STATE OF TEXAS }
COUNTY OF WILLACY }

THE BOARD OF NAVIGATION AND CANAL COMMISSIONERS OF THE WILLACY COUNTY NAVIGATION DISTRICT met in Regular Wednesday, September 09, 2026 at 9:00 A.M., 400 W. Hidalgo, Ste 200, Raymondville, TX with the following members present:

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:	ERIC KENNEDY	CHAIRMAN
	STACEY REYES	SECRETARY
	ALBERTO TREVINO	MEMBER
	STEVEN KENDRICK	MEMBER
	ERNESTO CAVAZOS	MEMBER
ALSO PRESENT:	OSCAR MONTOYA	PORT DIRECTOR
	MARK SOSSI	ATTORNEY
	LETTY MARTINEZ	ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEASE SPECIALIST
	VIRGINIA LOMAS	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & HUMAN RESOURCES
	FRANK VASQUEZ	PORT SUPERINTENDENT

Eric Kennedy, Chairman called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.; upon conclusion of roll call, it was ascertained that a quorum was present.

Item No. 1: *REVIEW & CONSIDERATION OF PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING MINUTES:* Upon review of the August 12, 2026 regular meeting minutes and the August 20 special session minutes, Commissioner Trevino made the motion to approve the previous board meeting minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cavazos and vote carried.

Item No. 2: *PUBLIC COMMENT(S)*: None.

Item No. 3: *BORDER AFFAIRS MONTHLY UPDATE*: Emmit Wells, with Border Affairs presented August update: Emmit Wells reported to the board that the district's website recorded low traffic, averaging approximately 1,200 monthly visits before active marketing and public relations agency became involved with Border Affairs. Following the implementation of targeted campaigns, monthly website traffic consistently doubled, stabilizing in the range of 3,000 to 4,000 visits. During the month of August, website traffic peaked at approximately 6,000 total sessions, representing a five-fold increase from the original historical baseline.
Future promotional and marketing content will shift focus toward the upcoming Texas Youth Hunt.

Item No. 4: *DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE WILLACY COUNTY NAVIGATION DISTRICT'S FISCAL YEAR 2026-2027 BUDGET AND 2026 PROPERTY TAX RATE, INCLUDING: (A) ADOPTION OF AN ORDER AMENDING THE DISTRICT'S BUDGET TO INCLUDE THE APPLICABLE 2026 TAX RATE CALCULATION FORMS; (B) RECEIPT AND CONSIDERATION OF THE DISTRICT'S 2026 NO-NEW-REVENUE TAX RATE AND VOTER-APPROVAL TAX RATE CALCULATIONS: (C) CONSIDERATION AND PROPOSAL OF A 2026 PROPERTY TAX RATE; (D) SETTING THE DATE, TIME, AND*

PLACE FOR ANY REQUIRED PUBLIC HEARING AND/OR MEETING TO ADOPT THE 2026 PROPERTY TAX RATE; AND € AUTHORIZING PUBLICATION AND POSTING OF ALL NOTICES REQUIRED BY LAW: The proposed and recommended tax rate is to maintain the rate at the existing 0.083 per $100 valuation. Last year's tax rate was set at 0.083 per $100 valuation, which generated a total tax levy of $746,756.

Commissioner Trevino made the motion to approve the amending of the Willacy County Navigation District Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget (originally adopted on June 17, 2026) to formally attach the 2026 tax rate calculation forms provided by the Willacy County Appraisal District (including NNR and voter-approval rates). The order clarifies that this amendment does not change any existing appropriations, revenue estimates, or fund balances. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cavazos and motion carried.

Secretary Reyes made the motion that the property tax rate be increased by the adoption of the tax rate of 0.083 per $100 valuation, which is effectively a 0% increase in the tax rate. The word "increased" is legally mandated by the Texas Tax Code because raising property values will generate more total revenue than the previous year, despite the nominal tax rate remaining identical. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Trevino and motion carried, with a vote of "yay" from each Commissioner.

Commissioner Cavazos made the motion to approve the scheduling a formal public hearing on the proposed 2026 property tax rate for September 22, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. at 400 W. Hidalgo, Suite 200, Raymondville, Texas. The motion authorized the Port Director to publish and post all required legal notices under Section 26.06 of the Tax Code and Chapter 551 of the Government Code. To finalize this process, the district must hold two special meetings in September: the public hearing on September 22nd and the final tax rate adoption meeting on September 29th. The motion was seconded by Secretary Reyes and motion carried.

Item No. 5: *PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH SELECTED ORGANIZATIONS FOR THE TRAPPING AND REMOVING OF NILGAI ANTELOPE FROM WILLACY COUNTY NAVIGATION DISTRICT PROPERTY:* *1st Presentation by Calen J. Ahrens with Ahrens Ranch and Wildlife* based in Alpine, Texas specializes in the live capture, transport, and commercial sale of approximately 200 to 300 nilgai antelope per year from ranches across South Texas. The live capture process utilizes two helicopters working in tandem, with no four-wheelers or ATV's used on the property. The first helicopter is equipped with a net-gun to trap the running Nilgai. The second helicopter transports two to three professional "jumpers" who jump from the low-flying aircraft, physically tie the animal, and secure it. The helicopter then lifts and slings the secured Nilgai back to a designated trailer site, where a ground crew unties the animal, administers dectamax, sprays for external parasites, and provides oral dewormers.

Ahrens, addressed the board that because the district is located within an active federal fever tick quarantine zone, captured Nilgai must be held in an approved temporary quarantine holding facility for a minimum of 14 consecutive days. They provide transports, and build its own mobile, heavy-duty temporary holding facility panels and specialized pens. An employee or himself will remain on-site daily to feed, water, and visually inspect all animals during this 14-day quarantine. Once cleared by the Texas Animal Health Commission, the Nilgai are loaded and transported to a specialized processing barn in Kerrville, Texas before being distributed to private ranches across the state for hunting. Ahrens Ranch provides a three-day health warranty on delivered animals to receiving ranches.

Nilgai Cows are purchased by Ahrens Ranch for $750 each. Nilgai Bulls with 4 to 6-inch horns are purchased for $1,500 each. Nilgai Bulls with 6 to 8-inch horns are purchased for $2,000 each. Nilgai Bulls with horns greater than 8 inches are purchased for $2,500 each. The Willacy County Navigation District retains full legal ownership of the Nilgai during the 14-day quarantine period. Once the animals are formally released from quarantine, Ahrens Ranch purchase them via check prior to transporting them off the property. If an animal is euthanized or dies on-site, it must be buried on district property. The meat cannot be salvaged or distributed for human consumption because the animal has already been treated with dectamax.

The target volume is a minimum of 20-25 animals per single operation, with a preferred range of 30 to 50 animals. Capture operations are recommended for January or February, utilizing a strict daily schedule between sunrise and noon to prevent heat stress. The holding pens require separate sections for cows and young bulls, and small individual stalls for mature bulls to prevent them from goring/hooking each other. Nilgai must be moved daily in and out of their stalls to prevent physical stiffness.

2nd Presentation by Shane Melton, based out of San Isidro, Texas, was introduced to present alternative live-trapping and capture services, matching many of the core operational parameters discussed in the industry. If off-road vehicles are prohibited on-site, dual-helicopter operations are mandatory. The quarantine facility must feature overhead shade, clean hauled water, and specialized plywood-lined stalls to block visual stimuli and keep wild Nilgai calm. Large bulls are isolated in individual 12x12' pens, whereas cows adolescent bulls are grouped in larger 24x24' turnout pens. A minimum capture of 30 animals is needed to make the operation economically viable, but the total should not exceed the mid-40's due to the labor-intensive requirements of daily feeding, watering and processing. The facilities are monitored 24/7 using remote cameras and on-site staff.

Upon arrival at the holding facility, state inspectors must physically inspect, scratch (feel for ticks), spray, and inject every animal. Following the 14-day hold, they must be physically handled, scratched, sprayed and injected a second time with dectomax before release. The USDA and TAHC enforce a zero-tolerance policy for fever ticks: All it takes is one, and the whole herd is one. All we have to do is find them on one animal and that's it. None of them go. If a single live tick is detected on even one animal at the end of the 14 days, the entire herd is failed, and the quarantine is extended for an additional 7 days to 14 days, requiring complete re-treatment of all animals.

Captured trophy bulls can be resold to private ranches for $3,000 to $3,500, the capture pricing remains negotiable based on property size and expected yield.

After presentation and discussion, Commissioner Kendrick made the motion to pursue live capture and removal instead of lethal harvesting and to authorize Port Director Oscar Montoya to negotiate capture dates and pricing structures with both Ahrens Ranch and Wildlife and Shane Melton, and report the final negotiated terms back to the board for approval. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Trevino and motion carried.

Item No. 6: *DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION AUTHORIZING OF THE PORT DIRECTOR OSCAR MONTOYA TO SIGN THE AGREEMENT WITH THE TEXAS WILDLIFE ASSOCIATED REGARDING THE TEXAS YOUTH HUNT. WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE ON NOVEMBER 6TH, 7TH, AND 8TH, NOVEMBER 20TH, 21ST, 22ND, DECEMBER 4TH, 5TH, 6TH, DECEMBER 18TH, 19TH, 20TH ENDING WITH JANUARY 15TH 16TH AND 17TH:* Gabe Lozano presented an award to the Willacy County Navigation District for owner of the year from the

Texas Youth Hunt. Lozano discussed the Texas Youth Program which will host 50 youth hunters across the five weekends (10 kids per weekend, split into operational groups of 5). The target harvest is two white-tailed deer per hunter. All participating youth must hold a valid Hunter Education Certification, and all hunting rifles utilized during the event must be a minimum of .243 caliver or larger to ensure ethical harvests. The program will operate across five scheduled weekend blocks: November 6th - 8th, 2026; November 20th – 22nd, 2026; December 18th – 20th, 2026; and January 15th – 17th, 2027. All revenues generated from the Nilgai live-captured program will continue to be earmarked to subsidize the youth hunt. The contract includes a robust $2,000,000 general liability insurance clause, fully indemnifying and protecting the Port and district from legal claims.

After board discussion Commissioner Kendrick made the motion to formally accept the Texas Youth Hunt agreement as in the previous years. And to provide direct financial assistance and physical equipment, including purchasing and maintaining game feeders and supplying corn. To authorize the Port Director Oscar Montoya to provide financial and logistical support where possible. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Trevino and motion carried.

Item No. 7: *PORT DIRECTOR'S REPORT*:

- Update on Seawall: the final physical walkthrough of the bulkhead and seawall repair project has been completed, and the project engineer has officially signed off on the construction.

- Community outreach: busy week, loss of families. Visit with San Perlita Mayor with what is going on in Port.

- Update on Nilgai Project:
- Reimbursement for Bulkhead:

Item No. 8: *A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE PORT MANSFIELD REPAIR BULKHEAD PROJECT, TXDOT PROJECT NUMBER CSJ9400-00-017 AS COMPLETED AND FURTHER AUTHORIZING THE PORT MANSFIELD DIRECTOR TO SIGN AND SUBMIT THE NOTIFICATION OF CONSTRUCTION COMPLETION TO THE TXDOT MARITIME DIVISION:* The board reviewed a formal resolution accepting the completed Port Mansfield Repair Bulkhead Project (TXDOT Project Number CSJ940000017). All construction is complete, punch-list items have been successfully received, and contractors have demobilized and cleared the job site. The Port Director is authorized to sign and submit the final notification of construction completion to the Texas Department of Transportation Maritime Division.
Future board discussions will address permanent methods to block off vehicle access to the slab.

Item No. 9: *REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL TRANSFER OF LEASES, BOAT STALL LEASE TRANSFERS AND COLLATERAL TRANSFER OF LEASES*: Upon review and discussion of each described and itemized leases, Commissioner Kendrick made the motion to accept and approve the leases as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cavazos and motion carried by vote.

Item No. 10: *REVIEW AND CONSIDERATION OF CHECKS AND VOUCHERS*: After review of checks and vouchers, Commissioner Kendrick made the motion to accept the issued checks and approve the transactions for payment of the Willacy County Navigation District and to accept the transactions August 13, 2026 through September 09, 2026. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Trevino and motion carried by vote.

Item No. 11: *DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO REVISIT THE VALUE OF THE WEST HARBOR SUBDIVISION LOTS*: The board reviewed the lack of sales activity for the West Harbor Subdivision lots. The lots were originally listed with a premium asking price of $500,000. Being on the market for 241 consecutive days, the listings have generated zero written offers or completed sales.

Alysa Canfield of Bravo Realty reported that while the properties generate substantial interest and numerous phone inquiries, prospective buyers immediately walk away once the $500,000 price point is disclosed. By comparison, the district's New Port Subdivision lots are priced at a non-negotiable $60,000 each.

After discussion, Commissioner Kendrick made the motion to reduce the official listing and asking price of the West Harbor lots to $350,000 to stimulate buyer interest and invite negotiations, with the strict condition that all incoming offers and conceptual plans must be brought back to the board for final approval. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Cavazos and motion carried.

Closed Session at approximately 10:31 a.m.

Item No. 12: *CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO TEX. GOV'T SEC. 551.074 (a) (1) CONSULTATION WITH ATTORNEY TO DELIBERATE REGARDING CONSTRUCTION WITH ACTIVITY AND DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR RESOLUTION.*

Item No. 13: *CLOSED SESSION PURSUANT TO TEX. GOV'T CODE SEC. 551.074 (a) (1) TO DELIBERATE THE DUTIES AND COMPENSATION OF TWO DISTRICT EMPLOYEES RELATING TO ADDITIONAL DUTIES PERFORMED DURING THE DIRECTOR'S ABSENCE:*

RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION at approximatley 11:51 a.m.

•No action was taken on any of the discussed items.

Item No. 14: *ADJOURN: at 12:03 p.m.*