



Board of Directors Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 26, 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	P	Fernando Escobedo, Jr.	A
Judge Nina Serna	PY	Sylvia Carreon	P	Alberto Mesta, Jr.	P
Commissioner David Stout	P	Laurencio Bosquez	P	Loren Cartagena	A
Senator César Blanco	P	Luis Perez	A	Fred Perea	P

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

STAFF

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

GUESTS

Arely Villalobos, Office of Senator Blanco

Lucy Vargas, Office of Judge Nina Serna

PROCEEDINGS

- I. **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 5:49 PM by Fred Perea.
- 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 Senator Blanco to approve the Consent Agenda which consisted of the following: August 29, 2023 Board Minutes, August 2023 Community Services, Weatherization & HVAC, and Housing Services Reports, August 2023 Human Resources Report, and the August 2023 Strategic Plan Report. The motion was seconded by Christina Sanchez. 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 provided information about the client application pipeline and that we have 1,500 application slots available to the end of the year.. Ms. Ponce announced the approaching deadline for the 2023 Organizational Standards and let the board know that Project BRAVO will not be able to meet 100% of the standards. This year’s focus was on updating the Employee Handbook and items like the review and update of the Fiscal Policies had to be postponed. Ms. Ponce updated the board on the progress of the

renewal of the Line of Credit. Ms. Ponce announced that with the board approval of the Employee Handbook and a formal presentation of the handbook to employees, there will be administrative updates to ensure compliance with new policies such as the merging of sick and annual leave to Paid Time Off. Ms. Ponce answered questions from the Board regarding staff's response to the new handbook. Ms. Ponce announced that the 2024 Budget process has begun and is having preliminary discussions with Kristy Gamble from Wipfli. Ms. Ponce announced the beginning of three upcoming procurements for the Community Assessment, Audit Services, and Client Database Software. **No action was taken.**

- B. Financial Committee: Review and accept the August 2023 Finance Reports:** Mr. Mesta announced that the Finance Committee was unable to meet to review the August 2023 Finance Reports due to schedule conflicts with committee members. Although the reports are included in the packet, Mr. Mesta requested for the approval of the Finance Reports to be tabled. **No action was taken.**

VI. New Business:

- A. Discussion and Acceptance of The Frugal CFO, LLC as a Private Sector Board Seat and Fernando Escobedo, Jr. as the Designated Board Member:** Ms. Ponce explained the Bylaws guidelines required for seats in the private sector and recommended the acceptance of The Frugal CFO, LLC as the holder of a Private Seat on Project BRAVO's Board of Directors. Mr. Fernando Escobedo will serve as their representative. **A motion was made by Christina Sanchez to Accept The Frugal CFO, LLC as a Private Sector Board Seat and Fernando Escobedo, Jr. as the Designated Board Member. Laurencio Bosquez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Review and Approve Proposed Bylaws Changes as Recommended by the Staff and Project BRAVO Attorney, per Organizational Standard 5.3:** Ms. Ponce presented the updated Bylaws and gave a brief synopsis of the changes between the last version and the new version. Ms. Ponce announced that the attorneys are reviewing Item 16 under Article XI regarding attendance of meetings by telephone. The current language adheres to the Open Meetings Act, but Project BRAVO wants to ensure the language is reflective of the current technology available regarding joining meetings virtually. An update will be presented to the Board when the attorneys finalize their review of the section. **A motion was made by Christina Sanchez to Approve the Proposed Bylaws Changes. Alberto Mesta seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**
- C. Present the Project BRAVO 2022 Annual Report, per Organizational Standard 2.3:** Ms. Ponce provided an overview presentation of the 2022 Annual Report. The report highlights the agency's accomplishments in 2022, including the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program. **No action was taken.**
- D. Discussion on Board Governance & Responsibilities Training, per Organizational Standard 5.8:** Ms. Ponce asked for questions or comments from board members after attending the Board Governance Trainings held on September 20 and 21. Mr. Mesta asked if any historical information or artifacts are available about Project BRAVO's founding. Ms. Ponce stated that the Articles of Incorporation have the names of the founders, but she has not found any other historical documents about the founders. **No action was taken.**
- E. Discussion on El Paso Giving Day Efforts:** Ms. Cortez provided an update on Project BRAVO's efforts to raise money for the Patient Assistance Program on El Paso Giving Day, which is slated for October 19. **No action was taken.**

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, detailing the plan to submit the Fiscal Audit and Form 990 as soon 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.

There was no Executive Session.

- IX. Community Updates:** Alberto Mesta announced that TRLA is hosting an Alternative to Guardianship clinic on October 21 to inform the community of options in regards to supported decision making. Senator Blanco announced that his office is hosting their annual Citizenship clinic on October 21 in which attorneys provide pro bono work to assist in the filing of forms on their path to citizenship. **No action was taken.**
- X. Confirm Next Meeting Date/Time:** The meeting was confirmed for Monday, October 30, 2023, at 5:30 PM at Project BRAVO's administrative offices at 2000 Texas Avenue.
- XI. Adjournment:** Senator Blanco made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Marla Jo St. Leon seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 6:25 PM.**