

Alamo Regional Mobility Authority

*Meeting March 12, 2009, 1:00p.m.,
in the Al J. Notzon III Conference Room
of the Alamo Area Council Of Governments,
at 8700 Tesoro Drive.*

Minutes

1. **Call meeting to order.** Chairman Thornton called the meeting to order at 1:08 p.m. All Board members present with the exception of M.C. Rodriguez and Rey Diaz.

Chairman Thornton apologized for being late due to a press conference on US 281. Chairman Thornton summarized the history of 281, discussed the economic stimulus funds for the 281/1604 Interchange project and the letter from SOS acting as attorneys for AGUA and TURF challenging the categorical exclusion for the interchange and the environmental reviews for US 281 and 1604. Chairman Thornton asked that if anyone is interested in bringing a lawsuit to stop this project they should come forward and be open. R. Thompson stated that the Interchange project could have been a combination of the stimulus funds with bond funds to include a tolled portion for additional work but that is not what is being undertaken. Chairman Thornton noted that the economic stimulus funds are time-qualified and any potential lawsuit would cause these funds to be lost.

Board member Rey Diaz arrived during this discussion.

2. **Approval of the minutes from the Joint Alamo RMA / VIA Board of Directors Meeting of February 5, 2009 and the Regular Board of Directors Meeting of February 11, 2009.** *R. Thompson made the motion to approve the minutes as presented to the Board. J. Reed seconded. Motion carried by a 5-0 vote.*
3. **Discussion and presentation on the recent light rail feasibility study conducted by VIA Metropolitan Transit.**

Jesse Balleza of VIA made a power point presentation on the study results. He stated that it was done with LAN and Parsons as consultants. He addressed the scope of work, existing conditions, a map of crossings, issues to be addressed, ridership estimates which need to be refined in the future, estimated costs, next steps, and an implementation schedule.

J. Reed asked about when Union Pacific would be vacating their lines and Mr. Balleza said it is unknown at this time. J. Reed also stated that it was unclear as to how the proposed stops would connect to buses and with USAA and the Medical Center, there would likely need to be additional stops to increase cross-traffic such as Heubner. R. Thompson asked about the Austin light rail and its opening and reasons for delay. He stated that San Antonio is the only major metropolitan city without light rail and it is an economic negative that we do not have one.

J. Balleza stated that VIA is working with others on a long range transportation plan. T. Brechtel

asked if there was authorization for a study for ridership estimates and J. Balleza said there was not at this time given they are pursuing the long range plan at this time and they recognize that they do not want to let the corridor go but they need to look at all of the options for future planning. T. Brechtel then stated that the current EIS process will address all alternatives and the Alamo RMA is happy to help VIA with part of it.

Chairman Thornton stated that when they previously met with Union Pacific that the company stated there would be no mixed use, only residential when there was no freight on it. Chairman Thornton then stated that we need to look at the 281/1604 footprint and determine if a light rail terminal can be accommodated in the future, he discussed the proposed merger of the RMA and VIA, the fact that only 15% of VIA's budget is from bus fares and the rest must be subsidized, the RMA has the potential to generate revenues with tolls, the RMA has the right of first refusal and the ability to acquire right of way and it may be that the RMA is better suited to manage the light rail.

C. Villareal asked about how the Austin rail was financed and when it was started and J. Balleza said it began in the 80's and financed with local and federal funds. R. Thompson stated that we need to tie light rail to a future event and set targets to works towards it but Chairman Thornton stated that he first wants the decision to be made as to who is handling it and that a meeting should be set up with the County Judge and others to discuss this issue further.

There was no formal action required of the Board of Directors on this item.

4. Discussion and appropriate action on a resolution approving the Alamo RMA 2008 Annual Report.

Leroy Alloway, Director of Community Relations, made the presentation of the 2008 annual report. There was discussion that it was done entirely in house. L. Alloway discussed the title "Switching Lanes" to reflect the new direction the RMA is taking and the update on all existing projects. He also noted that the audit approved by the Board last month will be included in the final report.

J.Reed asked about the printing but L. Alloway noted that the prior discussions on printing at a correction facility were for the strategic plan.

R. Diaz made the motion to accept resolution 09-11 as presented. C. Villarreal seconded. Motion passed by a 6-0 vote.

5. Discussion and appropriate action on a resolution approving the selection of the consultants for the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statements for the 281 North Project and the Loop 1604 Project.

Lisa Adelman, Legal Counsel, made a power point presentation summarizing the review process to procure consultants to prepare the 2 environmental impact statements. L. Adelman discussed the timeline, review teams, short-list and scoring methodology. L. Adelman stated that staff recommended the selection of the team led by Jacobs for the 281project and the team led by Baker for the 1604 project.

J. Reed stated that the Planning Committee had reviewed the process and the scoring sheet although they did not score the teams or proposals. R. Thompson stated that this is a new effort and there has only been one other EIS in the entire county and these 2 will be the second and third to be done with the recommendation of the County Judge and with the consent of TxDOT. He stated it will be a transparent and wide-open process and it will not be a right or wrong decision but a reasoned decision. R. Thompson also discussed his request to have UTSA interns involved in the EIS process.

Chairman Thornton noted that in the draft resolution it should be inserted Jacobs for the 281 project and Baker for the 1604 project.

R. Diaz commended everyone for doing a great job putting it together.

C. Villareal stated that it is a great idea to get young people involved and she wants to make sure that this will be an open process. L. Adelman then stated that the public will be involved in this process and includes groups like the Edwards Aquifer Authority.

Chairman Thornton then stated that it is the first step for local direction and local control. T. Brechtel then asked the consultants to stand and address themselves.

J. Reed made the motion to accept resolution 09-12 as presented. R. Thompson seconded. The motion carried by a 6-0 vote.

A copy of the power point presentation made on this item is included with the official record of this meeting.

6. Discussion and appropriate action on selection of consultant and approval of a contract for biological services for the 281 North Project and the Loop 1604 Project.

Lisa Adelman, Legal Counsel, made a power point presentation summarizing the procurement for biological services to conduct a one year habitat assessment and survey for the black-capped vireo and golden-cheeked warbler for the 281 project and the 1604 project. L. Adelman discussed the timeline, the need to start the surveys this season prior to execution of the EIS contract, and the qualifications and review team. Staff recommendation was Blanton & Associates and approval of the contract.

R. Thompson stated that this is required and needs to be done and we can supplement the information that the County's study is undertaking,

J. Reed stated that the Planning Committee reviewed the documents but were not a part of the scoring. R. Diaz noted that he was glad we included Texas Parks & Wildlife and they do a great job. T. Brechtel thanked the staff.

C. Villareal asked why this is separate from the EIS and L. Adelman explained the timing and the RMA does not want to lose a year in the survey season if it is not started now.

R. Thompson made the motion to accept resolution 09-13 as presented. J. Reed seconded. The motion carried by a 6-0 vote.

A copy of the power point presentation made on this item is included with the official record of this meeting.

7. Discussion and appropriate action on a resolution supporting local option funding sources.

Brian Cassidy, General Counsel, discussed the current legislative bills that have been filed. Chairman Thornton asked Terry Brechtel to follow up on who is in charge of light rail, research across the country which entities handle it and whether it can be the RMA and set up a meeting with VIA and the County Judge to discuss this issue further. T. Brechtel asked B. Cassidy about the likelihood of a bill for money from diversion and the indexing of the gas tax and B. Cassidy stated they are included in various bills. J. Reed noted that the resolution supports the concept of local option with the details to be worked out later and he is going to Austin next week with the County Judge, Chamber of Commerce, VIA and others to support the concept.

J. Reed made the motion to accept resolution 09-14 as presented. R. Thompson seconded. The motion carried by a 6-0 vote.

8. Discussion and appropriate action on a resolution authorizing the issuance of a Request for Qualifications for design/build services for the Loop 1604/US 281 Interchange Project.

T. Brechtel discussed the work that had been done to get the interchange project funded with federal stimulus funds and that the resolution authorizes the preparation and distribution of an RFQ for design/build. Chairman Thornton asked about the timing of this project and T. Brechtel stated she expects to have a contract signed within a year. Chairman Thornton stated that he would like to see light rail to be considered in the design and T. Brechtel stated that it could be added as a value add to the contract.

R. Diaz made the motion to accept resolution 09-15 as presented. J. Reed seconded. The motion carried by a 6-0 vote.

9. Discussion and appropriate action on the financial statement for the periods ending February 28, 2009.

Carrie Conner, Comptroller, presented the financial statements for period ending February 28, 2009. Carrie reviewed the balance sheet stating that cash and cash equivalents totaled \$5.4 million, described the assets, liabilities, and fund equity; the statement of revenue, expenses, and changes in fund deficit, explained the monies allocated for each column, and the statement of cash flow.

R. Thompson made the motion to accept the financials as presented to the Board. R. Diaz seconded. The motion carried on a 6-0 vote.

10. Presentation/briefing - Executive Director Report.

There was a group discussion on TeamTX, its purposes, its conferences and T. Brechtel's role this past year. T. Brechtel then referenced the GEC report included in the Board packets and that the GEC has been working on the EIS and biological services procurements as well as the interchange project. L. Alloway then presented information on the 4-1-1 on 281 campaign and showed the new website. Chairman Thornton then discussed the potential official membership of the RMA into the MPO and Sid Martinez said they would discuss it.

11. Citizens to be heard. There were no citizens signed up to speak.

12. Executive Session. There was no Executive Session.

13. Adjournment. There being no further actions for the Board Chairman Thornton called the meeting to adjournment at 3:11 p.m.

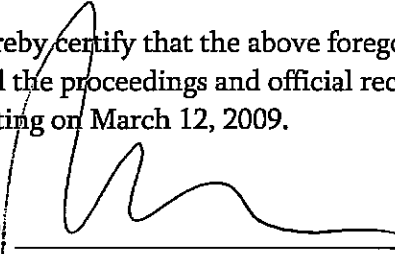
APPROVED:



DR. WILLIAM E. THORNTON, CHAIRMAN

DATE ADOPTED: 4/09/2009

I hereby certify that the above foregoing pages constitute the full, true, and correct minutes of all the proceedings and official records of the Alamo Regional Mobility Authority at its meeting on March 12, 2009.

ATTEST: 

REYNALDO L. DIAZ, JR
SECRETARY/TREASURER