

MINUTES

MEETING OF THE RIO GRANDE REGIONAL WATER PLANNING GROUP (RGRWPG) (REGION "M")

10:30 A.M. WEDNESDAY, JULY 17, 2019

LRGVDC MAIN CAMPUS – KEN JONES EXECUTIVE BOARD ROOM
301 W. RAILROAD STREET, WESLACO, TX
PRESIDING: SONNY HINOJOSA, VICE CHAIR

- DRAFT -

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Vice Chair Sonny Hinojosa called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. and presided over this meeting on behalf of Chairman Tomas Rodriguez. At the call to order a quorum was declared with the following voting members were in attendance:

Board Members

Sonny Hinojosa, Vice Chairman
Frank Schuster, Executive Committee
Nick Benavides, Executive Committee
Glenn Jarvis
John Bruciak
Carlos Garza
Dennis Goldsberry
Armando Vela
Riazul Mia
Dale Murden
Jorge Flores
Tom McLemore

Category

Water Districts
Other
Small Business
Other
Municipalities
Small Business
Water Utility
Groundwater Management Area
Municipalities
Agriculture
Municipalities
Water Districts

The following voting members were not in attendance:

Tomas Rodriguez, Chairman
Don McGhee, Secretary
Mayor Jim Darling
Judge Joe Rathmell
Jaime Flores
Dr. Neal Wilkins
Commissioner David Fuentes

Public
Industries
River Authorities
Counties
Environmental
Agriculture
County

2. Consider Approval of March 20, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Frank Schuster made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 20, 2019 meeting as presented. Mr. Riazul Mia seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

3. Hear Public Comment

There were no requests to make Public Comment.

4. Consider Authorizing LRGVDC to Negotiate and Execute Subsequent TWDB Contract Amendment

Mr. Nick Benavides made a motion to authorize the LRGVDC to negotiate and execute subsequent TWDB contract amendment. Mr. Glenn Jarvis seconded and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

5. Discussion and Consideration on Electric Generating Utilities in Region M

Vice Chairman Hinojosa recalled for the Board the discussion that took place at the last meeting on this topic then recognized Mr. Ron Garza, LRGVDC Executive Director, to address this item. Mr. Garza thanked Black & Veatch Engineer Sara Eatman for preparing a report on Electric Generating Utilities in Region M, and he noted that there are a few entities: Topaz, La Paloma, and Calpine, that could potentially have suitable candidates to serve as a voting member. For Consideration, renewable energy wind farms such as: Magic Valley Wind, Los Vientos I and II, and Cameron County Wind were also noted in the report.

Mr. Glenn Jarvis informed the Group that Maverick County has a hydro-power plant owned by the county; they do sell electricity and they are not a corporation or a river authority.

Mr. Garza noted there are three (3) options to consider:

- Option 1 - Contact the entities from this report to determine feasibility and interest in serving.
- Option 2 - Write a letter to the TWDB Administrator to get clarification on this category.
- Option 3 - Send a letter to TWDB requesting to remove the Electric Generating Utilities category from the Region M Voting Membership composition.

Upon conclusion of discussion ***Mr. Tom McLemore made a motion to send a letter to the active electric generating utilities identified in the report and Maverick County to determine interest in serving on Region M. Mr. Carlos Garza seconded, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

6. Information and Discussion on Regional Water Resource Advisory Committee (RWRAC)

Mr. Garza was recognized and informed the Group about the origins, development, and purpose of this new entity. The RWRAC has gone from an informal group advocating for drainage infrastructure projects because of damage cause by the last two June storm events; and has developed into an official advisory committee under the LRGVDC's Community & Economic Development Department. The RWRAC adopted bylaws in May and have appointed some of the members designated in those bylaws. Their membership includes a seat for a Region M Voting Member. Mr. Jaime Flores and Mayor Jim Darling have expressed interest in serving on this advisory committee. It was the consensus of the Group to submit their names to the RWRAC. The RWRAC will in turn request approval from the LRGVDC Board of Directors. No action needed.

At this time Vice Chair Hinojosa recognized TWDB Commissioner Brooke Paup and asked her to introduce herself. Commissioner Paup stated that she has spent the last few days touring the Valley and she spoke of the importance the Rio Grande Valley has for the State Water Plan.

7. Status Reports

A. Status on Current TWDB Contract Activities

Ms. Sara Eatman, Black & Veatch, was recognized and introduced their newest team member, Ms. Katie Snyder, who will also work on the Regional Water Plan. Together they addressed the following topics:

- 1. Chapter 1: Description of Planning Area 2021 Update**
Ms. Snyder summarized Chapter 1 and requested the Group review it and provide comments.
- 2. Chapter 2: Demand Projections, 2021 Update**
Ms. Snyder summarized Chapter 2 and requested the Group also review this chapter and provide comments.
- 3. Chapter 7: Drought Response, Approach**
Ms. Eatman summarized the following sections of Chapter 7:
 - a. Update Drought Contingency Plans**
Ms. Eatman explained the need for Region M to receive drought contingency plans and that they are required to be submitted every 5 years.
 - b. Update Emergency Interconnections**
Ms. Eatman stated that the recommendation for this planning cycle is not to have a sub-committee, but to have designated members either of the political subdivision staff, planning group members, or herself to determine if the list of interconnects from the last cycle needs to be revised in any way. She stated that two (2) members will be sufficient for this sub-committee and reminded the Group that the locations and functions of each interconnection needs to be kept confidential.
 - c. Identify Drought Management Strategies**
Drought management strategies are those that quantify a temporary reduction in demand or supplemental supplies which can be implemented in a time of drought but are not necessarily going to be utilized all the time. These are discussed in Chapter 7 as a unique sub-set of water management strategies and they will be evaluated along with the other strategies in terms of being in the "potentially feasible" list. Upon conclusion of discussion Ms. Eatman stated she would take the Group's suggestions and write a draft discussion on Chapter 7 and On-farm conservation for the next meeting.
- 4. Present Agricultural Conservation Water Management Strategy**
Ms. Eatman stated that agricultural demands are estimated based on conditions in 2011 when the reservoirs were full and there was very little rain. Supplies are based on the worst-case drought scenario. She proposed that Agricultural Conservation be included as a Demand Reduction WMS.
- 5. Report from GMA 16 Meeting Presentation, June 25, 2019**
Ms. Eatman stated that at this meeting she presented estimates of current groundwater pumping in the areas of Region M that are covered by GMA 16 and she offered to assist them in establishing pumping for the next Joint Groundwater Planning Cycle. The goal will be to provide the best estimates of current pumping so the model can identify any areas where DFCs are not met.
- 6. Budget and Contract Status Update**
Ms. Eatman showed the current budget figures and informed the Group that 57% of the budget remains based on current funding.

B. Financial Report

Ms. Marcie Oviedo, LRGVDC, reported that the current budget balance as of July 10, 2019 is \$15,847.48 from the annual budget of \$17,250.00, and there is an available cash balance of \$132,444.91.

C. Status of Joint Groundwater Area Planning in GMA's 4, 5, 7, 13, & 16

Mr. Armando Vela reported that the next GMA 16 meeting is scheduled for September 24, 2019 and that the board tried without success to pass a resolution concerning poor meeting attendance from Starr County representatives.

D. Status of No Charge Releases from the San Juan River

There was no new information to report on this item.

E. Reports from Other Water Planning Groups

1. **Reports from Liaisons with Other Regions: Region J, Chairman Tomas Rodriguez; Region L, Don McGhee, and Region N, Commissioner David Fuentes**

There were no reports from other planning groups at this time.

F. Report on Water Conservation Plans and Drought Management Plans Filed with Region

An updated list of plans that have been received was provided in the meeting packet.

G. Report on Notices of Applications for Funding and Grants

A current list of notices was provided in the meeting packet.

8. Reports from Federal and State Agencies

A. TWDB

Mr. Kevin Smith, TWDB Project Manager for Regions B, C & N reported on behalf of Mr. William Alfaro.

1. Mr. Smith reported on the status on the following topics:

a. **Drought Preparedness Council Recommendations**

He reported that an updated outline Drought Template for Chapter 7 of the Regional Water Plan is available on TWDB 5th Cycle working documents page under task 7. This is similar to the one from the previous planning cycle; one change is the open meetings requirement on the emergency interconnects. The Drought Preparedness Council met April 16 to discuss recommendations and as soon as they are available, they will go out to the planning groups.

b. **New Educational Material**

Mr. Smith brought copies of the new Do's and Don'ts which is aimed at answering questions from the public on what a RWPG does and made them available to the group. The State Water Infrastructure For Texas (SWIFT) Prioritization document talks about how SWIFT projects are ranked for funding from the SWIFT program.

c. **Legislative Update Presentation**

Mr. Smith informed the Board that during the regular legislative session three (3) bills relevant to regional water planning and significant bills related to flood planning and project funding were passed. Those bills are:

- HB 807
This bill created an interregional planning council (based on RWPG nominations) consisting of one member from each RWPG during each 5-year planning cycle prior to the adoption of a new state water plan. Each Group is to nominate at least one member. If more than one nomination is made than the TWDB will appoint a member based on those nominations.
- i. Nominate Member as Representative to Interregional Planning Council as per HB 807

Vice Chairman Hinojosa informed the Group that Chairman Tomas Rodriguez has expressed interest in serving on the Interregional Planning Council. He then opened the floor for other nominations. There being no other nominations Vice Chairman Hinojosa called for a vote, which was unanimously in favor to nominate Chairman Tomas Rodriguez to represent Region M on the Interregional Planning Council.

HB 807 also added 5 new requirements to the development of the Regional Water Plans. Mr. Smith detailed each of the following new requirements:

1. Identify unnecessary or counterproductive variations in drought response strategies.
 2. Provide a specific assessment for ASR projects to meet significant water needs identified in the RWPA.
 3. Set specific GPCD goals for each decade for municipal WUGs.
 4. Assess the progress in encouraging cooperation between WUGs to develop WMSs that achieve economies of scale and benefit the entire region.
 5. Recommend legislative changes to improve the water planning process.
- HB 721
Mr. Smith summarized the requirements for the TWDB and the anticipated implementation as set out in this bill
 - HB 723
Mr. Smith summarized the requirements for TCEQ as set out in this bill.
 - SB 7
This bill is aimed at providing funding through multiple funds and accounts for flood planning, protection and mitigation as well as data collection and modeling.
 - SB 8 (flood)
This bill establishes a state and regional flood planning process that will be administered by TWDB. Flood planning regions will be determined by river basins. The first regional flood plans will be due by January 10, 2023 and the first state flood plan will be due by September 1, 2024. It requires the State Soil and Water Conservation Board to prepare a 10-year dam repair, rehabilitation, and maintenance plan for flood control dams under their jurisdiction.

TWDB is planning stakeholder meetings around the state to gather preliminary input on SB 7 and SB 8 implementation. These meetings will provide input for rulemaking.

B. IBWC

No representative from the IBWC was present, and no report was provided.

C. TCEQ Watermaster

No representative from TCEQ was present, and no report was provided.

D. TPWD

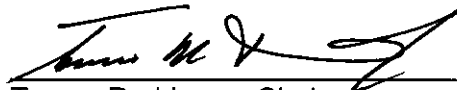
No representative was present, and no report was provided.

9. **Discussion and Consideration to Schedule Next Meeting**

It was the consensus of the Group to schedule the next meeting on Wednesday, September 4, 2019 at 11:00 am in Zapata.

10. **New or Unfinished Business**

There being no further business to come before the Group the meeting was adjourned at 12:14 p.m.



Tomas Rodriguez, Chair