

MINUTES

RIO GRANDE REGIONAL WATER PLANNING GROUP (RGRWPG) (REGION M)

9:30 AM WEDNESDAY, February 21, 2024

LRGVDC MAIN CAMPUS
VIA GOTOMEETING VIDEO CONFERENCE & IN PERSON
INITIATED AND CHAIRED AT 301 W. RAILROAD STREET, WESLACO, TX
PRESIDING: JIM DARLING, CHAIRMAN

- DRAFT -

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Mr. Manuel Cruz called the meeting to order at 9:32 am and confirmed that a quorum of the voting membership was present.

The following voting members were in attendance:

Board Members

Jim Darling
Sonny Hinojosa
Donald K McGee
Frank Schuster
Nick Benavides
Glenn Jarvis
Tomas Rodriguez
Judge Joe Rathmell
Jaime Flores
Louie Pena
Jorge Flores
Commissioner David Fuentes
Tom McLemore
Debbie Farmer
Robert Latham
Steven Sanchez
Marilyn Gilbert

Category

River Authorities
Water Districts
Industries
Other
Small Business
Other
Public
Counties
Environmental
Groundwater Management Area
Municipalities
Counties
Water Districts
Groundwater Management Area
Electric generating Utility
Water Utilities
Counties

The following voting members were not in attendance:

Carlos Garza
Dale Murden
Dr. Neal Wilkins

Small Business
Agriculture
Agriculture

2. **Consideration and Action to Approve November 1, 2023, Meeting Minutes.** *Mr. Glenn Jarvis made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 1, 2023, meeting as presented. Mr. Tomas Rodriguez seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.*

3. **No Public Comment**

4. **Action Item on Annual election of Officers and executive Committee.** Mr. Cruz started off by explaining to board that the officers are up for re-election and then went on to explain the Officers all in order, Mr. Cruz then turned it to the floor for further discussion. Mr. Jim Darling asked board just to clarify are all existing officers

willing to serve another term? They all agreed to a yes, then asked if there were any nominations from the floor. With no comments or concerns. There were no nominations at this time. **Mr. Dale Murden made a motion to approve the Annual Election of Officers and Executive Committee. Mr. Jorge Flores seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.**

5. Status Reports

5A1. Schedule and Progress Update.

Jaime Burke started with the Schedule and Progress update by showing the board the Conceptual Schedule for Region M plan Development, that was given to them in the packet. She highlighted task due dates that included the following: Technical Memorandum due March 4, 2024, Initial Prepared Plan due March 3, 2025, Final Plan due October 20, 2025. Ms. Burke presented the 2024 anticipated Region M schedule that highlighted TWDB due dates for certain tasks. She also gave a brief update on the progress since the last Region M meeting that included, • TWDB Board adopted Population and Water Demand Projections on November 9, 2023, • TWDB approved Region M hydrologic variances on November 9, 2023, • Sent surveys to WUGs and WWP's regarding water supplies and water management strategies for this cycle, • Prepared draft technical memorandum for submittal to TWDB by March 4, 2024, • Prepared draft amendment for infeasible WMSs, and • Prepared draft scope of work for Task 5B WMS evaluations. Ms. Burke also provided updates on new and ongoing efforts: New: Begin Drought Contingency Plan (DCP) Outreach and Evaluations (Task 7)

• Background:

- Certain entities must prepare DCPs and submit to Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and RWPGs
- DCPs updated every five years
- Submittal deadline to TCEQ is May 1, 2024

• Planning Group Responsibilities, for all eligible WUGs:

- Gather and request DCPs
- Review DCPs and describe Drought Management Measures (defined as demand management activities to be implemented during drought that may be evaluated and included as Water Management Strategies)

Next Steps:

- Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council (LRGVDC) will provide received DCPs to Technical Consultant, and
- Technical Consultant will send emails to request outstanding DCPs from eligible WUGs

With no further comment or discussion Jaime then moved on to the next item on the agenda.

5A2. Briefing on 2026 Region M Regional Water Planning Technical Memorandum.

The task objective is to develop a mid-cycle deliverable for the 2026 Regional Water Plan (RWP) with a snapshot of March 2024 data. The data within the Technical Memorandum (Tech Memo) remains in draft form until the submittal of Adopted Regional Water Plans by the Regional Water Planning Groups (RWPG) in October 2025. The memorandum is due to TWDB on March 4, 2024. Ms. Jaime Burke mentioned that the technical Memorandum Deliverable Handout A consists of several pages of the Tech Memo and appendices. Section one is the introduction, section two discusses public comments received, and section three to eight covers required items that need to be included in the memo itself. Ms. Burke presented sections three to eight of Handout A (Handout A can be found on the Region M website). The next step under this task is for the RWPG to receive and consider public comments, RWPG approves Tech Memo, lastly consultants submit Tech Memo to TWDB by March 4th, 2024.

5A3. Receive Public Comment on 2026 Region M Regional Water Planning Technical Memorandum.

There were no public comments received prior to the meeting; however, Commissioner Giner did provide a comment during the meeting. Commissioner stated she has been messaging with my hydrologists with regards to the projections and how maybe we can help. She recommended having a meeting with TCEQ WAM, an area that's responsible for the WAM, as well as the consultant, to ensure the projections regards to Amistad (how are the reductions in flows from the US Tributaries being affected, and the struggle on getting Mexico's delivery). Another thing that stands out (commented she might be wrong) is the difference between the 2030 and the 2080 doesn't seem very much, given the fact that we do have a drying system and that's really what the last 30 years have demonstrated regarding less flow coming into the main stem of the river.

No other public comments, Mr. Jim Darling then moved on to Item 4 on the agenda.

5A4. RGRWPG to Consider Public Comments and Discuss and Consider Approval of Results of 2026 Region M Regional Water Planning Technical Memorandum.

1) Consideration and Action to Approve and Authorization for the technical consultant to submit the technical memorandum to the TWDB. 2) Consideration and Action to Approve Authorization for the technical consultant to address DB27 updates and non-substantive revisions to the technical memorandum. 3) Consideration and Action to approve Authorization for the technical consultant to address any requests from TWDB associated with processing the technical memorandum. **Mr. Dale Murden made a motion to approve all 3 action items in 5A4, Mr. Glenn Jarvis seconded the motion, and upon vote the motion was carried unanimously.**

5A5. Consideration and Approval of task 5B Scope of Work for Evaluating Water Management Strategies.

Ms. Burke explained Handout B for draft Scope of work. She stated that there are 16 strategies that cover a wide range of strategy categories that are mostly all the same except for one (Regional Water Supply Facilities). Handout B was provided to the committee for their review prior to the meeting. Mr. Jim Darling moved on for the approval action items needed. 1) Approval and Authorization for the technical consultant to submit the notice-to-proceed Task 5B scope of work request to the TWDB. 2) Authorization for the technical consultant and/or the LRGVDC to work with the TWDB on any follow-up information that might be required. 3) Authorization for the LRGVDC to negotiate and execute the subsequent TWDB contract amendment that will be issued. **Ms. Marilyn Gilbert commented that there are some questions that need be addressed specifically to the plans but is okay with approving and going forward because there were already some clarifications. Mr. Jim Darling mentioned that any questions or concerns that there be enough time to negotiate or address before the final version. Mr. Nick Benavides made a motion to approve all 3 action items from 5A5, Mr. Jim Darling mentioned that any questions or concerns that there be enough time to negotiate or address before the final version. Mr. Jorge Flores seconded the motion, and upon vote the motion was carried unanimously.**

5A6. Consider Amendment to the 2021 Region M Water Plan to address Infeasible Water Management Strategies. Ms. Burke mentioned the RWPG Responsibilities was to review the status of strategies and projects with an online decade of 2020 in the 2021 RWPs and review additional, near-term strategies and projects that have lengthy permitting or construction processes. From a survey sent to WUGs regarding implementation status, all received responses, except two, said their project was either completed or they had moved forward with implementation: • Edinburg said their 2020 Non-Potable Reuse project has been put on hold, • McAllen has taken no affirmative action to move the 2030 Potable Reuse project forward, • Region M needs to complete an amendment to the 2021 Plan to remove Edinburg's project from the 2020 decade and McAllen's project from the 2030 decade. RWPG-adopted amendments due June 4, 2024. Modify infeasible strategies from 2021 Regional Water Plan: Non-Potable Reuse WMS for Edinburg: Shift the online decade from 2020 to 2030. This revision results in Unmet Needs in 2020 for Edinburg. North WWTP Potable Reuse Phase 1 WMS for McAllen: Shift the online decade from 2030 to 2040. This revision does not result in Unmet Needs for McAllen or other WUGs. The following chapters require edits as part of this amendment: Chapter 5. Water Management Strategies, Chapter 6. Impacts of Regional Water Plan; Unmet Water Needs, Chapter 10. Public Participation and Plan Adoption, Appendix B.5. Major Water Provider Second Tier Water Needs. The next steps for under this task are for RWPG to approvals submittal of amendment package to TWDB, TWDB will determine if is a major or minor amendment. Lastly RWPG adopts amendment at May meeting pending possible need for a public hearing. Recommendation to consider action to 1) Approve the submittal of the amendment package for TWDB for determination of minor amendment status, 2) Authorize LRGVDC to post public notice and hold a public hearing should the amendment status be deemed major. **Mr. Glenn Jarvis made a motion to approve the Amendment to the 2021 Region M Water Plan to address Infeasible Water Management Strategies. Mr. Tomas Rodriguez seconded the motion, and upon vote the motion was carried unanimously.**

5A7. Briefing on Major Water providers and Consideration of Potential Change to RWPG Definition for this Cycle. Ms. Burke brought this item to the group to see if they wanted to make a change to the RWPG definition on what a major water provider is for this cycle. A major water provider is "A WUG or WWP of particular significance to the region's water supply as determined by the regional water planning group. This may

include public or private entities that provide water for any water use category". The RWPG's designation of MWP's will not change the role of the entity in the RWP. Information about the MWP's will be summarized in 'snapshots' in the RWP. **Mr. Darling made motion to approve to keep the 3,000, include Mexico and treated water suppliers separately, but list everybody over 3,000. Mr. Glenn Jarvis seconded the motion, and a non vote the motion was carried unanimously.**

5A8. Initial Discussion of potential Need for Environmental Review Subcommittee and Water Management Strategy Subcommittee and request for Volunteers. Ms. Burke mentioned the potential to activate subcommittees, if needed. The Environmental Review Subcommittee Responsibilities: • Option to review past cycle(s) environmental assessment methodology for WMS evaluations and impacts to the region and consider need for updates. • Main environmental impacts considered: • Acres permanently impacted; Construction acreage impacted; Inundation acreage (for reservoirs); Wetland impact; Habitat acreage impacted; Threatened and endangered species count; Cultural resources impacted, Impacts to environmental flows. Water Management Strategy Subcommittee Responsibilities: • Option to review WMS evaluations prior to presentation to RWPG, • Mainly updates to last cycle's WMSs. Mr. Darling recommended that we leave it up to the membership and do a survey to see who would want to serve.

Ms. Burke's full presentation can be found on the Region M website.

5B. Financial Report

5B1. Consideration and Action to approve 2024 Budget. Mr. Cruz presented the budget spreadsheet to the board and explained the projected Annual Budget for 2024. **Mr. Tomas Rodriguez made a motion to Approve the 2024 Annual Budget for Region M, Mr. Steven Sanchez seconded the motion, upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.**

5B2. Consideration and Action to Accept Expenditure Report. Mr. Cruz presented the quarterly budget spreadsheet. The budget presented is the final expenses for the year 2023 and reflects expenses throughout each quarter. **Mr. Steven Sanchez made a motion to approve and accept the Expenditure Report, Mr. Tomas Rodriguez seconded the motion, upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.**

5C. Status of Joint Groundwater Is planned in GMA's 13 & 16.

Mr. Louie Pena started off by stating that they have a consultant, Tarah, Steve Young. They're preparing the new GAM, and as soon as it is received it, it will be compared to the old one. He mentioned GMA 16 next meeting is March 26, 2024, in Falfurrias at the Brush Country Office. Mr. Pena also mentioned Mr. Adam Foster as the formerly new our Executive Director.

Debbie Farmer provided a brief update on GMA 13, stating that the next GMA 13 meeting will be on Friday, April 19th at 10 o'clock at the Evergreen Underground Water Conservation District in Pleasanton. Doctor Bill Hutchison, consultant for GMA 13, will be providing an update for a discussion and approval for submission of recalibrated GAM for the southern portion of the Carrizo-Wil Cox, Queen City, and Sparta to the TWDB. The TWDB stakeholder review comment period and meeting requirements will be applicable.

5D. Reports from other regional Water Planning Groups. No updates or reports currently.

5E. Report on Water Conservation Plans and Drought Management Plans Filed with Region. No updates or reports currently.

5F. Report on Notices of Applications for Funding and Grants.

Mr. Kevin Smith started off by letting the board know that a Swift Application had a deadline of February 1st. He mentioned that the Board did receive an application from the Laguna Madre Water District for their Desalination Project and the next step would be for them to submit a full application.

5G. Report on Regional Water Resource Advisory Committee (RWRAC). Mrs. Melissa Gonzales informed the committee of a vacancy for our Special Purpose District Irrigation category; therefore, nominations are being accepted until March 1st, 2024. If anyone is interested in serving on our RWRAC they can reach out to Ms. Gonzales or Ms. Valerie Ramos and a nomination form can be provided. The next RWRAC meeting is March 20th at two o'clock here at the LRGVDC and via gotomeeting.

6. Reports from Federal and State Agencies.

6A. TWDB Updates.

Mr. Kevin Smith provided the following TWDB updates.

- Technical Memorandum– Due to TWDB March 4, 2024
 - Electronic Submittal Folders will be provided by TWDB in February
 - TWDB to Accept or Reject within 30 Days
- Prop 6/Texas Water Fund -TWDB is seeking public input during Board Meetings and Stakeholder Workshops through April. Details and FAQs on TWDB Website.
- Water Use Survey is open until March 1, 2024
- Texas Water Service Boundary Viewer open for editing until July 1, 2024
- Agricultural Water Conservation Grant application period open through April 3. Informational webinars on February 7, March 6, March 27.
- RWPG Chairs Call Held January 16, 2024:
 - Review of Upcoming Materials for RWPGs
 - Review RWP Amendment Guidance and Infeasible Amendment Timeline
 - Discuss Notice to Proceed Process
 - Review Socioeconomic Impact Analysis Process & Timeline (August 2025)
 - Update on the Interregional Planning Council
 - Next Chairs Call will be scheduled for date TBD April 2024.
- Interregional Planning Council
 - Next meeting: February 8 in Austin with virtual option to attend
 - Review of Final Draft of IPC Report (due to TWDB March 4, 2024)
- Upcoming Materials for RWPGs
 - County-Specific Water Supply Planning Info & Resource Documents (Includes Rural Entities and At-Risk Suppliers (<7,500, SS, 180 Day)
 - Conservation Resources
 - Drought/Drought Preparedness Resources
 - List of Entities Required to Submit Drought Contingency Plans to TCEQ
 - Drought Preparedness Council Recommendations to RWPGs
 - Updated Drought Management Costing Information
- Updated Uniform Costing Model

Lastly, Mr. Smith mentioned the TWDB Financial Assistance Workshop that was being held the same day and time as the Region M meeting (February 21st, 10:00 am). The workshop would discuss specific projects and answer questions about the following financial assistance programs:

- Economically Distressed Areas Program (EDAP)
- Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)
- Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF)
- Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF)
- State Water Implementation Fund for Texas (SWIFT)
- Texas Water Development Fund (DFund)
- Flood Infrastructure Fund (FIF)
- Proposition 6

6B. IBWC Update.

Commissioner Giner provided a presentation to the committee, that include the following topics:

- Update on 5Yr Cycle Deliveries, • Current Mexican Dam Storage, • Current International Dam Storage

• Actions USIBWC is Taking (Operational Constraints and Near-Term Projections), and the • Rio Grande Minute Update. This presentation can be found on the Region M website for public review.

6C. TCEQ Watermaster.

s. Georgina Bermea stated that they did implement the temporary dead storage, beginning the year 2024 and it was reflected and reported in our January monthly report period. The following is echoing to Ms. Giners slide. As of February 10, 2024, the U.S. combined ownership, the Amistad and Falcon stayed at 21.82% of normal conservation capacity, impounding 736-acre feet, and is down from 31.16% at the same time last year. Overall, the system is holding at 22.29% of normal conservation capacity with Amistad at 23.82%, impounding 768,538-acre feet. Falcon is at 20.44% of conservation capacity, impounding 545,070-acre feet. Mexico has 22.93% of normal conservation capacity, impounding 577,058-acre feet at Amistad and Falcon.

7. Discussion, Consideration and Action on Date for Next Business Meeting. Mr. Cruz then stated the next meeting would take place Wednesday, May 8th at 9:30am



Mr. Sonny Hinojosa, Vice-Chair