

**WEBB COUNTY – CITY OF LAREDO
REGIONAL MOBILITY AUTHORITY BOARD**

WC-CL RMA Board of Directors Meeting
TxDOT - Laredo District Meeting Room
1817 Bob Bullock Loop, Laredo, Texas 78043
Tuesday, October 22, 2019
10:00 AM

BOARD MINUTES

The Webb County-City of Laredo Regional Mobility Authority (WC-CL RMA) Board met at the above place and date. The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. WC-CL RMA Board Vice-Chair Doug Howland present and presiding. The following board members were present:

Doug Howland
George Beckelhymer
Jose Murillo
Alfonso Mendiola
Oscar O. Lopez
Arturo Dominguez
Jesus D. Romero

The following board members were absent: None

AGENDA

1. Open Meeting and Establish Quorum

After establishing a quorum, Presiding Officer Douglas Howland, called the meeting to order at 10:05 A.M. He then announced the following Board Members were present: Oscar O. Lopez, Arturo Dominguez, Alfonso Mendiola, Jose Murillo, Jesus D. Romero and George Beckelhymer. He then notified everyone present that a notice of the meeting had been posted in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, and then asked everyone to stand for the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Welcome and Introduction of Board Members – Douglas Howland (WC-CL RMA Presiding Office)

Vice-Chairman Howland informed all present that the meeting was being recorded and thanked TxDOT for hosting and videotaping the meeting.

3. Open Public Forum/Comment Period.

No comments were made.

4. Action Item: Discussion, Consideration and Approval of the August 20, 2019 WC-CL RMA Regular Board Meeting Minutes.

Vice-Chairman Howland stated that the Board Members had been provided a copy of the August 20, 2019 Board Meeting Minutes for review. He then asked for a motion to accept the Board Meeting Minutes of the Webb County-City of Laredo RMA as presented.

Motion: So Move
Moved by: Arturo Dominguez
Second by: Jose Murillo
Discussion: No discussion was held
In Favor: Motion passed unanimously

5. Vice-Chairman’s Report

A. New Chairman Appointment

Vice-Chairman Howland went on to inform the Board that there was no news on the appointment of a new Chairman by Governor Abbott. The new Chairman remains unknown at this time. Until the new appointment is known, Douglas Howland, the Vice-Chairman, would conduct the board meetings and assume the Chairman responsibilities.

B. Financial Report

Chairman Howland informed the Board that they have a current checking account balance of \$3,288,672.23 as of October 22, 2019. Also earned \$15,193.18 interest on their CD and currently have a CD balance of \$6,042,923.15 in a 3-month CD maturing 12-27-19 at 1% interest.

Funds disbursed since the last meeting were:

HNTB Corporation	\$142,347.75
Locke Lord LLP	\$436.35
J Cruz & Associates LLC	\$3,851.00
Bond Insurance Payment	\$87.50

6. Action Item (Resolution 19-19): Discussion, Consideration and Possible Action to Approve the Selection of a Provider for RMA Accounting Services.

Vice-Chairman Howland informed the board that the only provider that submitted a response to the WC-CL RFQ was Ruben Soto, CPA. Vice-Chairman Howland went on to inform that board that the executive committee had met at J. Cruz & Associates, LLC to review and score the response and a recommendation was made to approve. Vice-Chairman Howland called on Juan J. Cruz for his recommendation.

Mr. Cruz went on to say that on August 23, 2019, RMA published, in the local newspaper, a Request for Qualifications, which ran for two consecutive Sundays as required. He further said that Ruben Soto, CPA was the only entity that submitted a response to the publication. A tabulation was presented containing scoring method based on experience of the firm, staffing, and appropriate services. Scoring process was handled by Doug Howland, Oscar O. Lopez and Arturo Dominguez. Mr. Cruz introduced a resolution for the board to move on approving Ruben Soto to provide accounting services. He went on to say that this motion will be based on qualification and competence only. Contract Price will later be discussed with Mr. Soto and proposed at a future board meeting before providing services. Mr. Cruz advised the board that Mr. Soto has been very involved with RMA and is capable of providing such reports needed by RMA. If the motion does not pass, the other option would be to make a motion to re-procure and post again to see if more companies would reply.

Mr. Dominguez asked if everyone had the same opportunity, which Mr. Cruz responded that it was posted in the Laredo Morning Times and the RMA website.

Vice-Chairman Howland went on to add that it was critical to move in obtaining. Mr. Soto has been doing work pro-bono and already have RMA's information and background needed.

Motion: So Move
Moved by: George Beckelhymer
Second by: Arturo Dominguez
Discussion: No discussion was held
In Favor: Motion passed unanimously

Vice-Chairman Doug Holland excused himself from the meeting. Mr. Lopez, taking over, went on to advise the Board that due to a possible conflict of interest with the next agenda item, Mr. Howland will be stepping out of the meeting momentarily. Mr. Lopez introduced the next agenda item.

7. Action Item (Resolution 19-20): Discussion, Consideration and Possible Action to Authorize an Agreement with LWS Media, LLC dba Liquid Studios Group for Website and Social Media Services.

Mr. Cruz went on to inform the Board that the current website is not an elaborate website and does not contain substantial information compared to other similar entities. Mr. Cruz went on to say that RMA had no social media presence and reached out to Liquid Studios. He added that when HNTB submitted its proposal, they had Liquid Studios as subcontractors for a minimal amount of money. Because Allie Howland is employed by Liquid Studios, Mr. Cruz requested Mr. Howland to abstain, not participate in the discussion and submit an affidavit of conflict of interest as required by law. The affidavit has been signed by Mr. Howland in case the board decides to engage with Liquid Studios for social media services. Proposal was handed out showing a summary of the cost of no more than \$13,300.00.

Mr. Bechelhymer asked if RMA was required to request proposals. Mr. Cruz responded that only if you have an expenditure for goods or services of over the \$50,000.00 threshold, which is not anticipated.

Mr. Belmares went on to explain and illustrate the services offered by Liquid Studios to the Board. Liquid Studios will work on the redesign and redevelopment of the RMA website, establish social media presence and create a blog with RMA project developments.

Mr. Cruz went on to inform the board that the resolution says that the WC-CL RMA Board authorizes the WC-CL RMA Secretary to negotiate, finalize and execute an agreement with Liquid Studios to provide services for a term of one year and not to exceed \$13,300.00 under the terms and conditions of the secretary and the WC-CL RMA.

Motion: So Move
Moved by: Alfonso Mendiola
Second by: Jesus D. Romero
Discussion: No discussion was held
In Favor: Motion passed unanimously

Vice-Chairman Howland was invited to rejoin the meeting.

Vice-Chairman Howland asked to skip to Agenda Item No. 12.

12. Discussion and Consideration Related to the Hiring of Certain Consultants and/or Personnel, including an Executive Director.

Mr. Cruz went on to say that the organization has been operating with the volunteer work of the Board and the help of Mr. Soto. The organization is in need of an Executive Director as other RMAs. Mr. Cruz mentioned that the board can seek funding for an Executive Director from the City and the County.

Vice-Chairman Howland added that RMA has a lot more activity and explained why it needed an

Executive Director. He made of general discussion and explained that RMA needs someone with knowledgeable and informed the board of possible salary and office location.

Mr. Cruz went on to say that the degree of specialized knowledge of an Executive Director is to be put in prospective and RMA may want someone with engineering experience. Mr. Cruz reminding the board that this item is for consideration and no action was to be made. Mr. Cruz asked the board to consider the pay grade for the ED so to see how much money was going to be asked from the City and the County.

Mr. Rodriguez communicated and advised the board that every RMA is different based on its goals and plans. He conferred with the board and explained the benefits of having an ED.

Mr. Cruz discussed with the board to think about the funding, publish it in the newspaper, take applications and set up a timeline. Consider a plan of action to approach council members and county commissioners. Discussion included duties and responsibilities based on RMA goals. Discussions included a possible administrative assistant.

8. Presentation by Financial Advisor, Don J. Gonzalez, CPA, of Estrada Hinojosa Investment Bankers.

Vice-Chairman Howland introduced Don Gonzalez to provide information and discuss Bonding.

Mr. Gonzalez presented to the board material and a general discussion on upfront proceeds for a project to be determined using Vehicle Registration Fees (VRF) Revenue Funds.

9. Presentation by City of Laredo Staff Regarding Springfield Ave Project.

Vice-Chairman Howland introduced City Engineer, Ramon Chavez.

Mr. Chavez started with thanking the Board for the opportunity to present this project. Mr. Chavez went on to say that the City Council, as part of a capital improvement program, allocated \$4 million dollars for this project. He mentioned that this project was also presented to the MPO and made a motion to look at the liability and find building sources through the MPO. Mr. Chavez illustrated a map of the sections of the Springfield project in phases completed and phases pending to complete. He informed the board of an estimated \$14.8 million in construction costs not including land acquisitions. Discussion included the consideration of flood and environmental preservation. Also discussed was the review of several RFQ responses from various firms in efforts to move forward with the pending projects.

Vice-Chairman Howland discussed future projects in the next 2-3 years.

10. General Engineering Consultant Report

Chairman Howland then called on Mr. Antonio Rodriguez to discuss the General Engineering Consultant Report. Mr. Rodriguez reported to the Board:

- 1) Mr. Rodriguez and Chairman Howland gave an update and discuss with the board the Vallecio Project's construction cost, geotechnical work, environmental and traffic study analysis.
 - 2) Springfield Road – Numbers were a bit higher form the projected \$14.7 million being \$16.3 million. North/south arterial
 - 3) Mines Road – Chairman Howland introduced Eddie Garza to discuss with the board the purpose of the Planning Study. Mr. Garza informed the board that a Public Meeting will be held November 6, 2019 to with entities with interests within the study area to discuss potential transportation solutions. Mr. Garza discussed how this traffic analysis and study could provide a clear assessment of mobility conditions in Mines Road area. Goals consider were to identify feasible projects, promote safety, coordinate implementation and improve overall transportation network. Mr. Garza illustrated various maps with options to relieve congestion impacts in the area by extending roads to I-35 and truck parking issues. Other suggestion by Mr. Garza was implementing a roundabout system used is bigger cities and sidewalks for bus stops.
 - 4) Additional projects discussed were the Los Presidentes right of way dedication, Cuatro Vientos overpass development Lomas del Sur interchange.
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11. Update from TxDOT on the Status of Projects in the TxDOT Laredo District.

Chairman Howland then called on Mr. Jesus Saavedra, PE who replaced Carlos Rodriguez. Mr. Saavedra reported and discussed current summary of ongoing projects.

13. Discussion Regarding Date/Time/Location of the Next Regular Board Meeting.

Chairman Howland stated that next board meeting will be determined at a later date.

14. Adjournment.

On a motion made by Doug Howland and a second by Jose Murillo, meeting was adjourned at 12:12 P.M. Motion passed unanimously and meeting was adjourned.