

MINUTES

MEETING OF THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL ANNUAL ELECTIONS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

12:00PM Wednesday August 26, 2026

HELD IN-PERSON AND BROADCAST VIA YOUTUBE VIDEO CONFERENCE.
INITIATED AND CHAIRED FROM LRGVDC MAIN CAMPUS
301 W. RAILROAD STREET, WESLACO, TEXAS BUILDING B,
KEN JONES EXECUTIVE BOARD ROOM

PRESIDING: Judge Aurelio Guerra

Judge Aurelio Guerra called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. Roll Call was taken, and as of 12:10 p.m. quorum was attained.

Present: Judge Aurelio Guerra

Mayor Omar Ochoa, City of Edinburg
Councilwoman Marissa Ortega, City of Mission
Mayor Pro Tem Pete Garcia, City of Weslaco
Commissioner Ellie Torres, Hidalgo County
Mayor Pablo Morales, City of Lyford
Councilman Rene Pena, City of Sullivan City
Mayor Oscar Montoya, City of Mercedes
Councilwoman Aarin Hartwell City of South Padre Island
Commissioner Michael Fallick, City of McAllen
Commissioner Edward Gonzales, City of Raymondville
Mayor Pete Galvan, City of San Benito
Mr. Ron Garza, UTRGV
Mr. Troy Allen, Delta Lake
Mr. Ernesto Cavazos, Willacy Co, Navigation District
Mr. Oscar Garcia, Member-at-Large
Mr. Andres Chavez, Member-at-Large
Ms. Lupita Sanchez Martinez, Grassroots Org

Absent:

Mayor John Cowen, City of Brownsville
Mayor Norma Sepulveda, City of Harlingen
Commissioner Joey Lopez, Cameron County
Mayor David Moreno, City of Donna
Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez City of Pharr
Commissioner Marco Villegas, City of San Juan
Mr. Paul Hernandez, South Texas College
Mr. Luke Lucio, TSTC
Mr. Jim Darling, Member-at-Large

Judge Aurelio Guerra moved on to Item #2

Item #2 Consideration and ACTION to approve meeting Minutes June 24, 2026. **Mayor Oscar Montoya made a motion to approve the June 24, 2026, meeting minutes. Ms. Lupita Sanchez Martinez seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.**

Item #3: Public Comment – there being none, president then moved on to item #4.

Item #4: Administration

4.1. Presentation and Consider ACTION Regarding the 2025 Annual Audit. Melisa Gonzalez the CPA started off with the results of the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council's annual financial and compliance audits for the year ended December 31, 2025. The Council received an unmodified (clean) audit opinion, with no material weaknesses, significant deficiencies, or financial or compliance findings reported. The Council reported approximately \$32.6 million in revenues and expenditures, consisting primarily of federal, state, and local funding. Total assets as of December 31, 2025, were approximately \$50.8 million. The approved budget was approximately \$42.5 million, while actual revenues and expenditures were \$32.6 million. The lower revenues were offset by lower expenditures, resulting in a balanced year. The Council continues to qualify as a low-risk auditee. The auditors commended management and staff for their cooperation and assistance throughout the audit process. Mayor Omar Ochoa asked if there was a reason why it reduced so much, Mrs. Balboa stated that they roll over due to projects not getting started. Mayor Omar Ochoa stated that he noticed that this is essentially driving the entire variance between budgeted and actual revenues, so he was curious about the reason for the difference. **Mayor Oscar Montoya made a motion to approve the 2025 Annual Audit Mayor Pablo Morales seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.**

4.2. Presentation and ACTION to Accept Quarterly Investment Report. Mrs. Crystal Balboa stated that the Quarterly Investment Report was attached with the report provided and asked for approval from the board. **Mayor Oscar Montoya made a motion to approve and accept the Quarterly Investment Report; Ms. Lupita Sanchez Martinez seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.**

B. Executive Director Reports -- Mr. Cruz started off with the following:

1. Introducing all new hires for the months of July and August.

2. Staff Recognition for years of Service. Mr. Cruz recognized staff members receiving Service Awards for their years of dedicated service to the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council and the citizens of the Rio Grande Valley. Employees reaching five years of service were acknowledged, with several recipients unable to attend due to operational commitments.

Five-Year Service Award Recipients:

Maribel Alonso – RGV 911
Monica Estrada – RGV 911
Conrad Hernandez – Finance
Gabriel Navarro – Human Resources
Claudia Olmedo – Valley Metro
Yesenia Vallejo – Finance
Rodolfo Zamora – RGVMPPO

Recipients Unable to Attend:

René Garza – Valley Metro
Melissa Gonzalez – Valley Metro
Daniel Hernández – Valley Metro
Zulma Martinez – AAA
Roberto Salinas – Valley Metro

The **Ten-Year Service Awards** were presented to recognize employees for their continued dedication and service to the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council. The following employees were recognized:

Rosemary Contreras – RGV 911
Yolanda De Leon – Finance
Rolando Flores – AAA
Selena Vallejo – RGV 911

The following employees were unable to attend due to operational commitments but were also recognized for reaching ten years of service:

James Benson – Valley Metro
Ceferino Garcia
Romero Garcia
Leticia Casca
Rodolfo Rosales
Jesus Segura

The **Fifteen-Year Service Awards** were presented to recognize employees for their continued dedication and service to the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council. The following employees were recognized:

Joe Garcia – RGV 911
Celeste Nepomuceno – Finance
Monica Rocha – AAA
Dora Rodriguez – AAA

Unable to Attend:

Dora Cruz – Valley Metro

The **Twenty-Year Service Awards** were presented to recognize employees for their outstanding dedication and long-standing service to the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council. The following employees were recognized:

Adalia Gonzalez – Finance
Viviana Moreno – AAA

The **Twenty-Five-Year Service Award** was presented to recognize exceptional dedication and long-standing service to the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council.

Jaime Garza – AAA

The **Thirty-Year Service Award** was presented in recognition of her exceptional dedication and 30 years of service to the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council.

Ms. Crystal Balboa, Finance Director

Updates on regional News, Funding Opportunities, Training and Legislation

3.A. Why Data Centers and Why Not. Mr. Cruz presented an overview of data centers and their potential impact on regional economic development, infrastructure, land use, workforce, and public policy. The presentation was based on a report from the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) and focused on the role of the LRGVDC's Economic Development District (EDD) in helping local governments make informed, objective decisions regarding data center development.

It was noted that data centers are experiencing rapid growth due to increased demand for artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and digital services. While these projects can bring significant private investment, property tax revenue, and construction employment, they may also require substantial amounts of electricity, water, broadband capacity, land, and transportation infrastructure. Their impacts can extend across multiple jurisdictions.

Mr. Cruz emphasized that the LRGVDC's role is to remain neutral and serve as a regional resource by convening stakeholders, providing technical assistance, analyzing infrastructure and economic impacts, and helping communities understand the potential benefits, costs, and long-term implications of proposed projects.

Melisa Gonzalez Rosas discussed the Broadband Coalition's efforts to develop a regional Community Benefits Agreement and elected officials' guide/questionnaire to help communities identify appropriate questions and potential community benefits when working with data center developers. She emphasized the importance of communities communicating their needs and working with developers to address local infrastructure, technology, and other community priorities.

Mr. Cruz also noted that data center water demands are not currently specifically identified in the Region M Water Plan. As part of the current five-year planning cycle, the LRGVDC will work to identify potential water and resource demands associated with data centers to provide local governments with better information for future decision-making. Overall, the presentation emphasized the importance of regional coordination, objective information, infrastructure planning, and community needs when evaluating future data center projects.

Item #5 Department Reports

A. Community & Economic Development

Status Reports: Staff provided several announcements and program updates: A tentative Data Center Guide Workshop is scheduled for September 24 at 1:30 p.m. in the Ken Jones Board Room, pending final confirmation.

A Regional Small Cities Community Workshop was held on August 4, with the Cities of Santa Rosa and Los Ebanos participating for the first time.

The Broadband Initiative continues to expand through coordination with the South Texas Development Council and efforts to develop digital broadband plans for Jim Hogg, Zapata, and Webb Counties. A new Broadband Specialist is expected to be hired in the coming weeks.

Two staff members, Sydney and Crystal, completed training through the Texas Stream Team and will conduct water quality testing in Hidalgo and Willacy Counties. The LRGVDC's Solid Waste Teachers Guide and Composting Curriculum is now available on the website. Region One will assist with producing printed copies for community use. Staff also recognized the Outreach Coordinator for completing 14 outreach events over the past two months and encouraged Board members and communities to contact them regarding future outreach opportunities.

B. Health & Human Services

1. Consideration and ACTION to approve the Direct Purchase of Services (DPS) Contractors List for fiscal Year 2026-2027. The Citizen Advisory Council requested Board approval to utilize a list of vetted contractors to provide essential services, including medical transportation, homemaker assistance, respite care, residential modifications, medication assistance, medical supplies, and durable medical equipment to eligible seniors in Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties. The contractor list is intended to ensure continuity of services without gaps for the 2026–2027 service year. Contractor details and services are outlined in Exhibit 1.1, included with the report. ***Mayor Omar Ochoa made a motion to approve the Direct purchase of Services (DPS) Contractors List for Fiscal year 2026-2027. Andres Chavez seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.***

2. Consideration and ACTION to approve the List of Subrecipients Providing Services under the Older Americans Act- Title III for fiscal year 2026-2027. The Citizen Advisory Council requested Board approval to utilize a list of vetted subrecipients to provide essential services, including congregate meals, home-delivered meals, transportation, senior center operations, and caregiver education and training to eligible seniors in Cameron, Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties. The list will ensure continuity of services without gaps for Fiscal Year 2026–2027. Subrecipient details and services are outlined in Exhibit 2.1 of the Board packet. ***Mayor Oscar Montoya made a motion to approve the List of Subrecipients providing Services under the Old Americans Act - Title III for fiscal year 2026-2027. Mr. Oscar Garcia seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.***

Status Reports: Ms. Margarita Lopez stated that her department report was included in the packet and was available for any questions.

C. Public Safety – Emergency Services, Criminal Justice, & Homeland Security.

1. Consideration and ACTION to approve the CJAC Policy, Procedures and Scoring Criteria for FY-2027-2028.

2. Consideration and ACTION to approve the CJAC Bylaws and Membership Roster for FY 2027-2028.

3. Consideration and ACTION to approve the HSAC Bylaws and Membership Roster for FY 2027-2028.

4. Consideration and ACTION to approve the HSAC Policy, Procedures and Scoring Criteria for FY 2027-2028. ***Mayor Oscar Montoya made a motion to approve all 4 action items for Homeland Security and Criminal Justice; Mr. Ernesto Cavazos seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.***

Status Reports: Two announcements were provided. The RGV Public Safety and Emergency Communications (PSEC) Conference has expanded its continuing education offerings to include TCOLE, behavioral health, social work, and EMS credits through a collaboration with South Texas Health System. Registration remains open. An update was also provided on RGV 911. The Multi-Agency Communications Center was showcased at the APCO conference in San Antonio, where it received significant recognition and positive feedback. The mobile

communications center is one of the few of its kind in Texas and among a limited number nationwide, highlighting the region's preparedness and emergency communications capabilities.

C.2 Lower Rio Grande Police Academy Program

1. Consideration and ACTION to approve an Interlocal Agreement with the City of South Padre Island, by and through the South Padre Island Police Department, for purpose of reporting law enforcement training to the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement and with the authority for LRGVDC Executive Director Manuel Cruz to sign and Finalize the agreement. South Padre Island has become a regional hub for law enforcement training due to its location and popularity as a training destination. The South Padre Island Police Department requested assistance with upcoming conferences and training events. Since the department does not have a contractual agreement with TCOLE to report training hours, the LRGVDC is exploring a partnership to assist with reporting TCOLE training hours for law enforcement personnel attending training events on the island. **Mayor Oscar Montoya made a motion to approve Interlocal Agreement with the city of South Padre Island, by and through the South Padre Island Police Department, for purpose of reporting law enforcement training to the Texas commission on Law Enforcement and with the authority for LRGVDC Executive Director Manuel Cruz to sign and Finalize the agreement, Mr. Ernesto Cavazos seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.**

Status Reports: Several updates were provided regarding regional law enforcement training and programs. On July 22, the Mission Police Academy graduated its 232nd class, with 14 peace officers successfully completing the program. This marked the third consecutive academy with a 100% first attempt pass rate on the TCOLE licensing examination. All 29 officers produced through these recent academies are currently employed by law enforcement agencies in the Rio Grande Valley.

Two additional academies are currently in session, with 26 cadets enrolled and expected to graduate in December. Another academy with the Mission Police Department is scheduled to begin this Friday. The Academy also partnered with the City of La Joya, La Joya Police Department, La Joya Fire Department, and La Joya ISD to conduct a full-scale mass casualty/active attack scenario exercise. The training focused on interagency coordination, communication, and response among law enforcement, fire, and EMS agencies. Similar training opportunities are available to other regional agencies upon request.

The 2026 RGV Police Canine Competition and Workshop is scheduled for December 5 in partnership with the City of Alton. The three-day event will provide specialized training from subject matter experts to regional police canine teams at a reduced cost and will be open to the public for viewing.

D. Transportation

Valley Metro

1. Consideration and ACTION to approve the updated Valley Metro Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP). The updated Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) outlines Valley Metro's safety management policies, procedures, and performance targets required by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The plan establishes the agency's Safety Management System framework, defines roles and responsibilities, identifies safety risks and hazards, and outlines strategies to mitigate risks and improve overall system safety. Approval of the updated PTASP ensures Valley Metro remains in compliance with federal requirements while continuing to prioritize the safety of passengers, employees, and transit operations. The PTASP was updated in its entirety for Board consideration. **Mayor Pablo Morales made a motion to approve the updated Valley Metro Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP). Commissioner Edward Gonzalez seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.**

LRGVDC Board of Directors Meeting Minutes August 26, 2026

Status Reports: Valley Metro reported a 30% increase in year-to-date ridership compared to the previous year, largely attributed to increase in-person attendance at UTRGV and South Texas College.

The Public Transportation Coordination Plan remains active, with KFH Group providing consulting services. Valley Metro planners have also continued participating in public involvement events throughout the region.

Rio Grande Valley MPO

1. Consideration and ACTION to approve the Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 Program Ranked Project. The projects were ranked by the RGVMPPO Technical Advisory Committee and designated project evaluation subcommittee.

Three projects were presented for consideration:

McAllen Metro – 35-foot Bus Acquisition Project – Ranked No. 1.

City of McAllen – ADA Sidewalk Program – Ranked No. 2.

Valley Metro – Management and ITS Implementation – Ranked No. 3.

Funding was available to fully award the first two projects and provide a partial award for the third project. Board consideration and action were requested to program the awarded funds into the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for transit projects. ***Mayor Oscar Montoya made a motion to approve the Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 Program Ranked project. Commissioner Eduardo Gonzalez seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.***

Item #6: New & Unfinished Business - Mr. Cruz thanked the Hidalgo County Commissioners Court for adopting the resolution approving the Hidalgo County Active Transportation and Tourism Plan. Moving forward, the LRGVDC will request that all cities within Hidalgo County adopt the plan as well.

The comprehensive plan identifies existing and proposed hike and bike trails throughout the county and serves as a resource to support tourism, active transportation, and recreational opportunities for residents. Hidalgo County provided funding to cover the cities' contributions toward development of the plan.

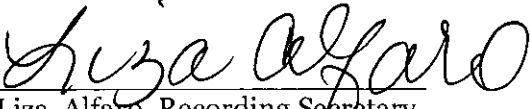
The plan will also assist cities in expanding their existing trail networks and provide a documented resource to support grant applications for federal, state, and MPO funding.

Item #7 Adjourn - President called meeting at 1:05 pm



President Judge Aurelio Guerra

ATTEST:



Liza Alfaro, Recording Secretary