

Laredo Housing Authority  
Regular Board of Commissioners Meeting  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88602113681?pwd=TTBzNW9zWVNuUGoxWUhfMDZkOGhSdz09>

Call in Number: 1-346-248-7799

Webinar ID: [886 0211 3681](#)

LHA Board Room  
2000 San Francisco Ave.  
Laredo, Texas 78040  
Thursday, February 22, 2024  
11:00 A.M.

### **Board of Commissioners**

Cynthia Mares, Board Chair  
Silvia Madrid, Vice Chair  
Joe E. Aranda, Commissioner

Leo Flores, 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 videoconferencing, as permitted by Tex. Gov't Code Section 551.127)***

**A-24-R-1**

**Minutes**

**February 22, 2024**

#### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

Cynthia Mares, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:01 a.m.

#### **2. INVOCATION PRAYER**

Gloria Ann Freeman, Resident Commissioner, led us in prayer.

#### **3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Joe E. Aranda, Commissioner, led us in the recital of the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Mrs. Gaona proceeded with roll call and declaration of quorum was made by Cynthia Mares, Board Chair.

#### **Commissioner Present**

Cynthia Mares, Board Chair  
Silvia Madrid, Vice Chair  
Joe E. Aranda, Commissioner  
Leo Flores, Commissioner  
Gloria Ann Freeman, Resident Commissioner

**Staff Present**

Mary Gaona, Executive Director  
Gustavo Rojo Buendia, Assistant Executive Director  
Jennifer Barrientos, Director of Finance  
Bulmaro Cruz, Director of Construction  
Melissa Ortiz, Director of HCV  
Robert Pena, Director of IT  
Raquel Aguilar, Director of Housing Management  
Christy Ramos, Human Resource Manager  
Alejandro Jimenez, Assistant Director of IT  
Sonia Flores, Senior Accountant (zoom)  
Sara Vicharelli, Leasing Specialist (zoom)  
Maria Hernandez, Property Manager (zoom)  
Veronica Castro, Assistant Property Manager (zoom)  
Melinda Gavilanes, Property Manager (zoom)  
Elsa Rodriguez, Clerk (zoom)  
Maria Serrano, Property Manager (zoom)  
San Juana Valero, Property Manager (zoom)  
Kayla Moreno, Assistant Director of Housing Management (zoom)  
Gisela Mendoza, Property Manager (zoom)  
Denise Guzman, Property Manager (zoom)  
Doug A. Poneck, Attorney

**Other Present**

Jason Hyde, Garza/Gonzalez & Associates  
Eli Mendoza, Garza/Gonzalez & Associates

**5. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF NEW BOARD OF COMMISSIONER**

Cynthia Mares, Board Chair, welcomed the newly appointed commissioner to the Laredo Housing Authority board Mr. Leo Flores. Discussion took place. Mr. Leo Flores stated that he is honored for being selected to represent the Laredo Housing Authority board and he is looking forward to working with everyone.

**6. ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**Joe E. Aranda, Commissioner, moved to approve and keep our current Board Chair, Cynthia Mares, and our current Vice Chair, Silvia Madrid. Gloria Ann Freeman, Resident Commissioner, seconded the motion; motion carried.**

**Ms. Cynthia Mares appointed the following committee members. Leo Flores and Joe E. Aranda to the Finance and Building Committees with Leo Flores chairing the committees. Gloria Ann Freeman and Silvia Madrid to the Policy Committee with Gloria Ann Freeman chairing the committee.**

**7. 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)

**Cynthia Mares, Board Chair, stated that there were no disclosures.**

#### **8. PRESENTATION BY RESIDENT ADVISORY BOARD**

**Mary Gaona, Executive Director, informed the Board of Commissioners that Ms. Rios, Resident Advisory Board President, was unable to attend the meeting today.**

#### **9. PRESENTATION BY GARZA/GONZALEZ & ASSOCIATES (No action to be taken)**

**Jason Hyde, and Mr. Eli Mendoza from Garza/Gonzalez & Associates presented the audited financial statements for fiscal year ending March 31, 2023. Discussion took place and the Board thanked the auditors and staff for all their work.**

**Joe E. Aranda, Commissioner, moved to move up action items 14A and 14B. Gloria Ann Freeman, Resident Commissioner, seconded the motion; motion carried.**

#### **10. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. Approval of Minutes for Board of Commissioners meeting on October 26, 2023.**

**B. Approval of Minutes for Special Board of Commissioners meeting on December 21, 2023.**

**Joe E. Aranda, Commissioner, moved to approve the minutes for the Board of Commissioners meeting on October 26, 2023 and Special Board of Commissioners meeting on December 21, 2023, as presented. Gloria Ann Freeman, Resident Commissioner, seconded the motion; motion carried.**

#### **11. BUDGET WORKSHOP**

Review and discuss the Laredo Housing Authority's annual operating budgets for fiscal year ending March 31, 2025. The workshop will provide an overview of the proposed budgets for the upcoming fiscal year.

**Motion was made by Gloria Ann Freeman, Resident Commissioner to move item 11A towards the end of our agenda. Leo Flores, Commissioner, seconded the motion; motion carried.**

**Jennifer Barrientos, Director of Finance, presented the Laredo Housing Authority annual operating budgets for fiscal year ending March 31, 2025. Discussion took place.**

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

- A. Executive Directors Report to include status of grant programs and ongoing construction projects.

**Mary Gaona, Executive Director, presented the Executive Directors Report. Discussion took place.**

- B. Unaudited Financials for the month of December 2023.

**Jennifer Barrientos, Director of Finance, presented the December 2023 unaudited financials.**

### **13. 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.

**A discussion took place and Gloria Ann Freeman, Resident Commissioner, moved to approve all the following items under consent agenda.**

- A. Consideration to approve the writing-off of non-collectable amounts for vacated Public Housing, Russell Terrace, Meadow Elderly, Farm Labor and Los Balcones units from April 1, 2023 through September 30, 2023, as recommended by staff.
- B. Consideration to authorize the Executive Director to extend the contract with Quantcorp Construction LLC for an additional year, as allowable by Contract No. 2022-0131-1, effective February 21, 2024 through February 20, 2025. This represents the third year of the contract maximum of five years.
- C. Consideration to adopt Resolution No. 24-R-01 and approve the Utility Allowance Schedules for the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) and Project Based Voucher (PBV) Programs effective April 1, 2024, as recommended by staff.
- D. Consideration to adopt Resolution No. 24-R-02 and approve the Utility Allowance Schedules for the Public Housing Program effective April 1, 2024, as recommended by staff.
- E. Consideration to authorize a travel request of staff for the 2024 San Antonio HUD-VASH Summit: Homefront Horizons: Empowering Veteran Resilience in San Antonio, Texas on April 2-3, 2024.
- F. Consideration to authorize a travel request of staff for a scheduled All Competitive Grantee in Person Meeting with the San Antonio HUD Field Office of Community Planning and Development staff in San Antonio, Texas on April 3-4, 2024.

- G. Consideration to authorize a travel request of staff and/or Board for the 2024 Nelrod Consortium Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada on April 10-12, 2024.
- H. Consideration to authorize the Executive Director to extend the landscaping contract with Airstream Professional Misting Systems for an additional year, as allowable by Contract 2023-0412-1, effective April 12, 2024 through April 11, 2025. This represents the second year of the contract maximum of five years.
- I. Consideration to authorize the Executive Director to extend the contract with JD's Pest Control for an additional year, as allowable by Contract 2023-0412-2, effective April 12, 2024 through April 11, 2025. This represents the second year of the contract maximum of five years.
- J. Consideration to authorize the Executive Director to extend the contract with Slay Architecture for an additional year, as allowable by Contract 2022-0516-1, effective May 16, 2024 through May 15, 2025. This represents the third year of the contract maximum of five years.
- K. Consideration to authorize the Executive Director to extend the contract with Architect Plus, Inc. for an additional year, as allowable by Contract 2022-0516-2, effective May 16, 2024 through May 15, 2025. This represents the third year of the contract maximum of five years.
- L. Consideration to authorize the Executive Director to extend the contract with Able City for an additional year, as allowable by Contract 2022-0516-3, effective May 16, 2024 through May 15, 2025. This represents the third year of the contract maximum of five years.
- M. Consideration to authorize the Executive Director to extend the contract with Redline Architecture for an additional year, as allowable by Contract 2022-0516-4, effective May 16, 2024 through May 15, 2025. This represents the third year of the contract maximum of five years.

**Silvia Madrid, Vice Chair, seconded the motion; motion carried.**

#### **14. ACTION ITEM**

- A. Discussion and possible action to accept into public record the audited financial statements for fiscal year ending March 31, 2023.

**Leo Flores, Commissioner, moved to approve as presented. Gloria Ann Freeman, Resident Commissioner, seconded the motion; motion carried.**

- B. Discussion and possible action to award RFQ No. 2023-1211-1 Annual Audit Services and authorize the Executive Director to finalize negotiations and contract with selected firm.

**Valeria De Leon, Procurement Officer, presented to the Board of Commissioners for approval the award of RFQ No. 2023-1211-1 Annual Audit**

**Services to Garza/Gonzalez & Associates. Discussion took place. Leo Flores, Commissioner, moved to approve as presented. Gloria Ann Freeman, Resident Commissioner, seconded the motion; motion carried.**

- C. Discussion and possible action on amending the Laredo Housing Authority's lobby hours to provide employees with uninterrupted time to complete work tasks.

**Gustavo Rojo Buendia, Assistant Executive Director, presented to the Board of Commissioners for approval the possibility of amending the Laredo Housing Authority lobby hours to provide employees with uninterrupted time to complete work task. Discussion took place. Leo Flores, Commissioner, moved to approve as presented. Gloria Ann Freeman, Resident Commissioner, seconded the motion; motion carried.**

- D. Discussion and possible action to adopt Resolution No. 24-R-03 and approve the updated Personnel Policy for the Laredo Housing Authority effective February 22, 2024.

**Gustavo Rojo Buendia, Assistant Executive Director, and Christy Ramos, Human Resource Manager, presented to the Board of Commissioners for approval the updated Personnel Policy for the Laredo Housing Authority effective February 22, 2024. Discussion took place. Leo Flores, Commissioner, moved to approve as presented subject to Attorney review. Gloria Ann Freeman, Resident Commissioner, seconded the motion; motion carried.**

- E. Discussion and possible action on approving an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Operating Budget and adopt Resolution No. 24-R-04.

**Jennifer Barrientos, Director of Finance, presented to the Board of Commissioners for approval an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Operating Budget. Discussion took place. Leo Flores, Commissioner, moved to approve as presented. Silvia Madrid, Vice Chair, seconded the motion; motion carried.**

- F. Discussion and possible action to approve the Operating Budget for Fiscal Year ending March 31, 2025, for the Laredo Housing Authority and adopt Resolution No. 24-R-05.

**Jennifer Barrientos, Director of Finance and Mary Gaona, Executive Director, presented to the Board of Commissioners for approval the Operating Budget for Fiscal Year ending March 31, 2025. Discussion took place. Joe E. Aranda, Commissioner, moved to approve as presented. Gloria Ann Freeman, Resident Commissioner, seconded the motion; motion carried.**

- G. Discussion and possible action on determining the date and time for our next Board of Commissioners meeting.

Cynthia Mares, Board Chair, stated that the bylaws stipulate meeting quarterly on the last Thursday of the month. If they want to continue meeting on a monthly basis or quarterly. Discussion took place. They all agreed to keep it on a quarterly basis and call for a special meeting if needed. Joe E. Aranda, Commissioner, moved to approve as presented. Silvia Madrid, Vice Chair, seconded the motion; motion carried.

**15. 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).

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

**17. ADJOURNMENT**

Leo Flores, Commissioner, moved to adjourn the meeting. Gloria Ann Freeman, Resident Commissioner, seconded the motion; motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.



Cynthia Mares, Board Chair



Mary Gaona, Executive Director