1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Efrain Valdez at 12:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

The following Bridge Board Members were present:

Mayor Efrain Valdez
Bridge Board Member Yolanda Garza
Bridge Board Member Roberto Sifuentes
Bridge Board Member Al Arreola
Bridge Board Member Al Cervantes

A quorum was declared.

Others present: Frances Rodriguez, Manuel Chavez, Gilbert Sanchez, Margie Montez, Joe Rivera, Daniel Reyes, Ramiro Barrera, and Beverly Karl.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Regular Meeting March 31, 2009

Bridge Board Member Al Cervantes made a motion to approve the minutes for March 31, 2009 with no corrections. Bridge Board Member Roberto Sifuentes seconded the motion. The vote was 5-0. MOTION PASSED

4. No item 4 was included in the Agenda.

◄ OTHER BUSINESS ►

(Action may be take on these matters)

5. MONTHLY REPORTS – As of March, 2009

Mr. Manuel Chavez, Finance Director, referred the Board to (Page 6), Statement of Operations (through March 31, 2009.) Commencing with the Total Passage Income $367,309.50, adding Misc., Cash Over/Short and Gain on Sale of Pesos, the Total Bank Receipts for March - $369,390.66.

Mr. Manuel Chavez continued by referring the Board to (Page 7), Comparative, through March 31, 2009 – Vehicles, PickUps and Motorcycles decreased 9,699, pedestrians decreased 1,127 and Passage Income decreased $51,071.49.

Mayor Efrain Valdez invited any questions on the Monthly Reports. There were no questions.

6. RESERVES FOR FUTURE CONSTRUCTION REPORTS – As of March, 2009

Mr. Manuel Chavez, Finance Director, reported the following information on the Bridge Fund Reserves for Future Improvements/Construction commencing on (Page 9):

The TexPool Account – Bridge Fund had- $427,818.12
The Bridge Fund Certificate of Deposit, Compass Bank - $500,000.00

The Del Rio National Bank & TexPool General Fund Reserve balance was $1,363,638.12 for a Total of $2,291,456.24.

Mayor Efren Valdez called for any questions on the General Fund Reserve and there were no questions.

7. FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR MONTH ENDING DECEMBER, 2008

Mr. Manuel Chavez, Finance Director, continued to (Page 12) and reported the Financial Statement ending December 2008. The Bridge Fund has total assets and total liabilities of $6,578,242.33. Mr. Chavez referenced the Revenues collected at $1,230,802, Expenditures $589,796, Proceeds From a Sale of Land at the Bridge, $1,200,000 and Operating Transfers totaled $1,061,320. Mr. Manuel Chavez concluded the financial statement.

Mayor Efren Valdez called for any questions on the Financial Statement ending December, 2008. Ms. Frances Rodriguez, City Manager, questioned and clarified the transfer with Mr. Manuel Chavez. Mr. Chavez advised that $800,000 went to the General Fund and $300,000 for Fleet Reserves. Mr. Manuel Chavez also responded to Bridge Board Member Al Arreola, advising him that this was accomplished through a budget amendment through City Council.

8. OPERATIONS REPORT – As of March, 2009 – Margie Montez, International Bridge Superintendent

Ms. Margie Montez, International Bridge Superintendent, read the following Report:

Operations March, 2009

On March 3rd, members of the Police Department were reviewing the camera system, hoping to install a new camera system that would allow them to view the bridge operations from the Communication Department. This system, if installed, will give Ms. Montez access to view the operations online from home. They will inform her if the system gets approved.

March 12, 2009 – The contract for the security company was signed.

March 16, 2009 – was a Mexican holiday, “Benito Juarez Day” and there was little commercial traffic on this day.

March 20, 2009 – The security company started at 10 p.m. and their hours are from 10 p.m. until 6 a.m.

On March 21st there was a bike rally in Del Rio. Participation in Mexico was less than expected and merchants reported that attendance was very low.

During the month of March, a task force consisting of U.S. Customs, Border Patrol, Sheriff’s Department, DPS and Del Rio P.D., evolved and conducted an outbound check of vehicles entering into Mexico.

Staff: Currently, there are two (2) part-time positions open due to the transfer of one employee and the dismissal of another toll collector.

Equipment: No major problems with the equipment.

Bridge Board Member Al Cervantes asked Ms. Montez what company provides security services. Ms. Margie Montez advised the company is Securitas out of Laredo, Texas.

Mayor Efren Valdez called for any questions on the Bridge Superintendent’s Operations Report and there were no questions.

9. DISCUSS INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE RATES
April 28, 2009

Mr. Manuel Chavez stated that annually, the revenue collecting departments in the City are asked to review their rates. Ms. Margie Montez was asked to evaluate the current rates and give her recommendation.

Ms. Margie Montez shared a Memorandum she had forwarded to Administration in regard to International Bridge Imposed Rates. Ms. Montez questions if it would be wise to increase the Bridge tolls at this point in time with the economy problems presently affecting both the U.S. and Mexico. Additionally, she questioned if it would be wise to increase tolls while expecting a drop in crossings in June (the requirements regarding passports.)

Ms. Montez referred the Board to Page 15 where she provided a comparison of fees for Texas Major International Bridges and reviewed several bridges and their respective toll charges. Laredo appeared to have the higher fees overall. Del Rio was the only one with night fare (Fridays and Saturdays). On Page 16, Ms. Montez averaged the months of January, February and March (for all Classes 1 through 10) and the average Revenue was $363,118.43.

Ms. Margie Montez continued on Page 17, and offered 3 Proposals regarding Bridge Rates. She recommended Proposal No. 3 which was “No Increase”.

Mayor Efrain Valdez mentioned current negative activities going on in the Border area and included the Mayor of Acuna’s inability to staff a police chief due to violence. This type of activity leads to bad publicity which, in turn, affects bridge crossings. Mayor Efrain Valdez thinks it would be wrong to increase rates while these activities are prevailing. Bridge Board Member Roberto Sifuentes agreed it is not the right time to increase rates and voiced support for Ms. Montez’s recommendation. Mayor Efrain Valdez continued a commentary on drug violence. He expects an ultimate spillover to Del Rio, advising that he may ask for more grant money (via Homeland Security) to fund more law enforcement. Mayor Efrain Valdez pointed out that the upcoming June passport issue and the swine flu outbreak are two more factors affecting crossings. Bridge Board Members Yolanda Garza and Al Cervantes spoke in favor of Ms. Margie Montez’s recommendation.

Mayor Efrain Valdez called for a motion as follows; The International Bridge Board recommends that there be no increase in rates at the International Bridge at this time. Bridge Board Member Roberto Sifuentes made the motion as stated. After a brief discussion with Ms. Frances Rodriguez about “difficult to project” issues affecting finances, and after a brief discussion with Ms. Margie Montez on the 3 Proposals, Bridge Board Member Al Arreola seconded the motion. The vote was 5-0. MOTION PASSED

10. STATUS – 2ND INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE/TOLL BOOTH RELOCATION

Ms. Frances Rodriguez, City Manager, advised that she received an e-mail from TxDOT, (letter to follow), authorizing $500,000 for an environmental assessment and acquisition of services of a design engineer, in connection with the toll booth relocation project.

Mayor Efrain Valdez assured the members that the City will receive the rest of the funding this coming Fiscal Year.

Mayor Efrain Valdez called for further questions on the status regarding the 2nd International Bridge/toll booth relocation and there were no questions.

11. SET MAY 2009 MEETING

Mayor Efrain Valdez scheduled the next meeting for May 26, 2009.

12. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Efrain Valdez adjourned the meeting at 12:20 p.m.

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Efrain V. Valdez, Mayor

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Beverly Karl, Deputy City Secretary