

STATE OF TEXAS

(Minutes conducted via electronic voting)

COUNTY OF CAMERON

**BE IT REMEMBERED**, that on the **27<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2025**, the Board of Trustees of the Brownsville Independent School District met in a **Special Called Board Meeting** at the Administration Building, 1900 Price Road, Brownsville, Texas, for the purpose of transacting any and all business that came before the Board and with the following to wit:

**PRESENT:**

Erasmo Castro	President
Daniella Lopez Valdez	Vice-President
Minerva Pena	Secretary
Carlos Elizondo	Board Member
Denise Garza	Member
Jessica Gonzalez	Member
Frank Ortiz	Member

**ABSENT:**

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Alejandro Cespedes	Superintendent Designee
Benjamin Castillo	Attorney for the Board

**ALSO ABSENT:**

None

**WHEREUPON**, a quorum being present and it appearing before the Board, it is hereby so found that notice of this **Special Called Board Meeting** has been duly given in the manner and for the length of time as prescribed by law. The meeting was called to order and declared ready for the transaction of business with the following to wit:

- I. Meeting called to order by Erasmo Castro, Board President at 12:00 p.m.**
- II. Moment of Silence led by Alejandro Cespedes, Superintendent Designee.**
- III. Pledge of Allegiance led by Alejandro Cespedes, Superintendent Designee.**
- IV. Roll Call. Ms. Patricia Perez, Executive Assistant announced that all Trustees are present.**
- V. Recommend approving the agenda of the Special Called Board Meeting of Monday, January 27, 2025, with any corrections/deletions.**

**Motion made by Denise Garza, seconded by Jessica Gonzalez, to recommend approving the agenda of the Special Called Board Meeting of Monday, January 27, 2025, with no corrections/deletions, as stated by administration.**

**The following vote was recorded**

Yea: Ms. Lopez, Ms. Garza, Mr. Castro, Mr. Ortiz, Ms. Gonzalez, Ms. Pena  
Nay: Mr. Elizondo  
Abstain:

**Motion Carried: 6-1-0**

**VI. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**No public speakers signed up for Public Comment.**

**The Board may deliberate or take action regarding the following agenda items.**

**Board policy BE (Local) and Robert's Rules limits debate to two opportunities. A Trustee may debate a motion for three minutes on the first speaking opportunity and two minutes on the second opportunity.**

**VII. General Function Item(s):**

- A. Discussion, consideration, and possible action to authorize Superintendent, General Counsel and Financial Advisor to negotiate Bond counsel contract and fees associated with possible bond issuance.**

Ms. Minerva Pena, Board Member stated, I just wanted to see if maybe we can turn around and table this until we go and meet with the committee and actually have a vote to turnaround and have this Bond. Because this right now appears to me that we're putting the horse, the cart before the horse. And I know they say, well, we've got to hurry by February so we can do it in May. We always have the November election. We can always do it then. I don't want to feel like we're being rushed or pressured by anyone to do stuff to get this out there, to get the vendor contracts and this and that. I'd like to, with everything that's going on right now and all of the uncertainties and our personnel having to have attention and giving them time to recuperate, I would really like to see that we can table this until we turn around and actually take it to the Board to vote, because to turn around and vote to get all this done for the bond when the bond has not even been approved, I have never seen an operation like this done, and it is very disheartening to see that we are doing it backwards. And we have gotten questions on that by esteemed members of the community. We need to take it one step at a time and be very careful because we don't want to seem like we are rushing it and then it is going to turn around and fail on us and we don't want that to happen. **Mr. Alejandro Cespedes, Superintendent Designee stated, right, so just to clarify a couple of things. It is nowadays, it is common practice for the Bond Counsel to come. This is in no way, shape or form allowing for the Board to call a bond election. That will be done, Board will take action for that on a Special Called Meeting February 13th. As you all recall in the 86 Texas legislator back in 2019, the Legislator revamped the way bond elections are called now. There're several things now. There's specific language that has to be included in the ballot language as well as now, aside from the general proposition, there have to be different special propositions in case the Board or the district wants to call an election for one of those specifically. This is just for the district. If the board approves this, it's for the district to work with Bond Counsel. Their legal expertise is in preparing the ballot language and preparing the propositions in case that the board does decide to call a Bond election again on February 13th. So, this is not approving any bond, it's just that we also have to be conscious of giving**



Bond Council enough time to prepare this ballot language because again, for example, we have two scheduled meetings with the board, February 6th and February 10th. And that is when you all, the Board, will go through all the assessments that have been completed by our subcommittees and look at all the work and then you all will make a decision if you all want to call a Bond election or not. This is a forwarding time for our Bond Council to also be prepared at the same time. Ms. Pena stated, may I ask, it says here negotiate a contract for them. So they are going to start getting paid and we haven't even decided what is going to happen because that's what a contract is. Why didn't we work this so we can maybe have a suggestion so that we can do the stuff and not thought that we're going to start paying for something that hasn't been approved and I know this makes you feel very uncomfortable. I apologize for that. Mr. Cespedes stated, no, no, you're okay. So let me just answer that. There is no fee that will be paid to them unless one, the Bond gets called by the Board. Now we have to look at the fee structures for the most part. So again, this is all contingent upon the Board deciding to call Bond election on February 13th. So to negotiate the contract, that's looking at terms in terms of what the bond total package is going to look like. So these Bond Counsels have to come back and let us know if the Bond is going to be structured, if the Board decides to structure it a certain way, there are fees that are going to be attached to that. But again, the important thing to take from here, it's contingent upon the Board deciding to call an election on the 13th of next month. Ms. Pena stated, and who is the general counsel and the financial advisor that we are looking at? Mr. Cespedes replied, so our financial advisors, we already have a contract with them it is Estrada Hinojosa. Both Mr. Hinojosa and Dr. De Los Santos are here. Ms. Pena stated, thank you. Mr. Cespedes continued, they're the ones that helped us out with the procurement. They did a request for information that set up the criteria in conjunction with myself and with Dr. Chavez to make sure that the criteria was set out. Again, and so these are some of the, we received five firms that received back the request for information and after scoring the matrix, that is one of the recommendations that we are bringing forth today. Ms. Pena stated, and the council? Mr. Cespedes stated, right. Ms. Pena stated, the general council? Mr. Cespedes stated, well, the general council, like I said, we worked with our financial advisors, but this is to approve the bond counsel. Ms. Pena stated, okay, so it's just for the bond counsel? Mr. Cespedes replied, that's correct. Ms. Jessica Gonzalez, Board Member stated, thank you. I just wanted to pretty much reiterate what Mr. Cespedes said. I don't want to be confusing the community or misinforming the community, especially at any time, of course. He is correct. What we are, what their administration is asking us to approve today is our financial advisors who we are already under contract with, part of their scope of work, which is included in our backup, thank you administration for that, it also says that they can do this for us. So, there will be no additional fees as of right now. We are also not calling a bond election as of right now. So, I just want to make that crystal clear. We do not need to be misinforming, confusing our community at any time. Thank you. Ms. Pena stated, and Mr. Cespedes. Mr. Castro, Board President stated, Mr. Ortiz. Ms. Pena stated, I'm sorry. Mr. Frank Ortiz, Board Member stated, just for the record, I do and thank you for the explanations that were given just a little while ago. But I feel uncomfortable with this item agenda due to the fact, as Ms. Pena indicated, makes it seem like we have already called a bond election, which we have not done so at this point in time. And also, I do not have any information from the Citizens Facilities Committee yet as to what their recommendations are going to be. So, as I said, I just want to state this for the record that I am feeling uncomfortable with this item at this time. Mr. Cespedes stated, right. I just want to clarify this has zero to do with our Citizens Facilities Committee's work. We have a scheduled meeting tonight at 5.30 where they will present their final report and their recommendations. However, I think it is important for us to be proactive and to be diligent



in having a bond counsel there to help as you all work out those assessments and decide ultimately if you do want to call or bond or not that they're ready with that valid language on the 13th. Again, should the board decide to call? Mr. Castro stated, Ms. Lopez Valdez. Ms. Daniella Lopez Valdez stated, Mr. Cespedes, also just to clarify, you're saying since the 86th legislative session, this is how procedure takes place? Usually we do the bond counsel first. **Mr. Cespedes stated, right and again, remember, the district has not passed the bond since 2006. So back then, the rules were way different than they are now. So now it is very complex in terms of the ballot language, the resolution and the number of propositions.** Mr. Carlos Elizondo, Board Member stated, May I? Mr. Castro stated, Mr. Elizondo. Mr. Elizondo continued, yes, just real quick. You suggest to this committee that this is the way it is done, but there are other bonds that have been held throughout the valley and that's not the process. You know that for sure, right, because you were in Edinburg and there's McAllen and Hidalgo and La Joya has done this. This is the only district and I know that it sounds like you already have your votes for the bond, right, and I don't want to continue down that road, but what I'm seeing here is that you're going beyond. You know, you're getting this done before the actual process has even taken its whole place. I said you're going to meet with the committee later on but did you want to push down an attorney already? I said is there any of these individuals that are here? I see the list here. Are there any of these individuals present? **Mr. Cespedes stated, I can have our financial advisors I can call on them and have any questions regarding any of those but again, we're just trying to be proactive in case that you all decide to call one. If you don't, then again, that's the Board's decision and you all have that right.** Mr. Elizondo stated, right. **Mr. Cespedes stated, we are just trying to be proactive.** Mr. Elizondo stated, I wish we were proactive with other things, not just this. But let me let me keep on asking my question. I see that we're being forced to vote on something today that hasn't even completely culminated and followed the process yet. There's still other aspects, right? **Mr. Cespedes interjected, in Mrs. Pena's words, we're never forced to do anything, sir.** Mr. Elizondo stated, forced to do what? **Mr. Cespedes stated, anything.** Mr. Elizondo stated, about? **Mr. Cespedes stated, anything.** Mr. Elizondo stated, I don't understand. **Mr. Cespedes stated, you're not forced to take action on it today. You're not forced to vote yes or no on it. I don't think anybody here is forced to do anything.** Mr. Elizondo stated, no, we're not being forced to do anything, but you're bringing it to us already without the information. **Mr. Cespedes interjected, right, I just wanted to clarify that.** Mr. Elizondo interjected, Mr. Ortiz already mentioned that we haven't got any of the information yet. Yet you want us to vote on something right now with not having the information given to us. **Mr. Cespedes stated, voting on the bond council has no regards in terms of what the actual propositions or what the packages would look like.** Mr. Elizondo stated, sir, voting on the Bond council. Ms. Daniella Lopez Valdez interjected, I would like to call a question. Mr. Elizondo stated, excuse me, voting on the bond counsel is going to cost this district money. **Mr. Cespedes stated, it's only contingent upon if the board decides to call a bond election.** Mr. Elizondo stated, so that's what I'm saying. **Mr. Cespedes stated, so if the Board decides not to call a bond election.** Mr. Elizondo interjected, then we don't need this process. **Mr. Cespedes continued, then even if you approve it today, there would be zero fees paid.** Mr. Elizondo stated, so then why bring it up now? Ms. Gonzalez, let Mr. Erasmo. Ms. Pena interjected Jessica stop. Mr. Elizondo stated, figure it out on himself, please. Ms. Gonzalez stated, I'm sorry what did I do. Ms. Pena stated, you are talking to him and telling him what to do, I heard you. Mr. Elizondo stated, Mr. Castro I am almost done. Ms. Gonzalez stated, actually I said there was a call to question, people. Mr. Castro stated let's go on Mr. Elizondo, Mr. Elizondo, Mr. Elizondo, Ms. Pena. Mr. Elizondo stated, yes, may I finish. Ms. Gonzalez stated, (inaudible) finish. Mr. Elizondo stated, thank you. And so, what I am trying to say is we already have one, two, three, four, five, five individuals here, bond counsel, and we're



in the process of any of us giving them the information other than today to vote on it. Mr. Castro stated, I'm just going to try to understand it myself. The process is that we hire the attorneys to get ready in order if the bond is voted through or the bond is not voted through. If the bond is not voted through by this Board, then we pay the attorney nothing. That's my understanding. So, if we decide to hire on the attorneys, there will be a fee. And if we don't hire on the attorneys because the Bond does not pass, then we don't pay a fee. I don't understand what the discussion is. Mr. Elizondo stated, I understand that, President. That's not my question. My question is, out of these five firms, how much of that information has been given to us? Mr. Erasmo, I have five individuals here that I vote on, that I have to vote on. I've got zero information given to me so I can make the right choice. That's my question, not about the money. I know that we don't pay them anything yet. Mr. Castro stated, Mr. Cespedes, would you let us know how we got to these five different. **Mr. Cespedes stated, so again, just like we've done a lot of the other procurements, we had a request for information conducted by our financial advisors. In consultation with them, we set the criteria, the matrix, and it was scored. I believe I would want them to help us in doing the scoring. They are the ones that have the expertise in this. And they are bringing, along with us, we are bringing a recommendation to the Board. Even if we decide not to vote on this, and you all want to wait until the 13th, we are going to come back with the same recommendation.** Ms. Pena stated, and question, may I. Mr. Castro stated, Ms. Garza. Ms. Denise Garza stated, Mr. Cespedes, thank you Mr. Castro. We have Estrada Hinojosa here, could they just give us a little bit of their input since I know they work with many other districts throughout the state of Texas and that way they can just give us an update of how things changed after the 86 Legislative Session and going now for bonds? **Mr. Cespedes stated, yes, definitely, I can call Mr. Noe Hinojosa.** Mr. Noe Hinojosa, President/CEO, Estrada, Hinojosa & Company, Investment Bankers stated, well, good morning or afternoon, Noe Hinojosa with the Estrada Hinojosa and Company and my partner, Miguel de los Santos, here in our Valley office. Just to clarify, if you hire a bond counsel, which is not a function of us telling you to do so, but in anticipation that if you were to call an election for May or November, we're not licensed as financial advisors to prepare those propositions to bring to you legal documents. But even if you decide to call the election, you're not, part of the negotiations with this attorney, or attorney firm, is to make sure that they don't charge us, even if you call the election. We would only be charged if the bond election passes and the bonds are sold. So, part of that negotiation is to make it very clear to them, just like ourselves, we work on a basically on a concession that if the bonds are passed and you decide to sell bonds down the road, then at that time that's when we get paid. Otherwise, the district is not out of pocket. So, what we did, based on the guidance from staff, we went out and sought services through an RFI from seven different firms. We received proposals from five of those seven firms. And we had a matrix, a grade, and brought that to the staff as to recommendations. So, you know, typically, prior to recent initiatives, it was not uncommon for us as financial advisor to bring to you a name or two of firms that you could work with. They normally work at the guidance of the board given to us or staff given to us. And that's all it is. There's no ultimatum that if you hire somebody that we're going to be calling the election in May or whatever. I think what's important is for you to appreciate the fact that we need to have a lawyer to help us through that process. Mr. Elizondo stated, thank you, sir. May I? Mr. Hinojosa stated, thank you. Mr. Castro stated, Mr. Elizondo? Mr. Elizondo stated, thank you for that, and you mentioned two key words, staff and Board. Mr. Hinojosa stated, yes. Mr. Elizondo stated, did this Board ever, was this Board ever involved in the process? Mr. Hinojosa replied, no, sir. Mr. Elizondo continued, and that's what I'm, that's what I'm trying to say, Mr. Castro. Mr. Cespedes, this Board was not involved in any of the process.



And this is what I have an issue with, and I continue to have an issue, that you, you're forcing us here to make a vote, to make a choice. Like Mr. Hinojosa says, we have not been involved in this process. We weren't included in the process. It's something that continues to be brought to our desk now and be asked for us to vote on something when we don't have any of the information. That's what I'm talking about. And understand that we don't even need a financial advisor. We do need an attorney. Is that correct? Mr. Hinojosa replied yes. Mr. Elizondo stated, and this is what I'm trying to talk about. I mean, it would be foolish for us not to have a financial advisor right, but the law doesn't state that we have to have financial advisor to get a bond. Mr. Hinojosa stated, that's correct. Mr. Elizondo stated, that is what I'm trying to make fact of. Mr. Castro stated, Ms. Lopez Valdez. Ms. Lopez Valdez stated, typically, Ben, maybe you can help us out. In a RFI, typically the Board is not involved, correct? Mr. Ben Castillo replied, *so in this kind of circumstance, it seems like the request for information was led by our financial advisor, which is typically the case, to be honest with you, because they are the ones that work closely with bond counsel in coming up with the language for the proposition. Any resolutions that the board may need to approve with respect to spending of money prior to any bonds getting passed in situations like that. Not saying that we're going to do that here, but yes, bond counsel is typically it is hired prior to the board making a decision as to going out for a bond because they're the ones who draft up the election order for the board and just like Mr. Hinojosa said they generally don't get paid not only if the if the board doesn't call the bond but if it doesn't pass they don't get paid.* Ms. Lopez Valdez stated, so to clarify this is not out of process this is typically the process? Mr. Castillo replied, *not in my experience I could even say as a trustee in Weslaco, we hired board financial advisor and bond counsel prior to calling the bond.* Ms. Lopez Valdez stated, thank you. Mr. Elizondo stated, that was prior to calling the bond, right? We haven't called the bond here. Mr. Castillo stated, *yes, sir. Prior to calling the bond. Yes, sir.* Mr. Elizondo stated, so that's the actual caveat. We haven't called the bond. See the difference? Ms. Pena stated question, and what I'm having a real concern with is the rushing process, rush, rush. How can we ask people to vote for something and trust the Board with a \$400 million that you're asking for, when we're doing it this very suspicious way? We can't ask the voters to go and vote for something and give us control of money, and then we don't come through because we have failed in the past, like we didn't build the Performing Arts Center. Right now, I'm having too many questions and too many people calling, and the only thing that I tell people is go out and vote your conscience. Go out and vote your conscience. And my problem is, Mr. Elizondo is correct. We are blind. There's Board Members here that know everything about everything, because they tell their friends and their friends call us and tell us, which is funny. So my thing is. Ms. Garza interjected Ms. Pena. Ms. Pena continued, we're not being, we're not, let me finish. Let me finish. Ms. Lopez Valdez I calla question. Ms. Pena stated, I want to make sure that we are up to par in every little thing, what all of us know, Erasmo. You know what I know, I know what you know. To be fair, it has always been like that. I've never seen it the way it is right now. That's all I'm asking. Mr. Castro stated, and just to mention, I came in November, I think it was this November. I came in November, and by the time that I had come on the Board, there had already been some information sessions in regards to the Bond. And I got a little bit updated, not only as to speaking with the administration about it, but I also got informed by going to the committee meetings, which also were very informative, because you got to hear a little bit of what the individuals that had been sent to these schools wanted, and also representatives of what their community wanted. So, I've been hearing about the bond for maybe six months already, so I don't know if that's a little time or a long time to it, but it seems like a fair time enough to me. Ms. Pena stated, Mr. Castro, I just want to know why that we're rushing it like, because we have plenty of time we could even do it in November, why are we rushing it and getting on there for May when we have less people? I want to make sure that we have the right information 100%



because this is taxpayers' money and stop nodding your head at me, Jessica, please. I take care of the people's money. I earn my own money and I take care of their money. Mr. Elizondo stated (Inaudible) as far as the timeline. **Mr. Cespedes stated, as far as the timeline for calling the bond in May, so as you know we've been working on this since October, November with our Citizens Facility Committee meetings. We have a deadline of February 14th, if you all, the Board, would like to call a bond election in May. Now, as you all recall, even thru our budget process last year and our budget process this year, Dr. Chavez has made it, I think, pretty clear on the importance of why we would recommend to the Board to call an election in May, and that is given the debt capacity that we have and with the tax rate. Knowing that the potential tax rate for next year, if we do not try to go out for a bond, could potentially go down. And the district would lose some debt capacity in terms of going out and asking for a bond with minimal or no tax rate increase.** *Mr. Castillo stated, Mr. Board President, you have a motion and a second?* Mr. Elizondo stated, real quick, I have a question to this. Thank you for interjecting. Mr. Castro stated, we will finish and move on. Mr. Elizondo continued, I have one more issue to address, Mr. Castro. Ms. Garza interjected, I believe I was first. Mr. Elizondo stated, go ahead lady's first. Ms. Garza continued, so I just want to make sure that we let the community know this is this agenda item has nothing to do with us voting for a bond for May or November. This is just in case we were to go out for bond the wording the language everything is out there and the community will already have already know exactly what we are looking for. This agenda item again has nothing to do with us already going out for a bond for May or November. Mr. Elizondo stated, and real quick, this is just a caution that the debt not only is it for the school district, but if the bond passes, the debt is going to be put on the taxpayers, right. **Mr. Cespedes stated, if you would have attended the, I think the Citizens Facility Committee on November 7th, actually, and these are very preliminary numbers. The debt that actually falls on the taxpayers is only about 42% of the total bond.** Mr. Elizondo stated, right and the individuals that are losing their homes are going to be part of that debt too, correct? **Mr. Cespedes stated, I think the tax rate has nothing to do, the district has a done a good job of reducing the tax rate. I think what the district doesn't have a control over is property values.** Mr. Elizondo stated, correct, this ultimately affects that. So just want to be cautioned that this debt is going to be pushed back on the taxpayers, the burdened taxpayers already. Mr. Castro stated Pat we have... Ms. Pena interjected, Mr. Castro? Mr. Castro? Mr. Castro continued, we have a second and first. Ms. Pena stated, Mr. Castro, please? Mr. Castro stated, yes. Ms. Pena stated, may I please address our attorney? This is very important. Sir, is this related to, Denise said that this is not related to the bond, so this item is not at all related to the bond that we're trying to get? *Mr. Castillo replied, what I heard is it is related to the bond, but it's not, by taking action here.* Ms. Pena interjected, no, a simple question. Is it related to the bond? *Mr. Castillo replied, yes, but also just clarification.* Ms. Pena interjected, no, no I. *Mr. Castillo continued, by taking action here, you're not approving a bond.* Ms. Pena stated, but it is related to the bond. *Mr. Castillo replied yes.* Mr. Castro interjected, thank you, Ms. Pena, he has answered your question. Ms. Garza stated, and I never said it wasn't related to a bond. I did say that it wasn't related to us going out already for a bond in November or May. Ms. Pena stated, that's not what I understood, I'm sorry. Mr. Castro interjected, okay thank you, we have a first and a second. Mr. Elizondo stated, Mr. Castro, I have one more question. Ms. Gonzalez interjected, there is a motion. Mr. Elizondo continued, I have one more question and it's not for you anymore. It's actually for Ms. Hinojosa, and I just want to see who they brought to the table and they suggested that that be the person we go with. We haven't heard that yet. Mr. Hinojosa replied, yes, so as I said, we went out and invited seven firms who had been expressing an interest in working with the school district. Five out of the seven opted to respond. And the five firms that are basically coming before you, I believe one is



Norton Fulbright, it's a global firm with offices in San Antonio, Austin, Dallas, Houston. Their partner is a fellow by the name of Matt Lee. There's another law firm called Winstead. Winstead is more of a regional firm. They're based out of, I think, headquarters in Dallas. Their partner there is Don Martinez. Then we have a Cantu Hardin out of San Antonio, their major partner is Arnold Cantu, he is a valley native. And then we have the law firm of our good friend Mr. Perez who is here, present. And who else? And we're missing a fifth one. But basically, Jackson Walker. And Jackson Walker is a state firm with a headquarter in Dallas also. Rick Witte is their Bond Counsel. And our recommendation, after having the recommendation we gave to staff, was to go with the law firm of Norton Fulbright, Matt Lee. Mr. Elizondo stated and why? Mr. Hinojosa stated, Why? Well, Matt Lee is basically someone who we work with all over the state of Texas. Very much, not only someone who understands the valley, because he is from the valley, but someone who has a very strong support of other lawyers within his firm. This is not something that we basically preferred him. They are very comparable firms. Winstead and I think the second-ranked firm and Jackson Walker, they are all very competent firms. They're all very competent firms, but we felt compelled that in lieu of what's going on in Austin, in lieu of what's going on with tax issues and how reliable they are whenever we call them, in our team at Estrada Hinojosa, there's about four or five people working with your staff and for you as a Board. And basically, we want to have kind of the same kind of relationship with whatever law firm our clients work with. Mr. Elizondo stated, so typically because they work well with you, that's why you pick them. Mr. Hinojosa replied, yeah, they all work well with us, but what we like to do is have people that are very reliable with us. That if I'm missing someone like a Matt Lee or whomever, that I could talk to somebody either above somebody, somebody else than a Matt Lee, but somebody right at par with him. And that's what we like. Mr. Elizondo stated, Mr. Hinojosa, and so because, let's say you weren't our financial advisor, then they wouldn't be the first choice? Mr. Hinojosa replied, yes, sir. Mr. Elizondo stated, they would not? Mr. Hinojosa stated, no, they would be, they would be our first choice. I mean, we stand by our recommendation. Mr. Elizondo stated, no, I know that, but if you weren't the financial advisor, they wouldn't be the first choice? Mr. Hinojosa replied, if I wasn't the financial advisor, they wouldn't be the first choice? Well, I wouldn't be here to make a recommendation, I guess. Mr. Elizondo stated, exactly. Mr. Hinojosa stated, that right. Mr. Elizondo stated, so the other question would be is, do we have any, I see that some of these people were actually, do they have offices here locally in Brownsville? Mr. Hinojosa stated, the only one that has an office here locally is Mr. Perez in McAllen. If you mean the Valley wide. Mr. Elizondo stated, okay, well, I guess Valley wide, right? Mr. Hinojosa stated, it's also Valley wide. Mr. Elizondo stated, and he wouldn't be a first choice? Mr. Hinojosa replied, no, sir. Mr. Elizondo stated, why? Mr. Hinojosa replied, well, I just, I think I share with you, it's about reliability. Things are getting so complex. People have mentioned other, what's going on up in Austin. I mean, you need legal representation at all times. Mr. Castro stated, thank you, sir, appreciate you. Mr. Hinojosa replied, thank you. Mr. Castro stated, Pat. Mr. Elizondo stated, just one more question, Mr. Castro. Mr. Castro stated, Pat Perez can we vote, please? Ms. Pena stated, can we please Mr. Erasmo, let's talk with this. **Ms. Patricia Perez, Executive Assistant stated, please vote?** Mr. Castro stated, Pat Perez, can we please vote. **Ms. Perez stated, please vote.** Ms. Pena stated, this is the citizens' money, sir, and you're telling the citizens. Mr. Castro interjected, Pat Perez, can we please vote? **Ms. Perez stated, we're ready, sir, yes, sir. Please vote.** Ms. Pena stated, I'm sorry, I have to vote no because this Board refuses to allow the proper things. I need to explain because this money belongs to the citizens. Mr. Castro stated, that's fine, you do not have to explain. Ms. Pena stated, yes, I have to explain. Mr. Castro



stated, you can explain afterwards. Right now, we're going to vote yes or no, Ms. Pena. Ms. Pena interjected, I want the public to know why I am voting no. Mr. Castro interjected, Ms. Pena, Ms. Pena, right now we are going to vote yes or no of the reason, and they you have the rest of the day to call or speak or do whatever you want. Ms. Pena stated, I am voting no because I don't like the process. Mr. Castro stated, again, Ms. Pena. Ms. Pena stated, we're in the U.S. I have a right to speak. Mr. Castro interjected again, Ms. Pena. **Ms. Perez stated, Mr. Castro. Motion failed, three yes, four no.** Mr. Castro stated, mine was a yes. **Ms. Perez stated, yours was a yes, motion passes. Four yes, three no.** Ms. Pena stated, your conscience voted no, Mr. Castro.

**Motion made by Jessica Gonzalez, seconded by Denise Garza to recommend approval to authorize Superintendent, General Counsel and Financial Advisor to negotiate Bond counsel contract and fees associated with possible bond issuance to Norton Rose Fulbright US LLP.**

**The following vote was recorded**

Yea:	Ms. Lopez Valdez, Ms. Garza, Ms. Gonzalez, Mr. Castro
Nay:	Mr. Elizondo, Mr. Ortiz, Ms. Pena
Abstain:	

**Motion Carried: 4-3-0**

**VIII. Announcement(s):**

**Mr. Alejandro Cespedes, Superintendent Designee stated, yes, so I do have a couple of announcements.** Mr. Carlos Elizondo, Board Member stated, I'll excuse myself. Okay, sir.

**Mr. Carlos Elizondo left meeting at 12:32 p.m.**

Mr. Cespedes continued, today, this afternoon, we have the final Citizens' Facility Committee meeting at 5:30 p.m. at CAB Cafeteria. On the 29th, we do have the PHIT Center Grand Opening, 9 a.m. at Garden Park Elementary. On the 30th and 31st of this month, January, at Lopez Early College High School, we do have their presenting their musical theater production at 7 p.m. On February 1st, we have the District BISD Spelling Bee, 8 a.m. at Veterans Memorial. And then we also have another for Lopez, it's their final musical theater production that would be at 3 p.m. and that's on Saturday. February the 1st through the 2nd we will have our Regional VIII Chess Championship at 8 a.m. this is at the San Benito Veterans Memorial Academy. On February the 3rd on Monday we have an Insurance Committee Meeting 5:30 p.m. here in the Boardroom and then on Tuesday, February 4th we have the Regularly Scheduled Board Meeting at 5:30pm here in the Boardroom.

**IX. Adjournment.**

**Motion was made by Denise Garza, seconded by Daniella Lopez Valdez, and unanimously carried to approve to adjourn the Special Called Board Meeting at 12:33 P.M. (6-0-0)**



- There being no further business appearing before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.

(HANDOUTS ADDED TO OFFICIAL MINUTES)

(AUDIO/VIDEO TAPES OF THE OPEN MEETING AND THE WRITTEN CERTIFIED AGENDA  
OF THE CLOSED MEETING ARE ON FILE)

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Daniella Lopez Valdez, President of the Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Attested by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Minerva Pena, Secretary of the Board

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Notes: Font style designation**

Board of Trustees  
**Administration**  
*Board Attorney*  
***Staff Attorney***  
Speaker/Presenter

(Minutes presented at Regular Board Meeting held on April 1, 2025)