

AGENDA

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

9:30 A.M. WEDNESDAY, MAY 7, 2025

LRGVDC MAIN CAMPUS
INITIATED AND CHAIRED VIA GoToMeeting & IN PERSON AT
301 W. RAILROAD ST., WESLACO, TEXAS

Virtual access is available at:
<https://meet.goto.com/268978381>

You can also dial in using your phone.
Access Code: 268-978-381
United States: +1 (312) 757-3121

MEETING MATERIALS WILL BE AVAILABLE AT LEAST THREE (3)
DAYS PRIOR TO THE MEETING.

PRESIDING: JIM DARLING, CHAIR

-
1. Call to Order & Roll Call.....Chairman
 2. Consideration and **ACTION** to Approve February 5, 2025, Meeting Minutes.....Chairman
 3. Public Comment.....Chairman
 4. Consideration and **ACTION** to Approve Jaime Flores's continued Region M Membership, serving under the Environmentalist Category.....Chairman
 5. Status Reports

ACTION MAY BE TAKEN ON ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS

- A. Status on Current TWDB Contract Activities.....Jaime Burke
Black & Veatch
1. Schedule and Progress Update

- B. Consideration and **ACTION** to Approve Financial ReportMelisa Gonzales
- C. Status of Joint Groundwater Area Planning in GMA’s 13 & 16.....Louie Pena, GMA 16
Debbie Farmer, GMA 13
- D. Reports from Other Regional Water Planning Groups
 - 1. Reports from Liaisons with: Region J, Tomas Rodriguez; Region L, Don McGhee,
and Region N, Commissioner David Fuentes
- E. Report on Water Conservation Plans and Drought Management Plans
Filed with Region.....Chairman
- F. Report on Notices of Applications for Funding and GrantsChairman

6. Reports from Federal and State Agencies

ACTION MAY BE TAKEN ON ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS

- A. IBWCIBWC Staff
- B. TCEQ Watermaster Georgina Bermea
Rio Grande Watermaster
 - 1. Status of Reservoirs

- 7. Discussion, Consideration, and **ACTION** on Date for Next Business Meeting.....Chairman
- 8. Adjourn

Agenda items may be considered, deliberated and/or acted upon in a different order than numbered above. The Board of Directors of the Rio Grande Regional Water Planning Group (RGRWPG) (Region M) reserves the right to adjourn into Executive (Closed) Session at any time during the course of this meeting to discuss any of the items listed on this agenda as authorized by the Texas Open Meetings Act. No final action will be taken during the Executive Session.

PUBLIC INPUT POLICY
Public Input Policy: “At the beginning of each RGRWPG meeting, the RGRWPG will allow for an open public forum/comment period. This comment period shall not exceed one (1) hour in length, and each speaker will be allowed a maximum of three (3) minutes to speak. All individuals desiring to address the RGRWPG must be signed up to do so, prior to the open comment period. The purpose of this comment period is to provide the public an opportunity to address issues or topics that are under the jurisdiction of the RGRWPG as outlined within final implementation guidelines of Senate Bill 1, 75th Legislative Session (SB-1). For issues or topics which are not otherwise part of the posted agenda for the meeting, RGRWPG members may direct staff to investigate the issue or topic further. No action shall be taken on issues or topics which are not part of the posted agenda for the meeting. Members of the public may be recognized on posted agenda items deemed appropriate by the Chairman as these items are considered, and the same time limitation (3 minutes) applies.”

ITEM 2.

MEETING MINUTES

MINUTES

RIO GRANDE REGIONAL WATER PLANNING GROUP (RGRWPG)

(REGION M) 9:30 AM WEDNESDAY, February 5, 2025

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

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Mr. Nick Benavides called the meeting to order at 9:30 am and confirmed that a quorum of the voting membership was present.

The following voting members were in attendance:

Board Members

Jim Darling
Frank Schuster
Nick Benavides
Glen Jarvis
Carlos Garza
Dale Murden
Comm. David Fuentes
Tom McLemore
Debbie Farmer
Steven Sanchez
Marylin Gilbert
Jorge Flores
Tomas Rodriguez
Judge Joe Rathmell
Robert Latham

Category

River Authorities
Other
Small Business
Other
Small Business
Agriculture
Counties
Water Districts
Ground Water Management Area
Water Utilities
Municipalities
Municipalities
Public
Counties
Electric Generating Utility

The following voting members were not in attendance:

Board Members

Sonny Hinojosa
Donald McGhee
Louie Pena
Dr. Neal Wilkins

Category

Water Districts
Industries
Ground Water Management Area
Agriculture

2. Consideration and Action to Approve January 7, 2025, Meeting Minutes. *Tom McLemore made a motion to approve meeting minutes, Dale Murden seconded the motion, upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.*

3. Public Comment – No public comment submitted for this meeting.

4. Consideration and Action to Approve Nominations for Annual Election of Officers/Executive Committee, as presented in the meeting information packet. *Dale Murden made a motion to approve Nominations for Annual Election of Officers/executive Committee. Glen Jarvis seconded the motion upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.*

Mr. Nick Benavides noted that everyone listed on the Executive Committee is still willing to continue to serve in their executive capacity.

5. Consideration and Action to Approve Membership Renewals for Members who have expired Term dates, as presented in the meeting information packet. *Steven Sanchez made a motion to approve membership Renewals for members who have Expired Term Dates. Dale Murden seconded the motion and upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.*

Mr. Nick Benavides stated that all members that had term expiring would still like to continue to serve in their perspective capacities.

6. Review and Discussion on Region M Bylaws Membership and Attendance.

Mrs. Melisa Gonzales started off meeting with, in your packet, you received a copy of the region and bylaws for your review and educational purposes. One key point we'd like to remind everyone about is attendance. We understand that everyone has busy schedules, but if you're unable to attend a meeting, we kindly ask that you notify Valerie, Lisa, or Jim Darling (the president) via email with the reason for your absence.

As per the bylaws, absences must be excused by the president. A question was raised about who excuses the president, but that aside, we just want to ensure that everyone is aware of this policy. We understand your time commitments, but we do ask that you inform us if you can't attend. Ideally, please notify us in advance, preferably before the meeting day itself.

This is important because we strive to secure a quorum the day before the meeting. If you're part of the quorum and can't attend, it may cause challenges in ensuring we have the numbers needed to approve action items.

If you have any questions about the bylaws, please feel free to ask. We want to adhere to the bylaws, but we're not looking to be overly strict; we just want to ensure consistency and accountability. So, once again, if you're unable to attend, please let us know.

Additionally, if you log on after a call, please inform us by raising your hand or sending a chat message to confirm your presence. Similarly, if you call in and we don't recognize your number (such as a generic "cell phone" label), please let us know by speaking up, so we can accurately track attendance. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated to help ensure we maintain accurate records and avoid any attendance issues.

A point of clarification was raised regarding late arrivals by Mr. Steven Sanchez. While we understand that everyone has a lot going on, if you arrive after the meeting has started, it is your responsibility to notify us of your attendance. There was also a question about whether attending only part of a meeting would count as an absence. This is something we will need to address in accordance with the bylaws, but we want to ensure everyone is clear on the attendance expectations moving forward. We appreciate everyone's busy schedules and will continue to work together to maintain accurate records. Mrs. Melisa Gonzales clarified that as long as you're present for roll call, you will be considered in attendance. If you need to leave the meeting early, simply inform Mr. Darling, the president, by stating that you need to step out. It's important to communicate this to ensure proper attendance records. Again, we just ask that you either be present for roll call or notify us that you're here so we can accurately track attendance.

It was noted by Mr. Jim Darling that the main concern arises if we barely have a quorum and then one or two members drop off, causing us to lose the quorum. In that case, it could impact on the legitimacy of any actions

taken after the quorum is lost. This is why maintaining a full quorum is crucial for the validity of decisions made during the meeting. Mr. Carlos Garza then stated that Mr. Benavides and I mentioned during the last meeting that we logged in five minutes after the meeting started and made a call to notify our attendance. Mrs. Melisa Gonzales then assured everyone that Liza Alfaro and Valerie Ramos keep an eye out on all people that log on before or after. If you join the meeting after roll call, your attendance will still be recorded, but please let us know, especially if you're calling in. When you call in, the system only displays "cell phone," and we won't know who it is. We don't want to dwell on this, but we kindly ask that you inform us if you log on after-roll call to ensure accurate attendance.

Mr. Nick Benavides stated to reiterate, there have been instances where logging in has caused delays, and sometimes we need to reinstall the app or troubleshoot, which can lead to missing roll call. However, as mentioned earlier, it's important to notify someone when you're logged in so we can ensure accurate attendance. Everyone's participation is greatly appreciated.

Moving on, does anyone have any questions? Ms. Marilyn Gilbert brought up a point regarding Section 5 on page 9 of the bylaws, which states that a majority must be present at the meeting to form a quorum. She asked if, given that we are meeting virtually, we are being considered part of the quorum, or if we need to make clarifications to the bylaws to ensure we're in compliance and not violating them. Mrs. Melisa Gonzales responded that they would investigate the matter, Ms. Gilbert. She explained that the LRGVDC requires the president to be present for meetings. However, her understanding is that if a quorum is met both locally and virtually, the meeting is valid. She also mentioned that Mr. Cruz is particularly strict about the president's presence, as it ensures the meeting can be properly conducted from that location. It was noted by Mr. Jim Darling that under the Open Meetings Act, to have a valid meeting, the president must be present. The current structure, with the president, vice president, and other roles in place, ensures that we comply and covered on that front. Mr. Kevin Smith added to the discussion, stating that under the OMA requirements, if members are attending virtually, their cameras must remain on for the entire meeting. If a member's camera is turned off during the meeting, they will no longer be considered present for the meeting. It is required that the camera be on and accessible throughout the duration of the meeting. Ms. Gilbert inquired about potential modifications to the bylaws, specifically regarding the inclusion of alternates. In response, it was noted that the bylaws were currently under review. If members wish to propose changes, they can coordinate with Mr. Darling or the president to organize a workshop for revising or amending the bylaws. The idea of a workshop for these amendments was acknowledged as a great suggestion.

7. Status Reports.

A. Status on Current TWDB Contract Activities.

7.A.1. Schedule and Progress Update.

Ms. Jaime Burke began by stating that the goal for today is to adopt the draft plan. Before moving forward, she provided a few updates on the schedule and progress.

She shared the overall schedule for the planning cycle, noting that we are currently in the first quarter of 2025. The initially prepared plan is due on March 3rd, which is why the group is meeting today to consider adoption so it can be submitted to the board. The final plan is due on October 20th, and work will continue towards that deadline after today's meeting.

Key dates in the schedule include:

- **January Meeting:** Completed.
- **Today:** Adoption of the initially prepared plan with a submittal date of March 3rd, 2025, to the Water Development Board (TWDB).
- **Late April/Early May:** Public hearing and a regional water planning group meeting (tentative).
- **August/September:** Address public agency comments and finalize the plan for the October 20th submission.

Ms. Burke also provided a progress update since the last meeting. Work on the draft plan has continued, and all chapters have been sent out for planning group review. A list of the dates that emails were sent to planning group members by Valerie Ramos was shared. Additionally, work on database entry is ongoing, and as data is entered and final requirements from the TWDB are reviewed, some tweaks are being made to the chapters to ensure compliance with TWDB requirements.

Looking ahead, the following steps were outlined:

- Finalize the database entry.
- Complete the initially prepared plan deliverables package for submission to TWDB, including the certification letter and other necessary items.
- Submit the package to the board by March 3rd, 2025.
- Begin coordinating with the LRGVDC to plan the public hearing.

The meeting then proceeded with further discussion on the draft plan. Ms. Gilbert raised a point regarding some of the chapters, which contained yellow highlights marking various comments. She noted that many of these comments were administrative in nature. She inquired whether another version of the document would be provided with those final revisions and if any remaining issues would be addressed before submission. Ms. Gilbert acknowledged the tight timeline leading up to the March 3rd deadline but asked whether there would be a database where members could make further updates, if the content wasn't materially changed (e.g., not adding entirely new topics), but simply addressing the remaining issues that need to be cleared up.

Ms. Burke mentioned that they will provide a clean, final version of the draft chapters, which will be submitted to the Water Development Board (TWDB). In the executive summary, there is a link to the TWDB's database reports, which can be accessed directly. The team is still working on entering data into the database, but once completed, they will notify everyone so they can review it. Some of the reports may also be included in the strategy section of the plan, and additional reports can be found in other chapters. For example, Chapter 3 contains some database reports for review. The last cycle included a full appendix of printed database reports in the executive summary, but this time, the approach will be more streamlined, with a link provided along with a list of available database reports. She asked if this clarification addresses the question or if further information is needed. Marilyn confirmed that the question had been answered. She mentioned that if any changes in the material arise that could impact others, those comments will be circulated. Ms. Gilbert stated that she doesn't see anything that stands out but will review the material again to ensure that no comments were lost in the various iterations. Ms. Burke states Yes, and in one of the upcoming slides, I have a question for the planning group regarding how to handle any additional comments that may come in before the IPP is submitted. We can discuss this further.

7.A.2. Presentation, Consideration and Action Regarding and RWPG Member Comments on Draft Chapters.

The update is regarding the comments received from planning group members to date, with an opportunity for discussion as needed. Since the last meeting, and as of January 29th, we received typo corrections in Chapter 10 from Brownsville. Mr. Sonny Hinojosa provided suggested edits to the Executive Summary, as well as Chapters 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, and 10. Additionally, during the January meeting, we presented some comments on Chapters 7 and 8 but did not have sufficient time to fully address and propose responses. We have developed proposed edits and responses for the comments on Chapters 7 and 8. A handout with all comments and responses for Items 2 and 3 on this slide is included in your meeting materials. The minor typo corrections from Brownsville were not included in the handout, though those changes have been made. We want to provide this information for review and ask if there are any questions, comments, or further discussion needed on the proposed edits based on the received comments. Someone raised a question regarding the change to the DMI reserve, noting that it was mentioned as occurring in December 2014. However, it was clarified that the update took place in December 2024. The item number referenced, 3.2.1, incorrectly stated December 2014, but the correct date is December 2024. Ms. Jaime Burke then states that 2024 was correct and not 2014 and will get that error fixed. Mr. Glen Jarvis also made the comment, it was noted that there have been updates that should be mentioned in the plan. Specifically, the closure of the sugar mill should be addressed in sections related to agriculture, as it has impacted the agricultural sector. Additionally, Water District 3 and District 15 have recently been consolidated into a single

district. This is a very recent change and should be reflected in reference to Hidalgo County Water Improvement District 3 and Santa Cruz District 15. These are two updates that have not yet been incorporated, and clarification is made to ensure that the document remains current when it is finalized. Mr. Steven Sanchez then asked Mr. Jarvis if they merged but didn't, they create a different irrigation district? Mr. Jarvis then states, it was clarified that they are Water Improvement and Control districts. The resolution and order of consolidation have been filed, and the final name can be provided. However, the speaker did not have the name on hand now but will send it when available. This is one of Sonny's remarks. He mentioned this in his remarks. I can't locate it on my phone now, but it was the change you made in red. It was noted that the Santa Cruz number was mentioned, along with Cruz and Hidalgo number three. However, the location of Hidalgo number three is currently unclear. Mr. Jarvis stated that Hidalgo Number Three refers to McAllen, specifically the Hidalgo County Water Improvement District No. 3. These names appear in several sections of the plan. Number Three refers to Hidalgo County Water Improvement District No. 3, and District 15, I believe, is known as the Santa Cruz Irrigation District. It was converted to a Water Control and Improvement District prior to the consolidation, then states that he will send a copy of that consolidation record that was filed yesterday.

One of my other questions is that some planning group members may still be reviewing the factors and may want to provide comments, which they are welcome to do. Ms. Burke questioned the planning group: how should we handle comments that come in over the next week or so before we finalize and PDF the document? If the comments are minor, should we address them immediately? If they are more substantive, should we wait and review them after the draft plan is submitted, but before the final version? Do any of you have a preference on how we should proceed if this occurs? Mr. Glen Jarvis states that it might be that the executive committee could consider it and then determine whether the whole group needs to consider any change. Some may be very uncontroversial but could be controversial. Ms. Marilyn Gilbert commented, I would recommend that the executive committee, along with the person proposing the comments, discuss them. This way, if any clarification is needed, the comments can be addressed and included as part of that conversation. She further emphasized that if a comment impacts another person or entity (for example, if the discussion involves Hidalgo), then the relevant parties should also be included in the conversation. If the changes are minor, it may not be a significant issue. Ms. Gilbert trusts that the executive committee will involve the appropriate parties when addressing changes that affect other sections or projects. ***Dale Murden made a motion to approve the Action regarding any RWPG member comments on draft chapters. Carlos Garza seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.***

7.A.3. Discussion and Action to Adopt and Certify as Complete the Region M 2026 Initially Prepared Plan (IPP). ***Dale Murden made a motion to approve Action to Adopt and certify as complete The Region m 2026 Initially prepared plan (IPP). Carlos Garza seconded the motion and upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.***

7.A.4 Discussion and Action to Authorize Black & Veatch to Make Non-Substantive Revisions and Any Revisions Requested by the RGRWPG. ***Dale Murden made a motion to approve to Authorize Black & Veatch to make non-substantive Revisions and Any revisions requested by the RGRWPG. Carlos Garza seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.***

7.A.5 Discussion and Action to Authorize Black & Veatch to submit the Initially Prepared Plan (IPP) to the TWDB on Behalf of Region M. ***Dale Murden made a motion to Authorize Black & Veatch to submit the Initially Prepared Plan (IPP) to the TWDB on behalf of Region M. Carlos Garza seconded the motion and upon a vote, the motion was carried unanimously.***

7.A.6 Discussion and Action to Schedule Public Hearing (s) for Initially Prepared Plan (IPP). ***Dale Murden made a motion to approve Schedule Public Hearing (s) for Initially Prepared Plan (IPP). Carlos Garza seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.***

7.A.7 Discussion and Action to Authorize LRGVDC to Prepare, Post and Mail-Out the IPP Public Hearings Notice. ***Dale Murden made a motion to approve to Authorize LRGVDC to prepare, post, and mail out the IPP Public Hearings Notice. Carlos Garza seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.***

7.B. Financial Report

Mrs. Melisa Gonzales started off as of today, the current balance is \$78,642.85. There have been no significant changes since the last update, but these are the financials for Region M currently. If there are no objections, I will entertain a motion to approve the financials as presented. ***Steven Sanchez made a motion to approve the financial report. Dale Murden seconded the motion; upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.***

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

Ms. Debbie Farmer provided a brief update. She mentioned that the next GMA 13 meeting will be held on Friday, April 11th at 10:00 AM at the Evergreen Underground Water Conservation District in Pleasanton. GMA 13 has submitted a recalibrated groundwater availability model to the TWDB, which has been approved. The comment period is ongoing and will close at the end of the day on February 20th.

No report was provided for GMA 16.

7.D.1. Reports from other regional Water Planning Groups - Reports from Liaisons with Region J, Region L, and Region N.

No updates were provided.

7.E. Report on Water Conservation Plans and Drought Management Plans filed with region.

Mr. Jim Darling had no reports at this time.

7.F. Reports on Notices of Applications for Funding and Grants

Mr. Kevin Smith reported that the SWIFT period for the abridged applications closed on February 3rd, which was on Monday. These applications opened in December. I want to inform everyone that three applications from Region M were submitted: one from the Laguna Madre Seawater Desalination Project, one from the City of McAllen for a Brackish Groundwater Project, and one from the Donna ID for irrigation conservation.

8. Reports from Federal and State Agencies

8.A IBWC

Commissioner Giner expressed her gratitude to the group for the opportunity to provide an update on recent developments. She emphasized that the team remains highly engaged with the community and understands the challenges it is facing. She commended the state water plan for highlighting issues such as the closing of the sugar mill. She presented several items, including background slides on Minute 331, water deliveries, and Amistad Dam. The Amistad Dam situation is a significant concern due to erosion of its base caused by the karstic foundation. While this is a major issue, there has been progress in addressing it, marking a significant achievement.

She also shared that she recently visited Washington, D.C. and had the opportunity to brief the Department of State. She is preparing additional materials for them to brief appointees, who will, in turn, inform the Secretary. She noted that during Secretary Rubio's confirmation, both Senator Cruz and Senator Cornyn highlighted the 1944 Water Treaty, which she found encouraging. She believes this focus will help gain support for addressing water issues, especially with Secretary Rubio's position and the backing of President Trump.

She mentioned that the current delivery schedules show the lowest levels of water deliveries in recent history. Mexico is currently in arrears by approximately one million acre-feet. Marielena has notified the administration about the challenges in closing this gap and emphasized the need for a plan to address it. She suggested that Mexico could use tools such as Minute 331, including reservoir transfers, and allocate a larger portion of their

share to the United States to help mitigate the shortfall. Regarding the water situation in Chihuahua, Marielena highlighted that while there isn't a lot of water available, flows are still coming in. She is working with the hydrology department to determine the amount of water Mexico should deliver each month based on the inflow from rivers and tributaries. This will help assess what can be delivered before the hurricane season starts.

Currently, U.S. reservoirs, including Falcón and Amistad, are at record lows, with only 872,000 TCMs (707,000 acre-feet) of water available. She mentioned that most of this water would be allocated to municipal needs and dead storage before reaching farmers. Mexico has approximately 313,000 acre-feet in its share. Commissioner Giner emphasized the importance of finalizing the critical elevation levels with Mexico, which remains pending.

In addition, she briefly mentioned the Lower Rio Grande Water Quality Initiative, which was previously operational but is now formally codified. She noted that a study conducted by the University of Utah on river salinity hotspots would provide valuable information for addressing the salinity issue. One notable finding is that the Morillo Drain has been effective in reducing salinity, contributing only 2% to the problem. Other areas where salinity sources are detected will also be targeted for technical solutions. This is Jim Darling. Regarding the Elm Real Drain, the counties agreed to cover half of the IBWC's cost. However, neither Edge Cross nor I have received a bill for the last two years. The last time we checked, we were nearly three years behind, and it becomes very difficult to collect when the amounts are so large. If someone could investigate this, it would be greatly appreciated. Ms. Isela then stated that we did send a bill over a year ago, Mr. Darling, and I believe I had communicated with you at that time. However, we will resend it to you. The last communication I had indicated that you were facing difficulties due to the group, but I will send the updated bill and check if we have the most current version.

Commissioner Giner provided the following information:

Environment Workgroup:

- The Environment Workgroup has already begun meeting.
- Today, in Austin, there will be a briefing with TCEQ, which is part of the Environment Workgroup, to review their progress and advancements.
- TCEQ has secured funding for three projects, which are upstream of the main stem (two in Mexico and one in the United States) focused on increasing water availability in the Big Bend area. These are proof-of-concept projects.
- The progress of these projects could be a potential topic for discussion at the next Citizens Forum meeting.
- Updates on these projects will be shared, and the team is open to presenting them at future meetings as well.

Projects Workgroup:

- A meeting with TCEQ is scheduled for today to discuss how to move forward with launching the Projects Workgroup, including defining the terms of reference and selecting members.
- There has been significant interest from the community regarding participation in the Projects Workgroup, which will be key to ensuring local stakeholder buy-in.
- IBWC is fully supportive of this initiative.
- Further coordination will continue through our partners in the state of Texas.

The proposed tools to be applied include securing a greater than one-third share from the six tributaries, as well as initiating reservoir water transfers. It is necessary to ensure that a minimum of one year's worth of water is retained in the reservoirs for the city's needs. Further analysis is needed to determine the exact volume required for the cities, to facilitate water transfers to our users. The goal is to request that these transfers be made once the volume requirements are understood.

Mexico Water Offer:

Mexico has offered 120,000 acre-feet of water from the San Juan reservoir. As of February 5th, 69,000 acre-feet was ordered for transfer. While the exact amount transferred in acre-feet is unclear, it is estimated that approximately 55,000 acre-feet has been requested. Additionally, 66,528,000 cubic meters have been transferred.

Update from Isela (IBWC Staff):

On February 5th, a total of 53,935 acre-feet has been transferred, and 56,386 acre-feet has been ordered. The difference is due to the seven-day lag between placing orders and actual transfers.

Coordination Efforts:

Commissioner Giner inquired about the coordination between CONAGUA and TCEQ to ensure smooth water transfers. Isela explained that the process began in November, with a rapid and intensive effort involving TCEQ and CONAGUA to establish operational guidelines, considering Mexico's physical and operational limitations. A seven-day lag was implemented as part of the operational guidelines, which has posed some challenges for TCEQ due to the U.S. system's structure. Once transfers began in early December (around the 2nd or 3rd), daily meetings were held to monitor progress. Over time, these meetings shifted to two to three times per week and are now held weekly. The process includes daily orders for the upcoming week, the seven-day lag, and confirmation emails. This coordination effort has been significant, but the team continues to track progress closely, and TCEQ has been a crucial partner in this process.

Recognition of IBWC and TCEQ Staff:

Commissioner Giner acknowledged the efforts of the IBWC and TCEQ staff who worked over Thanksgiving, sacrificing personal leave to establish necessary rules and ensure the smooth progress of the project. Their dedication has been crucial in minimizing potential losses.

Amistad Dam – Minute 332:

Commissioner Giner provided an update on Minute 332, marking it as her sixth minute negotiated since joining IBWC. For decades, Amistad Dam has been rated as DSEC 2 (potentially unsafe) by the Army Corps of Engineers due to erosion under the dam and leakage from its karstic foundation.

- On December 10th, Minute 332 was signed, which outlines a permanent solution to the dam's issues, rather than the previously considered temporary overbuild.
- The minute also establishes the cost-sharing agreement: the U.S. is responsible for 56.2% of the costs, which range from \$90 million to \$251 million.
- Thanks to supplemental emergency funding from Congress, approximately \$70 million is available for the project, with additional reallocation of base construction funding proposed for Amistad Dam to cover grout curtain and part of the cutoff wall funding.
- The Corps of Engineers serve as the technical advisor, participating in all bi-national meetings and reviewing deliverables.
- The design phase is expected to be completed by March 2025, and after the design is approved, procurement for the grout curtain will begin. The grout curtain installation is slated for July 2025 through September 2026.
- The cost range is largely due to uncertainties regarding the depth of the cutoff wall, which will be determined once the grout curtain is in place. The cutoff wall's construction is tentatively scheduled to begin in January 2026, with the exact end date dependent on the depth required.

Grout Curtain Explanation:

A profile view of the dam was presented, showing the grout curtain in red. The grout curtain consists of two parallel lines of holes drilled from the crest, which are then backfilled with pressurized cement grout. This grout fills cavities in the karstic bedrock and helps determine the necessary depth for the cutoff wall. The grout curtain will extend down to the bedrock and serve as a flow barrier, reducing water movement through the bedrock both upstream and downstream of the cutoff wall. The cutoff wall will be constructed from panels excavated between the two grout curtains. The construction will occur in primary and secondary phases, with the aim of blocking water flow through the rock foundation. The goal is for the cutoff wall to reach the bedrock and effectively seal any water flow under the dam.

Sinkhole Formation and Reservoir Levels:

Due to lower water levels in the reservoir, there has been reduced support for the base of the dam, leading to the formation of more sinkholes. Currently, there are around 60 to 66 sinkholes, and they span a distance of over 2,000 meters, although this may extend further. This is another unknown factor that needs further understanding.

Grout Curtain Installation:

A diagram of the dam profile was shown, with red representing impermeable material, green representing semi-impermeable material, and the rest being permeable. The grout curtain will be installed by drilling holes into the bedrock, with primary and secondary holes placed along the crest of the dam. The distance between the primary holes is 10 meters, and the secondary holes are 5 meters apart, though this distance may vary based on field conditions. The grout curtain will extend along the entire crest of the dam, reaching the bedrock. The holes will be drilled at an angle to better understand the geotechnical properties of the area.

Wet and Dry Side Drilling:

Drilling will begin on the west side of the dam, with the primary holes angled in one direction, followed by drilling on the dry side at an opposite angle. This will ensure that both sides of the dam are properly addressed.

Backfilling and Cutoff Wall Construction:

After the grout curtain is installed, it will begin filling the holes in the karstic foundation. Panels will then be excavated for the cutoff wall, with varying depths based on the bedrock's depth. The panels will be backfilled accordingly, with some panels requiring deeper excavation depending on the conditions encountered.

Middle Rio Grande Citizens Forum Meeting:

A Middle Rio Grande Citizens Forum meeting is scheduled for February 19th and 20th. On the 19th, there will be a tour of Amistad Dam. On the 20th, the meeting will take place in Laredo. Since there is no established Citizens Forum group in the Middle Rio Grande region, this will be a stakeholder meeting to engage with the community in that area. Participants will have the option to attend online or in person.

Mr. Benavides asked if the new minutes are having a positive impact, particularly in terms of fostering better collaboration between the U.S. and Mexico. He inquired if the minutes are proving to be an effective avenue for recovering some of the previous issues, acknowledging that the minutes are relatively new. He requested input on the current outcomes and progress. Commissioner Giner then mentions, If I had been in a decision-making position, I would have preferred to see the immediate application of the tools. However, Mexico faces challenges in socializing the minute and ensuring that the states of Tamaulipas and Chihuahua understand that it needs to be applied for them to meet their commitments. On the federal level, there is a strong understanding of the need for these tools, which is why, even though we didn't technically need the minute to receive San Juan water, it helped make it clear that the 120,000 acre-feet would be delivered. Initially, they also offered additional water but later rescinded a second offer of 80,000 acre-feet. The situation now emphasizes the importance of addressing the states of Tamaulipas and Chihuahua. This need is becoming more urgent and evident. Despite these challenges, I remain optimistic that the minute will allow the tools to be applied this year. With the upcoming rainy season, more water will be available for sharing, and there should be no excuse for not sharing more water. Therefore, I am cautiously optimistic about the progress.

Mr. Tom McLemore then asked Commissioner; regarding the two reservoirs in Mexico that were at over 100% capacity. Could you provide an update on the situation? I noticed that the capacity decreased from 106% to 100% without any release, and I'm curious about what occurred. Commissioner Giner answered, regarding the issue, since the dams in question are quite small, there have been metering challenges. While releases were occurring, the data recorded showed zero, which is why the capacity dropped from 106% to 100%. There are two possible explanations: one is that some of the water may not have made it to the main stem, and the values measured reflect only what reaches it, or two, the data entry might have shown zero because this is being measured on the Mexican side. Isela, would you like to add anything? You were with me during that discussion, or did I miss anything?

Ms. Isela explains that there are a couple of small dams that were over 100% capacity. She notes that sometimes the releases are reported, and sometimes they are not. As the Commissioner mentioned, the Mexican section is looking into this. Additionally, some of the releases are so small that they are not reaching the confluence. She concludes by stating that there is nothing more to add beyond what the Commissioner already mentioned. Commissioner Giner explains for the benefit of the group that one of the provisions of Minute 331 requires the obligation to make all releases above normal, meaning those exceeding conservation capacity. She then goes on to mention that Frankie Pinon, one of our public affairs officers, shared the meeting times, dates, and locations in the chat for the group. I look forward to continuing to provide updates on all these activities. Thank you again for your advocacy and for representing the community with the federal government. Your efforts in making your voice heard are greatly appreciated.

8.B. TCEQ Watermaster (Status of Reservoirs)

Ms. Georgina Bermea began by clarifying that the data being presented is from the IBWC on January 25th. The combined storage at Amistad and Falcon was at 21.19% of normal conservation capacity, equivalent to 715,372 acre-feet. This is a decrease from the previous year, when it was 21.89%, or 738,837 acre-feet of normal conservation capacity. The combined usable storage for the U.S. at Amistad and Falcon is now at 20.65% of normal capacity. Overall, the system is at 17.39% of normal conservation capacity, with Amistad at 20.78% and Falcon at 13.28%. Mexico has 12.29% of conservation capacity, with 309,472 acre-feet stored at Amistad and Falcon.

Regarding water master operations, Ms. Bermea reported that current releases are 15 CMS from Amistad, 8 CMS from Falcon, 9.55 CMS from Anzalduas, and a request for 5 CMS from San Juan. The new water year for 2025 has just started, and the yearly reset has been initiated. The team aims to finalize the data and send out the monthly report to users before February 14th.

9. Discussion and Consideration, and Action on date for the next Business Meeting. Mr. Benavides stated that they were looking into May 7th @ 9:30am. ***Steven Sanchez made a motion to approve the date on next business meeting. Dale Murden seconded the motion, upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.***

10. Adjourn

Mr. Jim Darling, Chair

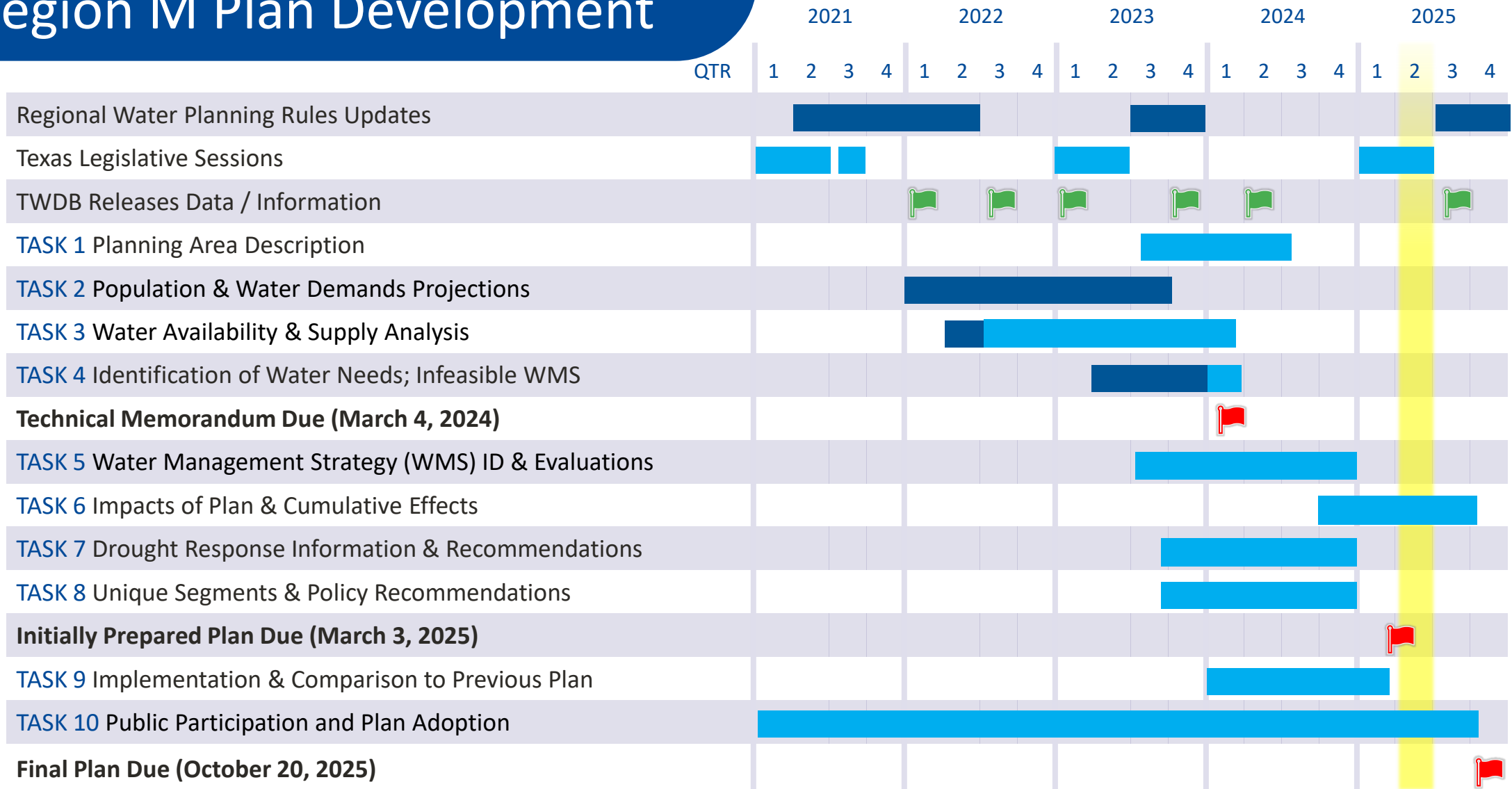
ITEM 5A.

STATUS ON CURRENT TWDB CONTRACT ACTIVITIES

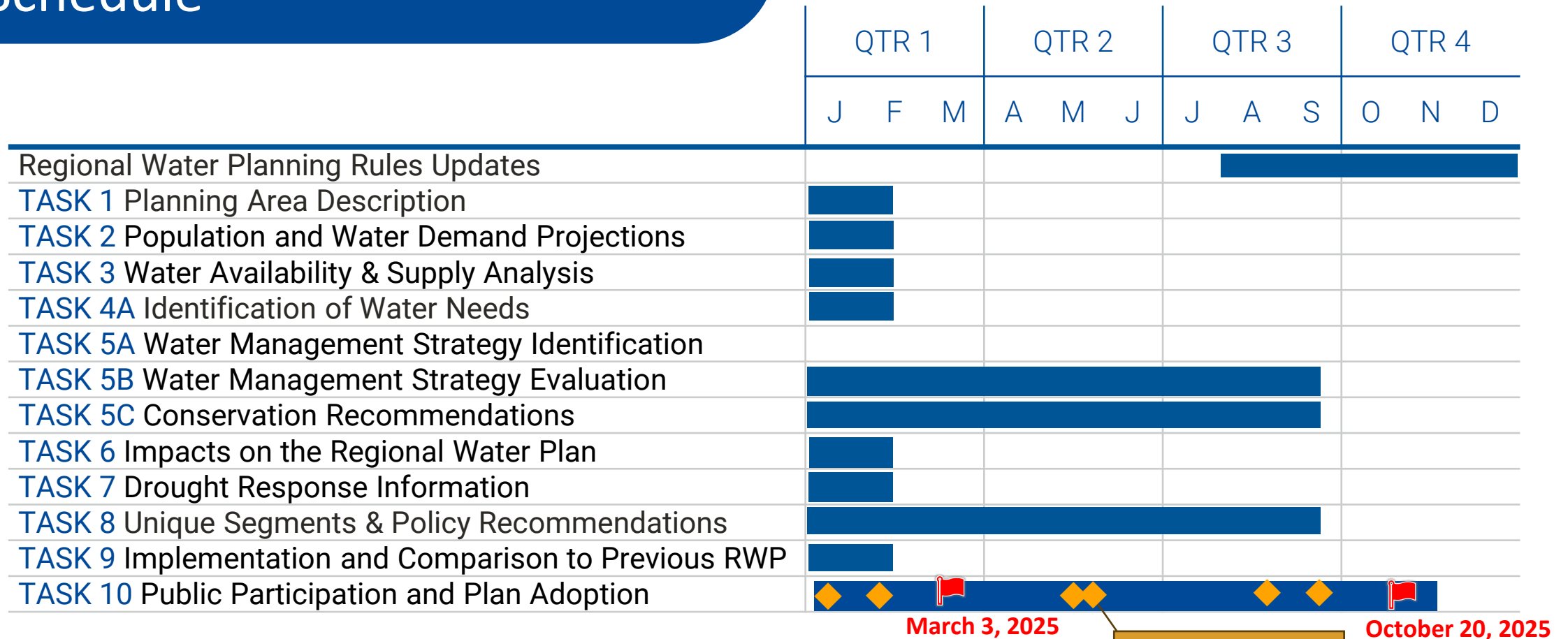
Agenda Item 5.A.1:

Schedule and Progress Update

Conceptual Schedule for Region M Plan Development



2025 Region M Anticipated Schedule



LEGEND

 Region M RWPG Activities
  Tentative Region M RWPG Meeting
  TWDB Deadline

Progress Since Last Meeting

- Prepared final IPP deliverables package and submitted to TWDB on March 3rd
 - TWDB identified the submittal as administratively complete on March 5th
- Worked with LRGVDC to plan the public hearing
 - Public hearing will be held at LRGVDC and virtually on May 22, 2025, at 2:00 pm
 - Presentation will be given, and public comments (oral and written) will be received
 - RWPG members can attend, but are not required
 - Written public comments will be accepted until July 22, 2025
 - Public and newspaper notices were prepared and LRGVDC sent them out in mid-April
 - Electronic or hard copies of the IPP were sent to a library and county clerk office in each of the eight counties
 - Public hearing presentation is being prepared
- Followed up on 2021 Plan implementation surveys that were sent out early this year. Will send monthly reminders and include updated results in final plan.

Upcoming Efforts

- Hold public hearing
 - Link to IPP: <http://www.riograndewaterplan.org/>
Public Hearing Date: May 22, 2025
Time: 2:00 p.m.
Location: Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council
301 W. Railroad St.
Weslaco, Texas 78596

Virtual Meeting Link: <https://meet.goto.com/581851189>
Call in #: United States: +1 (571) 317-3122
Access code: 581-851-189

Upcoming Efforts

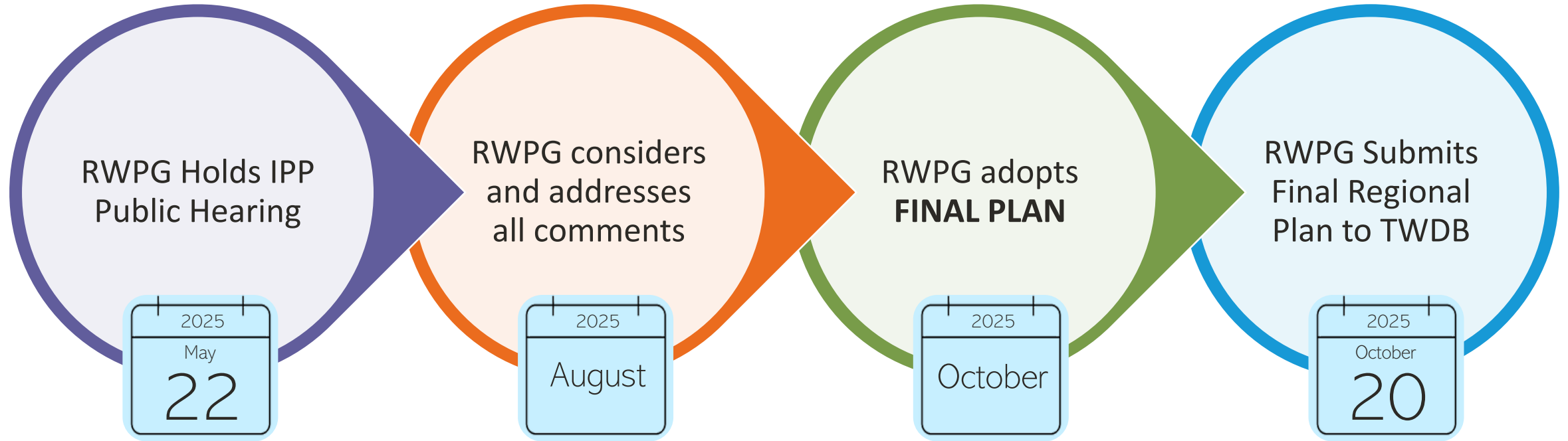
- Receive and review public and agency comments

The public can submit written comments through July 22, 2025, to:

Jim Darling, Chairman
Rio Grande Regional Water Planning Group
301 W. Railroad St.
Weslaco, TX 78596

Email: Outreach_RegionM@BlackandVeatch.onmicrosoft.com

IPP to Final Timeline



Written public comments accepted until July 22

ITEM 5B.

FINANCIAL REPORT

