

MINUTES

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

9:30 AM WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 2023

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 9:31 am and confirmed that a quorum of the voting membership was present.

The following voting members were in attendance:

Board Members

Jim Darling, Chairman
Sonny Hinojosa, Vice Chairman
Frank Schuster, Executive Committee
Glenn Jarvis
Tomas Rodriguez
Carlos Garza
Jaime Flores
Armando Vela
Dale Murden
Tom McLemore
Jorge Flores
Commissioner David Fuentes
Debbie Farmer
Robert Latham
Steven Sanchez

Category

River Authorities
Water Districts
Other
Other
Public
Small Business
Environmental
Groundwater Management Areas
Agriculture
Water Districts
Municipalities
Counties
Groundwater Management Areas
Electric Generating Utilities
Water Utilities

The following voting members were not in attendance:

Don McGhee, Secretary
Nick Benavides, Executive Committee
Judge Joe Rathmell
VACANT
Dr. Neal Wilkins

Industries
Small Business
Counties
Municipalities
Agriculture

2. Consideration and Action to Approve March 1, 2023, Meeting Minutes

Mr. Glenn Jarvis made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 1, 2023, meeting as presented. Mr. Jorge Flores seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

3. Hear Public Comment

Mr. David Earl, Director of Legacy Water Supply Corporation submitted his public comment in writing, however he was unavailable to attend the meeting to present it. Chairman Darling

informed the Group that the written comment was in regard to the Legacy Water Supply Corporation/Legacy Water Control and Improvement District Brackish Salination Project. The comment was made available in the meeting packet for review.

4. Consideration and Action to Solicit Nomination in Municipal Category

Chairman Darling stated that Mr. Riazul Mia has announced his retirement from the City of Laredo effective April 28, 2023. His retirement leaves a vacancy in the Municipal Category. The excerpt of the bylaws regarding the process to select new members was provided in the meeting packet and requires placing solicitations of nominations in the eight (8) newspapers throughout Region M. ***Mr. Tomas Rodriguez made a motion to solicit a nomination in the Municipal Category in the newspapers in the eight (8) county newspapers. Mr. Sonny Hinojosa seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

5. 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

Ms. Burke presented the overall schedule for the Plan Development noting that the planning process is now approximately halfway through.

2. Update and Discussion on Draft Population and Municipal Demand Projections from TWDB and WUG Feedback

Ms. Burke provided information on the county populations based on the 0.5 migration scenario, which the Group chose to use at the previous meeting. She then presented the feedback that the Water Use Groups (WUG) had provided on their population and municipal demand projections. Five (5) WUGs requested revisions to their projections, including East Rio Hondo WSC and Primera in Cameron County, McAllen in Hidalgo County, and Laredo and Webb County Water Utility in Webb County. The revisions were shown for each WUG and how their request impacts the county population. Ms. Burke presented the information for initial review and said the revision requests would continue to be adjusted and would be brought to the Group for final approval at the next business meeting.

3. Presentation and Initial Discussion of Task 4B – Identification of Infeasible WMS from 2021 Plan

Ms. Burke informed the Group that as required by SB 1511, the 85th Texas Legislature analysis must be completed prior to March 4, 2024, which is the due date for the Technical Memorandum. Planning Groups are to present results of analysis at the same public meeting where the Group also presents methodology for identifying potentially feasible WMSs in 2026 Plan. If infeasible WMS are identified, the Group must amend the 2021 Plan to remove invisible strategies, revise infeasible strategies to make them feasible, and/or incorporate new strategies. The Group's adopted amendments are due on June 4, 2024.

4. Initial Discussion of Anticipated Groundwater/Surface Water Modeling Subcommittee Activities and Request for Volunteers

Ms. Burke identified that the water availability and supply analysis task (Task 3) would be getting started soon. Part of that effort involves surface water modeling, including requesting a hydrologic variance that TWDB needs to approve. Activating the Groundwater/Surface Water Modeling subcommittee at this time would be appropriate.

Ms. Burke provided a list of tasks that the subcommittee would be assisting with and asked for volunteers. Currently the members of the Groundwater/Surface Water Modeling Subcommittee are Armando Vela, Sonny Hinojosa, and Tomas Rodriguez; however, Mr. Vela earlier announced his retirement; any other changes to subcommittee members can be made to that list. Mr. Jaime Flores and Mr. Steven Sanchez volunteered to serve on this subcommittee.

B. Financial Report

1. **Consideration and Action to Accept Expenditure Report**

Ms. Sarah Dierlam gave the Expenditure Report for the period of January 1, 2023, through May 31, 2023, and reported that from the local funds annual budget of \$22,650.00, there is a balance of \$18,926.33 remaining. The cash fund balance is \$98,037.26 which includes \$1,349.36 in interest income. **Commissioner David Fuentes made a motion to accept the expenditure report as presented. Mr. Carlos Garza 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

Ms. Debbie Farmer, Representative for GMA 13, provided a written report. Chairman Darling reported that on May 5, 2023, GMA 13 received a copy of the Groundwater Availability Model for the southern portion of the Queen City, Sparta, and Carrizo-Wilcox aquifers from the TWDB. The GAM can be found on the TWDB website at www.twdb.texas.gov/groundwater/models/download.asp. The next GMA 13 meeting is scheduled for Friday, September 15, 2023, in Pleasanton.

Mr. Armando Vela, Representative for GMA 16 was recognized and reported that they held a meeting on March 28 and that Mr. Perez with TWDB will have a new model next meeting on June 27. At that meeting Mr. Vela stated that he will announce his retirement and GMA 16 will discuss appointing a new representative to Region M.

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**

Mr. Tomas Rodriguez was recognized and reported that he attended the recent Region L meeting virtually. He stated that there was no major action to report, however, Region L has the same issues as Region M which is the accepting TWDB population demands going from the migration rate of 1.0 to 0.5.

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 recently submitted plans from Eagle Pass Water Works System, McAllen PUB and City of Primera.

F. Report on Notices of Applications for Funding and Grants

There was no new information to report.

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

Commissioner David Fuentes was recognized and informed the Group that the RWRAC meets quarterly, and the next meeting is scheduled on June 14. At that meeting the committee will discuss continued progress on the initiative to address the Regional Flood Planning Group which is part of the TWDB initiative to address regional flooding. The RWRAC also works with the Flood Infrastructure Funding (FIF), as well as the Freshwaters Study conducted by Dr. Fuller who provides regular updates.

6. Reports from Federal and State Agencies

A. TWDB

Mr. Kevin Smith was recognized announced that at yesterday's TWDB meeting, five (5) entities with Region M received grant and loan funding for mostly wastewater projects from the EDA program. That is the economically distressed areas program, and the total funding was about \$49 million. Mr. Smith next reported on the following items:

1. Reminder of Upcoming Critical Deadlines

Mr. Smith stated that Ms. Burke covered most of these deadlines and these critical dates are worth highlighting.

2. Revisions to Plumbing Code Savings

Mr. Smith noted that the revisions to the Plumbing Code somewhat overestimated what the *passive* savings would be, so the original draft demands increased.

3. Interregional Planning Council

Mr. Smith reported that the Planning Councils first met on November 9, 2022, again on March 9, 2023; and recently on May 30. The Councils have agreed on the outline of the report that they have submitted and talked about what priorities they would want to focus on from the last council, and they talked about the next meetings which will be in August and November.

4. Additional IPC Resource Materials Available (Provided 4/5/2023)

Mr. Smith provided the following list of resource materials: Status of 2021 RWPG policy recommendations, Active RWRPG committees, Information on TCEQ Memberships, voting membership costs, and liaison materials.

5. RWPG Additional Funding

Mr. Smith informed the Group that TWDB asked for an additional \$1.3 million per year for RWRPGs as part of the agency's Legislative Appropriations request. TWDB anticipates allocating the additional funding to Regions via a formula funding tool, as always. Details on the increased funding amount and allocations will be provided later this summer. Any increase in funding will be included in the upcoming contract amendments to increase the contract committed funds, and TWDB is anticipating

issuing the contract amendments in the fall of 2023. RWPGs will need to take action to authorize the fall contract amendments.

B. IBWC

No representative from the IBWC was available to provide a report, however, Chairman Darling stated that he would like to know when the IBWC will provide a report on the Mexican water debt and what efforts they will use next.

Mr. Sonny Hinojosa stated that we are now in the middle of a five-year water cycle and as of May 16 Mexico is in arrears by almost 550,000 acre-feet. IBWC Commissioner Maria Giner has been advocating with their Mexican counterparts of Comision Internacional de Limites y Aguas (CILA) and Comision Nacional del Agua (CONAGUA) asking the State of Chihuahua to consider releasing water because they do have it. And she is asking us to do our part by contacting our federal and state elected officials for their support in asking for the water to be released. Upon conclusion of discussion, **Mr. Sonny Hinojosa made a motion to authorize Region M Chairman Jim Darling to send letters to our federal and state legislators requesting for Mexico to release water as per the 1944 Treat. Mr. Tomas Rodriguez seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

C. TCEQ Watermaster

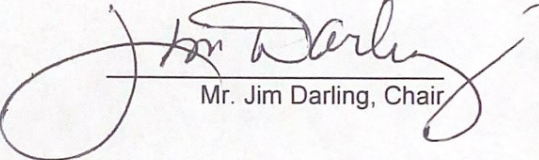
Ms. Georgina Burmea, Rio Grande Watermaster, was recognized and provided the May 27, 2023, detailed reservoir report which was included in the meeting packet.

7. Consideration and Action to Schedule Next Meeting on August 2, 2023

It was the consensus of the Group to schedule the next meeting for Wednesday, August 2, 2023, at 9:30 am.

8. Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Group, Chairman Darling adjourned the meeting at 11:08 a.m.


Mr. Jim Darling, Chair