

STATE OF TEXAS §  
COUNTY OF CAMERON §  
TOWN OF LAGUNA VISTA §

MINUTES OF A TRI-CITY MEETING OF THE LAGUNA VISTA TOWN COUNCIL, CITY OF  
PORT ISABEL AND CITY OF SOUTH PADRE ISLAND

DATE: August 14, 2019  
TIME: 6:00 p.m.  
PLACE: City Hall Building

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Susie Houston, Mayor  
Johvonne Howard, Councilmember Place 2  
Frank Davalos, Jr., Councilmember Place 3  
Rolando Gonzalez, Councilmember Place 4  
Nadine Smith, Councilmember Place 6  
Rolando Vela, City Manager

J.J. Zamora, City of Port Isabel Mayor  
Martin Cantu, Sr., City of Port Isabel Commissioner  
Carmen Rios, City of Port Isabel Commissioner  
Martin Cantu, Jr., City of Port Isabel Commissioner  
Jeffery Martinez, City of Port Isabel Commissioner  
Jared Hockema, City of Port Isabel City Manager

Patrick McNulty, City of SPI Mayor  
Evan Dalton, City of SPI Council Member  
Ken Medders, City of SPI Council Member  
Kerry Schwartz, City of SPI Council Member  
Randy Smith, City of SPI City Manager

Susie Alcocer, City of Port Isabel City Secretary  
Nadini Jee, City of Port Isabel Asst. City Secretary  
Susan Manning, City of SPI City Secretary  
Rolando Vela, City Manager  
Alexia Garza, Assistant to the City Manager  
Alan Ozuna, City Attorney  
Alma Deckard, City Secretary

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Michael Carter, Councilmember Place 1  
Victor Worrell, Mayor Pro-Tem

ALSO PRESENT:

Maria Galasso, Laguna Vista  
Cynthia Cantu, Laguna Heights  
Benny Ochoa III, Port Isabel  
Tom Goodman, South Padre Island  
Angie Gonzalez, Port Isabel  
Jan Wilson, South Padre Island

Bill Hood, South Padre Island  
Gayle Hood, South Padre Island  
Manuel Hinojosa III, Port Isabel  
Virginia Guillot, South Padre Island  
Jerry Wilson, South Padre Island  
Ivonne Fuentes, Port Isabel  
Juan Fuentes, Port Isabel  
Bertha Zamora, Port Isabel  
Eddie Trevino, Cameron County  
John Young, San Benito  
Angelique Soto, South Padre Island  
Mark Shellard, South Padre Island  
Rodrigo Gimenez, South Padre Island  
Ramona Kantack, South Padre Island  
Louis Gonzalez, South Padre Island  
Jimmy Vela, Port Isabel  
Robyn Awand, Laguna Vista  
Glenda Stafford, Port Isabel  
June Williams, Bayview  
Lydia Caballero, South Padre Island  
Wanda Reyes, Laguna Vista  
Marcella Hancock, Port Isabel  
Doug Fowler, South Padre Island  
Charles Ortiz, Port Isabel  
Susan Rice, South Padre Island  
Eddie Rice, South Padre Island  
Benito Ochoa IV, Port Isabel  
Laura Baguio, Laguna Vista  
Michael Baguio, Laguna Vista  
Tommy J Saenz, South Padre Island  
Joseph Cantu, South Padre Island  
Johnny Pineda, Port Isabel  
Mary Volz, Laguna Vista  
Sarah McGinley, South Padre Island  
Rebekah Hinojosa, Brownsville  
Dennis Gavin, Long Island Village  
Alicia Baldovinos, Port Isabel  
Norman Esquivel, Laguna Vista  
Pete Sepulveda, Cameron County  
Mickey Furcron, South Padre Island  
Lulu Nunez, Port Isabel  
Gloria Vela, Brownsville  
Allyson Cole

## ORDER OF BUSINESS

### **1) CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm, by Mayor J.J. Zamora.

J.J. Zamora called roll for the City of Port Isabel Commission. All were present.

Mayor Nick McNulty called roll for the City of South Padre Island Council. Council Members Joe Ricco and Alita Bagley were absent.

Mayor Susie Houston called roll for Town of Laguna Vista. Council Members Michael Carter and Victor Worrell were absent.

**2) INVOCATION** was led by Mayor Susie Houston.

**3) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** was led by Mayor Patrick McNulty.

### **4) PUBLIC COMMENT/OPEN FORUM**

**John Young, Ramona Kantack, Tommy J. Saenz, Rebecca Hinojosa, Bill Berg and Tom Goodman all spoke in opposition to the LNG plants, and tax abatements.**

**5) WORKSHOP WITH CITIES OF CITY OF SOUTH PADRE ISLAND, CITY OF PORT ISABEL AND TOWN OF LAGUNA VISTA. (Please Note: No action will be taken on these items).**

- a) Discussion regarding introductory remarks by presiding officer or representative of the Cities of South Padre Island, Port Isabel and Laguna Vista.

**Mayor J.J. Zamora welcomed everyone for coming.**

**Mayor Patrick McNulty stated that he was glad that the three cities finally got together for the Tri-City meeting.**

**Mayor Susie Houston stated that she looked forward the Tri-City meetings.**

- b) Discussion acknowledging presence of elected officials, honored guests and official representatives.

**Jared Hockema recognized Point Isabel ISD School Board members Jimmy Vela, Alicia Baldovinos, Bertha Zamora. Also present was Assistant**

**Superintendent Johnny Pineda. Also recognized was JP Benito Ochoa III (retired) and JP Benito Ochoa IV.**

**Jared Hockema recognized Cameron County Judge Eddie Trevino and Cameron County Administrator Ernesto Sepulveda.**

- c) Discussion regarding the placement of links on the websites of governmental entities in the Laguna Madre Area for other governmental entities and municipalities in the Laguna Madre Area (City of Laguna Vista).

**Jared Hockema stated that the Tri-City meetings began as a result of the causeway collapse. The cities felt the need to help each other. One of the big discussions with the Tri-City meetings was the Bahia Grande and today it is LNG.**

**Rolando Vela stated that going to one cities website people should be able to connect with the other two entities. When the dust settles, we're all working together.**

- d) Discussion regarding potential lighting of the Queen Isabella Causeway. (City of South Padre Island)

**Randy Smith stated that the causeway is very dark at times and it is also a safety issue. The City of South Padre Island has done a study and there are some LED lights that are colored and would be a tourist attraction.**

- e) Discussion regarding traffic issues on SH 100. (City of South Padre Island and City of Port Isabel)

**Jared Hockema stated that the traffic light with heavy traffic will become a challenge with the second causeway. The City of Port Isabel is working on a project to create a second loop to Hwy 48.**

**Mayor Patrick McNulty stated that the lifespan of Queen Isabella Causeway is coming up for reconstruction. This will cause problems during the renovation.**

**Martin Cantu, Jr. stated that there is a concert scheduled for October 12, 2019 at the Cameron County Park and it will be interesting how the traffic in that area plays out.**

**Nadine Smith expressed thanks to the officers that control the traffic lights, because this make a big difference.**

**Randy Smith stated that when accidents happen on the causeway we used to have to wait until DPS showed up to take over the accident. However, now we move the vehicle off the bridge, for minor accidents. We have one employee that just works traffic during peak times.**

**Mary Volz stated that the traffic cones at the end of the causeway cause problems for the businesses in that area. Jared Hockema stated that they are trying to work the situation as best they can.**

- f) Discussion regarding opposition to construction of LNG facilities in the Laguna Madre Area. (City of Port Isabel, City of South Padre Island, City of Laguna Vista).**

**There was a long discussion concerning the LNG.**

**Jared Hockema stated that the Cameron County Commissioners is having a meeting on Tuesday, August 20, 2019 and the LNG tax abatement issue will be on the agenda. He urged everyone to attend the meeting to voice opposition to the tax abatement.**

- g) Discussion regarding Laguna Madre Youth Center and collaboration on regional sports and recreational facilities. (City of Port Isabel)**

**Jared Hockema stated that the Laguna Madre Youth Center formally known as the Boys and Girls Club is in dire need of financial help. The City of Port Isabel contributes approximately \$120,000 annually with payments for all utilities, building maintenance and one employee that works on grants.**

**The City of Port Isabel paid for an independent audit of the Youth Center and now maintains their accounting books. Our numbers of kids serviced has doubled. The Youth Center is also a branch of the Public Library.**

**Marcela Hancock stated that the annual budget is about \$300,000, with \$200,000 coming from grants, such as United Way and Fitness & Nutrition. The rest is earned through donations.**

**Martin Cantu, Jr. stated that the facility needs to be fixed before we're able to take in more kids or hold leagues and tournaments.**

**Jared Hockema urged the City of South Padre Island and the Town of Laguna Vista to financially support the Youth Center.**

- h) Discussion regarding presentation by Laguna Madre Water District regarding capital projects. (Laguna Madre Water District)**

**Charles Ortiz addressed the Councils explaining that the Laguna Madre Water District services South Padre Island, Port Isabel, Laguna Heights, Laguna Vista, and Bayview all the way to Ted Hunt Road.**

**Jared Hockema stated that the water rates in the Laguna Madre area are the lowest in the Rio Grande Valley.**

**Charles Ortiz stated that a Bond issue will be on the May 2020 election. The Bond issue was previously on the ballot and failed. There are several plants in severe need of repairs.**

**Nadine Smith stated that she toured the facilities and the #2 plant in Port Isabel is completely out and Plant #1 needs repairs. I urge everyone to go tour the facilities and see why we need to vote “yes” on the Bond issue in May 2020.**

- i) Discussion regarding the setting of future joint meetings. (City of Port Isabel, City of South Padre Island, City of Laguna Vista, Point Isabel ISD)**

**Patrick McNulty stated that the City of South Padre Island will host the next Tri-City meeting in about 4 – 5 months.**

**He suggested keeping the agenda items to a minimum of 4 – 6 items, to allow time for discussion.**

**Susie Houston agreed that 4 items are plenty.**

## **6) ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion was made by Mayor Patrick McNulty to adjourn meeting at 8:14 pm, Martin Cantu, Sr., seconded the motion. All voted “aye” to approve, motion carried.**

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Susie Houston, Mayor

Attest:

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Alma Deckard, City Secretary