



**Board of Directors Board Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, August 29, 2023 at 5:30 PM

at 2000 Texas, El Paso, TX 79901

| Public                   | P/A/PY | Low Income Rep.   | P/A/PY | Private                | P/A/PY |
|--------------------------|--------|-------------------|--------|------------------------|--------|
| Christina Sanchez        | P      | Marla Jo St. Leon | A      | Fernando Escobedo, Jr. | P      |
| Judge Nina Serna         | PY     | Sylvia Carreon    | P      | Alberto Mesta, Jr.     | P      |
| Commissioner David Stout | PY     | Laurencio Bosquez | A      | Loren Cartagena        | P      |
| Senator César Blanco     | PY     | Luis Perez        | P      | Fred Perea             | P      |

*P=In Person, A=Absent, PY=Proxy*

**STAFF**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Laura Ponce, Executive Director                  | Martha Hernandez, Human Resources Specialist (Virtually) |
| Andrea Cortez, Exec. Assistant & Outreach Coord. | Ema Marciscano, Community Services Manager               |
| Jessie Vasquez, Housing Programs Manager         | Mike Martinez, Weatherization and Maintenance Manager    |
| Kristy Gamble, Manager, Wipfli (Virtually)       | Cheryl Dunn Donley, Manager, Wipfli (Virtually)          |

**GUESTS**

Arely Villalobos, Office of Senator Blanco

Lucy Vargas, Office of Judge Nina Serna

Dr. Cynthia Renteria, Office of Commissioner Stout

Rosemary M. Marin, Attorney at ScottHulse PC (Virtually)

**PROCEEDINGS**

- I. **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 5:33 PM by Fernando Escobedo.
- II. **Certification of Quorum** – Quorum was certified by Andrea Cortez, Executive Assistant & Outreach Coordinator.
- III. **Public Comment** – There was no public comment.
- IV. **Consent Agenda:**
  - A. **A motion was made by Christina Sanchez to approve the Consent Agenda which consisted of the following: July 25, 2023 Board Minutes, July 2023 Community Services, Weatherization & HVAC, and Housing Services Reports, July 2023 Human Resources Report, and the July 2023 Strategic Plan Report. The motion was seconded by Sylvia Carreon. The motion passed unanimously.**
- V. **Committee Reports:**
  - A. **Executive Committee:** Ms. Ponce went over the Contract Activity Report, Program Monitoring Report, Board Roster Report, and Organizational Standards Report. Ms. Ponce gave her Executive Director’s Report. Ms. Ponce announced the promotion of Jessie Vasquez from Lead Housing Counselor to Housing Programs Manager. The promotion comes as a result of the growth of Project BRAVO’s Housing Program, which is one of two HUD certified housing agencies in El Paso County. **No action was taken.**

- B. Financial Committee: Review and accept the July 2023 Finance Reports:** Mr. Mesta announced that the Finance Committee met on Monday, August 28 to review the July 2023 Finance Reports. **A motion was made by Christina Sanchez to accept the July 2023 Finance Reports. Loren Cartagena seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**VI. New Business:**

- A. Review and Approve the “Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs Community Services Block Grant Proposed Budget, Program Year 2024”:** Ms. Ponce presented the 2024 CSBG Budget in detail and answered questions. Ms. Ponce stated the public hearing for the 2024 CSBG budget was presented on August 28, 2023, in person at the 2000 Texas location with a significant turnout from community partners Project BRAVO. **A motion was made by Fred Perea to Approve the “Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs Community Services Block Grant Proposed Budget, Program Year 2024.” Luis Perez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Review and Approve the Community Services Block Grant Community Action Plan, Program Year 2024 per Organizational Standards 2.1, 4.2, 4.3 & 4.4:** Ms. Ponce presented the 2024 CAP plan in detail and answered questions regarding the process and the plan itself. **A motion was made by Alberto Mesta to Approve the Community Services Block Grant Community Action Plan, Program Year 2024 per Organizational Standards 2.1, 4.2, 4.3 & 4.4. Luis Perez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**
- C. Review and Approve the “El Paso Community Action Program Project BRAVO Employee Handbook, Revised August 24, 2023”, per Organizational Standards 7.1, 7.6 & 7.7:** Ms. Ponce provided an overview presentation of the proposed Employee Handbook, with a Diversity and Inclusivity statement that was proposed by a board member and reviewed by the Executive Committee after the handbook was sent to the Board for review but prior to the board meeting. **A motion was made by Christina Sanchez to Approve the “El Paso Community Action Program Project BRAVO Employee Handbook, Revised August 24, 2023,” with the addition of the Diversity and Inclusivity Statement, and excluding the arbitration agreement in section 6.13. Alberto Mesta seconded the motion. The dissenting votes were stated by Fernando Escobedo, Jr., Fred J. Perea, Luis Perez, and Sylvia Carreon. The votes in favor of the motion were stated by Alberto Mesta, Jr., Christina Sanchez, and Loren Cartagena. Proxies for Judge Serna, Commissioner Stout and Senator Cesar Blanco did not vote per Project BRAVO Bylaws. The motion did not pass.**

**A motion was made by Sylvia Carreon to Approve the “El Paso Community Action Program Project BRAVO Employee Handbook, Revised August 24, 2023,” with the addition of the Diversity and Inclusivity Statement. Fred Perea seconded the motion. The dissenting votes were stated by Alberto Mesta, Jr., Christina Sanchez, and Loren Cartagena. The votes in favor of the motion were stated by Fernando Escobedo, Jr., Fred J. Perea, Luis Perez, and Sylvia Carreon. Proxies for Judge Serna, Commissioner Stout and Senator Cesar Blanco did not vote per Project BRAVO Bylaws. The motion passed.**

**VII. Old Business:**

- A. Update on the 2022 Fiscal Audit per Organizational Standards 8.1:** Kristy Gamble provided the board with an update on the progress of the 2022 Fiscal Audit. Kristy detailed the current issues keeping the audit from being completed by the original deadline, as a result the 2022 Fiscal Audit will be delayed. Project BRAVO, the WIPFLI team, and the auditing firm will be working closely to address the issues and get the audit completed as early as possible. **No action was taken.**

**VIII. Adjourn to Executive Session:**

This meeting is to be closed to review and discuss personnel matters under Tex. Gov't Code 551.074. Should any final action, decision, or vote be required in the opinion of the Board of Directors with regard to any matter considered in such closed meeting, then the Board may take action, decision, or vote on a matter posted for closed meeting when it reconvenes in open session.

**Attorney Rosemar R. Marin called into the board meeting through GoogleMeet to provide counsel for Executive Session. A motion was made by Christina Sanchez to adjourn to Executive Session. Alberto Mesta seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Executive session began at 5:35 PM.**

**A motion was made by Christina Sanchez to return from Executive Session. Alberto Mesta seconded the motion. Executive session ended at 6:46 PM. The motion passed unanimously. No action was taken.**

**IX. Community Updates:** Ms. Ponce announced that a group of Texas border grassroots organizations was organizing a march on Friday, September 1st to bring awareness to Operation Lone Star. The march will begin at 9 AM at Sacred Heart Church. Mr. Mesta announced that Texas RioGrande Legal Aid was assigned as a public defender to serve individuals affected by Operation Lone Star. Dr. Cynthia Renteria of Commissioner Stout's office announced the Segundo Barrio Block Party happening on September 3rd. **No action was taken.**

**X. Confirm Next Meeting Date/Time:** The meeting was confirmed for Tuesday, September 26, 2023, at 5:30 PM at Project BRAVO's administrative offices at 2000 Texas Ave.

**XI. Adjournment:** Christina Sanchez made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Fred Perea seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 7:43 PM.