



Board of Directors Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 27, 2021 at 1:30 PM

Virtual Meeting Through Google Meet

Public	P/A/PY	Low Income Rep.	P/A/PY	Private	P/A/PY
Gabriella M. Reed	P	Marla Jo St. Leon	P	Fernando Escobedo	P
Judge Nina Serna	A	Sylvia Carreon	P	Alberto Mesta	P
Commissioner David Stout	A	Laurencio Bosquez	P	Loren Cartagena	P
Senator César Blanco	PY	Vacant		Fred Perea	P

P=Present, A=Absent, PY=Proxy

STAFF

Laura Ponce, Executive Director	Ema Marciscano, Community Services Manager
Andrea Cortez, Exec. Assistant & Outreach Coord.	Mike Martinez, WAP Manager
Martin Dominguez, Chief Financial Officer	Martha Hernandez, HR Specialist
Martha Vargas, COVID Relief Program Manager	

GUESTS

PROCEEDINGS

- I. **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 1:32 PM by Gabriella Reed.
- II. **Certification of Quorum** – Quorum was certified by Ms. Ponce, Executive Director.
- III. **Public Comment** – There was no public comment.
- IV. **Consent Agenda:**
 - A. A motion was made by Fernando Escobedo to approve the Consent Agenda which consisted of the following: March 27, 2021 Board Minutes, March 2021 Community Services Report, March 2021 Weatherization Program Report, March 2021 Housing Services Report, March 2021 Human Resources Report, and the March 2021 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 offered an invitation to the board to participate in an upcoming CAPLAW conference, stating CAPLAW's conference tracts on legal, human resource, and governance are worthwhile. Ms. Ponce stated that the Texas Eviction Diversion Program will stop accepting referrals from judges on April 27 after providing over \$400,000 in assistance. Ms. Ponce stated that there are enough applications in the pipeline to expend remaining funds. Judges will now refer Eviction Diversion clients to the State Texas Rent Relief Program and EPRentHelp. The State program prioritizes cases for renters with active eviction court cases. Project BRAVO is one of 5 organizations TDHCA designated to provide input on the implementation of the new Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP), which will offer water utility assistance. Gabriella Reed asked if the organization has the capacity to introduce a new service. Ms. Ponce stated she is confident of Project BRAVO's ability to spend the funds. She informed the board that the current plan is to have a soft rollout for assistance to existing clients and then a full rollout to the public once the processes are tested and proven. **No action was taken.**
- B. Financial Committee: Review and accept the March 2021 Finance Reports:** Sylvia Carreon stated that March 2021 Financial Reports were reviewed in detail at the Finance Committee meeting. Sylvia Carreon stated that the CFO announced the FY 2020 year-end closing and upcoming financial and compliance audit is not complete. Ms. Reed asked why the process is not complete. Martin Dominguez clarified that review of fiscal activity in 2020 is almost complete and that it will not impede Project BRAVO to meet the fiscal audit deadline of September 30. Sylvia Carreon recommended the Board approve the March 2021 Finance Reports. **A motion was made by Fernando Escobedo to accept the March 2021 Finance Reports. Sylvia Carreon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

VI. New Business:

- A. Review the New Customer Service Quarterly Report, per Organizational Standards 1.3 & 6.4:** Ms. Ponce stated that Customer Service Reports are required as part of the Organizational Standards. Ms. Ponce reminded the Board that the process of gathering reports was typically made in-person at the centers when clients were approved, but report gathering was halted as a result of COVID restrictions. Due to the unusual circumstances and high work volume in the last three quarters of 2020, Project BRAVO suspended gathering client satisfaction data until management could develop a new data collection process. A new process was developed that sent an online survey to clients through links in email and mobile texts, and customer service surveys were sent to all 2020 and 2021 clients in early 2021. Ms. Ponce stated that the results were generally positive despite all the challenges of 2020. Ms. Ponce stated the survey revealed that most clients prefer the current application model that allows applicants to apply remotely. **No action was taken.**
- B. Discuss Project BRAVO's Plans for Staff to Return to Full Onsite Operations:** Ms. Ponce announced plans for all staff members to return onsite full-time beginning June 14, 2021. The reasoning for the return is to lift the burden on management of operating remotely. Ms. Ponce stated the return to the office could be postponed if there is a surge in COVID cases or changes in guidance from the CDC. The date was chosen to give parents the opportunity to make childcare arrangements. Ms. Ponce stated that staff has stated gratitude for the opportunity to work remotely. **No action was taken.**

- C. **Discussion and Action Regarding Project BRAVO Management’s Recommendation to Record Client Calls and Maximize Quality Customer Service:** Ms. Ponce announced that the current phone system has the capacity to record calls at no additional charge. Management does not plan to listen to phone calls until policies are developed and provided to the Board for review. Ms. Ponce is seeking support from the Board to begin working on these policies. Mr. Bosquez stated that he works at a company that records calls and that it is beneficial to both parties, the customer and the staff. **A motion was made by Laurencio Bosquez to accept Project BRAVO Management’s Recommendation to Record Client Calls and Maximize Quality Customer Service and move forward with developing policies. Alberto Mesta seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

- D. **Review and Accept Updated Timeline Proposal for Low-Income Representative Election:** Ms. Ponce stated a delay in completing the election with the original dates, and provided an updated timeline that would allow Project BRAVO more time to support candidates in their campaigning efforts. **A motion was made by Sylvia Carreon to Accept Updated Timeline Proposal for Low-Income Representative Election. Loren Cartagena seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

VII. Old Business:

- A. **Update on the 2021 Community Assessment for the County of El Paso, per Organizational Standards 1.2, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 & 6.4:** Ms. Ponce announced that a first draft was received and is in the review process. The draft revealed that additional input is needed by stakeholders in order to finalize the top five needs. The board will receive an invitation to participate in the input session and the final draft will be presented to the board in May. **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.

There was no Executive Session.

- IX. **Community Updates:** Gabriella Reed announced that UMC is using the Colosseum to vaccinate anyone older than 16 on a walk-in basis. **No action was taken.**

- X. **Confirm Next Meeting Date/Time:** The meeting was confirmed for Tuesday, May 25, 2021 at 1:30 PM through Google Meet.

- XI. **Adjournment:** Gabriella Reed made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Fred Perea seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 2:21 PM.**