

MINUTES

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

9:30 AM THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2022

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

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairman Jim Darling 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:

<u>Board Members</u>	<u>Category</u>
Jim Darling, Chairman	River Authorities
Sonny Hinojosa, Vice Chairman	Water Districts
Don McGhee, Secretary	Industries
Frank Schuster, Executive Committee	Other
Nick Benavides, Executive Committee	Small Business
Glenn Jarvis	Other
John Bruciak	Municipalities
Tomas Rodriguez	Public
Jaime Flores	Environmental
Louie Pena for Armando Vela	Groundwater Management Areas
Riazul Mia	Municipalities
Dale Murden	Agriculture
Dr. Neal Wilkins	Agriculture
Jorge Flores	Municipalities
Commissioner David Fuentes	County
Debbie Farmer	Groundwater Management Area
Robert Latham	Electric Generating Utilities
Steven Sanchez	Water Utilities

The following voting members were not in attendance:

Carlos Garza	Small Business
Judge Joe Rathmell	Counties
Tom McLemore	Water Districts

2. Consideration and Action to Approve JULY 6, 2022, Meeting Minutes

Mr. Sonny Hinojosa made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 6, 2022, meeting as presented. Mr. Tomas Rodriguez seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

3. Hear Public Comment

Mr. Tom Koeneke, Starr County Groundwater Conservation District, was recognized and informed the Group that the TCEQ's inquiry into SCGCD has been dismissed. The District entered into an agreed order with TCEQ to take certain actions and those have been completed; they are now in good standing with TCEQ. Mr. Koeneke added that a public information access page has been added to their website that includes information about wells.

4. Consideration and Action to Approve Contract between Halff Associates and LRGVDC for Time and Effort Dedicated toward Amendment Process

Chairman Darling stated that the 85-page contract is an agreement to reimburse the LRGVDC in the amount of \$7,500 for their time and effort dedicated toward the amendment process. He asked there were any questions, there being none, he asked if there was a motion on the contract.

Commissioner David Fuentes made a motion to approve the contract between Halff Associates and LRGVDC as presented. Mr. Riazul Mia seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

5. Consideration, Discussion, and Possible Action on Hidalgo County Drainage District #1 (HCDD1) Amendment to 2021 Rio Grande Regional Water Plan Opening

A. Public Comments Received

Chairman Darling stated that the public comments period ended Friday, September 23, 2022, then read the comments that were submitted, none of which affect the amendment as presented.

B. Comments from TWDB

All comments from TWDB regarding the Plan Amendment were sent to the Black & Veatch (B&V) team and have been addressed in the final version of the amendment.

C. Comments from Planning Group Members and/or Consultants

Mr. Jaime Flores asked in what order the projects would be done. Commissioner Fuentes gave a summary of the order based on mitigating circumstances. Commissioner Fuentes added that construction of the temporary testing facility will begin in the next 30 to 60 days, and then the actual TCEQ process for testing water will start. He added that they are on schedule and hopefully formal reports will be available by the end of 2023.

D. Consideration and Action to Adopt Amendment

Commissioner David Fuentes made a motion to adopt the amendment as presented. Mr. Steven Sanchez seconded the motion and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.

6. Status Reports

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

A. Status on Current TWDB Contract Activities

1. Schedule and Progress Update

Ms. Burke presented the Conceptual/Initial Schedule for the Region M Plan Development and summarized the progress to date.

2. Draft Projections from TWDB for Irrigation and Mining

Ms. Burke presented the draft Irrigation Demand Projections from TWDB. She stated that Region M requested a revision during the previous planning cycle to use 2011 historical use for the 2020 Demand. In 2011 this region experienced little rainfall and high demand, and the full reservoirs provided minimal supply constraints. A rate of change over the planning horizon was requested that used a combination of sedimentation and historic rate at which irrigation water rights have been converted to municipal use. There was lengthy discussion that considered many sides of this projection. Kevin Smith, TWDB, suggested their staff who work with these projections could provide an in-depth presentation at the next meeting. Discussion only, no action needed.

Upon conclusion of discussion on the Irrigation Demand, Ms. Burke moved to the Mining Demand projections. She stated that these projections were developed in the Mining Use Study that TWDB conducted in partnership with the University of Texas Bureau of Economic Geology and the US Geological Survey. A link to their report is at the bottom of slide 22 of Ms. Burke's presentation which is posted on the Region M website at: <http://www.riograndewaterplan.org/meetings>

Ms. Burke stated that mining demands include oil and gas, coal and aggregate. She pointed out that the mining demand for Maverick County and Webb County decline significantly after 2070 and stated that part of the study anticipates that the fracking wells will have been played out by this time resulting in no more water demand by that time. She suggested that a presentation might be available to explain those calculations.

Chairman Darling stated that it would be interesting to see those calculations because why wouldn't there be a gradual decrease based on wells playing out instead of such a big drop off. Ms. Burke recalled from a webinar on this topic that there are a certain number of wells that the TWDB study anticipates needing basically to reach build out. They looked at the last several years of how many have been drilled per year. They basically applied that rate out until they ran out, which was around 2060 or 2070 in most of the areas that do fracking. However, the areas like Hidalgo County have more aggregate mining and look as if they will continue to increase over time. Ms. Burke suggested requesting a presentation to provide more specific information.

Chairman Darling suggested reopening this discussion closer to the time when the Group has to take action and approve these figures. No action needed at this time.

B. Financial Report

1. Consideration and Action to Accept Expenditure Report

Chairman Darling gave the expenditure report for the period of January 1, 2022, through September 30, 2022. From the local funds annual budget of \$26,043.00, there is a balance of \$24,214.78 remaining. The cash fund balance is \$98,827.68 which includes \$244.33 in interest income. **Mr. Steven Sanchez made a motion to accept the expenditure report as presented. Commissioner David Fuentes seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

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

Mr. Louie Pena, General Manager for Brush Country Groundwater Management District

and GMA 16 member was recognized and reported for GMA 16. He informed the Group that he is serving today as an alternate for Mr. Armando Vela. Mr. Pena reported that GMA 16 submitted their Desired Future Conditions (DFC) to the TWDB and were informed they are Administratively Complete, and their next meeting is tentatively scheduled for January 2023.

Ms. Debbie Farmer, Representative of GMA 13, and General Manager of Winter Garden GCD was recognized and informed the Group that on July 22, the TWDB presented to Stakeholders their draft of the updated GMA 13 Groundwater Availability Model (GAM) for the southern portion of the Queen City, Sparta, and Carrizo-Wilcox aquifers. They have received written public comments on the draft GAM and requested and received an extension from TWDB to review the GAM and receive or make comments on the GAM. The deadline has been extended to October 31, 2022. Immediately following the Stakeholders Forum, the committee began their quarterly meeting. A Request for Qualifications for hydrogeological services for this cycle of planning has been issued, and the deadline for submittal is tomorrow, September 30, 2022. The next meeting has been scheduled for October 14, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. in Pleasanton.

D. Reports from Other Water Planning Groups

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

No reports were available at this time.

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

The list of plans received was in the meeting packet for review and included two recently submitted plans from Brush Country GCD and Cameron county ID #6.

Chairman Darling stated that in the last session, TWDB statutorily required Water Planning Groups to be more active regarding water conservation plans. Groups are supposed to review them to make recommendations to cities so that there are uniform requirements and citizens are better able to understand water conservation measures. Last year, Region M sent letters to the cities in our region asking that they review their plans, provide information, and enforce their provisions when the combined reservoir levels were close to 20%. He suggested the Group review the water conservation plan summaries and recommendations from the TWDB.

F. Report on Notices of Applications for Funding and Grants

No new notices have been received.

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

Commissioner David Fuentes informed the Group that at their recent meeting, the RWRAC received reports from all their partners, as well as the General Land Office (GLO). In addition, Texas A&M Kingsville gave a presentation on the Arroyo Sub-Watershed Delineation Database. Commissioner Fuentes announced that the RWRAC has a member vacancy in the Higher Education category and would appreciate the Group spreading the word to individuals in the education field.

7. Reports from Federal and State Agencies

A. TWDB

Mr. Kevin Smith was recognized and reported on the following items:

1. Interregional Planning Council

Mr. Smith informed the Group that the first meeting of the Interregional Planning Council is scheduled for November 9, 2022, in Austin with a virtual component.

2. Contract Amendment

Contract amendments will be routed for signature soon, and will include anticipated total project cost, full scope of work, and updated contract guidance documents.

3. New Water Supply and Flood Mitigation Information

Mr. Smith informed the Group that this information will be posted on the TWDB educational webpage at:

https://www.twdb.texas.gov/waterplanning/rwp/education/WaterSupply_and_FloodMitigationProjects.pdf

4. RWP Amendment Guidance

Mr. Smith provided links to amendment guidance/flowchart that have been updated and posted to the 2026 RWP document page. Mr. Smith's presentation is available for review on the Groups website meetings page at:

<http://www.riograndewaterplan.org/meetings>

B. IBWC

No report was available.

C. TCEQ Watermaster

Ms. Georgina Burmea was recognized and stated that she was filling in today for Mr. Jose Davila, Acting Watermaster. She provided the September 17, 2022, reservoir report which was included in the meeting packet.

8. Consideration and Action to Schedule Next Business Meeting

It was the consensus of the Group to schedule the next meeting for Wednesday, February 1, 2023, at 9:30 am.

9. Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Group, Chairman Darling adjourned the meeting at 10:33 a.m.



Mr. Jim Darling, Chair