



**Board of Directors Board Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, January 31, 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	A	Marla Jo St. Leon	P	Fernando Escobedo	A
Judge Nina Serna	A	Sylvia Carreon	P	Alberto Mesta	P
Commissioner David Stout	A	Laurencio Bosquez	P	Loren Cartagena	P
Senator César Blanco	P	Luis Perez	P	Fred Perea	P

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

**STAFF**

Laura Ponce, Executive Director	Mike Martinez, Weatherization Manager
Andrea Cortez, Exec. Assistant & Outreach Coord.	Ema Marciscano, Community Services Manager
Martha Hernandez, HR Representative	

**GUESTS**

**PROCEEDINGS**

- I. **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Fred Perea.
- 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 Lauencio Bosquez to approve the Consent Agenda which consisted of the following: December 6, 2022 Board Minutes, November & December 2022 Community Services, Weatherization & HVAC, and Housing Services Reports, November & December 2022 Human Resources Report, and the November & December 2022 Strategic Plan Report. The motion was seconded by Marla Jo St. Leon. The motion passed unanimously.
- V. **Committee Reports:**
  - A. **Executive Committee:** Ms. Ponce informed the board that Wipfli, an accounting firm with vast experience in Community Action, was contracted on January 18, 2023, to provide accounting services due to the changes in staffing in the Finance Department. Ms. Ponce introduced Cheryl Dunn Donley and Kristy Gamble of Wipfli and briefly explained the services they will be providing to Project BRAVO. Ms. Ponce also provided the Contract Activity Report, Program Monitoring Report, Board Roster Report, and Organizational Standards Report. **No action was taken.**

- B. Financial Committee: Review and accept the November and December 2022 Finance Reports:** Ms. Ponce asked to table the reports for November, December and January due to the recent change in the Finance Department organizational structure. The reports for November, December and January were tabled. **No action was taken.**

**VI. New Business:**

- A. Resolution to Authorize the Executive Director to Sign Contracts and Agreements on Behalf of Project BRAVO for Fiscal Year 2023:** Ms. Ponce announced an annual request to authorize the Executive Director to sign Contracts and Agreements on behalf of Project BRAVO. **A motion was made by Sylvia Carreon to accept Resolution to Authorize the Executive Director to Sign Contracts and Agreements on Behalf of Project BRAVO for Fiscal Year 2023. Senator Blanco seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Discuss and Approve Second Term Appointments for Private Sector Representatives Alberto Mesta, Loren Cartagena, and Fred Perea:** Ms. Ponce announced the requirement for the board to approve a second term for three of the four Private Sector Representatives. **A motion was made by Senator Blanco to Approve Second Term Appointments for Private Sector Representatives Alberto Mesta, Loren Cartagena, and Fred Perea. Laurencio Bosquez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**
- C. Affirm the Approval of the Letter of Engagement with Wipfli for Accounting Services:** Ms. Ponce explained the process taken to contract Wipfli for services and presented the contract for discussion. Ms. Ponce answered questions from the Board regarding the contract. **A motion was made by Loren Cartagena to affirm the Approval of the Letter of Engagement with Wipfli for Accounting Services. The motion was seconded by Alberto Mesta. The motion passed unanimously.**
- D. Presentation of the 2023 Meeting Calendar:** Ms. Ponce presented the meeting dates for the 2023 calendar year. In general, the board will meet the last Tuesday of the month except for months where there are conflicts with holidays or conferences. **No action was taken.**
- E. Approve Contractor for Facility Cleaning Services and Authorize the Executive Director to Negotiate the Final Contract:** Ms. Ponce explained the process to procure Facility Cleaning Services. **A motion was made by Sylvia Carreon to Approve X Cleaning Professionals as the Contractor for Facility Cleaning Services and Authorize the Executive Director to Negotiate the Final Contract. Senator Blanco seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**
- F. Approve Contractor for Audit Services and Authorize the Executive Director to Negotiate the Final Contract:** Ms. Ponce explained the process to procure Audit Services. **A motion was made by Sylvia Carreon to Approve Strickler & Prieto as the Contractor for Audit Services and Authorize the Executive Director to Negotiate the Final Contract. Alberto Mesta seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**VII. Old Business:**

- A. Update on Amistad Homeowner Utility Assistance Project:** Ms. Ponce provided an update to the board on Amistad's Homeowner Utility Assistance Project. Ms. Ponce answered questions from the Board and provided clarification on specific details of the project. **No action was taken.**

- B. Discuss Process for the 2022 Performance Evaluation of the Project BRAVO Executive Director:** Mr. Perea requested to adjourn to Executive Session to discuss the process for the 2022 Performance Evaluation of the Project BRAVO Executive Director. **A motion was made by Marla Jo St. Leon to adjourn to Executive Session. Alberto Mesta seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Executive session began at 6:52 PM. A motion was made by Laurencio Bosquez to return from Executive Session. Senator Blanco seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Executive session ended at 7:22 PM.**

**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.

**A motion was made by Marla Jo St. Leon to adjourn to Executive Session. Loren Cartagena seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Executive session began at 6:05 PM. The motion passed unanimously. Executive session ended at 6:44 PM. No action was taken.**

- IX. Community Updates:** Laurencio Bosquez thanked the board for the donations they provided to his church during the holidays for their toy and clothing drive for children living in orphanages in Mexico. The church will continue accepting non-perishable food donations for children as well as elderly adults. **No action was taken.**
- X. Confirm Next Meeting Date/Time:** The meeting was confirmed for Tuesday, February 28, 2023, at 5:30 PM at Project BRAVO's administrative offices at 2000 Texas Ave.
- XI. Adjournment:** Sylvia Carreon made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Christina Sanchez seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 7:29 PM.**



**Board of Directors Board Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, March 14, 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	A	Marla Jo St. Leon	P	Fernando Escobedo	P
Judge Nina Serna	A	Sylvia Carreon	P	Alberto Mesta	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	Mike Martinez, Weatherization Manager
Andrea Cortez, Exec. Assistant & Outreach Coord.	Ema Marciscano, Community Services Manager
Martha Hernandez, HR Representative	

**GUESTS**

Cheryl Dunn Donley

Kristy Gamble

**PROCEEDINGS**

- I. **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Fernando Escobedo.
- 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 Sylvia Carreon to approve the Consent Agenda which consisted of the following: January 31, 2023 Board Minutes, January & February 2023 Community Services, Weatherization & HVAC, and Housing Services Reports, January & February 2023 Human Resources Report, and the January & February 2023 Strategic Plan Report. The motion was seconded by Loren Cartagena. The motion passed unanimously.**
- V. **Committee Reports:**
  - A. **Executive Committee:** Ms. Ponce presented an update on application procedures, including stopping the acceptance of new applications as there are enough applications in the pipeline to fully spend present funds if all applicants are deemed eligible. Additional funds have been requested to TDHCA, and if additional funds are granted or applicants in the pipeline do not fully obligate all funds, the application process will open again to the public. Projects that are to be completed in the following months are updates to the Cost Allocation Plan, the Employee Handbook, and the Fiscal Policies. Ms. Ponce announced she and board member Sylvia Carreon would be traveling to the state’s Capital as part of a Legislative Day

with the intent of educating state legislators on the work of Community Action Agencies in Texas. Ms. Ponce provided a summary on an ongoing pilot partnership with SOURCE to provide free drinking water to people living in the Hueco Tanks Colonia using solar powered water harvesters. Ms. Ponce announced that SOURCE, Inc. has reached out to Project BRAVO to run the program as there were issues establishing the program through the County. Project BRAVO intends to apply for \$1.5 Million through various sources for the program. Ms. Ponce extended an invitation to the Board to attend a virtual presentation hosted by Aaron Seaman of SOURCE Global, PBC. to learn more about water harvesting technology and Hueco Tanks Colonia project. **No action was taken.**

- B. Financial Committee: Review and accept the November and December 2022 Finance Reports:** Alberto Mesta announced that the Finance committee met and reviewed the November and December 2022 financial reports in detail. The 2023 Project BRAVO Operating Budget was also presented and accepted by the Finance Committee. Mr. Mesta detailed the work Wipfli has done since onboarding in January. **A motion was made by Fred Perea to accept the November and December 2022 Finance Reports. Marla Jo St. Leon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**VI. New Business:**

- A. Review and Approve the 2023 Project BRAVO Operating Budget:** Ms. Ponce presented the 2023 Project BRAVO Salaries & Operations Budget to the board. Ms. Ponce reported that the 2023 Project BRAVO Salaries & Operations Budget was thoroughly reviewed and approved for presentation to the Board by the Finance Committee. Ms. Ponce provided an overview of key budget areas including the addition of Incentive Pay for staff completing certifications essential to Project BRAVO programs and services. **A motion was made by Alberto Mesta to Approve the 2023 Project BRAVO Operating Budget. Sylvia Carreon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**VII. Old Business:**

- A. Update on the Conclusion of the Amistad Homeowner Utility Assistance Project:** Upon discussion regarding the Amistad Homeowner Utility Assistance Project that began in April of 2022, the board, by consensus, directives the Executive Director to sunset the program in the following 30 days. **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.

**A motion was made by Marla Jo St. Leon to adjourn to Executive Session. Sylvia Carreon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Executive session began at 6:38 PM. Executive session ended at 6:44 PM. The board came out of Executive Session and Marla Jo. St. Leon made the motion to direct the Executive Director to take action to resolve a personnel issue discussed in Executive Session, per the instructions of the board. Sylvia Carreon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

- IX. Community Updates:** Alberto Mesta announced that board member Christina Sanchez is launching her campaign for County Attorney. The current County Attorney Jo Ann Bernal, Ms. Sanchez serves as her representative on the board of Project BRAVO, is retiring after her term ends in 2023. **No action was taken.**

- X. **Confirm Next Meeting Date/Time:** The meeting was confirmed for Tuesday, March 28, 2023, at 5:30 PM at Project BRAVO's administrative offices at 2000 Texas Ave.
  
- XI. **Adjournment:** Sylvia Carreon made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Luis Perez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 7:09 PM.



**Board of Directors Board Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, March 28, 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	P
Judge Nina Serna	A	Sylvia Carreon	P	Alberto Mesta	P
Commissioner David Stout	PY	Laurencio Bosquez	P	Loren Cartagena	A
Senator César Blanco	PY	Luis Perez	P	Fred Perea	P

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

**STAFF**

Laura Ponce, Executive Director	Mike Martinez, Weatherization Manager
Andrea Cortez, Exec. Assistant & Outreach Coord.	Ema Marciscano, Community Services Manager

**GUESTS**

Arely Villalobos, the Office of Senator Blanco

**PROCEEDINGS**

- I. **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 5:32 PM by Fernando Escobedo.
- 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 Christina Sanchez to approve the Consent Agenda which consisted of the following: March 14, 2023 Board Minutes. The motion was seconded by Alberto Mesta. 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 that a staff member from TDHCA will come to Project BRAVO from April 27 through the 28 to provide training per Project BRAVO’s request. Ms. Ponce announced that it is HVAC startup season and explained the process that current clients can follow to receive these services through CEAP funds. Ms. Ponce provided information on the Cost Allocation Plan, the Employee Handbook, and Fiscal Policies that will be reviewed and updated by staff in the coming months. Ms. Ponce thanked Senator Blanco for sponsoring a proclamation for the Texas Association of Community Action Agencies on March 30, 2023. Ms. Ponce announced that was elected Chairperson for the UnidosUS Affiliate Council. As the Chairperson for the Affiliate Council, she will also serve on the board of directors for UnidosUS, the largest advocacy organization for Latinos in the United States. Ms. Ponce announced that a tenant living in one of

Project BRAVO's affordable apartments turned 100. Ms. Ponce stated that she is proud that Project BRAVO's work allows an elder in our community to live independently and with dignity into her 100th year of life. **No action was taken.**

- B. Financial Committee: Review and accept the January 2023 Finance Reports:** Alberto Mesta announced that the Finance committee met and reviewed the January 2023 financial reports in detail. **A motion was made by Laurencio Bosquez to accept the January 2023 Finance Reports. Christina Sanchez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

#### **VI. New Business:**

- A. Review and Approve a Resolution Authorizing the Grant Application, Acceptance, and Execution for the Hueco Tanks Colonia Solar Hydropanel Healthy Drinking Water Project:** Ms. Ponce provided a summary of the presentation SOURCE provided to board members on March 24, 2023, regarding a project aimed at providing healthy drinking water to residents of the Hueco Tanks colonias. **A motion was made by Christina Sanchez to Approve a Resolution Authorizing the Grant Application, Acceptance, and Execution for the Hueco Tanks Colonia Solar Hydropanel Healthy Drinking Water Project. Sylvia Carreon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Review and Approve Compensation for the Executive Director:** Ms. Ponce presented a compensation report provided by the HR department comparing the Executive Director's 2023 salary to the salaries of other nonprofit Executive Directors and CEOs with comparable budgets and staffing. **A motion was made by Laurencio Bosquez to Approve the Executive Director's 2023 Salary. Alberto Mesta seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**
- C. Discuss and Approve Christina Sanchez as the Fifth Member of the Executive Committee per Project BRAVO Bylaws:** Ms. Ponce explained that the Executive Committee is composed of five members: the four board officers and another member from the board. Ms. Ponce announced that the Executive Committee recommended Ms. Christina Sanchez to serve as the fifth member and she agreed to serve. **A motion was made by Sylvia Carreon to Approve Christina Sanchez as the Fifth Member of the Executive Committee per Project BRAVO Bylaws. Fred Perea seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

#### **VII. Old Business:**

- A. Discuss Process for the 2022 Performance Evaluation of the Project BRAVO Executive Director per Organizational Standard 7.4:** Ms. Ponce announced that she met with the Board Chair and previous Board Chair to review her 2022 Performance Evaluation and she accepts the evaluation scores and comments as proposed by the board. **A motion was made by Alberto Mesta to approve the 2022 Performance Evaluation of Laura Ponce, the Project BRAVO Executive Director. The motion was seconded by Christina Sanchez. The motion passed unanimously.**

#### **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:** Sylvia Carreon and Beto Mesta spoke on Prop K and urged members to research the policy and participate in local elections. **No action was taken.**



- X. **Confirm Next Meeting Date/Time:** The meeting was confirmed for Monday, April 24, 2023, at 5:30 PM at Project BRAVO's administrative offices at 2000 Texas Ave.
  
- XI. **Adjournment:** Sylvia Carreon made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Fred Perea seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 6:17 PM.



**Board of Directors Board Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, April 24, 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	P
Judge Nina Serna	A	Sylvia Carreon	P	Alberto Mesta	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	Mike Martinez, Weatherization Manager
Andrea Cortez, Exec. Assistant & Outreach Coord.	Ema Marciscano, Community Services Manager

**GUESTS**

Alejandra Villarreal, Office of Senator Blanco

Sito Negrón, Office of Commissioner Stout

**PROCEEDINGS**

- I. **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Fernando Escobedo.
- 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 Christina Sanchez to approve the Consent Agenda with the exception of the Customer Service Satisfaction Report. The Consent Agenda consisted of the following: March 28, 2023 Board Minutes, March 2023 Community Services, Weatherization & HVAC, and Housing Services Report, March 2023 Human Resources Report, and March 2023 Strategic Plan report. The motion was seconded by Luis Perez. Ms. Carreon asked questions about the sample size of the Customer Satisfaction Report. Andrea Cortez clarified that the survey was sent to over 70 clients via email but only nine responded. A motion was made by Christina Sanchez to approve the Customer Satisfaction Report. The motion was seconded by Marla Jo St. Leon. 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 implementation of Microix, a paperless purchase requisition review and approval system. She commended her Finance staff that spearheaded the procurement process and implementation of the system. Ms. Ponce discussed Project BRAVO’s decision to close the application process for a period longer than first anticipated. Ms. Ponce presented the members of the board with a handout comparing the number of applications received in the first quarter of 2022 versus the first quarter

of 2023 broken down on a monthly basis. The handout showed that from January to March of 2022, 5,839 applications were submitted, compared to 5,825 from January to March 2023, with there being more closed application periods in the latter. The difference in 2023 is a decrease in contract funds due to the end of COVID-related temporary grants, as well as less funding to hire temporary staff to help with the workload, meaning it is more difficult to meet the demand of applicants. The explanation was granted to the Board to answer any questions they may receive regarding the change in assistance in 2023. Ms. Ponce announced her participation in the National Home Performance Conference in Seattle to receive updates on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Weatherization Assistance Program as well as attend for the National Community Action Partnership Energy Taskforce she serves on for the National Community Action Program. Ms. Ponce discussed her advocacy work on the Energy Taskforce to change testing procedures in the certification tests for Weatherization technicians that would make the process more equitable. **No action was taken.**

- B. Financial Committee: Review and accept the March & February 2023 Finance Reports:** Ms. Ponce announced that the finance committee was not able to meet to review the February and March 2023 reports, but she asked that these reports be approved by the board since they were available for review by all board members. **A motion was made by Christina Sanchez to accept the March & February 2023 Finance Reports. Fred Perea seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**VI. New Business:**

- A. Update on Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Weatherization Assistance Program:** Ms. Ponce reported to the Board that Project BRAVO has been expecting a large weatherization grant since the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) was passed in 2021. TDHCA has not dispersed any of the funds to Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) sub-grantees like PProject BRAVO. The latest information provided by TDHCA was that Project BRAVO and other Weatherization DOE subrecipients are only being provided 20% of the full BIL WAP funds and the rest are being granted through a competitive process. **No action was taken.**

**VII. Old Business:**

- A. None.**

**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:** Christina Sanchez reminded the Board of early voting dates. Alberto Mesta announced TRLA's Renter's Rights Workshop to empower tenants by providing knowledge about tenants' basic rights, the eviction process, and local resources available, and to make accessible to the community our team of staff attorneys who can help answer their questions and channel their concerns. Sito Negron announced that Appraisal Notices will be sent around this date, and Commissioner Stout's office will be providing a workshop with tips on the appeal procedures. **No action was taken.**

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

- XI. Adjournment:** Marla Jo St. Leon made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Fred Perea seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 6:27 PM.**



**Board of Directors Board Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, June 27, 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	P
Judge Nina Serna	PY	Sylvia Carreon	P	Alberto Mesta	P
Commissioner David Stout	P	Laurencio Bosquez	P	Loren Cartagena	P
Senator César Blanco	P	Luis Perez	P	Fred Perea	P

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

**STAFF**

Laura Ponce, Executive Director	Martha Hernandez, Human Resources Specialist
Andrea Cortez, Exec. Assistant & Outreach Coord.	Ema Marciscano, Community Services Manager

**GUESTS**

Arely Villalobos, Office of Senator Blanco  
Lucy Vargas, Office of Commissioner Stout

Cynthia Renteria, Office of Commissioner Stout

**PROCEEDINGS**

- I. **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 5:31 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 Sylvia Carreon to approve the Consent Agenda which consisted of the following: April 24, 2023 Board Minutes, April & May 2023 Community Services, Weatherization & HVAC, and Housing Services Reports, April & May 2023 Human Resources Report, the April & May 2023 Strategic Plan Report, and the January - March 2023 Customer Satisfaction Report. The motion was seconded by Senator Blanco. 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 that Project BRAVO has been accepting applications for Utility Assistance, HVAC repair and Weatherization since June 1. There was a cap of 300 online applications, but paper applications continue to be accepted. Ms. Ponce announced phase two of the partnership with Wipfli that will cover the formation of a Policies and Procedures handbook to serve as a guide for current and future staff. Ms. Ponce announced that three Project BRAVO staff members have received their Certified Community Action Professional (CCAP) Program Credentials. The CCAP credential recognizes individuals who have demonstrated knowledge and application of the core competencies required to effectively carry out the

vision, mission, purpose, and values of the Community Action movement. In order to receive the credentials, the individuals had to undertake hours of studying, creating a portfolio, and passing an intensive test, among other duties. The credential is widely respected in Community Action due to the purpose of the program, which includes guidance for individuals towards effective leadership within Community Action plus the recognition and elevation of the professional status of those that earn the CCAP credential. **No action was taken.**

- B. Financial Committee: Review and accept the February, March, April & May 2023 Finance Reports:** Mr. Mesta announced that the Finance Committee met on Wednesday, June 21 to review the February, March, April & May 2023 Finance Reports as the February and March detailed reports had not been reviewed by the committee. Mr. Escobedo noticed discrepancies in the reports and requested clarification at the Finance Committee meeting. The discrepancies were investigated and human error was determined to be the cause. The Finance Committee requested that the February and March 2023 reports be corrected and resubmitted for board approval. The Finance Committee asked that the April and May 2023 reports be tabled. The Finance Committee also provided information of discussion that occurred during the finance committee regarding the process and timing for reimbursements by TDHCA for reimbursements and payments. **A motion was made by Christina Sanchez to accept the corrected February & March 2023 Finance Reports and table the April & May 2023 Finance Reports. Commissioner Stout seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**VI. New Business:**

- A. Update on the 2022 Fiscal Audit and Filing of 2022 Form 990, per Organizational Standards 8.1 & 8.6:** Ms. Ponce announced the beginning of the 2022 Fiscal Audit with firm Strickler & Prieto. Ms. Ponce also announced the approval of an extension on the filing of the 2022 Form 990, an extension that is requested annually. **No action was taken.**
- B. Approve Laura Ponce as the Primary Signatory as President for El Paso Community Action Program Project BRAVO, Inc. for the J.P. Morgan Chase Bank Account:** Ms. Ponce reported an outdated signatory form for the J.P. Morgan Chase Bank Account that requires action by the board to name Ms. Ponce as President of Project BRAVO so that the forms can be updated. **Marla Jo St. Leon made a motion to Approve Laura Ponce as the Primary Signatory and President for El Paso Community Action Program Project BRAVO, Inc. for the J.P. Morgan Chase Bank Account. Christina Sanchez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**
- C. Reaffirm Laura Ponce, Executive Director and Approve the Addition of Ema Marciscano, Community Services Manager, and Mike Martinez, Weatherization & Maintenance Manager, as Signatories to the First American Bank Account with Authority to Sign Checks:** Ms. Ponce called on a motion to reapprove Project BRAVO staff members as signatories to the First American Bank Account. **Christina Sanchez made a motion to Reaffirm Laura Ponce, Executive Director and Approve the Addition of Ema Marciscano, Community Services Manager, and Mike Martinez, Weatherization & Maintenance Manager, as Signatories to the First American Bank Account with Authority to Sign Checks. Laurencio Bosquez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**
- D. Request Volunteers from the Board to serve as Signatories for the First American Bank Account and J.P. Morgan Chase Bank Account for El Paso Community Action Program Project BRAVO, Inc.:** Ms. Ponce called on the board for volunteers to be signatories for the First American Bank Account and J.P. Morgan Chase Bank Account. Alberto Mesta, Sylvia Carreon, and Marla Jo St. Leon volunteered. **No action was taken.**

- E. Approve the Stated Board Members as Signatories for the First American Bank Account and J.P. Morgan Chase Bank Account for El Paso Community Action Program Project BRAVO, Inc.:** A motion was needed to approve Alberto Mesta, Sylvia Carreon, and Marla Jo St. Leon as Signatories for the First American Bank Account and J.P. Morgan Chase Bank Account. **Marla Jo St. Leon made a motion to approve Alberto Mesta, Sylvia Carreon and Marla Jo St. Leon as Signatories for the First American Bank Account and J.P. Morgan Chase Bank Account for El Paso Community Action Program Project BRAVO, Inc.. Fred Perea seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**VII. Old Business:**

- A. None.**

**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:** No community updates. **No action was taken.**

- X. Confirm Next Meeting Date/Time:** The meeting was confirmed for Tuesday, July 25, 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. Marla Jo St. Leon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 6:05 PM.**



**Board of Directors Board Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, July 25, 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	P
Judge Nina Serna	PY	Sylvia Carreon	P	Alberto Mesta	P
Commissioner David Stout	A	Laurencio Bosquez	P	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
Andrea Cortez, Exec. Assistant & Outreach Coord.	Ema Marciscano, Community Services Manager

**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 5:36 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: June 29, 2023 Board Minutes, June 2023 Community Services, Weatherization & HVAC, and Housing Services Reports, June 2023 Human Resources Report, the June 2023 Strategic Plan Report, and the April - June 2023 Customer Satisfaction 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 provided a status on the review of the Employee Handbook, which is scheduled to be presented to the Board for review and approval in August Ms. Ponce announced WIPFLI is working with staff to review and update the Project BRAVO Financial Policies. Ms. Ponce announced the 2024 CSBG Budget and Community Action Plan will be presented at a public hearing in August and brought to the board for approval. Ms. Ponce provided an update on utility assistance. The 2023 CEAP contract is almost fully spent and obligated and so assistance is now being capped at \$200 per household with no future credits being provided. Ms. Ponce updated the board on her travel to Washington, DC, by invitation, to speak to White

House officials regarding Project BRAVO's work in the community funded with Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and American Rescue Plan funds. **No action was taken.**

- B. Financial Committee: Review and accept the April, May & June 2023 Finance Reports:** Mr. Escobedo announced that the Finance Committee met on Thursday, July 20 to review the April, May & June 2023 Finance Reports. **A motion was made by Fred Perea to accept the April, May & June 2023 Finance Reports. Luis Perez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**VI. New Business:**

- A. Review and Approve Contract Amendment No. 1 for the HVAC/Heating and Cooling Service Agreement with High Ridge Construction, Inc.:** Ms. Ponce proposed an amendment to the HVAC Service Agreement to replace annual renewals at High Ridge until a new procurement is established. **A motion was made by Sylvia Carreon to Approve Contract Amendment No. 1 for the HVAC/Heating and Cooling Service Agreement with High Ridge Construction, Inc. Luis Perez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Review and Approve Contract Amendment No. 1 for the Weatherization Service Agreement with High Ridge Construction, Inc.:** Ms. Ponce proposed an amendment to the Weatherization Service Agreement to replace annual renewals of High Ridge until a new procurement is established. **A motion was made by Fred Perea to Approve Contract Amendment No. 1 for the Weatherization Service Agreement with High Ridge Construction, Inc. Christina Sanchez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**
- C. Call for Volunteers to Serve on the Fundraising Ad Hoc Committee:** Ms. Ponce called on volunteers to serve on the Fundraising Ad Hoc Committee with the purpose of assisting with El Paso Giving Day. Fred Perea volunteered to serve. An additional invitation will be made to absent members. **No action was taken.**

**VII. Old Business:**

- A. Update on the 2022 Fiscal Audit per Organizational Standards 8.1:** Ms. Ponce provided the board with an update on the progress of the 2022 Fiscal Audit. Project BRAVO staff and the Wipfli team are working to provide the auditor, Strickler & Prieto, with requested documents.

**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:** Ms. Carreon spoke on rezoning efforts in the mission valley and the challenges. Ms. Carreon also announced a backpack giveaway being hosted by the neighborhood coalition. **No action was taken.**
- X. Confirm Next Meeting Date/Time:** The meeting was confirmed for Tuesday, August 29, 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. Sylvia Carreon seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 6:22 PM.**





**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.



**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.**



**Board of Directors Board Meeting Minutes**

Monday, October 30, 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	A	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	P	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	Jessie Vasquez, Housing Programs Manager
Andrea Cortez, Exec. Assistant & Outreach Coord.	Mike Martinez, Weatherization and Maintenance Manager
Jess Ervin, 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

Marcie Carrillo

**PROCEEDINGS**

- I. **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 5:30 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 Alberto Mesta to approve the Consent Agenda which consisted of the following: **September 27, 2023 Board Minutes, September 2023 Community Services, Weatherization & HVAC, and Housing Services Reports, September 2023 Human Resources Report, September 2023 Strategic Plan Report, and the July-September Client Satisfaction Report. The motion was seconded by Loren Cartagena. 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 acceptance of the Program Year 2024 Community Services Block Grant Proposed Budget and the Community Action Plan by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs. Ms. Ponce announced the submission of the Service Delivery Plan on October 27. Ms. Ponce announced the deadline to submit applications for 2023 Project BRAVO services is November 3. Ms. Ponce announced that

Project BRAVO is on track to spend and close out the 2023 contracts, meaning the organization will close from December 22 to January 1. Ms. Ponce announced Project BRAVO is participating in the City of El Paso's Solar for All grant application to provide solar panels for homes. Ms. Ponce took input from the board regarding legal issues that may be presented in the installation of the panels. Ms. Ponce announced a partnership with the EPA to provide community presentations and Train the Trainer sessions for Lead Awareness. Ms. Ponce announced her return from the UnidosUS board meeting in Washington, DC after becoming a board member and shared her experience and importance of Project BRAVO's role in the organization. **No action was taken.**

- B. Financial Committee: Review and accept the September and August 2023 Finance Reports:** Mr. Mesta announced that the Finance Committee met on Wednesday, October 25 to review the September and August 2023 Finance Reports. **A motion was made by Fred Perea to accept the September and August 2023 Finance Reports. Loren Cartagena seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**VI. New Business:**

- A. Call for Volunteers to Serve on the Nominating Committee to Determine the 2024 Slate of Officers:** Board Chair Fernando Escobedo asked for volunteers to serve on a committee with him to determine the slate of officers for the 2024 board of directors. Luis Perez, Loren Cartagena, and Fred Perea volunteered to serve on the committee. **No action was taken.**
- B. Review and Approve Resolution Requesting an Extension for the 2023 CSBG Contract:** Ms. Ponce presented the resolution requesting an extension for the 2023 CSBG Contract, an action that is completed on an annual basis. **A motion was made by Sylvia Carreon to approve the Resolution Requesting an Extension for the 2023 CSBG Contract. Luis Perez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**
- C. Review and Ratify the Line of Credit Agreement with First American Bank:** Ms. Ponce provided information regarding the line of credit extension. **A motion was made by Sylvia Carreon to Ratify the Line of Credit Agreement with First American Bank. Alberto Mesta seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**
- D. Review and Approve "Second Amendment to Lease Agreement" with HOME (Housing Authority of the City of El Paso) for 8909 Old County Road:** Ms. Ponce asked for approval for the renewal of the lease with HOME (Housing Authority of the City of El Paso) for 8909 Old County Road. **A motion was made by Sylvia Carreon to Approve "Second Amendment to Lease Agreement" with HOME (Housing Authority of the City of El Paso) for 8909 Old County Road. Loren Cartagena seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**
- E. Review the "El Paso Community Action Program Project BRAVO Code of Conduct Policy" per Organizational Standard 5.6:** Ms. Ponce presented the Code of Conduct to the board. Ms. Ponce provided examples of how the code could be violated and what forms and procedures should be followed to stay in compliance. Board members were asked to sign their acknowledgement forms and submit them to Project BRAVO. **No action was taken.**
- F. Report Presentation on Organization-wide, Comprehensive Risk Assessment, per Organizational Standard 4.6:** Ms. Ponce offered the overview to the board that contains recommendations related to Risk Management Basics, including the assignment of responsibility for risk management, risk oversight, and risk committees. **No action was taken.**



**VII. Old Business:**

- A. Follow-up on the Project BRAVO Bylaws “Article XI Meetings, Section 16, Action by Telephone” and Distribution of Final Copy of the Recently Updated Bylaws to the Board of Directors:** Ms. Ponce followed up on questions from the previous board meeting where the updates to the Bylaws were presented. Ms. Ponce asked our attorneys to recommend updated language on Project BRAVO Bylaws “Article XI Meetings, Section 16, Action by Telephone,” since there may have been changes to best practices since the pandemic. The attorneys stated that no changes were required and so the Bylaws approved at the previous meeting are considered the final approved copy that was presented to the board. Ms. Ponce asked board members to sign the Bylaws acknowledgement form and return it to Project BRAVO. **No action was taken.**
- B. Update on the 2022 Fiscal Audit per Organizational Standards 8.1:** Jess Ervin provided the board with an update on the progress of the 2022 Fiscal Audit and Form 990, detailing the plan to present the Form 990 on November 14, 2023, and the Fiscal Audit 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:** Ms. Carreon announced a community presentation on property taxes and a voter guide on Thursday, November 2. Ms. Carreon announced that all city community centers will have Halloween celebrations on Tuesday, October 31. Dr. Renteria announced the County building will have indoor trick or treating and Commissioner Stout’s office will be participating in the festivities. Dr. Renteria announced there will be a community cleanup in South Central El Paso with dumpsters available for residents to dispose of trash. Ms. Ponce announced that Project BRAVO’s central center will host trick or treating for the Rayito del Sol daycare facility. **No action was taken.**
- X. Confirm Next Meeting Date/Time:** A special meeting was confirmed for Tuesday, November 14, 2023, at 5:30 PM at Project BRAVO’s administrative offices at 2000 Texas Avenue. The annual meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 7, 2023 at 5:30 PM at Project BRAVO’s administrative offices at 2000 Texas Avenue.
- XI. Adjournment:** Sylvia Carreon made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Loren Cartagena seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 6:20 PM.



**Special Board of Directors Board Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, November 14, 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	A	Sylvia Carreon	P	Alberto Mesta, Jr.	A
Commissioner David Stout	PY	Laurencio Bosquez	P	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	Ema Marciscano, Community Services Manager
Andrea Cortez, Exec. Assistant & Outreach Coord.	Mike Martinez, Weatherization and Maintenance Manager
Jessie Vasquez, Housing Programs Manager	Kristy Gamble, Manager, Wipfli (Virtually)

**GUESTS**

Arely Villalobos, Office of Senator Blanco

Michael Drapes, Strickler and Prieto

Cynthia Renteria, Office of Commissioner Stout

**PROCEEDINGS**

- I. **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 5:30 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. **New Business:**
  - A. **None.**
- V. **Old Business:**
  - A. **Review and Approve the Project BRAVO Fiscal Year 2022 Form 990, per Organizational Standard 8.6:** Ms. Ponce provided background on how the FY2022 Form 990 was produced by Project BRAVO’s fiscal auditor, Strickler & Prieto, the Wipfli team, and Project BRAVO staff. Ms. Ponce stated that the Form 990 is due on November 15, 2023. Michael Drapes from Strickler & Prieto presented the Project BRAVO FY2022 Form 990 to the board. Mr Drapes answered questions from the board of directors related to details in the document. When asked about the status of the FY 2022 fiscal audit and if there were any material findings so far, Mr. Drapes stated that the Strickler & Prieto team had not identified any material changes so far. Kristy Gamble from Wipfli provided input on the role the company played in the creation of the Form 990. **Laurencio Bosquez made a motion to Approve the Project BRAVO Fiscal Year 2022 Form 990, per Organizational Standard 8.6. Luis Perez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**VI. 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.**

**VII. Community Updates:** Laurencio Bosquez announced that his church, Montaña de Cristo, would continue its annual tradition of accepting toy and coat donations for orphan children in need in Mexico. Laurencio urged the board to make donations by the next board meeting on December 5. **No action was taken.**

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

**IX. Adjournment:** Fred Perea made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Sylvia Carreon seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 5:52 PM.**



**Annual Board of Directors Board Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, December 05, 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	Vacant		Fernando Escobedo, Jr.	P
Judge Nina Serna	PY	Sylvia Carreon	P	Alberto Mesta, Jr.	P
Commissioner David Stout	PY	Laurencio Bosquez	P	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 (Virtual)	Jessie Vasquez, Housing Programs Manager
Andrea Cortez, Exec. Assistant & Outreach Coord.	Mike Martinez, Weatherization and Maintenance Manager
Ema Marciscano, Community Services Manager	Martha Hernandez, HR Specialist
Kristy Gamble, Wipfli (Virtual)	

**GUESTS**

Arelly Villalobos, Office of Senator Blanco  
 Lina Mendoza, Office of Senator Blanco  
 Rosemary R. Train, ScottHulse

Lucy Vargas, Office of Judge Nina Serna  
 Sito Negrón, Office of Commissioner Stout

**PROCEEDINGS**

- I. **Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Fernando Escobedo, Board Chair.
- 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 Sylvia Carreon to approve the Consent Agenda which consisted of the following: **October 30, 2023 Board Minutes, October 2023 Community Services, Weatherization & HVAC, and Housing Services Reports, October 2023 Human Resources Report, and the October 2023 Strategic Plan Report. The motion was seconded by Luis Carlos Perez. 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 Project BRAVO offices would be closed from December 22nd to January 1st due to the successful expenditures of contracts ending December 31. Ms. Ponce announced the 2024 application process will open p on January 3. **No action was taken.**

- B. Financial Committee: Review and accept the October 2023 Finance Reports:** Fernando Escobedo announced that the Finance Committee met on Monday, December 4 to review the October 2023 Finance Reports. **A motion was made by Fred Perea to accept the October 2023 Finance Reports. Luis Carlos Perez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

**VI. New Business:**

- A. Presentation of the Nominating Committee 2024 Slate of Officers for the positions of Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer for the Board of Directors of Project BRAVO. Nominations from the floor for additions to the ballot:** Mr. Escobedo presented the slate of officers that was determined by the Nominating Committee. The slate of officers that was presented was as follows: Luis Carlos Perez for Board Chair, Alberto Mesta, Jr. for Vice Chair, Sylvia Carreon for Secretary, and Fernando Escobedo, Jr. for Treasurer. Mr. Escobedo called for nominations from the floor for additions to the ballot, to which there were none. **A motion was made by Laurencio Bosquez to close nominations from the floor for the 2023 Slate of Officers for the positions of Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer for the Board of Directors of Project BRAVO. Christina Sanchez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**
- B. Officer elections, counting of the ballots, review of election results, and approval of election results for 2024 officers for the Project BRAVO Board of Directors:** The board members were handed a ballot and turned in their secret ballots for counting. Completed ballots were collected and counted by the Executive Assistant, Andrea Cortez, and the Housing Programs Manager, Jessie Vasquez. The election results are as follows: Luis Carlos Perez for Board Chair, Alberto Mesta, Jr. for Vice Chair, Sylvia Carreon for Secretary, and Fernando Escobedo, Jr. for Treasurer. **A motion was made by Christina Sanchez to accept the election results for the 2024 Officers for the Project BRAVO Board of Directors. The motion was seconded by Loren Cartagena. The motion passed unanimously.**
- C. Call for volunteers to serve on the Finance, Fundraising, and Code of Conduct Committees:** Ms. Ponce called on volunteers to serve on the Finance Committee, with elected Board Treasurer, Fernando Escobedo, Jr., serving as chair. Sylvia Carreon volunteered to serve on the Finance Committee. Luis Carlos Perez, Alberto Mesta, and Loren Cartagena volunteered to serve on the Code of Conduct Committee. Fred Perea, Loren Cartagea, and Luis Carlos Perez volunteered to serve on the Fundraising Committee. **No action was taken.**
- D. Discuss Process for the 2023 Performance Evaluation of the Project BRAVO Executive Director:** Ms. Ponce provided information regarding the Process for the 2023 Performance Evaluation of the Project BRAVO Executive Director. **No action was taken.**
- E. Review and Approve the Resolution to Adopt the Project BRAVO Medical Cafeteria Plan & Plan Documents:** Ms. Ponce presented the document and answered questions regarding the benefits for employees. **A motion was made by Christina Sanchez to adopt the Project BRAVO Medical Cafeteria Plan & Plan Documents. Sylvia Carreon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**
- F. Review and Approve the Resolution to Adopt the Project BRAVO Cafeteria Plan for Other Benefits & Plan Documents for Other Benefits:** Ms. Ponce presented the document and answered questions regarding the benefits for employees. **A motion was made by Christina Sanchez to adopt the Project BRAVO Cafeteria Plan for Other Benefits & Plan Documents for Other Benefits. Sylvia Carreon seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

- G. Accept the Resignation of Marla Jo St. Leon, Low-income Representative for the Northeast:** Mr. Escobedo presented the resignation letter submitted by Marla Jo St. Leon, Low Income Representative for Northeast. **A motion was made by Christina Sanchez to Accept the Resignation of Marla Jo St. Leon, Low-income Representative for the Northeast. Alberto Mesta seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**
- H. Discuss and take possible action regarding *Sandra Trejo v. El Paso County Community Action Program Project Bravo*, in the 243<sup>rd</sup> Judicial District Court, Cause No. 2023-DCV-0501:** Attorney Rosemary R. Marin attended the board meeting in person to provide counsel to the board of directors. A motion was made by Sylvia Carreon to adjourn to Executive Session. Laurencio Bosquez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Executive session began at 6:01 PM.

A motion was made by Fred Perea to adjourn the Executive Session. Christina Sanchez seconded the motion. Executive session ended at 6:20 PM. **The motion passed unanimously. 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 and Form 990, detailing the plan to present the Fiscal Audit at a Special Meeting of the board 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.

- IX. Community Updates:** Christina Sanchez reminded the board of elections in District 2 and urged voters in the area to vote before the deadline. Laurencio Bosquez thanked the board members and Project BRAVO staff for the toy and clothing donations that will be taken to the orphans in Mexico. Andrea Cortez thanked board members for their service in 2023, and presented them with a gift from the Team Building Committee as a token of appreciation. Andrea Cortez announced Project BRAVO staff's second annual Holiday Decorating Contest and asked for volunteers to help judge the contest via email. Laurencio Bosquez, Luis Carlos Perez, Loren Cartagena and Fred Perea volunteered to be judges. **No action was taken.**

- X. Confirm Next Meeting Date/Time:** The meeting was confirmed for Monday, January 29, 2024, at 5:30 PM at Project BRAVO's administrative offices at 2000 Texas Ave.

- XI. Adjournment:** Laurencio Bosquez made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Luis Carlos Perez seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 6:24 PM.**