



**RECORD OF WORKSHOP
WESLACO CITY COMMISSION
TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 2026**

On the 123rd day of June 2026 at 5:06 p.m., the City Commission of the City of Weslaco, Texas convened in a Workshop in the Legislative Chamber Room located at 255 S. Kansas Avenue with the following members present:

PRESENT:	Mayor	Adrian Gonzalez
	Mayor Pro Tem	Pete Garcia Jr.
	Commissioner	Letty Lopez
	Commissioner	Israel Gonzalez Jr.
	Commissioner	Josh Pedraza
	Commissioner	JP Rodriguez
	Commissioner	Adrian Farias (via zoom)

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT:	Xavier Salinas	City Manager
	Norma A. Cantu	City Secretary

Also present: Omar Rodriguez Asst. City Manager, Antonio Lopez, Asst. City Manager/Fire Chief, Aida Vega, Deputy City Secretary, Rosie Cavazos, Finance Director, Rebekah De La Fuente, Planning & Code Enforcement Director, Peter Hermida, City Engineer, Robert Lopez, Police Chief, David Arce, Utilities Director, Nick Castillo, Public Works Director, Marco A. Ortiz, Sanitation Director, Eddie Serna, Parks & Recreation Director, Arnold Becho, Library Director, Rick Mendoza, IT Director, Celine Pardo, Municipal Court, Luz Galindo and other staff members.

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Certification of Public Notice.

Mayor Gonzalez called the meeting to order and certified the public notice of the meeting as properly posted Wednesday, June 17, 2026.

B. Roll Call.

Norma A. Cantu, City Secretary, conducted roll call to show attendees.

II. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion and presentation regarding drainage projects. (Staffed by Engineering Department.)

Mayor Gonzalez thanked Raul Sesin, General Manager Hidalgo County Drainage District No. 1, Commissioner David Fuentes, Hidalgo County Precinct 1, Pete Alvarez, District Engineer TxDOT, the members of the City's Drainage Advisory Board, and residents for their attendance. Mayor Gonzalez stated the purpose of the workshop was to gather those entities involved in the city's drainage infrastructure, emphasizing the commission's commitment to pursuing solutions

aggressively that included lobbying Washington, D.C. for federal drainage funds for three major projects — on Paisano Street, Plaza, and Agostadero Street— totaling \$33 million. Mayor Gonzalez also referenced available 2025 bond funds earmarked for additional drainage projects throughout the city.

Drainage District Presentation

Commissioner David Fuentes, stated he is a member of the Hidalgo County Drainage District Board of Directors, addressed the commission and reflected on the severity of the 2018 flood event, which exposed critical deficiencies in the region's drainage infrastructure. He noted that since 2018, the drainage district had issued two bonds and allocated more than \$100 million to Precinct 1 alone. He credited these investments with measurable results — fewer homes flooded, fewer streets inundated — while acknowledging that more work remains. Commissioner Fuente explained that the district strategically leverages local bond funds against state and federal grants to maximize the number of projects completed. He noted that when FEMA withdrew funding from certain applications, the district redirected those applications to TDEM and successfully secured alternative awards. Commissioner Fuente emphasized the value of inter-agency collaboration with the city, the county, and local school districts, calling it a meaningful force multiplier for the community.

Raul Sesin then delivered a detailed technical presentation by describing the significant topographic challenges of the region, explaining that the flat terrain — dropping only one foot per mile from west to east — creates a slow-moving drainage system that flows southeasterly and then northeasterly toward Laguna Madre, not toward the Rio Grande as many residents assume. He emphasized that the primary regional outfall, the main flood water channel built by the drainage district in the 1970s and 1980s, carries approximately 70 percent of the county's storm water.

Mr. Sesin provided an important explanation of how the floodway system operates, clarifying that the IBWC floodway was designed primarily to divert Rio Grande river water, not to serve as a community drainage channel. The drainage district is permitted to drain into it, but that permission is secondary to the floodway's primary function. He explained that drainage gates throughout the system always remain open unless engineering conditions — specifically the risk of backflow — require them to be managed. He emphasized that gravity flow moves far greater volumes of water than pumping operations, and that closing gates is a measure of last resort. Went over pump structures and described the district's transition to newer automated systems equipped with float activators, allowing pumps to engage independently when sufficient water is present — an improvement over older systems that were ineffective when gates were open. He reported that seven new pump structures had been completed in Precinct 1, with four under construction and three more pending approval. He then highlighted two completed Regional Detention Facility (RDF) projects. The first, a 38-acre combined RDF system between the Chapas and Las Brisas Subdivisions, significantly reduced flood impacts in that area — from over 200 affected homes in 2018 to a single-digit figure following the facility's construction. The second, a 46-acre RDF near

the intersection of Mile 5 and FM 88 in southwest Weslaco, is partially excavated and is awaiting final approval through a TDEM grant application (formerly submitted under FEMA's BRIC program). Confirmed that right-of-way acquisition, engineering plans, and the pump structure at the floodway are already in place for this project, pending the approval from TDEM to begin full construction. He noted this RDF would benefit multiple Weslaco neighborhoods including Cornerstone, Quail Hollow, and areas along the Sixth Street corridor. Additionally, noted the challenge of land acquisition, noting that while appraisals may value parcels at \$240,000, public entities routinely receive counter offers far exceeding that can cause delays through negotiation and, in some cases, condemnation proceedings. Explained a gate structure near the Willacy County line, when water levels require gate management, the system backs up and pumping operations become critical. He noted an increasing frequency of gate management even outside of hurricane events, which he characterized as a sign of how much the volume of water flowing through the system has grown with continued regional development. He then identified illegal dumping as one of the district's most persistent operational challenges, showing a photograph taken during the most recent rain event depicting a drainage crossing nearly blocked by discarded furniture, including a sofa. He appealed to the community to properly dispose of waste, noting that accumulated debris — from plastic bags to large furniture — can obstruct pipes and culverts and significantly impair drainage performance. He also noted access barriers caused by unauthorized driveways and encroachments over drainage ditches. Referenced and shared with the public to utilize the district's website, cdd1.org, which features GIS maps color-coded to indicate district-owned systems, systems maintained through interlocal agreements with irrigation districts, and systems still owned by irrigation districts where access has not been granted. He noted that the website also features a shredding operations tracker updated within 30 days, a bond program dashboard, and a public comment section.

Mayor Gonzalez and Mayor Pro Tem Garcia Jr. voiced concern to Raul Segin and Commissioner Fuente regarding two specific ditches in need of attention — one near Mile 2.5 and one north of Mile 5 — and discussed the need for coordinated maintenance with Irrigation District No. 9, whose ditches connect to city systems. Raul Segin noted that drainage systems inside city limits are traditionally the responsibility of the city to maintain, though the district is willing to assist with one-time cleanings to reestablish ditch conditions. Commissioner Pedraza recognized the measurable impact of the drainage improvements in the Las Brisas and Chapas area, noting that streets that were underwater for seven days in 2018, five days in 2019, and three days in 2020 showed no standing water during the most recent rain event.

TxDOT Presentation

Pete Alvarez, TxDOT District Engineer, presented on the agency's role in regional drainage and its partnership with local governments. He opened by acknowledging that TxDOT relies heavily on adjacent drainage infrastructure — whether city-owned, district-owned, or irrigation-district-owned — to properly drain state roadways including FM 88, FM 1015, and Business 83, as well as Interstate 2. Stated a recent visit by TxDOT Chief Engineer Carl Johnson to the Weslaco area,

during which Carl Johnson and TxDOT Hydraulics & Hydrology Section Director, Rose Marie Klee, conducted a site tour with drainage district staff. He noted that Ms. Klee remarked that the Rio Grande Valley is uniquely challenging among all of Texas — a flat "donut" with no natural creeks or rivers to convey water, resulting in standing water conditions unlike anywhere else in the state.

Pete Alvarez then spoke to the flooding concerns on Interstate 2, specifically between Texas Boulevard and Westgate. He noted that when looking at the entire corridor from midway to the floodway, only three ditches connect to the interstate, leaving significant gaps in drainage connectivity. He acknowledged that the Weslaco Expressway project in the early 2000s designed the main lanes for a 100-year storm event and frontage roads for a 5-to-10-year event, but that continued development has increased runoff volumes beyond what those designs anticipated. He referenced a GIS analysis using the drainage district maps to identify where new or extended drainage connections to the interstate could be established. He addressed Mayor Gonzalez's concern about flooding on Texas Boulevard and Westgate, confirming that water from surrounding neighborhoods funnels northward into the frontage road system, creating bottlenecks that prevent neighborhoods from draining. He affirmed TxDOT's openness to working with the city on potential detention solutions along the frontage road corridor, citing examples in other communities where developers have been required to construct detention ponds that slowly release water into the TxDOT system through restricted outfall connections. He expressed support for working with developers whose projects touch state roadways to incorporate drainage detention as part of their site plans.

In response to Commissioner Gonzalez Jr.'s question about why flooding recurs and what has been done over the last five years. Pete Alvarez explained that the valley experienced back-to-back 500-year flood events in 2018, 2019, and 2020 — events statistically expected to occur once every 500 years. He framed the path forward around low-hanging fruit: cleaning ditches, removing trash and vegetation, and regrading, before pursuing costlier infrastructure upgrades. He acknowledged that the development of the Westgate area — which was largely undeveloped farmland as recently as 2012–2015 — has dramatically increased invulnerable cover and runoff volumes. He credited the drainage district's bond programs and TxDOT's collaborative approach on projects such as the Mile 10 corridor as productive steps forward. In response to Mayor Pro Tem Garcia Jr.'s inquiry about TxDOT's policy regarding farmland runoff entering the state road system. He explained that TxDOT designs roadways to match existing elevation and that agricultural land is generally expected to have captured ditches at the right-of-way line to contain runoff. He acknowledged that in practice this does not always occur and encouraged collaborative solutions involving irrigation districts and farmers to regrade or redirect those flows.

Mayor Gonzalez reiterated the urgency of the interstate drainage issue and his intention to remain a persistent advocate for solutions, noting that the city's hospitals and emergency access routes depend on keeping the frontage road system passable. He emphasized that the commission's

approach to all infrastructure challenges begins with the foundation — drainage, water, and sewer — before other priorities.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Pedraza seconded by Commissioner Gonzalez Jr. moved to adjourn the workshop meeting of June 23, 2026 at 6:25 p.m. The motion carried unanimously; Mayor Gonzalez was present and voting.

CITY OF WESLACO

Adrian Gonzalez, **MAYOR**

ATTEST:

Norma A. Cantu, **CITY SECRETARY**