

STATE OF TEXAS

(Minutes conducted via electronic voting)

COUNTY OF CAMERON

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the **4th day of June, 2026**, 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:

Daniella Lopez Valdez	President
Frank Ortiz	Vice-President
Minerva Pena	Secretary
Carlos Elizondo	Board Member
Denise Garza	Member
Jessica Gonzalez	Member
Neida Ruth Grantland	Member

ABSENT:

ALSO PRESENT:

Dr. Alda T. Benavides	Interim Superintendent of Schools
Eden Ramirez	Attorney for the Board

ALSO ABSENT:

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. Special Called Board Meeting called to order by Daniella Lopez Valdez, Board President at 5:30 p.m.**
- II. Moment of Silence led by Daniella Lopez Valdez, Board President.**
- III. Pledge of Allegiance led by Daniella Lopez Valdez, Board President.**
- IV. Roll Call. Daniella Lopez Valdez, Board President announced that all Trustees were present for the exception of Mr. Carlos Elizondo.**
- V. Recommend approving the agenda of the Special Called Board Meeting of Thursday, June 4, 2026, with any corrections/deletions.**

Motion made by Jessica Gonzalez, seconded by Daniella Lopez Valdez, and unanimously carried to recommend approving the agenda of the Special Called Board Meeting of Thursday, June 4, 2026 with no corrections as stated by administration. (6-0-0)

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT:

No Public Speakers signed up for Public Comment Period

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

Board policy BE (Local) and Roberts 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. SUPERINTENDENTS REPORT:

A. General Function Item(s):

1. Recommend approval of Ms. Carmen Ocanas-Lerma, M.Ed., SNS, to provide Child Nutrition Financial Consulting Services in the amount not to exceed \$24,500.00 (Best and Final Offer) from Local Maintenance Fund 199.

Ms. Jessica Gonzalez, Board Member station motion to approve. Neida Rut Grantland, Board Member, stated second. Ms. Daniella Lopez Valdez, Board President stated, we have a first and a second, and we have a question on the floor. Mr. Frank Ortiz, Board Member stated, yes, just a question here, I'm concerned with the amount of money that we're spending to do this, and it's coming out of function 199. Seems to me like we keep on hitting 199 all the time, and I'm concerned about the amount of money. Don't we have internal auditors that can help us with this instead of going out and hiring somebody else. And don't we also have another consultant that is on board, correct me if I'm wrong, Dora Rivas. And what is she doing? **Ms. Rosario Pena, Chief Financial Officer replied, yes, sir, Madam Chair, good evening. We do have onboarded Dora Rivas, but and Ms. Cruz, correct me if I'm wrong, she is doing consulting work on the leadership portion of it. This hiring would be more of a financial. On your question about internal auditing, yes, sir, you are correct. We do have an auditor that can do this, however, the Auditing Department is mostly compliance procedures, guidelines following governmental accounting procedures, following TEA. The consultant that we're proposing to bring in is more on the operations side. As you well know, Food and Nutrition is very restrictive, very governed by the Texas Department of Agriculture. They have special guidelines, and when we are going to bring in Ms. Lerma, it is to oversee the program itself, for example, meal planning, inventory costs, labor costs, to see if our reimbursables are where they need to be. So it's a very specialized, very technical area for the district. And in turn, when she finishes her review of the program itself, we can share with the Internal Audit Department. Again, that's the difference between the Internal Audit Department and what we're proposing to bring in.** Mr. Ortiz stated, okay, but you mentioned something a little while ago, you said we do have an Internal Auditing Department that could do this job, is that correct? **Ms. Pena replied, that can do the auditing portion of it, sir, not the program or operations part of it.** Mr. Ortiz stated, well, if they do the auditing portion of it, would it bring the costs down? **Ms. Pena stated, the answer would be no, sir, to be honest with you, because they would be auditing accounting financial statements, books, following the account procedures. Her job is going to be to identify what got us to this point and how she can move it forward so that we can control the costs that are now at present time with**

Food and Nutrition. Mr. Ortiz stated, okay, I just have an issue with that. And like you said, you mentioned that our Internal Auditing Department could do this to a certain point. So, if that's the case, then this consultant wouldn't have to do that part, so I don't know how the cost would stay the same. It doesn't make sense to me. Ms. Minerva Pena stated, question. Ms. Daniella Lopez Valdez stated Ms. Pena, actually. Mr. Ortiz stated, I'm just waiting for an answer. Ms. Lopez Valdez stated, I actually have Ms. Grantland before you. Mr. Ortiz stated, I'm just waiting for an answer. **Ms. R. Pena stated, again, sir Ms. Ocañas Lerma will come in to look and review at the operation and the program side of it. The auditors, internal auditors, are there for compliance purposes. In other words, are their books meeting financial procedures? Are they meeting auditing standards? Their job is not to review whether we have the appropriate meal costing, the appropriate meal per labor hour, or are we purchasing the foods at the right price. So that's the difference between the internal auditing department and the consulting that we're trying to bring in.** Ms. Lopez Valdez stated Ms. Grantland. Ms. Neida Ruth Grantland, Board Member stated, thank you Madam President, I did some research on this, and it appears to me that our internal auditor stays focused on compliance with the state, state reporting, all the nuts and bolts of how we do those reports and our procedures within that reporting being done according to Hoyle, so to speak. This consultant, I believe, is coming in to, or I know because I researched it, is coming in to identify areas of weakness in the strategizing for saving money as we serve the district in an exemplary manner. The other consultant Ms. Rivas, is here to do yet another function. So, my hope is that once we do this, we will be in a position and poised to save money, continue with the excellent nutrition program we have, and to streamline the consulting part of it. We have a lot of talent, you all have done a great job, I appreciate it. But that's my hope that we will, by approving this, we will see great results from your department. Thank you. Ms. Lopez Valdez stated, Ms. Pena. Ms. Minerva Pena, Board Member stated, yes, and I concur with Mr. Ortiz as far as the auditing. To say that our auditors cannot do this is just to say there are certain things that certain departments can do because the auditors can and they've done it before in different investigations in the past when they go in and see that money is not being used properly and they are going to audit, but they go deep in. To say that they're only limited and they cannot do this is to say that they're very unqualified to do good auditing because the auditing is up top to bottom, left and right up and down. So let me finish, do not interrupt. I want to make sure that we understand that this is something we can do, and 24,000 to pay for this to me when we constantly keep saying we're in the red, we don't have the money. I have a lot of confidence in the auditor that we have here, and he does a great job, and he knows everything, as simple as when people get into a new job and they turn around and figure out what to do, and we can say, you know what, you're doing a good job. Because if that's the case, then why are we hiring people who've never done a certain position before and we're giving all the responsibility? Because we have faith, they're going to be able to do it. That's why they say, I believe in our auditing department. They're very good, they're very structured, and they look at every little detail. And the way what she's going to look at this lady, and I've read the background of what she's going to be doing and what she's going to be looking at, our own people can do this. For us to go out and give this 24,000 to me is not a right thing to do at this time, especially when we're in the deficit. Because we have to stop telling people we don't have any money when we keep giving it out in consultant positions that, in my opinion, are not necessarily needed. Because we have people inside that are qualified, that are educated, and have been doing it for years, and they can get every little detail. Because you've heard the saying, you

know, ask questions, you get all the way to Rome. In Spanish, is preguntando, llegas a Roma. I do believe that these auditors, if they have any doubt, they ask and they'll find information just like when we have a doubt and we research, like Ms. Grantland research, Frank's research, we all research. I just don't think right now that \$24,000 is appropriate to do what I saw that she's going to be doing. It's something that we can have done on the inside. That's just my personal opinion. So thank you. Ms. Jessica Gonzalez, Board Member stated, thank you, I'm just trying to understand where we are right now. Obviously, we know we've been questioning some stuff that's been going on in the department. What I don't understand is how we're questioning \$24,000 when we didn't question spending \$300,000 on an audit that we also have internal auditors to do, and it also came from 199. So that's the part I don't understand. Yes, let's spend \$300,000 but oh no, let's not spend 25, 24,000. So that's just the part I'm trying to understand. I want to do anything that we can to support our directors, our departments, and help them get the help that they need. If they need 24,000 I'm willing to give that to them so that they can get everything in order and we can be comfortable that everything is straight. It's not \$300,000. So thank you for not coming to us with a consultant because previously we do have one out there that's charging us \$300,000. Ms. Denise Garza, Board Member stated, thank you, Ms. Lopez Valdez. Ms. Pena, going to Ms. Carmen Ocañas Lerma, will she be working closely with her financial department team? Because I know she has a finance team, correct?

Mr. Carlos Elizondo arrived at 5:41 p.m.

Ms. R. Pena replied, yes, ma'am, they do have assigned, and Jackie, correct me if I'm wrong, they do have assigned a person that is handling their finance right now in house. Go ahead, Jackie. **Ms. Jackie Cruz, Director of FNS** stated, here we go. Okay actually, currently, myself, Ms. Emiliana Guerra, and Ms. Audrey Pena are handling the finances. We do not have a Finance Coordinator or a Finance Supervisor, so we are looking at that. And I think that has proven to be very successful for us because of the fact that we are actually doing the budgeting. We're looking at exactly what needs to get done. So the three of us are looking at that. I do want to clarify though, because I think it's important to get something clarified, is that Mrs. Rivas did not come in to help us with the administrative part of it. She came in to help us with warehouse efficiency. The fact that we're getting ready to build, we're almost finished here, and we have realized the goal that we had for her was a 10 percent reduction in or actually a reduction in expenditures and increasing the efficiency. But she does everything. So I just want to make that clear that I don't want you all to get the impression that we're having to have somebody hold our hand through everything because we're not. Thank you. Ms. D. Garza stated, and let me finish up. So, spending the 24,000 with the amount of the deficit that we're currently in, it's still a win because it's a big amount and we're only going to be spending 24,000 for this consulting services. Do we have a time frame how long Ms. Ocañas Lerma will be needing? **Ms. R. Pena** replied, ma'am, she proposed 10 weeks to complete the from beginning to end, in other words, to identify what got us to this point and moving forward. Also, her services include a post review of 12 months. She will be coming in every month just to follow up and to see that we're in line with what she proposed and that we're in line and moving in the right direction. Ms. D. Garza stated, thank you. And I think moving forward, I think it's best that we have quarterly monitoring to see where we're at. Moving forward, because honestly, when we were told about this deficit, I think I can say for myself, I was caught off guard. I really was because I never questioned your finances because they've always told us you all are self-funded; your budget is totally different from BISD's budget. And

so, I never questioned it. And now I feel like I'm going to have to question it, right? So, I think moving forward, having quarterly reviews, that way the Board is aware. So, when you bring anything to the table, we can see okay, can we afford it? Can we not? To also help you as well and your team. Thank you. Ms. Lopez Valdez stated, Ms. Gonzalez. Ms. Jessica Gonzalez, Board Member stated, thank you. Just to kind of question what you just said right now, Ms. Jackie, Ms. Cruz, I'm sorry, you mentioned you had, I remember you had a Coordinator, a Finance Coordinator in the past. To my understanding, that person got moved for whatever reason. Is that position open right now? **Ms. Cruz replied, so that person was a supervisor, a pay grade 3 in the business management plan. And they were overseeing the procurement and the financial. So, we've not had a dedicated financial person, but they were overseeing the finances along with another individual who got moved out of the department, who was an assistant director over the administrative and financial services area. So, you had two people who were looking at this. Now that's not to deflect, I accept accountability for everything, but you had two individuals who were looking at the budget at the time.** Ms. Gonzalez stated, is there a reason why those positions have not been filled? **Ms. Cruz replied, I believe because we're in a deficit. And the reason that we had been requesting a finance coordinator was not because we want to spend more money, but you're talking about a \$34 million, I think that's the revenues that we had, right, Mrs. Alaffa, for next year, about \$34 million revenues. So, there's a lot of stringency that goes into this, but that is why. So, at this point, we've got it. And I understand that it is a surprise. I do want to say you did receive a report from me via Dr. Benavides. I think everything kind of came together at once. This has been moving along. But I think it'll be also bring awareness with when we have the consultant come in to also talk about some of the ways that we've been restricted from moving forward with trying to have savings. I can tell you right now we're overstaffed and we're carrying probably close to \$2.5 million, but we cannot right size. So, I think it's going to be, I think it'll be give you all a perspective, not of what we're doing wrong as, and I'm not saying that's what you're saying, that it's a leadership or an operational failure, but I think you'll be also interested to see what it is that we need support in from peer departments to be able to move forward because we did not get here alone. And I just want to make clear that the accountability ends with me, but I also have to be transparent and let you know that there's contributors that have led to this. So I think once you get the report from the consultant, you'll be able to see that as well.** Ms. Gonzalez stated, thank you. Ms. Lopez Valdez stated, thank you, Ms. Cruz, Dr. Benavides. **Dr. Alda T. Benavides, Interim Superintendent stated, all I wanted to add is that all the comments are well taken and I understand how each board member feels. However, I do, as an Interim Superintendent, want to recommend I can already tell you some things that I have identified, but I'm not the expert in food and nutrition. And so, I would rather have a report from someone who has done it and has done it at the regional level and can pinpoint what the things are. And I would like to come to you by the end of June and give you a preliminary report of what it looks like so that we can move in the right direction. I think that the district has a wonderful food and nutrition department, has been doing an excellent job, but there are some things that are very blatant to me right now, but I'm not the expert, and so I am not going to start saying it's this and it's that. I did notice that we have about 700,000 employees that have resigned or retired, and that is a good point. The district is in a good place. We can look at some of those things, some of those positions that do not need to be replaced, so that we can**

start building that fund balance. And I know that it can be built, even with all the serving of all the children and everything else, all the wonderful things that have been done in the district. So I just, at this point, I need your support. Ms. M. Pena stated, no, I have, I need to ask her, please, yes. Why haven't they filled the position that she was asking? What's the position? Ms. Lopez Valdez interjected, Ms. Pena, actually, Mr. Ortiz, had his hand up first. Mr. Frank Ortiz, Board Member stated, thank you. I'm like Ms. Garza here as well, when I heard the news as well, it floored me, you know, and that was one of the reasons, and I echo the words that Ms. Garza said, you know, I never really questioned, you know, FNS because of the funding. I do want to say also that, yeah, I think that our FNS department is second to none and is very innovative and we're doing a lot of things moving forward. That's just my concern of how we got into this situation. Ms. Cruz, you were saying that you had two people that were overseeing the financial aspect of FNS. This didn't happen overnight. How could those two people not catch some of these things and it got to this point? Ms. Cruz replied, well, the report that I Submitted to Dr. Benavides and also the report that I had submitted to Ms. Pena outlines that this probably started back when we brought everybody up to 15 an hour, and then you had the decompression, and then on top of that, we also have the excess staffing, we have overtime, we have all of that. I cannot speak to this, it didn't happen overnight. We understand that. However, you know, you try to hold. I'm not going to deflect here accountability, but I will say that hopefully through this audit, you all will also be able to see that I was unable to hold people accountable for doing their job and they were undermining the department. And you know, I know the big question is, well, how did you not catch that, Jackie? But it is the truth. However, we are going to do whatever we can, as you as I mentioned, we have submitted corrective action to Ms. Pena already, how to go ahead and replenish our fund balance through second chance breakfast, you know, through charging correctly on catering, maybe not doing all these after-hour activities. So this didn't happen overnight. It came to a head, and I agree, but that's why I think it's good to have this looked at because we, it's not just us, sir, that contributed to this situation. Ms. Lopez Valdez stated, Ms. Pena and Mr. Elizondo. Ms. Minerva Pena, Board Member stated, yes, and I guess I was going to ask, like, how long ago? If I can direct a question to Ms. Jackie? How long ago has that the people in that department, that finance that you need, how long have they been out? Ms. Cruz stated, since January of 2026. Ms. Pena continued, okay, and we have had a request to fill those positions? Ms. Cruz replied, I was, what we did is we want to, we had wanted to eliminate one of the positions, well, we don't have, we want to eliminate, we're recommending to eliminate the assistant director position along with another position that we can actually combine the finance coordinator into because of the fact that this finance coordinator would be looking at metrics, would be looking at systems analysts, would be looking at data translation. You're talking about \$34 million worth of money. And so that you're looking at 11 different key performance indicators. So, we felt that this individual, we could probably close two positions and then go ahead. And we're still carrying one position that should not be on our payroll either. So, you close those three or you transfer them out, you're going to still have savings with a finance coordinator. But I understand that why Ms. Pena and Dr. Gallegos denied the request was because we are in a deficit. However, I think in the future, once we build that back up, it would behoove us because any district our size has a finance coordinator. We're trained in that, but we also are doing diets, community outreach, looking at menu planning. So, I think at that point, when we build up our fund balance

again, which I'm confident we will, and I'm confident that the consultants' report is probably going to be semi-identical to ours, and we'll also have important information out there that I've even recognized that we need to improve upon. But at one point, our goal will be to hopefully get somebody who can sustain the financial oversight. We work with the finance department, but they have their own things to do as well.

Ms. Pena stated, thank you. And Dr. Benavides, if we could look into that so we can get it, I mean, it's been six months, so we can get someone to come in and actually do the job. and I know it's hard and we're short on funds and, you know, it breaks my heart when anyone says it's only 24,000, I'd like to see how many of us have \$24,000 to just give away. Every penny counts. It's disheartening. Every penny counts. And the reason that I'm saying this is because I want to make sure that if we have someone inside that can do the job, we need to do that. Because everybody's knocking on the door, consult, No, We're not consultants or vendors' piggy bank. We belong to the community. And I want to make sure if we're cutting children, we can't fund this, we can't fund the trip, we can't fund the teacher. We need to be very, very sure if we have someone that can do the job and get it done well and have a lot of confidence with the people that work in the department, Rosario, that we can turn around and do it and minimize the money. Because \$100, \$24,000 money is money, and I want to make sure we can help and do everything we can. So, can you look into that, see what we can do to correct and maybe get them back on track? **Dr. Benavides stated, yes, ma'am. and I do want to say that the dietician, we have told Ms. Jackie to go ahead and look at it because having to run the program plus plan menus for 34,000 kids, and we have a lot of special needs, we need that dietician. So, we're on that route, and definitely we will look at the financial side to see what we need to do to equip the program with the right staff so that they can run their department even better.** Ms.

Pena stated, thank you, Dr. Benavides. Ms. Lopez stated, Mr. Elizondo. Mr. Carlos Elizondo, Board Member stated, just real quick, I have a couple of questions. Ms. Jackie, you said there were two key positions that were told for you to remove them from your department? **Ms. Cruz replied, there are two positions that we're recommending to remove from our department, which is the assistant director that we no longer need because the services are duplicative, pretty much. And then another position that we really are doing most of the work for that.** Mr. Elizondo stated, maybe I didn't ask the question correctly. There were positions that you said there were financial positions to look at these kinds of issues that you used to have. And you don't anymore. Who is the one that told you to get those people out? **Ms. Cruz replied, well, they were moved after I was an investigation.** Mr. Elizondo stated, who is they? **Ms. Cruz stated, well, the investigators who investigated.** Mr. Elizondo stated, who is they? *Mr. Eden Ramirez, Board Attorney (inaudible).* Mr. Elizondo continued, sir, my question is because I need to ask the following question, this is the reason why. Okay? Who is they? Ms. Lopez Valdez, interjected, are we, Mr. Elizondo I just want to make sure, I want, if it deals with actual personnel, we can't say the name. Mr. Elizondo stated, it has nothing to do with personnel, it's asking the process was done, the question was brought up. There's many of you guys that have questions. Who these people are? I just want to know who removed these people so I can ask my second follow up question. Who removed them? Ms. Lopez Valdez stated, Mr. Legal. *Mr. Eden Ramirez, Board Attorney stated, so, yes, so the question you can answer is going to be who made the recommendation for these people not to be there?* Mr. Elizondo stated, that is exactly what I asked. *Mr. Ramirez stated, yes so, what's the answer to that question?* Mr. Elizondo stated, and that is because I do not have a law degree. **Ms. Cruz stated, with the names, okay.** *Mr. Ramirez stated, not who you removed. Who made*

the recommendation for them not to be there anymore? **Ms. Cruz stated, okay.** Mr. Elizondo stated, who is the person that said these people are out? **Ms. Cruz stated, well, it was two investigators that I know of, it was two investigators when I was on administrative leave. Those are the ones that made the recommendations. The final investigators made the recommendation.** Mr. Elizondo stated, the Investigators are our employee, is that what I gather. **Ms. Cruz replied, yes, our employees.** Mr. Elizondo stated, who are they. **Ms. Cruz stated, am I able to.** *Mr. Ramirez replied yea.* **Ms. Cruz continued, okay Dr. Alma Rubio and also Dr. Ronni Renfro.** Mr. Elizondo stated, okay thank you, that's all I was asking. I don't think that was very difficult. Thank you, ma'am. No, no, I understand, but Legal likes to jump in, you know, he's one of those. Ms. Lopez Valdez stated, we just want to make sure that we're doing everything correctly. Mr. Elizondo stated, so it's pretty simple. Thank you. Thank you for your answer. That's okay. Thank you. And the second one is if the recommendation is to keep those people, and I understand that Ms. Pena and I think Ms. Gallegos denied those people to stay for whatever reason because there was a deficit. Do you think it would have cost that department less than the 5 million that we're in now to keep them there? **Ms. Cruz stated, well, the recommendation was not to keep them. The recommendation is to get a finance coordinator. I hope I'm answering your question correctly.** Mr. Elizondo stated, maybe I didn't answer right. So, do you think that it would have been less than 5 million if we had those two individuals still there? Do you think they would have caught it early? Is probably what I'm trying to say because I know this happened a year or a minute, but since January, would we have minimized the five million? **Ms. Cruz replied, yes.** Mr. Elizondo stated, that's what I'm talking about. **Ms. Cruz stated, yes.** Mr. Elizondo continued, so, Ms. Pena, if you can see that maybe in the future of finding out, maybe the cost is a lot less. And I understand that you're against the wall. I understand the finance have to do a lot with, but if we were able to have those key individuals there and maybe minimize the amount. And I know that maybe wouldn't have caught it all, but if they were there, we might have been able to say, you know what, we're out 2 million instead of 5, right? And the cost of those individuals would have been 200,000 Do you see what I'm trying to figure out? Maybe, I don't know. **Ms. Cruz stated, I do understand what you're asking. Ultimately, the accountability ends with me. I do think, though, that during this audit or as the consultant comes in, you will be made aware as well through how all of these things led up to it as well. Because to sit here, and I'm surprised too, but to sit here and I cannot, in my right, be responsible in saying that this is the only thing that contributed was our oversight or anything. There are other factors.** Mr. Elizondo stated, I understand that, Pack, but that could have been a buffer or something to maybe, you know what, we didn't catch it. We caught it eight months down the line instead of a year down the line, minimize the expense that came out of your department. And I understand ultimately, it's your responsibility, but you can't be everywhere at the same time. This is a reason that you have key individuals in key positions to be able to help you look at everything, just like everybody else. What I'm trying to say with Ms. Peña and Gallegos is not here is to maybe look at that in the future and see, you know what, maybe it's going to be a little of an expense, but maybe we can save ourselves millions in the future by keeping those key individuals there. And I understand it's very difficult for you to win when there's no money. I understand that. But maybe look at that and see if we can maybe put some emphasis on that and see maybe that's one of the reasons why we keep these individuals. **Ms. R. Pena stated, Madam Chair, if I may. Dr. Benavides stated, definitely. Ms. R. Pena continued, Mr. Elizondo, yes, we're currently looking at that position for the**

upcoming year. We did want to fill the dietetic or the dietician position first because that's very important to our children. And so as soon as Ms. Cruz fills that vacancy, we'll post the one for the finance coordinator or however she wants to title it. But I am in agreement with you, sir, that that is ultimately what is needed in her area. Mr. Elizondo stated, thank you and just to follow up real quick, ma'am, if I may, is just maybe if we can listen to our directors, of course, they are the experts in that field, when especially it comes to your field and Gallegos, and to see, you know what, this is the reason that this young lady or this individual, this man, is asking for those positions. And maybe look into it instead of just looking at a black and white piece of paper, seeing red and it's a no. **Ms. R. Pena stated, yes, sir, and I am totally agreement with you.** Mr. Elizondo stated, thank you, ma'am. Ms. Neida Ruth Grantland, Board Member stated, just very quickly, I concur that that is a key position. I do like the idea of trimming it down to one person instead of the assistant director and the coordinator because I think that that gives a good faith act in what we're trying to do with the budget. I do want to encourage you to look at that and approve that because that's a real key thing. And of course, once the auditor comes in and she confirms what we suspect or what you suspect, because I don't know all the details, then you've got substance behind getting that position. And then we can move forward and save some money. So I call the question. Ms. Lopez Valdez stated, thank you for calling the question. I will go ahead and just say thank you, Ms. Cruz, for the explanation. I appreciate you. Would you like to? **Ms. Cruz stated, I just want to make it clear that I am not at all trying to deflect responsibility. I hope you understand that. I have always been transparent. I think this will continue to offer transparency for the community. I am in no way trying to deflect, but what I am trying to say here is it would be very easy for me to roll over and play dead and say this is all my fault. This is, you know, when there are a lot of contributors, and I think that it's going to raise awareness as to how we've gotten to this point, too. But in no way, it begins and it ends with me. I'm a professional, and I know that ultimately, I have to answer for this. So, I just want you to understand that I'm in no way trying to deflect.** Ms. Lopez Valdez stated, thank you, Ms. Cruz. Thank you for running an amazing program that has gone international recognition. Thank you all very much. We have a first and a second. **Ms. Patricia C. Perez, Executive Assistant stated, please vote.** Ms. M. Pena stated, and, Ms. Cruz, do you agree with this lady coming to help you? This recommendation of the consultant? **Ms. Cruz stated, I will follow the directives that I take from my supervisor.** Ms. M. Pena stated, thank you. **Ms. P. Perez stated, please vote.** Mr. Elizondo stated, it is an independent auditor, correct? Ms. Lopez Valdez stated, yes. Mr. Elizondo stated, okay, all right. Ms. M. Pena stated, right now I'm on the line with this, I'm just going to stay out of it because I just don't think that we have enough information to give \$24,000 away. **Ms. Perez stated, Motion passes 5 yes, 1 no, 1 abstention.** Ms. Pena stated, Pat changed mine to no. Mr. Elizondo stated, I am sorry that is supposed to be a no for me to ma'am. Ms. Pena stated, change mine to no, that way, people won't say that I'm being very wishy washy when I am making decisions, I apologize. *Mr. Eden Ramirez, Board Attorney stated, so your abstention was a no, and your yes was a no.* Mr. Elizondo stated, I actually hit the wrong button. *Mr. Ramirez stated, okay, so you can just reflect it for the record.* *Mr. Ramirez stated, the final vote was 4-3. Four in favor, three against.*

Motion made by Jessica Gonzalez, seconded by Neida Ruth Grantland to recommend approval of Ms. Carmen Ocanas-Lerma, M.Ed., SNS, to provide Child Nutrition Financial Consulting Services in the amount not to exceed \$24,500.00 (Best and Final Offer) from Local Maintenance Fund 199.

The following vote was recorded

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

Motion Carried: 4-3-0

Dr. Alda T. Benavides, Interim Superintendent left meeting at 6:04 p.m.

VIII. CLOSED MEETING: as pursuant to the Texas Government Code Sections: 551.071, 551.072, 551.074, 551.082, and 551.084. 6:04 p.m.

A. SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH:

1. Discussion with legal counsel on matters related to Superintendent Search – Conduct Superintendent Interviews – First Round Interviews.

IX. BOARD RECONVENES - Board action on agenda items discussed in Executive Session. 10:31 p.m.

**A. Discussion and possible action to name Lone Finalist for Position of Superintendent.
No Action taken**

X. Adjournment.

Motion was made by Carlos Elizondo, seconded by Minerva Pena, and unanimously carried to approve to adjourn the Special Called Board Meeting at 10:31 p.m. (7-0-0)

➤ **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 Rescheduled Regular Board Meeting of June 24, 2026)