

MINUTES

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

9:30 AM WEDNESDAY, August 2, 2023

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:

<u>Board Members</u>	<u>Category</u>
Jim Darling, Chairman	River Authorities
Sonny Hinojosa, Vice Chairman	Water Districts
Frank Schuster	Other
Tomas Rodriguez	Public
Carlos Garza	Small Business
Jaime Flores	Environmental
Dale Murden	Agriculture
Dr. Neal Wilkins	Agriculture
Tom McLemore	Water Districts
Debbie Farmer	Groundwater Management Areas
Robert Latham	Electric Generating Utilities
Steven Sanchez	Water Utilities
Louie Pena	Other
Marilyn Gilbert	Municipality

The following voting members were not in attendance:

Don McGhee, Secretary	Industries
Nick Benavides, Executive Committee	Small Business
Glenn Jarvis	Other
Judge Joe Rathmell	Counties
Jorge Flores	Municipalities
Commissioner David Fuentes	Counties

2 . Consideration and Action to Approve June 7, 2023, Meeting Minutes

Mr. Tomas Rodriguez made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 7, 2023, meeting as presented. Mr. Sonny Hinojosa seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.

3. Public Comment

No public comments were submitted for this meeting.

4. Consideration and Action on Nominations to Fill Vacancy in Municipalities Category

Mr. Jim Darling stated that they had 1 nomination to replace Mr. John Bruciak and that was Ms. Marilyn Gilbert. **Mr. Tomas Rodriguez made a motion to Nominate Marilyn Gilbert for new Municipalities category. Mr. Sonny Hinojosa seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.**

5. Consideration and Action on Petition from Voting Members to Serve Additional Term

Mr. Manuel Cruz explained that in the memo he sent to the board was strictly from the Bylaws and explains that a petition must be submitted if they would like to serve longer than the assigned term. When the group first started, they had staggered positions and drew lots. The first lot was for 3-years and the second was for up to 5-years. Once completed the year for the 2-year session, they would go into the 5-year term. The following members petitioning for additional 5-year term until 2028 are: Donald McGhee, Tomas Rodriguez, Carlos Garza, and Nick Benavides. **Mr. Carlos Garza made a motion for Petition for Voting Members to Serve Additional Term. Mr. Tomas Rodriguez seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.**

5a. Consideration and Action for Replacement of Armando Vela and Nominating Louie Pena (added during the meeting)

Mr. Louie Pena explained that he would be replacing Mr. Armando Vela from GMA 16. Mr. Jim Darling mentioned that this is an automatic position. **Mr. Tomas Rodriguez made a motion to replace Armando Vela with Louie Pena. Mr. Carlos Garza seconded the motion, upon a vote the motion was carried unanimously.**

6. Consideration and Action to Approve Resolution 2023-01 for Mexico Water Debt

Mr. Jim Darling stated that the ideal plan for this resolution was for the Rio Grande Regional Water Planning Group to strongly urge Mexico to comply with the terms of the 1944 Treaty and release the water due to the United States. Mr. Cruz mentioned that in early July, signed letters were sent to Federal Representatives and the next step is to get local governments to approve the resolution for a stronger voice. **Mr. Sonny Hinojosa made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-01 on water Debt. Mr. Tom McLemore seconded the motion, upon vote the motion was carried unanimously.**

7. Status Reports

Ms. Jaime Burke, Black & Veatch Water Planning Leader was recognized to address the following:

A. Status on Current TWDB Contract Activities

1. Schedule and Progress Update

The proposed project schedule was presented. Ms. Jaime Burke stated they are currently in the 3rd quarter of 2023 and starting to tap into task 4 of the project timeline. She went over the conceptual schedule for the Region M plan development and shared the 2023 anticipated Region M schedule. The presentation timeline can be found on the Region M meeting material webpage, <http://riograndewaterplan.org/meetings>

2. Update and Discussion on Draft Population and Municipal Demand Projections from TWDB and WUG Feedback (several actions taken under this item)

a. Consider Adjustment for Undercount of Minority Communities

Ms. Burke went over the WUG requested revisions from counties and a few cities within.

In previous conversations with the planning group, it was decided to use the 0.5 migration scenario for the population revision count. Ms. Burke mentioned that as revision requests were received, they felt they still didn't have enough county population to meet these requests for Hidalgo, Cameron, and Webb Counties. TWDB staff provided information for a methodology another region is using to increase their county populations. For the counties who requested revisions, the high percentage of Hispanic populations it would allow for a significant increase to the county population based on the 5% undercount of Hispanics. Therefore, Black & Veatch is requesting to use the 5% increase for the undercount of Hispanic population. ***Mr. Steven Sanchez made a motion to consider adjustment of the undercount for minority communities for Hidalgo, Cameron, and Webb Counties by increasing population 5% from the census. Mr. Tom McLemore seconded the motion, upon vote the motion was carried unanimously.***

In Cameron County there were two WUG revision requests, one being East Rio Hondo WSC and Primera. Approval is needed to consider adjustment to population. ***Mr. Tom McLemore made a motion to approve the adjustments presented for the three entities. Mr. Tomas Rodriguez seconded the motion, upon vote the motion was carried unanimously.***

In Hidalgo County there was one WUG revision request, the entity being McAllen. Approval is needed to consider adjustment to population. ***Mr. Tomas Rodriguez made the motion for population adjustments presented. Mr. Sony Hinojosa seconded the motion, upon vote the motion was carried unanimously.***

In Webb County there were two WUG revision requests, one being the county and Laredo. Laredo did not request any change to their population projections, but requested to increase their Baseline GPCD to 144, which is their 2021 GPCD. Approval is needed to consider adjustments to the GPCD requested projections. ***Mr. Jim Darling made motion for Laredo population to change. Mr. Tomas Rodriguez seconded the motion, upon vote the motion was carried unanimously.***

Webb County requested WUG revisions. Approval is needed to consider adjustment to population. ***Mr. Dale Murden made the motion for population adjustments presented. Mr. Steven Sanchez seconded the motion, upon vote the motion was carried unanimously.***

3. Discuss and Consider Approval of Population and Municipal Demand Revisions to be Submitted to TWDB Draft Projections and to Authorize Consultant to Submit Revision Request to TWDB

Motions made under 7.A.2.a, covered the approval and motion of 7.A.3.; approving authorization for the consultant to submit revision request to TWDB.

4. Consider Authorizing Consultant to Continue Working with TWDB Regarding Minor Edits to Revisions on behalf of Region M Group

Mr. Tomas Rodriguez made the motion to include language, authorizing the consultant to continue working with the TWDB on additional revisions as needed. Mr. Dale Murden seconded the motion, upon vote the motion was carried unanimously.

5. Presentation and Discussion of Hydrologic Variance Assumptions for 6th Cycle of Regional Water Planning

Ms. Jaime Burke discussed the hydrologic variance assumptions and submitting a variance request to TWDB. Ms. Burke introduced Mr. Kurt Kennedy, a subconsultant who will be working on surface water modeling for this cycle. TWDB requires the RWPGs to use this publicly available model to evaluate surface water availability and are also required to

incorporate anticipated sedimentation into the WAM for major reservoirs. Region M has used the TCEQ Rio Grande River WAM Run 3 and the Nueces-Rio Grande Coastal WAM Run 3 models to determine the surface water availability for past planning cycles. TCEQ most recently updated the Rio Grande WAM in October 2021 and the Nueces- Rio Grande WAM in January 2013, but will check with TCEQ if there is a more updated one since then.

The most current WAM Run 3 will be used for all Surface Water Rights Modeling for existing supplies and future WMS, which includes: a.) Full exercise of existing surface water rights; b.) Zero effluent discharges unless specifically required by a surface water right (hydropower, industrial rights, etc.); and c.) Best available water rights information as of June 2018. In the evaluation of the cumulative effects of water management strategies, the Rio Grande WAM Run 3 may be used to estimate the impacts of future urbanization (limited to the reclassification of water rights) on the firm yield of the system. The results of these analyses will be limited to the discussion of cumulative effects.

Reservoir capacities for Amistad and Falcon will be based on the current estimates for sedimentation in 2020 and 2070, and a linear interpolation will be used to determine capacity for the decades between: a.) Existing supplies will be based on the 2020 Firm Yield; and b.) Projected supplies and WMS will rely on estimated decadal averages of Firm Yield.

The Rio Grande WAM will be ran to be consistent with Region E with respect to the following: irrigation demand patterns above Fort Quitman will be modified so that diversions only occur March through October, which is consistent with the operations of the Rio Grande Project. This demand pattern change does not have a discernible impact on the firm yield of the Amistad-Falcon system in Region M. Source water available for a reuse water management strategy will be determined based on the estimated amount of water returned to a utility's WWTPs for each decade, less the amount of reuse water already being utilized as existing supply. The amount of water returned to a utility's WWTP will be estimated at 50% of the utility's projected water demands, adjusted for water conservation and drought management strategies, unless site-specific information is available. Direct reuse does not require WAM modeling since there are no return flows. Indirect reuse would be entered as a return flow to assess downstream availability.

The following hydrologic assumptions for this cycle will be **modified**: a.) new version of the Rio Grande WAM; b.) best available water right as of July 2023; and c.) reservoir capacities for Amistad and Falcon will be based on the current estimates for sedimentation in 2030 and 2080, and a linear interpolation will be used to determine capacity for the decades between. The following hydrologic assumptions for this cycle will be **new**: a.) The Rio Grande WAM will be run to be consistent with Region E by modeling the San Solomon Springs (within Region E) to be cut off from the rest of the basin (impact to Region F); and b.) when modeling the Delta Region Water Management Strategy using the Nueces-Rio Grande Coastal Basin WAM, the priority dates for the three reservoirs will be modified to reflect one or more reservoirs as senior, and the others as more junior, with respect to one another.

6. Discuss and Consider approval of Hydrologic Variance for Surface Water Supplies and Authorize Technical Consultant to submit proposed Variances to TWDB.

Ms. Jaime Burke mentioned that if the committee is comfortable with what was presented and are ready to give approval of hydrologic variance and assumptions and be able to submit the variance request to TWDB, they could begin modeling. ***Mr. Tom McLemore made a motion to consider approval to get it done. Mr. Sonny Hinojosa seconded the motion, upon vote the motion was carried unanimously.***

B. Financial Report

1. Consideration and Action to Accept Expenditure Report.

Mr. Manuel Cruz gave the Expenditure Report for the period of January 1, 2023, through June 30, 2023, and reported that from the local funds annual budget of \$22,650.00, there is a balance of \$17,294.02 remaining. The cash fund balance is \$96,404.95 which includes \$1,349.36. **Mr. Dale Murden made the motion for approval to accept expenditure report. Mr. Steven Sanchez seconded the motion, upon vote the motion was carried unanimously.**

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

Mr. Louie Pena, Representative for GMA 16, was recognized and reported that they held a meeting June 27 at Falfurrias. During the meeting it was asked if anyone wanted to be considered for the GMA 16 as a replacement for Armando Vela. Mr. Pena mentioned that they are working with a consultant on their GAM and will possibly be ready in January 2024. More costs may have been incurred due to Starr County tax living. Also discussed, John Perez with TWDB, mentioned that GAM's for 15 and 16 should be prepared by November and will be meeting again in January 2024.

Ms. Debbie Farmer, Representative of GMA 13, mentioned that the next meeting for GMA 13 is scheduled for September 15, 2023, in Pleasanton.

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

Mr. Tomas Rodriguez was recognized and reported that they had the same issues with the population demands and have been discussed.

Mr. Andy Garza, liaison for Region N to Region M, was recognized and reported that Region N has met twice this year, one meeting on January 26, and considered non-municipal water demand for irrigation, manufacturing, electric mining, and life stock. Updates regarding desalination plans were received by Corpus Christi and Alice. Also at the meeting was discussion and status on the Region N Plan. At the May 18 meeting, action was taken on TWDB draft population and municipal water demand projects, and request on hydrologic variance.

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

Mr. Jim Darling mentioned that all plans are up to date but waiting on the Delta Project.

F. Reports on Notices of applications for Funding and Grants

There was no update on this topic.

G. Report on Regional Water Resource Academy Advisory Committee (RWRAC)

Mr. Manuel Cruz mentioned that RWRAC met on June 14 and currently has a vacancy under Special Purpose District Drainage for Hidalgo County category. The next meeting is scheduled for September 13, 2023, 2pm (hybrid). For anyone in Hidalgo County Drainage District who is interested can provide nomination form. Also needed are chairman and vice-chairman for this committee.

On August 3 at 9:00 am, LRGVDC will host an open discussion on the Flood Infrastructure Fund (FIF) Program, on projects that are going on throughout the three-county area. The projects deal with the installation of sensors throughout the three-county area to identify flooding before it happens and to be proactive, and to be in conjunction with Emergency Management. This meeting with the FIF group to identify any gaps and specifically to identify any features that Emergency Management would need to be able to receive information that they might need to identify potential flooding in the region.

8. Reports from Federal and State Agencies

A. TWDB

Ms. Michele Foss was recognized and reported on the following items:

1. Reminder of Upcoming Critical Deadlines

Ms. Foss stated that Ms. Burke covered most of the upcoming tasks. Expressing once more the deadline for the population water demands project is due August 11, and technical memorandum is due March 4.

On September 14, the TWDB Board meeting will be held in City of Hidalgo City Hall. Attendance is encouraged.

2. Discussion Regarding June 27, 2023, Chair's Conference Call

On June the 27th, an update was received on legislative session, received an update on the interregional planning council meeting that was held back May 30th, and discussed progress and draft outline for the council report that is being prepped by the interregional council.

3. New One-Pager on Population Projections Revision Process Summary and Uncertainty in Regional Water Planning

One-page information can be found on the TWDB website. There is explanation on the population projections, revision process, and answers to some questions on supporting data that consultants are putting together to support revision requests. Another one-pager that can be found is the also uncertainty in regional water planning on looking at other water management strategies addressing potential shortages of water supplies for the future.

4. Legislation Affecting Texas Water Planning (Bills that Passed)

Ms. Foss mentioned that there were over 43 Bills, several were related to regional water planning groups: one being House Bill 1565. This bill authorizes the TWDB to continue operating regional water planning efforts, regional flood planning efforts, administrating the funding and grants programs that are available, and to continue the water science and conservation activities. Also included in this Bill is requiring planning groups to report on implementation of large projects and for planning groups to optimally plan for conditions worsening the drought record. Another Bill passed was House Bill 1, the Budget Bill. This Bill includes additional funding for regional water planning group activities; therefore, contract amendments will be issued later this fall that will include additional funds for your planning group efforts. Senate House Bill 28, is the Texas Water Fund Bill that passed \$1 billion dollars, pending voter approval in November. This will allow the board to provide additional funding resources for water projects.

5. Legislation Affecting Texas Water Planning (Bills that Did Not Pass)

Ms. Foss mentioned House Bill 4373 did not pass. This Bill would have removed the requirements for planning groups to place printed copies of initially prepared plans at each county courthouse and public library. It would also have allowed for notice of your IPP to be posted on your websites in lieu of newspaper publications.

B. IBWC

No representative from the IBWC was available to provide a report.

C. TCEQ Watermaster

1. Status of Reservoirs

No representative from TCEQ was available to provide a report; however, Mr. Jim Darling mentioned the status of the reservoirs is at 26.2%.

9. Discussion, Consideration, and Action on Date for Next Business Meeting

No meeting date was voted on but was mentioned that a meeting should be scheduled in November 2023.

10. Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Group, Chairman Darling adjourned the meeting at 11:44 am.

Mr. Jim Darling, Chair