about 7,500 sq. ft. and the exhibit A & B potentially can be the BiblioTech site and more office spaces there as well and mentioned that if they are already entertaining this discussion which he has already had with the staff, so nothing is fresh, but what he has talked to them is gutting the building and parceling out spaces that can be finished out later, so they would do the mechanical, electrical service, panel entry and get that done and whatever they think are going to have, but the HVAC, the air conditioning and then just shell out the rest and for the future they can build that out as they need it.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that the whole idea of having a conference or meeting room center is for the reasons they all have experienced with the Inner City Summit and when they have meetings of 30, they are squeezed in and they try to find a space and cannot find a space unless they go to the college and mentioned that they cannot get enough of the departments together to have a large meeting with them which does not happen regularly, but it does not happen because they do not have the space, so the residents need a space which they have not had for a while, so that would allow them to take half of that room useable for a large meeting room and stated that a large meeting room based on that size is roughly about 100 – 120 people which is not that large, so that is kind of the vision

he gave to the Architect and Bulmaro about two years ago, so it is what they came up with and stated that it can be different things and said that the issue with that location is that they do not see it because they see a building that looks like box and it is three different buildings, too old semi-residential structures that are within it and then it just has a big roof, a steel structure and they can build anything inside of it; it is a self-sustain structure, all the exterior walls can remain and then basically they have the inside and they shell it and stated that there is a separation and elevation; the old family planning side, the community hall is higher than where the rest of the staff is officing there; they are like 8 inches below, but that will have to be addressed and said that it is a financial question and when they say to put BiblioTech over there, they would have to gut it and they will need to decide what they are going to shell and outfit it with mechanical and everything else. Commissioner Ms. Guerra mentioned that then they are not going to have a conference area and asked if they both could be there. Chairman Ceballos stated that they can both be there and asked about the size of the BiblioTech in Russell Terrace square footage wise and mentioned that it is 1,500sq. ft. and that Lozano is a little larger, maybe 1,800 sq. ft., so they can basically take one wing that is there and dedicate it to that and maybe they do not do the other, they would just shell it for future office space and stated that maybe they already need office space.

Chairman Ceballos stated that they are not acting on it, but it is out there and if they say no and to just put BiblioTech there and be done with it. Commissioner Ms. Guerra mentioned that she thinks they need the conference space. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that they need the space. Commissioner Ms. Guerra stated that the space for employees and the community is needed. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he agrees and that they just need to blend the funding so that it is attainable. Commissioner Ms. Guerra mentioned about the mobile BiblioTech they saw that is digital. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that it is a good point and that they really have a challenge for the Architect to blend the BiblioTech to the conference room and it could be just one room the size of the current conference room that would be connected to other meeting rooms. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that they left the masterplan there and invested money in that layout and left the concept there and if they want to do more Mrs. Gaona would need to let them know how far out they can afford to go. Commissioner Ms. Freeman mentioned that she thinks it needs to be in that building for the simple fact that if there is a conference going on and they need some information really quick that they need to get to a computer, the computer would be right there. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that those conversations go back quite a few years and what she said has been mentioned before and stated that they also thought at one point to put BiblioTech near Section 8 and Public Housing so that kids that are coming in would go to the BiblioTech while they are waiting and it is not too far away from being that. Chairman Ceballos asked if there was any input from anybody present. Ms. Barrientos mentioned about having public restrooms accessible in the area for the visitors. Chairman Ceballos stated that he agrees and said that actually those rooms have worked very well which are probably the oldest ones and said that it

is very convenient to have a restroom in every floor and mentioned that they are mostly private. Ms. Barrientos mentioned that currently there are some restrooms that are outside which Chairman Ceballos mentioned the ones on the other building are old model and is super old school and sated that there are some general things, the connection between BiblioTech and the conference, the fact that they all agree that they need meeting space and mentioned that in terms of the COVID funds, they are some things they already will have to do to tie them in.

Chairman Ceballos stated that this item does not need action and asked if there were any other business. There was no other business.

**B. Discussion and possible action on setting tentative ceremonial opening date for ongoing construction projects.**

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that there are different projects that are going to come to conclusion within the next 60 days probably and stated that they obviously did not celebrate the Russell Terrace opening for COVID, so they have it pending and they would like to do some sort of ceremony and stated that he and Commissioner Ms. Freeman were talking about centering it around the Sara Rodriguez memorial and asked Commissioner Ms. Freeman if she can take the lead with Mrs. Gaona about deciding on the gazebo project and a plaque and stated that they can put a date on that since it technically already opened, he thinks they can schedule it whenever they all decide is fitting and that it can be until next year, it would be fine which is probably what they are looking at now.

In regards to Ana Maria Lozano, Chairman Ceballos stated that Mrs. Gaona has particularly been in communication with the families who are very interested in being part of the ceremony and obviously other people are interested too because it is a BiblioTech, the largest one they have or competitive with the one at Russell Terrace, but the investment was greater, so it is the largest one and mentioned that in setting that date, they were hoping to set the date before the end of the year, but due to holidays, details and construction remaining, he asked Mrs. Gaona to think about a date in January and stated that Mrs. Gaona said that a symbolic date would be Ms. Lozano's birthday, January 18, so Chairman Ceballos would like to suggest that date to the Board and check with the family and do it like they have done the ceremonies carried out through an agenda with an invite, digital and card, which he thinks all the staff have been involved with that, so they all know how to do it and the first date Chairman Ceballos would suggest to the Board is January 18 and stated that they will also have Balcones finished by the end of the year and that one will have to be, not that Lozano would not be open because it needs to be open when it is ready to open, so they will just have a ceremony later and with Los Balcones, it is also the same; it needs to be housing people, so as soon as they know dates for that and asked Mr. Cruz if he thinks they would be ready to house people in January. Mr. Cruz stated that he would estimate by the second week in January. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that it would be better to have no one in the units while they have the ceremony which would be easier for



everything and asked Mrs. Gaona if they can get away with housing people until February and asked her for the timeline. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that their timeline is February 20 for completion. Chairman Ceballos asked what it would be the timeline for housing people. Mrs. Gaona responded that it would be March 1. Chairman Ceballos asked if it would be March 1. Mrs. Gaona confirmed. Chairman Ceballos asked the Board what they think about a date in February or if they had any preference. Commissioner Ms. Guerra mentioned that as long as it would not be February 2. Chairman Ceballos stated that he would not want them or anybody else and even people they are inviting having to come to two ceremonies and maybe to try spreading them three weeks or four weeks if possible and stated that technically they will be completed the first week in January, so they will meet that compliance and then housing them may be March 1. Mrs. Gaona asked what day of the week would work better for the Board. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that for planning for events, he likes Wednesdays or Thursdays so that the team can have at least two days to prep stuff. Mrs. Gaona asked if they would like to look at maybe February 17. Commissioner Ms. Freeman mentioned that they need to be careful what they plan in February in case the city opens Washington Birthday Celebration up, so they would not conflict with their events. Commissioner Ms. Guerra mentioned that they are planning for that celebration. Commissioner Ms. Freeman mentioned that it means that they are going to be open for the Washington's Birthday Celebration and the dignitaries are not going to be available. Chairman Ceballos stated that it is a good point and asked if they can give Mrs. Gaona at least a week, if she can work with the week of February 16, 17, 23 and 24 to see what is best. Chairman Ceballos asked if they can get with the marketing people to help them theme each of those ceremonies and said that obviously Lozano is fine, but they do need to theme the Balcones and mentioned that subsequent to that he would put Russell Terrace especially if it includes a build out.

Chairman Ceballos asked if there was anything else pending on dates and asked if they are ok on the construction site with the dates they talked about. It was confirmed.

Chairman Ceballos stated that they would go back to item 11A.

## **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**

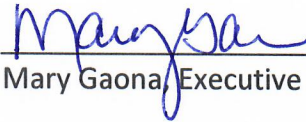
**14. ADJOURNMENT**

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

**Meeting adjourned at 1:23 p.m.**



\_\_\_\_\_  
Jose L. Ceballos, Chairman



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Mary Gaona, Executive Director