

MINUTES

**RIO GRANDE REGIONAL WATER PLANNING GROUP (RGRWPG)
(REGION "M") MEETING - 11:00 A.M. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING RGRWA MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 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 11:00 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
Robert E. Fulbright, Executive Committee
John Bruciak
Sonia Najera
Charles W. Browning
Joe Guerra
Sonny Hinojosa
Sonia Kaniger
James R. Matz
Donald K. McGhee
Tomas Rodriguez
Ray Prewett
Carlos Garza
Gary Whittington
Commissioner John Wood

Category

Other
River Authorities
Public
Agriculture
Municipalities
Environmental
Water Utilities
Electric Generating Utility
Water Districts
Water Districts
Others
Small Business
Municipalities
Agriculture
Small Business
Industries
Counties

The following members were not in attendance:

Roberto Gonzalez, Executive Committee
Judge Jose Aranda

Municipalities
Counties

After calling the meeting to order Chairman Jarvis moved to item 2. – Consider Approval of the January 7, 2009 Meeting Minutes. ***Mr. Jim Darling made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Tomas Rodriguez 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. – Ratify Executive Committee Action RE: Resolution 2009-02 in Support of Irrigation Infrastructure Projects. **Mr. James Matz made a motion to ratify the Executive Committee Action. Ms. Mary Lou Campbell seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

Upon conclusion of action on item 4, the Chairman moved to item 5. – Election of Officers and Executive Committee. Currently serving are Mr. Glenn Jarvis, Chairman; Mr. Jim Darling, Vice Chairman; Ms. Mary Lou Campbell Secretary; Mr. Robert Fulbright and Mr. Roberto Gonzalez. **Mr. Ray Prewett made a motion to re-elect the same slate of officers. Ms. Sonia Kaniger seconded the motion, and upon a unanimous vote the motion carried.**

Upon conclusion of action on item 5, Chairman Jarvis moved to item 6. – Presentation RE: Status on Arundo donax Project and recognized Dr. John Goolsby. Dr. Goolsby then proceeded with a presentation updating the Group on the status of the Arundo donax Project. Dr. Goolsby stated that USDA staff were approximately six weeks away from the release of the first bio-control agent and provided details on the research and experimentation involved in this project.

At the conclusion of the presentation Chairman Jarvis asked if control of Arundo donax was included in the Regional Water Plan, and stated it needed to be mention as part of noxious weed control, and/or it could be a Water Management Strategy. The Chairman suggested the Group find out if there was a way Region M could support this program. Dr. Goolsby stated that support from Groups such as Region M was critical to this program. Mr. Ray Prewett suggested Dr. Goolsby make this presentation to Region E upriver in the El Paso area. Dr. Goolsby agreed and stated he would appreciate the opportunity to talk to the Region E Group. No action needed.

The Chairman then took item 8.B. out of order as Mr. Patrick Daize requested to give his report early due to a scheduling conflict. Mr. Daize reported on Stimulus Funds, Safety of Dams, Laredo-Nuevo Laredo Weir, El Morillo Drain, Mexico's Water Availability Model and the 120th Anniversary of IBWC. Chairman Jarvis brought the Groups attention to a letter he received from US IBWC Commissioner Bill Ruth dated February 23, 2009 and noted the paragraph regarding the water accounting procedure used by both sections of the USIBWC. Chairman Jarvis stated that the US IBWC indicated that they may use portions of the Brandes Report and the Group intended to keep this item on the agenda to see which portions the Commission may want to utilize in the future.

The letter also addressed the Fort Quitman water division issue and stated that the IBWC disagreed with the Group's position on this matter. Chairman Jarvis stated that he met with Mr. Herman Settemeyer, TCEQ on this issue and they researched historical data to support the Group's position; the IBWC seemed to be open to discussion and the Group will keep this item on the agenda.

Mr. James Matz noted that the letter referred to a report on the proposed Mexican

Aqueduct from Falcon dam to Matamoros, Tamaulipas and asked about that report. Chairman Jarvis had the only copy available, and requested staff to distribute copies to the Group via email. The Chairman noted the report was in Spanish with an English translation in the back. At the conclusion of discussion **Mr. Ray Prewett made a motion to contact Commissioner Bill Ruth regarding the status of the “Acueducto Falcon-Matamoros” project and its implications to the Region M area. Mr. Tomas Rodriguez seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

Chairman Jarvis next moved to item 7. - Status Reports and recognized Mr. Jake White, NRS.

A. Report on TWDB Contract Activities

1. Status of Deliverables and Expenditures under Current Contract

Mr. White stated that reports for Tasks #2 and #3 were submitted to TWDB at the end of January and are currently being reviewed by the Texas Water Development Board. They are still considered “draft” reports and as such, modifications can still be made. Mr. White noted a change on Task #2 from the draft presented in January to Water Demand from Irrigation Districts. Because not all Irrigation Districts returned a completed survey form NRS sent them, aerial mapping from adjacent Irrigation Districts was used to determine the type of urbanization that may be in place and transferred that information to the Irrigation Districts lacking the survey data.

Chairman Jarvis noted that if the data from all the Irrigation Districts was totaled, the percentage of shortage would remain the same. Mr. White agreed and stated that what that implies is the number would equal the supply that was in the WAM run. Chairman Jarvis noted that on page 1, paragraph 2, line 5, the word “late”, referring to the drought of the 1990’s had not been removed as previously requested. Ms. Sonia Kaniger noted on page 1, paragraph 3, line 3, “water rates” should be “water rights”. Mr. White stated that those changes would be made. Chairman Jarvis asked what were the next steps regarding Task #2 with Irrigation Districts as Water User Groups. Mr. White stated that Irrigation Districts would be included in the next scope of work. Staff was finalizing the first phase, which included these special studies and in the second phase, Irrigation Districts as Water User Groups would be in the actual Regional Water Plan. The Chairman also noted that some of the Irrigation Districts in Task #2 are incorrectly named. Mr. White stated that the common names will be replaced with the proper names.

2. Discussion RE: Unfunded Projects in Recent TWDB Application

a. Analyze Potential Impact of Increased Groundwater Withdrawal from San Felipe Springs

The Chairman stated that at the last meeting the Group decided to make an effort to work with Region J and that initial contact was going to be made informally. Mr. White stated that NRS staff made a “cold call” to Region J but was unable to make contact, so no progress has been made as of yet. Chairman Jarvis stated that Ms. Townsend made a comment at the last meeting that Region M could work jointly with Region J if the San Felipe Springs item was rewritten as a Watershed Protection Study, then the Group could apply for the Facilities Planning Grant. The primary goal of this item is to determine what impact of groundwater development in and around those springs has on the river; however, the Region J Group may not be amenable to that notion. It was the consensus of the Group for NRS staff to continue efforts to contact Region J on this matter.

- B. Discussion RE: Status of Joint Groundwater Area Planning in GMA-16 Under HB 1763 (2005). Mr. Jarvis stated the in December GMA-16 decided to delay requesting the final GAM run until they received input from land owners and interested parties in Brooks, Jim Hogg, Hidalgo and Jim Wells county, and have decided to set the BFC based on the amount of draw down in the aquifer by county. The GAM run has been requested and because of scheduling by the TWDB will probably be completed by the middle of June.
- C. Discussion of IBWC Water Accounting at Fort Quitman
IBWC has determined that staff will continue their current practice of dividing the water 50/50 at Fort Quitman; however, further research is being pursued.
- D. Report RE: Other Water Planning Groups
 - 1. Reports from Liaisons with Regions E, J, L, & N
Chairman Jarvis stated that the other Water Planning Groups were involved in the same type of activity as the Region M Group.

Upon conclusion of the Status Reports, Chairman Jarvis moved to item 8. – Reports from Federal and State Agencies

- A. TWDB
Chairman Jarvis recognized Ms. Connie Townsend. Ms. Townsend referenced a letter sent to the Chairman regarding the Group’s suggestion to allow comments on the application review process and stated that this suggestion has gotten a favorable response from TWDB staff. Ms. Townsend informed the Group that the Federal Stimulus Package – American Recovery & Reinvestment Act passed February 2, 2009 would have \$340 million total funds, with \$179 million for waste water projects and \$160 million for water projects, and stated more information on this subject could be found under the “Hot Topics” tab on the TWDB web site. Mr. Prewett stated a newspaper reported that some funds would be delegated to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for pending Irrigation District projects, but ultimately

was not included in the final stimulus bill. The Chairman commented that in addition to providing irrigation water, irrigation districts also deliver municipal water and are the raw water suppliers for cities. The Group may want to consider focusing more on this perspective. Mr. Prewett stated that this Group has taken steps to classify Irrigation Districts as Water User Groups, and it should be made clear that they are identified not just for irrigation purposes. The Chairman referenced the introduction to Task #2: Classify Irrigation Districts as Water User Groups in the 3rd Round of Regional Planning: 1st Phase that states "Irrigation Districts deliver the majority of raw water for municipal users" and suggested making that a more powerful statement such as: "Irrigation Districts *are* the raw water suppliers for municipal users".

Regarding Steam-Electric water demand projections, Ms. Townsend stated that the Group would need to make a decision soon on what projections they wished to use and this item would need to be included in an agenda for consideration/action at a regular meeting.

Ms. Townsend stated that Region M was identified as a region that was growing faster than anticipated and population revisions could be submitted if so desired; Ms. Townsend recommended the Group act soon to initiate this process. Ms. Townsend recommended the Group send the "draft" population projections to the TWDB Research and Analysis staff prior to acting on it to ensure no further revisions would be needed and to prevent the need for an extra public meeting.

B. IBWC

This item was addressed earlier in the agenda.

C. TCEQ

Chairman Jarvis recognized Mr. Erasmo Yarrito. Mr. Yarrito stated that the 5 year cycle report and the reservoir level report were in the folders and proceeded to summarize those reports; Mr. Yarrito added that the Mexican reservoir levels were in good shape. Mr. Yarrito reported on the TCEQ Workshop for Water Rights holders; informed the Board that although the reservoirs are currently full, levels were dropping and no charge water will most likely cease in the next week or so. Mr. Yarrito stated that IBWC was hosting a Town Meeting in Presidio, TX regarding the damage cause by the levee breach after Hurricane Dolly and planned on attending that meeting, a report on that discussion will be provided at the next meeting.

1. Status of Water Availability Model (WAM) for Mexico

Mr. Yarrito turned the floor over to Mr. Herman Settemeyer for this report. Mr. Settemeyer stated that it is known that Mexico has a WAM, although agencies from the U.S. have not yet seen it. Regardless what the Mexican

WAM states, Mexico must comply with the treaty.

2. Status of Study of Irrigated Acres and Crops Grown

Mr. Yarrito informed the Group that staff was in the process of gathering information on this topic and getting good response. Staff anticipates having this information available in approximately 2 weeks for posting on their website.

D. TPWD

No representative from TPWD was in attendance and no report was available.

Upon conclusion of reports the Chairman then moved to item 9 – Discussion and Possible Action RE: Meeting Schedule. It was the consensus of the Group to schedule the next meeting for April 1, 2009.

Chairman Jarvis then moved to item 10. – New or Old Business and recognized Ms. Sonia Kaniger who reported on Texas Water Day in Washington D.C. Ms. Kaniger informed the Group that approximately 100 people attended this event and the Valley delegation met with Sen. Hutchison, and Representatives Grace Napolitano and Silvestre Reyes.

There being no further business to come before the Group the meeting was adjourned at 1:28 p.m.

Glenn Jarvis, Chairman

Mary Lou Campbell, Secretary