The regular meeting of the Laredo Community College Board of Trustees convened on Thursday, January 28, 2010, beginning at 6:47 p.m. in the Samuel A. Meyer Board Room Laird Hall 124 of the Fort McIntosh Campus.

MEMBERS PRESENT
Pete Saenz, Jr., President
Cynthia Mares, Vice President
Carlos Carranco, Jr.
Hilario Cavazos, III
Leonides G. Cigarroa, Jr. (arrived 6:47p.m.)
Mercurio Martinez, Jr. (arrived 7:26p.m.)
Alfonso Martinez, Ex-officio

OTHERS
Juan L. Maldonado
Eleazar Gonzalez
Federico Solis Jr.
George Meurer, College Attorney
U.S. Customs and Border Protection representatives:
Austin Skero, Jesus Chan, and Eric Webb, Contractor for Customs

MEMBERS ABSENT
Belinda Guerra, Secretary
Rene De La Viña
Edward C. Sherwood

ROLL CALL

CALL TO ORDER
Mr. Saenz called the meeting to order. Ms. Mares called the roll. A quorum of the members was present. Mr. Cavazos mentioned Mr. Martinez should be arriving at 7:30 p.m. and Mr. De La Vina asked to be excused. Mr. Saenz indicated Mr. Sherwood is out of town.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY
Mr. Saenz informed the public of the guidelines to be followed during public testimony.

Josie Cruz read a letter on behalf of Luis Torres, student & dorm resident, expressing his disappointment regarding the Board’s decision to destroy the dorms and asked that they reconsider.

Kamil Faheed, student and dorm resident, asked the Board to put themselves in their place and reconsider the demolition of the dorms. He feels safe living on-campus.

James Earhart expressed his appreciation of Board members’ volunteer work, mentioned he worked on a voluntary basis at the environmental center, and expressed his support of the Paso del Indio Nature Trail.

Ricardo Villarreal, Museum Director for Webb County Heritage Foundation, expressed his support for the Nature Trail. He mentioned he brings tour groups through the City and to the Paso del Indio Nature Trail and is a board member for two groups at the State and Federal levels that promote tourism.

Ricardo Perez mentioned his support of the Nature Trail that is visited by people from all over the country.

Alejandro Medina, TAMIU student, mentioned he understood the need for the road but stated there was nothing temporary about knocking down a tree and expressed his concern about the number of trees being cut. He asked the Board to consider the educational value of the trail.
Tom Miller, Director of LCC LBVESC, spoke in support of the Nature Trail, reported the number of students that have visited the trail and about the development of the trail.

George Goodwin mentioned a personal situation involving destruction of brush on his property, how he resolved it, and suggested that the government reconsider their methods when building the road.

Danny Gunn, Board member of the Rio Grande International Study Center, requested the Board to postpone the vote until they view the trail. It is a historical site, a nature trail, and is ideal for ecotourism.

Jay Johnson-Castro, Executive Director of the Rio Grande International Study Center, expressed his support of the nature trail and his opinion about this project. He suggested the Board not be pressured to take a vote until completely informed and requested the item be tabled.

Father Bill Davis, Father of San Francisco Javier Church, spoke to the Board in support of the Nature Trail and the importance of nature’s appreciation.

Pastor Mike Barrera commented on three issues: erosion problems, the Rio Grande River is the 7th most endangered river in the world, and communication is crucial.

Mr. Mercurio Martinez arrived at 7:26 p.m.

Berta Torres, Chairperson of the Greens of Guadalupe, mentioned the importance of safeguarding the environment for future generations and expressed her support of the Paso del Indio.

Melinda Tellez, out-of-district student, mentioned the reason she decided to attend LCC was because Laredo has the number 7th Nursing Program in the Country and 3rd in Texas with a 100% passing rate for the past three semesters. She noted LCC accommodates students (in dorms). She asked that the Board reconsider the south campus as the location to build and save the dorms.

Jeffrey A. Jones mentioned he has worked with Dr. Earhart for 20 years, organized canoe trips down the river with participants from the Ukraine, and also worked on the Paso del Indio Trail since its existence 15 years ago. He mentioned the possibility of increased danger related to speed.

Billy Perez, out-of-district Physical Therapy student and dorm resident, thanked the Board for the opportunity to address them. He presented his situation and mentioned he was shocked to find out, by word-of-mouth, the fate of the dorms. The students were not extended the courtesy of being notified. He asked the Board to put themselves in their shoes and give the residents more consideration.

Dr. Juan L. Maldonado, President, introduced Oneida Gonzales. She is a United High School 2007 graduate and member of the Student Vocational Nurses Club. She majors in Nursing and plans to transfer to TAMU.
Mr. Saenz thanked all the people who signed up for public testimony to bring up these issues before the Board.

Dr. Maldonado asked that Item 6 be deferred to the February meeting. Mr. Martinez so moved. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cavazos. The motion carried.

Dr. Alfonso Martinez, Faculty Assembly President, mentioned he is working on faculty retirement related issues. He will continue to meet with Dr. Maldonado and will present it to the Board at a later meeting.

Dr. Maldonado provided the background for this item and reported a long-term 50 year easement was approved by the Board in 2005. Representatives for the Border Patrol Austin Skero, Jesus Chan, and Dr. Eric Webb presented the specifics of the project, reported they were asking for a renewal of the temporary easement to complete the project that was started in 2005, and answered questions from Board members. After a lengthy discussion, Mr. Martinez made a motion that the Board approve granting the renewal of the temporary work area but with the understanding that Customs will work, as much as possible, with the environmental group and coordinate efforts when working in areas with major interest to the environmental group. Ms. Mares seconded the motion. Discussion followed. Mr. Martinez amended his motion to grant the easement for one year with the possibility of an extension at the discretion of the Board. Ms. Mares seconded the amendment. The vote for the amendment passed unanimously. Mr. Martinez called for the question. The vote for the motion was taken and passed with five votes; Mr. Cavazos opposed.

At 8:45 p.m. the Board took a recess. Mr. Martinez made the motion. It was seconded by Ms. Mares; motion carried.

At 8:51 p.m. the Board reconvened. Ms. Mares reported the Finance Committee was presented with the Letter to Management and the findings by Mr. Juan J. Garza, CPA. Mr. Garza informed the committee they were satisfied with management’s responses and the College had no repeat findings from previous years. Ms. Mares complimented the external audit firm of Canales, Garza, and Baum and made a motion to accept the FY 2009 Letter to Management. Mr. Martinez seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously. Mr. Garza thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve the College and noted the College has strong internal controls.
Ms. Mares reported the committee reviewed the December 2009 report. There is nothing of significance to report. The College’s expenses are at 33% of budget. The tax collections are up-to-par or slightly higher. She indicated it was time to approve the quarterly investment report for the month of November that is included in the December monthly financial report. She so moved. Mr. Martinez seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Mares reported the committee heard a presentation from Mr. Marco Arredondo, Energy Consultant. Mr. Martinez complimented Mr. Arredondo for being able to negotiate a five-year contract for the College. Mr. Marco Arredondo explained in detail the process he used to negotiate this contract, answered questions from Board members, and presented his recommendation – Direct Energy. Ms. Mares made a motion that the Board approve the selection of Direct Energy as the Retail Energy Provider for Laredo Community College for the next five years. The motion was seconded by Mr. Martinez. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Mares made a motion that the Board approve a tax refund in the amount of $3,719.68 to Correctional Services Corporation. Mr. Martinez seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously.

At 9:10 p.m. Mr. Martinez made a motion that the Board go into executive session to discuss the items listed below:

9. CLOSED SESSION CONSULTATION WITH LAREDO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT’S ATTORNEY REGARDING CAUSE NO. 2008CVQ001592-D2; CALIXTO LEJIA V. LAREDO COMMUNITY COLLEGE, PENDING IN 111TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT, WEBB COUNTY, TEXAS PURSUANT TO SECTION 551.071 OF THE TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE

10. CLOSED SESSION CONSULTATION WITH LAREDO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT’S ATTORNEY REGARDING LAREDO COMMUNITY COLLEGE V. GEORGE HACHAR D/B/A SATURN VENDING, CAUSE NO. 2009 CVF001842 D2 PENDING IN THE 111TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT, WEBB COUNTY, PURSUANT TO SECTION 551.071 OF THE TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE

11. CLOSED SESSION CONSULTATION WITH COLLEGE ATTORNEY REGARDING EEOC CHARGE NUMBER 451-2010-00099, PURSUANT TO SECTION 551.071 OF THE TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE

The motion was seconded by Mr. Cavazos; motion carried unanimously.

At 10:07 p.m. Ms. Mares made a motion for the Board to reconvene. The motion was seconded by Mr. Carranco; motion carried. Mr. Martinez moved that legal counsel continue as suggested in reference to Items 9, 10, and 11. Mr. Cavazos seconded the motion; motion carried. Mr. Saenz noted for the record that no action took place in executive session.
PRESIDENT’S REPORT
Dr. Maldonado reported the reports were for information purposes.

NEXT MEETING DATE
Dr. Maldonado reminded the Board that the Facilities Master Plan is on a fast-track. He needs to schedule a Special Board Meeting for February 11, 2010 to review bond counsel selection. Dr. Maldonado will poll Board members for availability.

ADJOURNMENT
At 10:10 p.m., Mr. Martinez moved to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Mr. Carranco; motion carried.