

Timeline shows how severance package for **Jorge Diez** developed

By Larry Stanford

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CONYERS — Former Rockdale County Public Relations director **Jorge Diez** resigned from his post on Feb. 26 following a meeting five days earlier between **Diez** and Commission Chair Oz Nesbitt Sr.

At that meeting, **Diez** presented Nesbitt with a letter listing needs for his department. Included in the letter was a request that **Diez** be recognized as one of Nesbitt's executive directors "in both substance and salary." Sometime during the meeting, which **Diez** secretly recorded, Nesbitt began "chewing out" **Diez**. After the meeting, **Diez** took the letter and recording to Post 1 Commissioner Sherri Washington, who said later she found the way Nesbitt talked to **Diez** to be "disgusting," "demoralizing," and "degrading."

When **Diez** resigned, Washington and Post 2 Commissioner Dr. Doreen William agreed to a severance package that included a lump sum payment of six months pay of **Diez**'s \$105,000 salary, and 155 days pay for personal time off (PTO) that **Diez** had accumulated.

Discussion of that package turned heated between Nesbitt and Washington during a March 16 work session, with Nesbitt stating it sets a bad example for the county to give severance to an employee who resigns, while Washington noted that the money paid in the severance was less than what the county would have paid if **Diez** sued them for a "hostile work environment." (See "Commissioners have heated debate over **Diez** severance" in the Apr. 7 edition of the Rockdale/Newton Citizen).

Seeking better clarification of the severance package provided for **Diez**, the Citizen made Open Records Act requests for the personnel file of **Jorge Diez** and also correspondence between **Diez** and Nesbitt. The correspondence provides the following timeline and information in regards to the development of the severance package.



Feb. 26 — **Diez** submits his letter of immediate resignation, noting his accrued PTO in the amount of 155.2 hours and "in consideration of reasonable severance compensation."



March 4 — Chief of Staff James Cabe emails county attorney Qader Baig and advises him that Washington and Williams have "instructed me to coordinate with you to draft a severance agreement for **Jorge Diez**. Chairman Nesbitt is not in favor of severance package." Cabe said the only guidance was that **Diez** was to be paid for 155.2 hours of PTO in a lump sum and three months of his annual salary in a lump sum.

March 9 — By email, Washington and Williams gave their approval to the final severance package agreement. Under the agreement, the county would pay **Diez** a lump sum payment for six months salary, withholding taxes and retirement benefits, and a lump sum payment for 155.2 hours of PTO, again withholding taxes and retirement benefits.

The package also contains language that in accepting the severance, **Diez** agrees to release any claims or demands against the county and present or former elected officials and employees, including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Act of 1991, and similar laws and regulations.

March 11 — **Diez** signs the agreement and sends a scanned copy to the county, promising to bring the original on March 12.

March 23 — The Board of Commissioners ratifies the agreement by a 2-1 vote, with Washington and Williams in favor, and Nesbitt against.

Paid to **Diez** following his resignation from Rockdale County were:



Six months of salary came to a gross payment of \$52,500.11. The net payment after taxes and benefits was \$31,155.90.



Paid Time Off (PTO) — 155.20 hours came to a gross payment of \$7,834.63. The net payment after taxes and benefits was \$4,991.27.

Recording of meeting on [settlement with the three BOC and attorney](#)

https://www.rockdalenewtoncitizen.com/news/timeline-shows-how-severance-package-for-jorge-diez-developed/article_e2556596-9b11-11eb-9df7-f3ba3d451a08.html