

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

Zoom Video Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82282207005>

Call in Number: 1-346-248-7799

Webinar ID: 822 86220 7005

LHA Board Room

2000 San Francisco Ave.

Laredo, Texas 78040

Friday, January 28, 2022

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-22-R-1

Minutes

January 28, 2022

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Jose L. Ceballos called the meeting to order at 12:08 p.m.

2. INVOCATION PRAYER

Commissioner Ms. Freeman led them in prayer: “Dear Heavenly Father, we pray that you protect our city, state and country from internal conflict; we pray for peace throughout the globe; we pray for all our elected officials. Dear Father, we pray that you protect our first responders as they do their jobs; we pray that you protect all those that are fighting illnesses, especially COVID 19 related illnesses; we pray for those that go to bed hungry and that do not have shelter; we pray for those in the path of Mother Nature storms and wildfires; we pray that you protect all our families; we pray that you protect our students as schools open. Thank you, Lord, for all the gifts and blessings you continue to bestow on us. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.”

Chairman Ceballos thanked Ms. Freeman for a very nice prayer.

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

4. ROLL CALL AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Chairman Ceballos stated that he appreciated everybody that joined the meeting in person and via zoom and mentioned that they are going back to hybrid for this meeting and appreciates everybody that is accommodated as they are doing it and stated that most of the agenda is going to be presented digitally and that Board members are present and they will go through the order in a second.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that the Executive Director is joining them digitally online and stated that in person they have Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza, Commissioner Anita Guerra, Attorney Ricardo De Anda as well as himself, Robert Peña, IT Director, who is handling the zoom communication as well as Christy Ramos.

Chairman Ceballos asked Mrs. Ramos to announce who is online, for the record. Mrs. Ramos stated that online they have Sara Vicharelli, Jennifer Barrientos, Melissa Ortiz, Sonia Flores, Bulmaro Cruz, Valeria Cabello, Jose Hernandez, Monica Rivera, Kayla Moreno, Laura Villalobos, Melinda Gavilanes and present they have Robert Peña and Alex Jimenez as well. Chairman Ceballos stated that they also have Dr. Waldo Lopez joining them online who will be providing some expertise on an item on the agenda related to COVID. Chairman Ceballos asked if there was anybody else that they did not acknowledge that is online. Mr. Doug Poneck stated that he is also joining online. Chairman Ceballos thanked Mr. Poneck, legal counsel, for joining.

Chairman Ceballos stated that they have a quorum as established earlier and mentioned that Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina is in route to the meeting and will join them in a few minutes.

Commissioners Present

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

Commissioners Absent

Staff Present

Mary Gaona, Executive Director (zoom)
Christy Ramos, Administrative Assistant
Sara Vicharelli, Leasing Specialist (zoom)
Sonia Flores, Accountant (zoom)
Robert Peña, Director of IT
Melissa Ortiz, Director of Section 8 (zoom)
Jennifer Barrientos, Director of Finance (zoom)
Valeria Cabello, Procurement Officer (zoom)
Alejandro Jimenez, Assistant to IT Director
Bulmaro Cruz, Director of Construction Projects (zoom)
Laura Villalobos, Property Manager (zoom)

Monica Rivera, Property Manager (zoom)
Melinda Gavilanes, Property Manager (zoom)
Kayla Moreno, Property Manager, (zoom)
Jose Hernandez, Property Manager, (zoom)
Ricardo De Anda, Attorney
Doug Poneck, Attorney (zoom)

Others Present

Dr. Wado Lopez (zoom)

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

Christy Ramos, Administrative Assistant, stated that she spoke to Ms. Rios, Central Resident Council President, the day before and Mrs. Rios had mentioned that she did not have any comments. Chairman Ceballos thanked Mrs. Ramos for the information.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that Mrs. Gaona should feel free to make any comments or any direction with regards to the meeting.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of Minutes for Board of Commissioners meeting on December 15, 2021.

Chairman Ceballos stated, for the record, that Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina is joining the meeting at this time and mentioned that they are doing hybrid meeting today.

Chairman Jose L. Ceballos moved to approve the minutes for Board of Commissioners meeting on December 15, 2021.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

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

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

Mrs. Gaona presented to the Board and stated that the current leasing percentage is 99.21% in Public Housing and the HAP Utilization is 104.10%; the lease up in HCV Program is 99.30%. In regards to the Emergency Housing Vouchers Program Mrs. Gaona stated that they have 45 vouchers already issued and have about 36 referrals; in Rapid Rehousing they have 15 families they assisted; they continue to work on the lease up in Asherton and Farm Labor and everywhere else they already made up the differences that they were behind and mentioned that they are basically losing one or two units per month and are turning them around before the end of the next month.

Mrs. Gaona stated that as they could see, they were at 95% for the year in Public Housing. Chairman Ceballos asked where does that put them on ranking, if high performer or standard. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that they still need to go up to 98%. Chairman Ceballos asked if that would then be standard performer. Mrs. Gaona confirmed. Chairman Ceballos asked if they could reach 98% by the fiscal year. Mrs. Gaona stated that she does not think so, they would be closer to 97%, but does not think they will make 98% and mentioned that they are still looking at whether they will score them or not and said that it is looking like they are not. Chairman Ceballos asked is they would possibly waive the score this year. Mrs. Gaona confirmed and stated that they already covered the Rapid Rehousing and mentioned that their first grant will be ending January 31st and they will be starting the 2022 grant February 1st. Mrs. Gaona stated that they have an item later on in the agenda regarding Rapid Rehousing to consider allocating an additional 85 vouchers, so they will be discussing that in another item.

Chairman Ceballos asked if they are still having problems finding one-bedroom units. Mrs. Gaona confirmed and mentioned that they also started having issues with landlords evicting tenants because of situations that occur in the units. Chairman Ceballos stated that it is behavioral situations. Mrs. Gaona stated that they are facing that challenge right now and have three that have been given an eviction notice. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that those are former homeless that have come in through the Emergency Housing Voucher Program and stated that they are not surprised to hear that and mentioned that probably at another meeting they need to look at possibly getting into finding an apartment complex they can buy, so they can run it and help provide supportive services. Mrs. Gaona stated that it is something they will probably be doing soon.

Mrs. Gaona presented some pictures of the construction site at Los Balcones Apartments. Chairman Ceballos asked if they are going to reach their target of February 22; Mrs. Gaona confirmed. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that it is the date the city had given them to complete the project which has been a very difficult project, as they know, nobody likes to do renovations and they decided to

do it to activate the otherwise vacant units in the inner city and stated that it is a hard final push, but they need to get that done and complete it.

Mrs. Gaona also presented pictures of the former Executive Office and mentioned that the carpet has already been installed, so they are hoping to get that project finished by mid next month and also provided pictures of the parking lot.

Mrs. Gaona asked if they had any questions. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked about issues with the parking lot. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that the issue they are currently tackling is that since they have public, they are sharing that big space, public parking lot and staff parking lot which is a secure parking lot where staff can have their own dedicated space, so they are trying to make sure they do not have too few public spaces that will then again give them parking all around the neighborhood on the street, so how they align the walkways is what they are currently working on and mentioned that he just met with the engineer to review a final adjustment they are going to make, so it is like running two parking lots in one parking lot, so that is the adjustment he at least knows and said that he does not know of any other issue with it and mentioned that there is a team of staff that has been supporting that effort to get it all landscaped and get it all done, so Chairman Ceballos thinks that probably within a couple of weeks, that main parking lot will be activated and mentioned that they have already poured some of the sidewalks and it is starting to look really different. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza mentioned that it is looking nice. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that it will be nice when it is done and hopefully everything will be done within six months and stated that the building they saw last is probably like Mrs. Gaona said, maybe two weeks from being done and stated that most of the work that is not done, is like the roof that is being worked on and the sidewalk access to that building.

Chairman Ceballos stated that he appreciates, on behalf of the Board, the effort of all the team that has been working on that project and stated that when they are renovating, they hit surprises everywhere because it is a property from the 1940's, so they are having to move poles to get driveways and all that kind of stuff and it takes time.

Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any other questions. Commissioner Ms. Freeman stated that she had several questions regarding Mrs. Gaona's report and asked why they have five vacancies in both Casa Verde Apartments and Riverbank Village Apartments; if it is because the people are relying on the Metro System and they do not have access to major shopping areas and if anybody has ever commented on why they do not want to live in those areas. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that they are pre-leasing them and that there are 10 people on the waiting list and stated that they have not had issues leasing; it is just because of COVID now, but usually they are leased up. Chairman Ceballos stated that they point out the things they know very well like accessibility to public transportation and grocery stores which he thinks are relevant and mentioned that they are working to put the shade structure in Casa Verde and stated that he does not know

the status of that, but it is an important aspect to Casa Verde because some of the folks there are still on foot and take the bus which is all relevant and mentioned that he would agree that what Commissioner Ms. Freeman pointed out is true; it does play a part and stated that what Mrs. Gaona is saying, if he is understanding it correctly, is that they actually have the tenants waiting and ready to move in; it is just the matter of getting the paperwork done and asked Mrs. Gaona if that was correct. Mrs. Gaona confirmed and stated that at Casa Verde they were working off the waiting list on those five units, but at Riverbank they had three that are already pre-leased. Chairman Ceballos thanked Commissioner Ms. Freeman for looking at it because he agrees that it is an important piece, that those apartments are far from amenities like that.

Commissioner Ms. Freeman stated that another question she had was regarding the Emergency Housing vouchers and asked if the San Antonio Field office says that ours is the highest utilized, but are only at 36.47%, she wondered why Laredo Housing Authority is still so low. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that the reason they still have not been able to lease them is what she mentioned earlier about the clients having a hard time finding units and Mrs. Gaona stated that they are working with SCAN, Border Region and other agencies that assist the client to locate a unit. Chairman Ceballos stated that it is an ongoing issue and he thinks that the only solution is that if they cannot find a private sector that accepts those clients, it is for them to get in the world of operating those apartments which is kind of what Los Balcones is, to a degree, but it is a challenge because they need to have supportive services if they are really going to be successful staying on the assistance.

Chairman Ceballos asked Mr. De Anda if he wanted to comment. Mr. De Anda confirmed and stated that he noticed they have 100% occupancy except for Farm Labor and Asherton units and they know that he has dealt with some tenant issues at the Farm Labor Project units and stated that they are aware that they can get a waiver from the Department of Agriculture to house other than farm workers which may be a way of getting the occupancy up in that housing project. Chairman Ceballos stated that he agrees and mentioned that it has been a recurring issue and it seems that it has been since they started this Board and mentioned that they really need to do that and that every time they think they are going to fill them, they always end up leveling at 8-10 units vacant and they really need to change the use and just take the hit on the subsidy; they have units there and they just talked about buying an apartment, so why not just dedicate units there; they already have a staff member there and asked Mrs. Gaona what she would think, but said that they always end up with like eight units vacant and he knows that those are large units, but maybe they may end up modifying them and making them duplexes; they are already duplexes, so it would be quadruplexes to house some of the people on Emergency Housing and stated that they would make money actually because they have vouchers. Chairman Ceballos asked Mrs. Gaona if she agrees with that or if she thinks there is another issue why they are vacant. Mrs. Gaona responded that she agrees and that they just need to make sure they

put a policy in place as to how they are going to move the families and make sure it is all by the book. Chairman Ceballos stated that it is not on the agenda to move on that and convert it, but he thinks that it should be explored and stated that they have explored it before and he thinks that they should really act on it and maybe put it on the agenda for the next meeting. Mrs. Gaona stated that they will start looking at what is needed to do it.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that on the next item which is the consent agenda, there are two items that were written in a form that is not customary for consent agenda, which are items 10 C. and 10 D. from the consent agenda; therefore, Chairman Ceballos moved to pull those items out and do them independently and stated that typically the write up they use is consideration to authorize, so he wants to make sure that they can be consistent, so it is just an oversight on how they listed that.

Chairman Ceballos moved to treat items 10C and 10D separately as individual items.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned to Mr. De Anda that it is probably not necessary, but he would like to do that to keep the same consistency. Mr. De Anda confirmed.

10. CONSENT AGENDA

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

Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina moved to approve items 10 A. and 10 B. of the consent agenda.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

- A.** Consideration to authorize travel of staff and/or Board for the 2022 NAHRO Conference in Washington, D.C. on March 26-30, 2022.
- B.** Consideration to authorize the Executive Director to proceed with discussions on a possible contract with the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs Department in regard to a partnership involving the management of an additional 85 Emergency Housing Vouchers within the Section 8 Housing Program.
- C.** Discussion and possible action to adopt Resolution No. 22-R-01 and approve the Utility Allowance Schedules for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) and Project Based Voucher (PBV) Program effective March 1, 2022, as recommended by staff.

- D. Discussion and possible action to adopt Resolution No. 22-R-02 and approve the Utility Allowance Schedules for the Public Housing Program effective March 1, 2022, as recommended by staff.

The Board continued with Item 10 C. Discussion and possible action to adopt Resolution No. 22-R-01 and approve the Utility Allowance Schedule for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) and Project Based Voucher (PBV) Program effective March 1, 2022, as recommended by staff.

Chairman Ceballos stated that these are customary updates to the utility allowances and mentioned that both 10C and 10D are updates and that they are dealing with item 10C.

Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any questions or comments from staff on this item. Mrs. Melissa Ortiz stated, for the record, that the utility allowances did increase most of the rates, so they are seeing the utility allowance schedules increase per unit type.

Chairman Ceballos asked if Nelrod helped prepare the schedule. Mrs. Ortiz confirmed.

Chairman Jose L. Ceballos moved to adopt Item 10 C. as presented which updates the utility allowance schedule for Section 8.

Commissioner Anita Guerra seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

Item 10 D. Discussion and possible action to adopt Resolution No. 22-R-02 and approve the Utility Allowance Schedules for the Public Housing Program effective March 1, 2022, as recommended by staff.

Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any comments from staff on this item.

Ms. Barrientos informed that there is an increase this year and stated that Nelrod prepared the report for them and mentioned that between the one bedroom and two bedrooms, they are looking at \$22.22 increase; in three and four bedrooms, they are looking at \$22.49 increase as well. Chairman Ceballos stated that obviously this is a benefit to the tenant and it makes sense and he does not think that anybody questions with inflationary issues being what they are and stated that he is not surprised and that it will benefit obviously the tenant; they will get a higher allowance. Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any questions from the Board. There were none.

Chairman Jose L. Ceballos moved to approve item 10 D. as presented.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

11. ACTION ITEM

- A. Discussion and possible action authorizing the Executive Director to: conclude the value engineering and negotiation of RFP 2021-0811-1-COVID 19 Public Health & Safety Project-Section 8 & Colonia Guadalupe Administration after not arriving at the budgeted amount; reduce and amend the scope of work; and proceed with a construction management delivery system to achieve the work.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that over an extended period of time since the award, the staff was working with the firm that was awarded this project and they were really unable to arrive within what they had as a budget and at this point, they would be converting or ending this negotiation process and turning it into a project management or construction management opportunity which means that they will be basically negotiating with subs or negotiating with firms that would be interested in managing the project as opposed to an award to a general contractor which was what they had. Chairman Ceballos asked Mrs. Gaona if she had other information to add for the Board and asked her how long was the process. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that she would say that it has been since October until now, so they have been doing it for about 3 ½ months back and forth trying to arrive to a figure that would work with their budget, unfortunately, they were not able. Chairman Ceballos stated that the scope was perhaps too much and stated that he would like to see that firm invited to respond for the opportunity to manage it as opposed to it being a complete award of the contract as stated and if they would not like to respond, they will not respond, but at least invite the firm because he thinks it is a good firm and stated that Mrs. Gaona did her best and the firm did their best, but they could not get to the amount. Chairman Ceballos asked how many back and forth attempts to revise the budget Mrs. Gaona had. Mrs. Gaona responded that it was about four meetings.

Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any questions for Mrs. Gaona or any comments. There were none.

Chairman Jose L. Ceballos moved for them to proceed as the item is written and conclude end of engineering negotiation and convert it into a construction management delivery system to move the project forward and stated that the scope would have to be reduced for there is no way they can do all the things they had on those drawings.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion.

Motion carried unanimously.

- B. Discussion and possible action to authorize the eligible purchase of a 2021 Ford Escape in the amount of \$23,460.00 for the Rapid Rehousing Program.

Mrs. Gaona stated that they would like to get Board authorization to purchase a vehicle under the Rapid Rehousing Program which is an eligible line item with this grant and being that the grant does require for staff to go out and take participants

and also, to do home visits; therefore, they are asking for this purchase. Chairman Ceballos asked if the availability of funds is driving this request. Mrs. Gaona confirmed. Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any questions for Mrs. Gaona. There were none.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza moved to approve item 11 B.

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

Motion passed unanimously.

- C.** Discussion and possible action to authorize the purchase of one compact car or small pick-up truck for each public housing property and HCV program to serve management needs, as may be financially feasible under the current fiscal year while maintaining a positive operating balance.

Mrs. Gaona mentioned that they are looking at possibly purchasing a small pick-up or a small vehicle for the property managers and mentioned that they have not had the courier service contract since April of 2020, so they do have to go do deposits, they have to come to the main office and go to different properties when it is an AMP that consists of two properties and there is no vehicle available for them, so most of the time they are having to take their personal vehicle, or ride with the maintenance staff stated Chairman Ceballos. Mrs. Gaona confirmed and stated that because of COVID, they want to prevent having more than the two people on one vehicle and cause to be contaminated from maintenance to management, so they would want the Board's authorization that if there is operating revenue at the end of the fiscal year, that they be able to do this purchase before the end of the year. Chairman Ceballos stated that he had asked if they had already purchased the trucks for the maintenance and Mrs. Gaona had mentioned that they did last fiscal year and asked if it was this fiscal year. Mrs. Gaona stated it was in 2020, but that they did not really receive them until 2021 because it took a while. Mrs. Gaona stated that they purchased them in October and that the Board approved them on October of 2020, but they received them in early 2021 and mentioned that they did receive one new vehicle for the properties.

Chairman Ceballos stated that his comment is to just be smart of what they buy because if it is a place where they usually need pick up trucks, that they do not buy a car, but buy a small pick-up truck and mentioned that they only have one pick-up per site for maintenance, so it could also help in the event they are out of that truck as opposed to buying a car that does not help with maintenance on an emergency. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked what this car would be used for, if for anybody. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that the question is if it is for anybody and asked Mrs. Gaona if it is for the particular project, the AMP. Mrs. Gaona responded that they would want to buy one for each property if the funding is available, for the property Amp.

Commissioner Ms. Freeman mentioned that they could possibly entertain buying a small fleet of the smaller cars or compacts at a reduced price. Chairman Ceballos stated that he thinks that is what they are doing; they are buying a fleet vehicle. Mrs. Gaona confirmed.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked what size of a vehicle they are going to buy and if they know what brand of the vehicle they are going to buy. Mrs. Gaona stated that they are going to look at the fleet that is available and the price that is available and mentioned that they just procured the Ford Escape and it was what was available right now, so if they are looking for a small vehicle or like Chairman Ceballos said, a small pick-up truck that can be used by the property manager and if need be, it could be used for maintenance if, let's say the maintenance truck is in the shop or something, but it is a small vehicle. Chairman Ceballos stated that the other aspect of this and he does not know if they have been clear is that if they do not utilize the operating revenue, it goes into reserves and he thinks that they all already know that really well; it becomes part of restricted reserves, so what Mrs. Gaona is trying to do is if they have a good year, which looks like they are going to have a good year financially, is to utilize those excess revenues to make this purchase.

Vice-chairman Dr. Garza stated that he knows they are not going to get something that is very expensive, but at the same time if they get something small, it is not going to be of any help at all. Chairman Ceballos stated that the item says small, so they may want to open that in the motion, to leave it up to the Executive Director to be smart on what she buys. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that particularly for Section 8, it seems smart to get them cars, but when they do not need them anymore, they serve no other purpose; they cannot send them to the maintenance department, so he wondered if it would make sense to get them a small truck because it is only that people that ride it in Section 8, so he recommended to get them a little pickup truck, so that when they cycle through them, they would send that pickup truck to a shop, to the maintenance department; right now they are going to try to find a place for those cars, so Chairman Ceballos again recommended to be smart about what they buy and to maybe customize the selection like Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza mentioned, for the site and for the needs of the agency as opposed to say that they are all going to get escapes which do not do anything for maintenance in the future. Chairman Ceballos stated that Mrs. Gaona is basically telling them that they have an opportunity because they are going to have excess reserves and if they want to invest in vehicles they need.

Chairman Ceballos stated that he is going to move and try to integrate Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza's comment, to authorize the purchase of new vehicles that are selected based on the best use for the agency and the projects they will serve and as financially feasible, given the operation revenues leading to the end of the fiscal year.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

- D. Discussion and possible action to approve the Employee On-Call Policy with any Board amendments, effective February 6, 2022.

Chairman Ceballos stated that they have a draft and asked Mrs. Gaona if she has already been implementing an incentive to compensate on-call or not. Mrs. Gaona responded that she has not yet. Chairman Ceballos stated that Mrs. Gaona is proposing to compensate \$1.25 per hour for any staff member that is on call during the weekend, on the holidays or whatever and they will effectively make the sum of those hours multiplied by \$1.25 while they are on call. Chairman Ceballos stated that he added the language as any Board amendments because they really have not had a lot of time to look at this, but said that in talking to Mrs. Gaona, she is beginning to describe like they may be having some employment competition; people being recruited to other industries, trucking is one, so they are not going to compete with the trucking industry; they cannot pay \$80-\$90K, but they can provide some things that staff members can use, including this pay which is fair, it could be more or it could be less, but the other thing Chairman Ceballos would like to add is certainly providing them a phone which is a minimum investment for the agency or phone allowance and stated that he knows the on-call person as Mrs. Gaona described to him, has a phone, but what Chairman Ceballos is saying, so that they would not lose people, it is not directly related to the on-call, but it is related to staff members exiting the agency and stated that he was going to propose that maybe under this item or the next one and said that maybe he is getting ahead of himself, but mentioned that the phone be provided to the lead maintenance staff which is a \$15 investment a month for the agency, but it is an allowance for them, so they do not spend \$50; it is a perk and it may be more related to the next item.

Commissioner Ms. Guerra mentioned that she was wondering how many people are paid on-call. Chairman Ceballos asked Mrs. Gaona to speak how they pay the on-call and how it is budgeted. Mrs. Gaona stated that right now each property has a maintenance staff that is on-call every week; every week they rotate the on-call, so they have a phone that is assigned to each property and the on-call employee takes the cellular phone home with him every day for that week; they are only compensated, let's say if they have an emergency work order, they come in, they are compensated for the time from when they leave their house to the time that they complete the work, so if it is already at an overtime rate, they get paid at the overtime rate for the actual hours worked, but it is only for the actual hours worked. Chairman Ceballos asked if people really do not want to be on-call. Mrs. Gaona replied that they do not because sometimes they may not get called all weekend and they do not get paid, but they have to be on standby and they cannot go out of town. Chairman Ceballos asked if one person is on call per day per property and if it is not one central on-call person. Mrs. Gaona stated that it is one on-call person per property. Chairman Ceballos stated that if they are unhappy, they have one unhappy person per property. Mr. De Anda mentioned

that if they are watching the football game and getting \$1.25 per hour is not bad. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that if the employees are displeased with that, they are going to lose them, they are going to be truck drivers and stated that he is all for it and mentioned that Mrs. Gaona provided comparable based on what the industry and other cities are doing and stated that they are at the top. Mrs. Gaona confirmed. Chairman Ceballos stated that they are at the top and that he would like the Board, maybe on the next item, consider issuing out cell phones which is an investment and mentioned that he gets reimbursed for his phone which is a nice perk, so that is something they can provide at a nominal cost to the agency which is a good investment of public monies to keep an employee satisfied or happy because they are doing things for them to keep them and said that they already do that with Directors; they provide them their phones and pay for them which is on the next item.

Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina mentioned that her question was whether the agency provide the phone or the employee provides their own personal phone and said that Chairman Ceballos already explained that the agency provides the phone and stated that her thing is about the checks and balances as to how they are verifying that they did receive a call, that there is a log book for the time and effort and stated that she is all for paying the employees, but then also, if they have a public phone, that they just review the laws of it, that it is not to be used for personal. Commissioner Ms. Guerra stated that they had that at the County where people were just going crazy doing all sorts of things and having all sorts of photos and they received grievances and even some lawsuits and now they said you have to do this and this or turn in their phone and now there is very few people that have County phones. Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina mentioned that it is the reason she brought that up.

Chairman Ceballos stated that it is an important point because he was actually on the other side of that thinking that he would not want to manage people's phones and would prefer to just give them the allowance with the expectation that they would answer their phone because otherwise they are managing a ton of phones.

Chairman Ceballos stated that he was looking at it from the incentive side, that the agency will carry that cost and it would be an incentive for them as opposed to a Housing Authority tool necessarily; it is just a different way to do it and he would agree with the consensus, but obviously the objective is that the services be delivered and that they keep a high morale as best as they can with the staff. Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina mentioned that even with the personal phone they can subpoena it; therefore, the employees have to be educated whichever route administration decides to do, there are legalities on both. Chairman Ceballos stated that it is true and asked Attorney De Anda in regards to being an allowance, if it would be reachable or subject to open records if it is an allowance. Mr. De Anda stated that they can definitely do an allowance. Mr. Poneck confirmed and stated that the nature of the information is what determines whether it is public, so if someone uses a phone that is private, but

they have texts that pertain to public information like discussions about public businesses of the entity; then, those are reachable as it would be if they are using an entity issued phone, so it is the nature of the information. Chairman Ceballos asked that the information would be reachable through a public request, but the utilization of that phone for other things would not be subject to open records. Mr. Poneck responded that it would not if it is truly private, personal stuff that has nothing to do with business of the entity; then, it is not reachable.

Chairman Ceballos stated that if they provide an allowance, hypothetically, the allowance allows them to get the phone they want, wherever they want, any exchanges with our agency become public, but every other use that they have with the phone is theirs, and asked if it was clear and correct. Mr. Poneck stated that it is correct.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked about just using the phone for messaging, but would not know about the internet and asked Robert if it can be controlled. Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina mentioned that they have to be careful because there are matters when they take care of business using WhatsApp or programs and that can still subject them to legal matters because they are talking about business outside.

Chairman Ceballos stated that he may be wrong for he was thinking it would be a perk, but if they are going to overlay a second phone on someone, the morale is going to shift the other way as opposed to it being an incentive and it may be that they are not an agency that can do this as an incentive because they are public, but if they say that they are going to get a phone that belongs to the Housing Authority, like they do right now, all the people that have a Housing Authority phone, is all owned by the Housing Authority and stated that he may be wrong in terms of its content, but generally, he thinks that is the case and if they say that they are going to issue them a phone, they are going to put them on-call, they are going to take the \$1.25 and stated that he does not think they are going to be encouraged to get an agency phone that makes them subject to all kinds of reviews.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked Mr. Peña if there is something he can do to block a cell phone. Mr. Peña stated that there is a service called MDM which is a mobile device monitoring service that allows to restrict basically almost every feature of the phone; they can restrict what applications are installed, restrict what websites to have access on it, have it turn on and off at certain hours, for example to turn off at 7 p.m., so they cannot use it overnight if that is something they would want, so it would be just the matter of getting it implemented on the phones, installing the software and then from there they set up whatever restrictions they want; there is also a feature called geofencing which allows you to whenever the phone passes a certain boundary of a certain restriction or if restriction is dropped, so they are able to use the phone depending on how they set it up, so there is a service that can do that.

Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina stated that what she just meant to say is that whatever administration decides to do, both have legalities to run through, so she thinks that it is important to work with legal to provide those little check lists that are important for the employee to understand and sign off of it, so that if in the future, if there is an incident, they were aware of that responsibility.

Mr. De Anda stated that his understanding that the reason an entity gives a phone to an employee as opposed to providing money is that the entity can maintain ownership of that phone and that way, it would just be a matter of asking for the phone back and they have all the information and communication they had with the employee as opposed to asking them for their personal phone and getting all the information. Mr. De Anda stated that he does not know whether they mean to own the phones where they would want to get into somebody's phone and get information and mentioned that they do not have proprietary information for example which may be a case for a company, they want to protect it; therefore, they provide a phone because they know that is where the proprietary information is going to be and if they ever want it back, they just get the phone. Chairman Ceballos stated that the discussion has taken them away from it being an incentive or a perk and that if that is the case; then, let's not, but he does agree that it should be betted legally, so he asked what would be the options; if it is a perk, what would they have to do; if it is a requirement, what would be the legal checklist and would agree with that, but to add a secondary phone to the staff would be going in the opposite direction; it is not going to be a perk. Commissioner Ms. Guerra stated that some people do not like it because it is like a mechanism control and they literally get out of it, they do not want a phone.

Chairman Ceballos stated that maybe they should study this a little more on the phone side and to see what is a real incentive for the maintenance staff, so they do not lose them and he was thinking that if the agency carries that cost which he thinks is about \$50 for the cheapest one or maybe a little more, now \$70 the cheapest and it will cost them probably \$15 to add a line to the account; they do not spend the money; they provide that perk and would appreciate that with all the legal ramifications all around, so he thinks that maybe they would study it a little more and stated that he would like it to be a perk and if they cannot do it, it would be ok.

Mr. De Anda stated that right now the employees are bound by the Open Records Act that if anything, it will require them to divulge information on their personal phones, whether it is the agency phone or the employee phone, our maintenance for example, if there is a car wreck and somebody is injured and there is some communication with his personal phone and the agency, the injured party may be entitled to that information even though it is a personal phone, so there are legal ramifications however way they cut it, but if they keep that money because they are causing them to use their phone for the agency purposes; then, it is a straight perk and they will be glad. Chairman Ceballos stated that it is not in this particular

item; it is related to the on-call, but Mrs. Gaona simplified this to this particular bump up on their on-call service.

Chairman Ceballos asked Mrs. Gaona what the total impact per year is on this program. Mrs. Gaona stated that it is from \$7K-\$8K per property. Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina stated that if Mrs. Gaona needs this policy, they can approve it, but to also charge her to evaluate it and mentioned that she is all for that perk, there is no doubt about that, as long as they are trained and educated on what it would entail once they start adding that stipend. Chairman Ceballos asked Mrs. Gaona if she needs that \$1.25 per hour, if she needs that program and if she wants it. Mrs. Gaona replied that she does. Chairman Ceballos stated that Mrs. Gaona needs it and Chairman Ceballos stated that he just wanted to leave it on the record, so that they are not providing perks because is perks; they are trying to address an issue and stated that it is a lot of money per property for sure.

Commissioner Ms. Freeman stated that along with this incentive they are discussing for the on-call maintenance personnel, she thinks that they should also have a sign in/sign out form for them to know how long they are going in or if they are going in to check the problem, to fix or address the problem afterhours because she had somebody go to her house who said that he did not know anything about it and it was after 5 o'clock on Friday night and she was told to call maintenance Monday morning and mentioned that it was about an electric problem, so Commissioner Ms. Freeman stated that she felt that having a set of breakers out at one time was a sufficient issue to be addressed during the weekend, but the person was in her house for maybe five minutes and Commissioner Ms. Freeman asked if they get paid for an hour for five minutes worth of work and not doing any work; just making a recommendation to make a phone call. Commissioner Ms. Freeman mentioned that she thinks they need to have a form that says what time they arrived, what time they left, what they recommended and also a resident comment and stated that there needs to be checks and balances on this also.

Jennifer Barrientos stated, for the record, that employees do clock in and out; that they have access to the time clock and mentioned that the emergency calls they get are reported in the security log at Senior Home because the resident is supposed to call Senior Home security, and from there, the security contacts the on-call emergency phone and reports the work order, so Ms. Barrientos stated that there is a log at Senior Home when they got contacted first by the resident and when they contact the maintenance personnel, so they have that log that they ask for every payroll; additionally, they do clock in when they get to the site or location and they clock out when they leave as well and they also call back Senior Home to let them know what time they left; additionally, when they are there, they have a carbon copy work order that the resident has to sign and they note down what time they arrived and the time they left, so Ms. Barrientos stated that they should be doing that and mentioned that she is going to address that since it was not done. Commissioner Ms. Freeman stated that she did not sign any carbon

copy form and mentioned that she has not signed any on-call since she moved back from Meadow Elderly to Russell Terrace, the only person that brought her a form to sign was Mr. Roycroft and that was because he had to come from another project to address her issue because it could not be addressed by the maintenance people at Russell Terrace which was during regular working hours. Ms. Barrientos stated that during the regular working hours, it is an emergency work order, but it is not an after-call emergency, so they report the call to the office to do a regular emergency work order during business time. Mrs. Gaona stated that work orders should also be reviewed by property managers and mentioned that she is sure all of them are on the zoom call right now, so they know that they should be reviewing those emergency work orders before they are even sent to finance for approval for payroll, so that also has to go through the property manager. Chairman Ceballos stated that it sounds more like an administrative issue than an on-call situation. Mrs. Gaona confirmed.

Commissioner Ms. Guerra asked how many they do on call and actually how many cases they have per property. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he does not have that information. Mrs. Gaona mentioned that last year they had 153 calls from January to December.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked if there is a particular property that has the majority of those calls. Mrs. Gaona stated that it varies and that is why a lot of the maintenance staff do not want to take it or they do not want to be on call because sometimes they do not get called; sometimes they get called once or twice during the week, but it is the fact that they have to be on call and they have to be on standby.

Chairman Ceballos asked Mrs. Gaona the total program cost. Mrs. Gaona asked if as far as the expenses they had. Chairman Ceballos asked how much this program is going to cost them, not by property, but total. Mrs. Gaona responded that it would be about \$40K and mentioned that they currently have \$5K that is budgeted for the overtime and the on-call, so they would be adding about \$3K to each budget.

Chairman Ceballos asked for the total operating budget for Public Housing. Mrs. Gaona stated that she did not have that information at the moment. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked how much the phone is going to cost, how they are going to align it and how they are going to get the services. Chairman Ceballos stated that the phone is not in this action. Mrs. Gaona stated that right now they do currently have a phone that is an on-call phone that is assigned to them; each one of them, if it is their week, the employee would take the phone with him; next week is somebody else's turn, so that person takes the phone with him, so there is a phone for each property that is going out for each amp that is assigned the on-call. Chairman Ceballos stated that the cost is \$1.25 for every on-call hour, basically to what the total arrives and mentioned that the reason he was asking the total cost is whether it would make more sense to hire a brand new person

that does all the on-calls, but when they are having problems recruiting, they are going to have another recruiting and keeping and said that he is asking the question, so that they all understand because it seems like a lot, but he is going to guess that the Public Housing operation program is \$5M-\$6M.

Chairman Ceballos asked Ms. Barrientos, Finance Director, what they are running in total operations, if \$3M-\$5M. Ms. Barrientos responded that it is less than \$3M. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that \$40K in the grand scheme of an operational budget that is \$3M is not a lot of money. Commissioner Ms. Guerra stated that she guessed the maintenance guys are very experienced and they bring a lot of intangibles to the Laredo Housing Authority and if it is just a retention issue in having to fill those positions and asked if there were a lot of vacancies in the maintenance division. Chairman Ceballos stated that Mrs. Gaona has mentioned to him that people want to be on-call when there is pay and asked if it was correct. Mrs. Gaona confirmed and stated that she is sure they would want to be on-call. Chairman Ceballos stated that they could be watching the Super Bowl and nothing happens and they are making \$1.25 an hour while they are watching the Super Bowl.

Chairman Ceballos asked Mrs. Gaona if she would like to start it this fiscal year or the new fiscal year, if she wants to start it ASAP or if she is looking at April 1st. Mrs. Gaona stated that she would like to start it next pay period if possible. Chairman Ceballos stated that it conveys the importance of this item; he was trying to give the Board a little bit of time if they would like to think it over and said that they can still think it over, but the Director is telling them that she needs it. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza asked if next week. Commissioner Ms. Guerra mentioned that Mrs. Gaona wants to start right now. Chairman Ceballos stated that Mrs. Gaona probably knows the folks that are considering options, so this is an incentive to keep them and stated that it is not a unique incentive, other cities are doing it, so it is obvious why they are doing it.

Chairman Ceballos moved to approve this item as presented and asked the Director for a follow up presentation maybe in 60-90 days to see how this all rolls out. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion for discussion.

Commissioner Ms. Guerra stated that she would like to know the number of calls they actually reported and maybe a survey. Chairman Ceballos stated that once they second the motion, they will continue with the discussion. Chairman Ceballos asked if there was a second for discussion purposes. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion for discussion. Commissioner Ms. Guerra mentioned that they would like to know how much time they spend on those calls because she is concerned about Commissioner Ms. Freeman issue regarding a work order that happened during a weekend. Chairman Ceballos stated that he would amend his motion.

Chairman Ceballos moved to authorize this program with the requirement that the time invested per call be documented and signed by the tenant. Commissioner Ms. Guerra asked for a survey and said that she does not want to make it so complicated that takes a lot of time for Mrs. Gaona, just something that has accountability; ultimately, it is the people they serve which is the residents. Chairman Ceballos confirmed. Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina stated that if they can ensure checks and balances, exactly as Commissioner Ms. Guerra recommended regarding Commissioner Ms. Freeman. Mr. De Anda mentioned some simple form for the employee to set up his time and a place for comments from the tenant; if the employee did a good job, he would want the tenant to comment and let the supervisor know and thank him and if he were the maintenance guy, he would want to do a good job because they are going to comment on his work; therefore, Chairman Ceballos re-stated the motion.

Chairman Ceballos moved to approve the item as presented with the add-on condition that the program include a tracking form for every work order that is completed that includes a signature from the tenant and a space for comments to be able to evaluate the work that is being performed and that the report reach the Executive Director's office.

Commissioner Ms. Freeman seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any additional comments or proposed amendments. Mrs. Gaona thanked the Board.

E. Discussion and possible action related to the development and implementation of a Workforce Recruitment and Retention Plan.

Chairman Ceballos mentioned that they will not attempt to reach consensus during this meeting, but they will bring it back and stated that there is no back up information on this item because he asked Mrs. Gaona to put it on, basically, to let them all know that they have some, as the rest of the country is having, workforce retention and recruitment and stated that they need to look closely and if any of them would want to work with Mrs. Gaona and him on some sort of plan to bring back to the Board, to please help them with it; basically, they are starting from scratch like most of the employers are and mentioned that his opinion is that they need to be what they are and this is an agency that requires a lot of work that is face to face and they cannot turn into an all-out work from home or flex schedule agency; they have seen the product of flex scheduling in the government and it is very ineffective and mentioned that he is trying to be polite and that personally, he is a believer that folks are best served when they are in person, however, the reality of their meeting today reflects that they have pandemic issues that are now long term and they will probably continue to be that way and they need to be as the country, as an agency, as everything else, they need to be responsive to that and they need to get ahead because they cannot afford to lose more of their team and then, be in a pinch to operate the agency while they are here.

Commissioner Ms. Guerra asked where was the most of the bleeding coming from. Chairman Ceballos stated that they have been unable to fill the Public Housing Director role for years, so there is a gap there and some of it includes increasing pay to recruit a different kind of pool, but now they are seeing and hearing that they are going to lose some more maintenance folks; they have been having problems keeping some maintenance people and mentioned that the Capital Fund Construction Program is now down to three members. Commissioner Ms. Guerra asked about the administrative tasks. Chairman Ceballos stated that it is mostly construction which he said is ok because they are subbing the work and then asked Mrs. Gaona to inform where they have the vacancies. Mrs. Gaona stated that they have about eight vacancies in maintenance staff at the properties. Chairman Ceballos stated that eight is 10% of the total staff and mentioned that just for general discussion today, he thinks they need to spend a little bit of time there and they may need to pump this out to a consultant that specializes in this stuff because they are not experts, but to at least be informed that he and Mrs. Gaona will try to start putting something together that will come back to the Board which he thinks will involve cross training the departments for Section 8 and Public Housing and stated that actually they have been working towards that where they have job descriptions now that are kind of similar, so that when they lose one in one department, they can cross them over to the other department; their jobs are not completely different, so those are the strategies and actions that Chairman Ceballos thinks they are going to have to work through and also the parity, for if they say that they will be able to work from home; he wondered, when is maintenance going to be able to work from home, so it would be looking for parities between people's pay and responsibilities is going to be important and mentioned that only for information, the cell phone incentives need to be scrubbed in like what they would provide people that would be an incentive to keep them from looking for another job or leaving and said that they can look, but when leaving is where they feel the pain.

Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any comments and mentioned that if they would want to be involved, he knows everyone is short of time, but this is a brand-new area they are going to have to tackle. Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina stated that she agrees that it is so important and she does not think it is just housing, but thinks that any business or industry, any educational partnership, everyone is going through the same thing in society and there is also so much competition in companies offering remote work to where nobody needs to go to a physical space and they can literally work at any company out of the whole nation, so that is also competition and there is a lot of different things that she thinks are happening in this world and also, when it comes to construction, it is also the supply and demand like not being able to get supplies on time to execute a project, so she thinks that society as a whole is providing a domino effect that affects the business industry. Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza mentioned that parts for his car have been in a ship for so many months. Chairman Ceballos stated that the other piece that is unique to the agency to a degree is that they are dealing with

sensitive third party information in their documents and wonders how they would be able to work from home if it is a Section 8 technician and they are opening up the screen and it has people's social security and all the information, so all those things come into place, so as much as remote work sounds attractive for us and our staff, it is not as simple as just going home and sending the files and stated that they cannot do that; they have never sent files home, never! It is not permissible and sometimes they do not even let the attorneys take them with them, so this was just for discussion and mentioned that this item will come back and invited them to help with this item as they go forward.

Chairman Ceballos stated that there is no action on this item, 11E.

- F. Discussion and possible action to authorize the Executive Director to close on aged Laredo Housing Employee Organization bank account and to transfer any funds to the public housing resident services program fund for utilization in referenced permissible uses.

Chairman Ceballos stated that they probably remember this account which involved some stuff that was very questionable that they found when they came into this agency which pre-existed them; this fund has been what he now considers disband employee organization, to settle out and close the proposed use of those funds; some of those funds origination may have been from Public Housing projects, so rightfully, that money should return, including the sale of Public Housing assets and stated that some of those actions being questioned by them and others involved in reviewing them years back, so Mrs. Gaona brought this item to put closure to that bank account and to transfer the funds back into the Public Housing Program to serve the residents.

Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any questions or anything the legal team would want to add on this item. Mr. Poneck stated that only if the funds were ultimately the Housing Authority funds because they were just put into a particular bucket, but that bucket has no legal identity separate apart from the Housing Authority so, he recommended to feel free to re-allocate those funds as they deem appropriate. Chairman Ceballos stated that if there is any staff member that would wish to question that; then, they can bring it up to the Board and to the legal team.

Chairman Ceballos moved to approve this item and for the Director to provide the Board a report of what was transferred, where it went and then memorialize it somewhere.

Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

At this time Chairman Ceballos moved to jump to Item 10H and to table that item, Item 10 H.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Ceballos stated that the purpose to table the item is that they want to go through that review and he knows that it has been postponed and today it is being postponed for obvious reasons and mentioned that they do have the forms to be able to start the evaluation and they will reconvene and meet with Mrs. Gaona at the next opportunity, but he would want to table it for now and then close the meeting with item 11G.

Chairman Ceballos moved to table item 11H.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

- G.** Discussion and possible action related to the current COVID-19 health concerns and any update to the COVID-19 policies implemented in response to the health concern. This item may be discussed in executive session pursuant to Section 551.071 (consultation with attorneys) and 551.074 (personnel matters).

Chairman Ceballos stated that they would want to discuss this item in open session for the sake of the staff, others and for the record and then go into executive session to look at some details.

Chairman Ceballos stated that the idea with this item was to update the policy and mentioned that obviously things have changed since they had the last policy which was June of last year; that policy helped pretty well actually with all things evolving back then and through the end of the year, however, there are some tweaks that he thinks are necessary with all the things that have changed, mostly regulatory, and of course, the lack that they do not have any clarity from certain aspects because of politics, so he mentioned that what they did as a committee, they met this week and stated that the committee is composed of Mrs. Gaona, Doug Poneck, Ricardo De Anda, and Public Health Consultant, Dr. Waldo Lopez and Chairman Ceballos, so they kind of scrubbed through the old and discussed the old policy and they came up with an initial first draft of what this policy update will look like; they are just seeing it for the first time, so they probably need some time to read it and stated that the exhibit which is attached to it is something Dr. Lopez added to kind of help staff members with Q&A over their circumstances, so he is going to go to first Mr. De Anda and then to Dr. Lopez to kind of take them through the highlights of the resolution and then, if they think they need to go into executive session, they can do that after they hear them.

Mr. De Anda provided them with an update and stated that in March of last year, they had the first COVID policy which was focused on masks and they were very strict on the policy requiring masking within all the buildings; on the common areas, they required masking from the employees and tenants in common areas and from the guests and visitors as of March of last year; in June, they had a policy that focused on vaccinations requiring the employees to be vaccinated, mandating vaccinations for the employees, but in the process of doing that following CDC

guidelines which they have been doing since day one, they relaxed the masking standards and said that if they were vaccinated they did not have to wear a mask and they totally removed the masking requirements with respect to the guests and the tenants in the common areas, so what they are doing in this case, at least what they presented, is to re-instate the original masking policy which will require the employees to be masked at all times at work, whether they are vaccinated or not, and requiring the tenants in common areas and our visitors and guests in our buildings to wear a mask, vaccinated or not, and mentioned that they do not have a vaccination issue any more as he understands that pretty much everybody is vaccinated, so they do not have to struggle with that at all. Chairman Ceballos stated that there is a booster potential and mentioned that they do not have an issue yet, but it may happen. Mr. De Anda stated that they added the booster requirement to the vaccination standard and mentioned that if they have already done two and if they have already committed themselves to two, they are not likely to complain about, so they added the booster to the vaccination requirement and mentioned that Dr. Lopez will talk to them in that respect with regards to employees that have tested positive and what is required from them before they come to work, employees who have been in contact with someone who has tested positive including the requirements for coming to work which is the exhibit that was presented which is very specific and is easy for the employees to read and understand and stated that if the wife tested positive, what is an employee supposed to do now, well Housing says they need to inform the supervisor immediately and then, they are going to follow the protocol.

Chairman Ceballos stated that this is the first draft, so to speak or the working draft; they discussed the mask before and he thinks that Mr. De Anda added the K-95 and the masking is something he wants to discuss in executive session and would like to have Dr. Lopez run them through his exhibit and then go from there.

Dr. Lopez stated that it is a pleasure and an honor to be back with this team and mentioned that he spent some time in Dallas working for the Headquarters of Region 2 and 3 and Texas Department of Health and CDC from August to almost November at which time he went to Orlando to visit with his mom. Dr. Lopez mentioned that the handout they have in front of them is to mainly simplify or explain better what is in the protocol itself or the right solution being proposed and stated that the resolution being proposed, as it stands, conforms with Texas Department of Health Services CDC and the City of Laredo Health Department or Dr. Victor Treviño who is the health authority for the City of Laredo, so by adopting that resolution they are in compliance with the City of Laredo CDC and the State of Texas which mainly pertains to people that have come in contact with someone who has COVID or they themselves have COVID and they do not know who they came in contact with, so if they were exposed to COVID and are not up to date on the COVID-19 vaccinations, it means that they do not have the booster, but had the other two; they can quarantine for five days as recommended as per CDC which has been reduced from the original protocol or resolution which he believes they had 10 days or 14 days and now it is five days.

Dr. Lopez mentioned that science has shared with them recently that five days and that 69% of the people do not transmit the disease in five days which means 31% of them, so in other words, CDC decided, because of what they know so far of COVID and the other variants, is that 69% of the people at the end of five days, regardless of their immunization status, do not transmit the disease which means that only about 30% transmit the disease which is low enough; it is the case like with influenza, when they get that low, there is almost no transmission; there is still some transmission, but not a lot to be very worried about it and at the end of 10 days, 95% of the people do not transmit the disease or 5% transmit the disease and that after 14 days, science tells them that only 1% of the people transmit the disease, so what CDC did, based on the science, they reduced the quarantine days to five days, so for five days they stay home, they quarantine for five days; they get tested and then after they are quarantined, they watch for symptoms for the next 10 days; they watch for the symptoms, take precautions and wear the mask for 10 days, so that is for the people that are not up to date with the vaccine; if they were exposed to COVID and are up to date on the COVID-19 vaccinations, no quarantine is needed; they do not need to stay home unless they develop symptoms; they get tested of course, everyone needs to be tested in all situations for at least five days after they had contact with someone with COVID, they watch for symptoms up to 10 days, of course, and continue to stay home until they know the results and take precautions and wear the mask, so those are the main two differences here, if they are up to date with their vaccinations, they do not have to quarantine, but are required to get tested and are required to watch for symptoms for ten days and if they develop symptoms, of course it is common sense, they do not go to work.

Chairman Ceballos stated that he wants to point out to the Board because it may not be obvious; this policy as presented is based on symptoms; it is based on full immunization, so when it says if you are immunized, it means fully with booster and secondly, it treats them based on symptoms, so if they are exhibiting symptoms, they are basically treated like they are COVID positive and asked Dr. Lopez if that is correct. Dr. Lopez confirmed. Chairman Ceballos stated that for a staff member that is coming in negative with symptoms, they will still have to conform to this protocol.

Commissioner Ms. Guerra asked if they can define the symptoms. Chairman Ceballos stated that they can define them and asked what the symptoms would be that would deliver that sort of protocol. Dr. Lopez stated that the main symptom continues to be fever, so if they can monitor people's temperature before they go into work would be a good measure and stated that he thinks they used to have that with Housing before or at least like when he was with DSHS and CDC over in Dallas; they were in this program where they had a log and they monitored themselves and every morning they took their own temperature and if they were over like 100.4, they did not go to work; they were not allowed to go to work, so there is more than one way to screen that test, so it is up to them, but

fever seems to be the main symptom they are looking for and of course the cough, the loss of taste and smell, chills, all of those continue to be the same, some people cough a lot, but they do get some symptoms; it seems to be more benign than the other variants, but it is still bothersome and they would feel ill.

Chairman Ceballos stated that he wants the Board to get the benefit of Dr. Lopez covering all of these items and they have two more and then, they will get into some discussion and stated that he does not think they will adopt it today, only because they have not completely reviewed the documents, but at least have the Board completely briefed on Dr. Lopez' information and they will have to re-group probably next week to try to just adopt the policy and thinks that there is still work to be done and thinks that it is hard to get through it in the next 30 minutes, so if he can finish his protocol; then, they will go to the Board's discussion.

Dr. Lopez stated that the next two are if they were exposed to COVID-19 and are confirmed COVID-19, but in the past 90 days, they tested positive and send a viral test to PCR, so in other words, now this is the first time CDC comes out forward and says that if they had the disease whether they are vaccinated or not, they got natural immunity, so actually, immunity helps; it is the first time CDC comes out with this, that no quarantine is needed and they do not need to stay home unless they develop symptoms like Chairman Ceballos just stated, based on symptoms, so they watch for the symptoms for 10 days just like when they were fully vaccinated and they continue to stay home until they know the results and wear the mask for the full 10 days, so having the disease is just like having the vaccine itself; it is like being fully vaccinated according to CDC and then the last one on the list, if they tested positive for COVID-19 or have symptoms, regardless of their vaccination status, they stay home for at least five days, wear the mask and are on quarantine and said that the isolation is one word maybe they should not try to include that much when it comes to human resources administrative actions for organizations because it is more of a medical word that is used for people within the household; they get isolated, for example, if a husband and wife, the wife or the husband, one of the two gets COVID and the other one does not have protection, or even if it has protection, they need to isolate and then, the two should sleep in different rooms for at least ten days which is what isolation is all about and stated that if isolation is the same as quarantine, he stated that it is not, it is exactly related, but it is more pertaining to the household and not so much for the workplace because if they are allowed to go to work, by common sense, they do not have to worry about isolation because they are good to go, so in summary, that is all what it is, the resolution has that and the resolution mirror images what the City of Laredo has posted on-line and CDC, and they got it from CDC. Chairman Ceballos asked if the city resolution has the mask component on it. Dr. Lopez responded that he believes it has the mask component too and confirmed that it does have the mask in no. 5 and mentioned that in regards to the size and how long they need to change it, it is a whole world too.

Chairman Ceballos stated that he agrees with the mask and that it is absolutely critical and a legal issue for him that they needed to talk through and mentioned that they have talked through the masking issue before.

Chairman Ceballos thanked Dr. Lopez for his briefing and stated that they need to add some definitions to it when they adopt it, so they know what symptoms and make sure everything is clear so that staff members know what they mean when they use certain language. Chairman Ceballos asked Mr. Poneck if he had any comments. Mr. Poneck mentioned that only if they go into closed session regarding the legal aspect, so he will reserve the comments in that regard.

Chairman Ceballos asked if there were any questions for Dr. Lopez or anything the Board would want to discuss in open session before they go into executive session. Commissioner Ms. Guerra stated that she was wondering about the booster because somebody told her that she needs a second booster now because she took hers in August, but she thinks it is too early and mentioned that she knows some people may still need the first booster, but thinks that some people are like her that they are coming like to the end of the efficacy of their first booster and wonders if it would be an issue eventually. Chairman Ceballos stated that everything is going to be an issue with staff members for sure because the scenario will come up, so that is why he thinks that if their intention is to be a specific issue, it should be that and it needs to be brought; it is kind of a legal analysis too and mentioned that he knows that some of the Board has comments. Commissioner Ms. Guerra asked about the different types of tests and what the PCR test is because she knows that they were talking about the fact that some of them had already tested on the variant, the one that gives false negative and then they took the one that is more effective and they were positive, so they expose people because they had false sense of security from a false negative, so she thinks that they need to address that too. Chairman Ceballos mentioned that he thinks those are the definitions and stated that they are running out of time for he has a 2:30 p.m. meeting he has to be at, so he thinks that they are going to run out of time and they are probably not going to adopt it because he really has not spent enough time scrubbing line by line and he would want to do that and for the protocol, they will add definitions so that PCR is well defined and clear and stated that they know it because they have been around this, but with staff, it needs to be very clear and also mentioned that the symptoms need to be defined clearly what those are once they are approved.

Commissioner Ms. Guerra asked what was considered fever for an adult, if it is 100.4 which she thinks Dr. Lopez had mentioned. Chairman Ceballos stated that fully immunized should be defined. Commissioner Ms. Guerra mentioned that also the date when they took their final booster, if they did. Mr. De Anda mentioned that he thinks they would require it and they have to wait six months after the second dosage before they are able to receive it. Chairman Ceballos stated that those ifs need to be well spelled out. Commissioner Ms. Guerra wondered if hers was still good because she took her booster in August. Chairman Ceballos stated

that it is the challenge to what Mr. De Anda just pointed out; they are waiting for CDC and CDC would do it whenever they think is the right time, so they need to keep that in mind as they craft the policy; on the resolution, they need to cite the CDC reference they are using or the guidance by date and stated that Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina had some comments. Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina stated that she will feel more comfortable in executive session and mentioned that there is a lot going on locally that is not really aligning to what is happening, so there are somethings she would like to discuss about the situation here in Laredo with the testing.

Chairman Ceballos stated, for the record, that he may not return into public session and Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza would need to preside because he may need to leave and stated that if they all think they arrived at a final document, to please adopt it and if they agree that they still need to scrub through it; then, they will bring it back next week, so he will leave it up to them as they move.

Chairman Ceballos moved to go into executive session at 1:49 p.m.
Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza seconded the motion.
Motion passed unanimously.

- H. Discussion and possible action to conduct the Executive Director's scheduled annual evaluation, as stipulated in contract agreement. This item may be discussed in Executive Session, pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.074 (personnel matters).

Item was tabled.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE

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

The Board went into executive session at 1:49 p.m.

The Board reconvened from executive session at 3:23 p.m.

13. ACTION ON ANY EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEM

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza informed that Mrs. Gaona, Dr. Lopez, Doug Poneck and Mr. De Anda joined the Board in executive session.

No action was taken in executive session.

Vice-Chairman Dr. Garza moved for the Board to authorize the Executive Director to establish administrative rules for handling COVID-19 matters in consultation with the COVID-19 Litigation Committee.

Commissioner Ms. Guerra seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

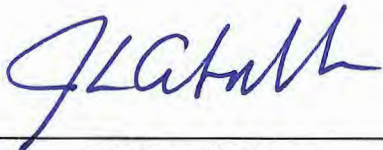
14. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Ms. Guerra moved to adjourn the meeting.

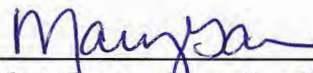
Commissioner Dr. Rodriguez Tijerina seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 3:24 p.m.



Jose L. Ceballos, Chairman



Mary Gaona, Executive Director