

MINUTES

**RIO GRANDE REGIONAL WATER PLANNING GROUP (RGRWPG)
(REGION "M") MEETING - 11:00 A.M. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING RGRWA MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2009
LRGVDC TRANSPORTATION CENTER BOARD ROOM
510 S. PLEASANTVIEW DR., WESLACO, TX
PRESIDING: GLENN JARVIS, CHAIRMAN**

Chairman Glenn Jarvis called the meeting to order at 11:09 a.m. and announced that the meeting had been posted as required by statute, and then stated that a quorum was present. The following voting members were in attendance:

Board Members

Glenn Jarvis, Chairman
Jim Darling, Vice Chairman
Mary Lou Campbell, Secretary
John Bruciak
Charles W. Browning
Sonny Hinojosa
Sonia Kaniger
Donald K. McGhee
Tomas Rodriguez
Ray Prewett
Carlos Garza
Gary Whittington

Category

Other
River Authorities
Public
Municipalities
Water Utilities
Water Districts
Water Districts
Small Business
Municipalities
Agriculture
Small Business
Industries

The following members were not in attendance:

Robert E. Fulbright, Executive Committee
Roberto Gonzalez, Executive Committee
Judge Jose Aranda
Sonia Najera
Joe Guerra
James R. Matz
Commissioner John Wood

Agriculture
Municipalities
Counties
Environmental
Electric Generating Utility
Others
Counties

After calling the meeting to order Chairman Jarvis moved to item 2. – Consider Approval of the December 10, 2008 Meeting Minutes. **Mr. Jim Darling made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Ms. Sonia Kaniger seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

Chairman Jarvis then moved to item 3. – Hear Public Comment, there being none, the Chairman moved to item 4. – Consider Action RE: Resolution / Letter of Support for New IBWC Commissioner C.W. (Bill) Ruth. Chairman Jarvis stated that the purpose of this resolution is to express support for the commissioner on a long term basis. **Mr. Tomas Rodriguez made a motion for approval of the resolution as presented. Mr. John Bruciak seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

Upon conclusion of action on item 4, the Chairman moved to item 5. – Consider Action RE: Special Reports and recognized Mr. Jake White, NRS Consulting Engineers. Mr. White addressed item 5.A. – Classify Irrigation Districts as WUG / WWP and stated that the report on Task 2 is the same report that was presented at the last meeting. To complete this task staff is pending the submittal of a number of surveys from Irrigation Districts and plans to visit those sites in an effort to gather the required information. Mr. White noted that this outstanding item needed to be resolved by the end of January. However, in the event the surveys are not submitted, staff will perform an analysis in which the rate of urbanization will be based solely on the rate of change in irrigation water demand as supplied by the TWDB on a county-wide level. Chairman Jarvis commented that another option would be to use comparable figures from similar Irrigation Districts and recommended using that data or data from TWDB, whichever would be more accurate. The Chairman also suggested a revision to page 1, paragraph 2, line 5 referencing the drought “in the late 1990’s and early 2000’s” to “in the 1990’s and early 2000’s”, eliminating the word “late”. Mr. White indicated that those changes could be made. Upon conclusion of discussion **Ms. Sonia Kaniger made a motion to approve the draft report for the 3rd Round of Regional Water Planning: 1st Phase; Study 2: Classify Irrigation Districts as Water User Groups. Mr. Tomas Rodriguez seconded the motion, and upon a unanimous vote the motion carried.**

Chairman Jarvis then moved to item 5.B. – Analyze Results of Completed Demonstration Project. Mr. White stated that no comments were received on this item from the public or from the Group at the last meeting. Chairman Jarvis asked Mr. John Bruciak if he had reviewed this report. Mr. Bruciak indicated that the report was fine as presented. **Mr. Tomas Rodriguez made a motion for approval of the draft report for the 3rd Round of Regional Water Planning: 1st Phase; Study 3: Analyze Results of Demonstration Projects. Mr. Carlos Garza seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

Upon conclusion of action on item 5, Chairman Jarvis moved to item 6.A. - Status Report on Contract Activities:

- ◆ Item 6.A.1. – Status of Deliverables and Expenditures under Current Contract. Chairman Jarvis recognized Mr. Bill Norris, NRS Consulting Engineers. Mr. Norris stated that for the various task studies, staff has until the end of the month to finalize the reports and submit them to TWDB. Mr. Norris asked Ms. Connie Townsend, TWDB, if in the instance that Irrigation Districts submitted their surveys for Task 2 a couple of weeks into the following month, can the draft report be revised using the new data. Ms Townsend answered in the affirmative.

- ◆ Item 6.A.2. – Discussion RE: Unfunded Projects in Recent TWDB Applications. Chairman Jarvis recognized Mr. Ken Jones. Mr. Jones referenced a spreadsheet on how the unfunded projects were ranked by the Group and the attached corresponding description of each task. The Group determined that the San Felipe Springs project should receive priority consideration and is on the agenda to determine if the Group would like to pursue a separate funding application for this particular project and possibly delay activity on the other unfunded tasks until the next planning phase. Ms. Townsend informed the Group that if the San Felipe Springs item was rewritten as a Watershed Protection Study the Group could apply for the Facilities Planning Grant and because of the spring's existence in another Water Planning Region advised pursuit of joint participation with Region J. Mr. Jones asked if the Group should request a letter of support from Region J or offer them the opportunity to be a dual grant applicant. Ms. Townsend was uncertain what degree of cooperation the Group would need from Region J. Mr. Jones suggested NRS staff contact Region J to explore what type of support might be anticipated. The cost of this project is just under \$14,000, so a 50/50 grant match would leave a balance of less than \$7,000 to fund this project. The Region M Group currently has sufficient local funds that could be used to absorb this cost, or a request could be made to Region J or the RGRWA to share 50/50 for a contribution of less than \$3,500. Chairman Jarvis recommended pursuing funding possibilities with Region J. Mr. Norris stated he would be in the Del Rio region soon and would make contact with the Region J Group. At the conclusion of discussion it was the consensus of the Group to approach the San Felipe Springs project as a joint funding effort with the Region J Group. Mr. Jones suggested Mr. Norris and the NRS staff create a “fact” sheet for this project. Chairman Jarvis stated that Tasks 2.6 and 2.7 could be included in the next phase of planning because of population and census. Mr. White suggested reorganizing the information for the remaining unfunded tasks with the *names* of the tasks and do away with the number system. This revised report will be available for the next meeting.

Chairman Jarvis then moved to item 6.B. – Discussion RE: Status of Joint Groundwater Area Planning in GMA-16 Under HB 1763 (2005) and stated that there was no new information to report.

The Chairman then moved to item 6.C. – Reports RE: Other Water Planning Groups and stated that the other Groups were working on the same issues as the Region M Group.

Upon conclusion of the Status Reports, Chairman Jarvis moved to item 7. – Reports from Federal and State Agencies and recognized Ms. Connie Townsend for item 7.A. - TWDB. Ms.

Townsend informed the Group that the first contract amendment had been completed and sent to the LRGVDC office for signature. Ms. Townsend then verified with NRS staff that billing format issues and questions had been answered satisfactorily; Mr. Norris confirmed that the billing format had been accepted. At the last meeting Mr. Norris had asked if excess funds from Phase I could be used to fund Phase II projects; Ms. Townsend confirmed that those funds must remain separate and could not be transferred from one Phase to the next.

Upon conclusion of the report from TWDB Chairman Jarvis recognized Mr. Patrick Daize to address item 7.B. – IBWC. Mr. Daize provided the Board with the background of newly appointed Commissioner C.W. “Bill” Ruth, reported the status of the reservoirs and noted that normal conservation levels will be reestablished on May 1, 2009. Mr. Daize also provided status reports on the safety of dams, the Brownsville – Matamoros Weir, the Laredo – Nuevo Laredo Weir, and El Morillo Drain.

Upon conclusion of the report from IBWC, Chairman Jarvis recognized Mr. Erasmo Yarrito to report on item 7.C. – TCEQ Watermaster. Mr. Yarrito announced that there will be a Water Rights workshop on February 10, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. at the TCEQ office in Harlingen; this workshop will cover the sale of water rights exceeding 100 Acre Feet. Mr. Yarrito informed the Board that under the Border Initiative there will be three additional water monitoring stations installed along the Rio Grande to track salinity levels. TCEQ sent a survey form to all water right holders in an effort to find out how many acres each water right holder is irrigating and what crops are grown. The purpose of the survey is to compile the data and match it with salinity volumes and crops; TCEQ hopes to maintain the information on a quarterly basis and it should be posted to the TCEQ website by the end of the second quarter of 2009. Mr. Yarrito informed the Group that a response to Mr. Buddy Garcia’s letter to Mr. Thomas A. Shannon, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Western Affairs, U.S Department of State regarding Mexico’s latest Water Availability Model (WAM) has not yet been received. Chairman Jarvis suggested that this item as well as the Fort Quitman accounting issue remain on the agenda for follow-up and review.

Upon conclusion of the report from TCEQ Chairman Jarvis moved to item 7.D. – TPWD; however, Mr. Mark Lingo was not in attendance and no report was available. The Chairman then recognized Mr. Jay Johnson Castro from the Rio Grande International Study Center in Laredo, TX. Mr Johnson submitted a Public Comment form; however he arrived after the Public Comments section had been addressed. The Chairman agreed to recognize the visitors and Mr. Johnson Castro introduced himself and Dr. Jim Earhart and stated that they came to the meeting to seek networking opportunities and offered to join forces to play a role in the stewardship of the Rio Grande.

Upon conclusion of the Public Comments, the Chairman then moved to item 8 – Discussion and Possible Action RE: Meeting Schedule. It was the consensus of the Group to not meet in February and scheduled the next meeting for March 4, 2009.

The Chairman then addressed an item not on the agenda and recognized Mr. Jones. Mr. Jones

stated that the draft of Resolution 2009-02 was not completed in time to make the seventy-two hour deadline for posting with the Secretary of State; however the Executive Committee could act on it and add it to the March agenda for ratification. This resolution summarizes the past authorized appropriations supporting Irrigation District improvement projects and addresses the continued need for additional appropriations for those projects. Mr. Ray Prewett suggested additional verbiage to paragraph two somewhat to the affect of "the Region M State Approved Water Supply Plan indicates a continued shortfall in meeting the Irrigation Water supply needs through the year 2060". Upon conclusion of discussion Ms. Mary Lou Campbell made a motion for approval of the resolution with the suggested revision. Mr. Jim Darling seconded the motion. This item will be on the March agenda for ratification.

There being no further business to come before the Group the meeting was adjourned at 12:34 p.m.

Glenn Jarvis, Chairman

Mary Lou Campbell, Secretary