

MINUTES

**RIO GRANDE REGIONAL WATER PLANNING GROUP (RGRWPG) (REGION "M")
MEETING at 10:30 A.M. – WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 21, 2007
MISSION CITY HALL – COMMISSIONERS MEETING ROOM
1201 E. 8TH STREET – MISSION, TEXAS**

PRESIDING: GLENN JARVIS, CHAIRMAN

Chairman Glenn Jarvis called the meeting to order at 10:48 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
Robert E. Fulbright, Executive Committee
John Bruciak
Charles W. Browning
Joe Guerra
Sonny Hinojosa
James R. Matz
Donald K. McGee
Gary Whittington

Category

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

The following members were not in attendance:

Mary Lou Campbell, Secretary
Roberto Gonzalez, Executive Committee
Judge Jose Aranda
Sonia Najera
Sonia Kaniger,
Adrian Montemayor
Ray Prewett
Xavier Villarreal
Commissioner John Wood

Public
Municipalities
Counties
Environmental
Water Districts
Municipalities
Agriculture
Small Business
Counties

After calling the meeting to order Chairman Jarvis moved to item 2. – Consider Approval of the June 20, 2007 Meeting Minutes. **Mr. Jim Darling made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Donald McGee seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

Upon conclusion of action on item 2, the Chairman moved to item 3. – Hear Public Comment. As there were no Public Comments the Chairman then moved to item 4. – Consider Approval RE: Letter of Support for Hidalgo County Irrigation District #2 (HCID#2) Pipeline Improvement

Projects as part of Border Environment Cooperation Commission's (BECC) Public Participation Plan. Mr. Sonny Hinojosa was recognized and informed the Group that HCID #2 proposed to improve its infrastructure by replacing the existing mortar-joint concrete pipe with flexible-joint reinforced concrete pipe. This improvement was estimated to provide an energy savings of over 55,000 kwh and reduce seepage losses. Upon conclusion of discussion **Mr. Robert Fulbright made a motion for approval of this letter of support. 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 agenda item 5. – Consider Filling Voting Member Vacancy RE: Environmental Category. Mr. Ken Jones was recognized and informed the Board that after advertising in the eight counties the Region M Group encompasses, one nomination was submitted: Ms. Sonia Najera of The Nature Conservancy. According to the Region M By-laws and TWDB rules Ms. Najera was eligible to fill the vacant Environmental Category seat; the Executive Committee considered her nomination and recommended her appointment. Upon conclusion of discussion, **Mr. John Bruciak made a motion to approve Ms. Sonia Najera to fill the Voting Member Vacancy in the Environmental Category. Mr. James Matz seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

The Chairman then moved to item 6. – Reports from Federal and State Agencies.

Regarding item 6.A. – TWDB, Ms. Kathleen Ligon was recognized and informed the Group that information regarding the upcoming Water Summit 2007 was available on the TWDB website and that she would forward information to Region M Members. Ms. Ligon stated that there was over \$700,000,000 available for projects in the Water Infrastructure Fund. Chairman Jarvis asked what types of projects qualified for the Water Infrastructure Fund. Ms. Ligon stated that any projects in the State Water Plan would qualify. Mr. John Bruciak stated that he had looked up the rules on the Water Infrastructure Fund and did not see the Rio Grande Regional Water Authority or the Southmost Regional Water Authority listed along with all the other river authorities and water authorities. Mr. Bruciak suggested this oversight could be addressed in the comments period. Ms. Ligon then informed the Group that a TWDB Marketing Representative may be available to present available programs to either the Rio Grande Regional Water Authority (RGRWA) or the next Region M Meeting.

Regarding item 6.A.1. – Request for Input RE: June 2007 TWDB Correspondence, it was the consensus of the Group that, if needed, the Executive Committee meet prior to the next Region M meeting to discuss the Group's responses to the four feed back questions posed in this letter and to take action on this item at the next meeting.

Regarding item 6.B. – IBWC, Commissioner Carlos Marin was unable to attend; however, Mr. Rick Reyes was recognized and gave the IBWC report in his stead. At the conclusion of Mr. Reyes' report Mr Jim Darling stated that coordination between IBWC, the counties and the cities was needed regarding water drainage/flood management.

Regarding item 6.C. – TCEQ Water Master, Mr. Carlos Rubinstein was recognized and informed the Group that the Governor's Conference was scheduled for the following week, and that three joint declarations had been created. One declaration recommended continued

funding for IBWC to continue to upgrade and promote repairs to enhance the levee system. Another declaration recommended continued funding with NAD Bank to expedite plan approval for water conservation projects, and the third was to define drought. Mr. Rubinstein was pleased that wording was added to define extraordinary drought as it relates to § 2 article 4 of the treaty defined as it impacts the United States. Chairman Jarvis asked Mr. Rubinstein about potential support from the Watermaster's office as it related to the current planning the Group was doing; in particular the water management project Mr. Bob Brandes was working on. Mr. Rubinstein replied that he would welcome the opportunity and that there was plenty of time, as the deadline wasn't until December. At the conclusion of Mr. Rubinstein's report, Mr. Ed Vela read the reservoir level report.

Regarding item 6.D. – TPWD, Mr. Mark Lingo was recognized and stated that in addition to the issues previously mentioned he would like the Group to keep environmental flows in mind when considering Water Management.

Upon conclusion of item 6 the Chairman moved to item 7. – Presentation RE: Status of Arroyo Colorado Water Shed Project and recognized Ms. Laura De La Garza. Ms. De La Garza introduced Ms. Amy Rangel as the new grant writer for the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Partnership. Ms. De La Garza then informed the Group that the Partnership was working on three CMP grant applications. The first was for the City of Rio Hondo nature center for outreach and education which included a fishing pier, a pavilion and a kiosk; the second was for a feasibility/site suitability study for regional wetlands; and the third was for pesticide education. Ms. De La Garza also stated that the Partnership was working on a drainage ditch demonstration project, which pertained to suitable plants for drainage ditches. Ms. De La Garza stated that staff had recently completed a 3' X 5' physical watershed model that would be used to demonstrate how water flows in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

Upon conclusion of the presentation Chairman Jarvis moved to item 8. – Discussion of Groundwater Management Area 16 – Groundwater Availability Numbers. Chairman Jarvis stated that there had been changes in the area of Groundwater Management. Legislation had recently required each Groundwater Conservation District in the state to define the desired future conditions of their aquifer. As a part of the overall process the legislature in 2002 directed the Texas Water Development Board to designate the Groundwater Management Area boundaries. Mr. Jake White then distributed maps to the Group that delineated the Groundwater Management Areas and the Groundwater Conservation Districts. There were 16 Groundwater Management Areas, defined as areas in which groundwater should be managed, as a part of that, certain critical management areas were identified that were needed in planning. Heretofore the Texas Regional Water Planning Groups had determined their own numbers and for planning purposes controlled the amount of available groundwater. Mr. Jake White added that the Groundwater Management Areas would be responsible for developing numbers called "managed available groundwater". They would determine the actual amount of groundwater availability based on the amount of draw-down they authorize. If there was a Groundwater Conservation District in each of the Groundwater Management Areas these Conservation Districts must abide by the values put forth by the Ground Water Management Areas. There were two Groundwater Conservation Districts in the Region M area; both were in Groundwater Management Area 16. For every Groundwater user in these areas, if they exceed the amount of water put forth by the Groundwater Management Areas, there will be no repercussions; however, for planning purposes, in the Region M Plan, this Group must abide by

the amount the Groundwater Management Area determines. SB 1763 said Groundwater Districts had priority over Planning Groups regarding groundwater availability. It is important for this Group, as well as the groundwater users, to at least be involved in the discussions regarding what the availability will be in the Region M area.

Chairman Jarvis then moved to item 9. – Status Reports. Regarding item 9.A. – Report on Current TWDB Contract Activities and recognized Mr. Jake White, NRS Consulting Engineers, who introduced Mr. Mike Irlbeck, new engineer to NRS. Mr. White went over the Action Plan for the contract activities and informed the Group that staff was finalizing the contract with R.J. Brandes Co. on water right management evaluation and work on the scope would soon begin. Mr. White suggested that Mr. Brandes should attend the next Region M Group meeting to finalize details. Regarding the next step Classify Irrigation Districts as WUGs or WWPs, Mr. White stated that staff had plans to do the following:

- Set up meetings with the Irrigation District General Managers and Texas A&M to discuss the extent of existing information related to mapping, urbanization, conveyance system efficiencies, and water supply/demand information.
- Compile existing maps and create a master map showing Irrigation District Locations, conveyance system, and major delivery points. The major goal here is to avoid redoing existing work.
- Evaluate urbanization by comparing historic and present aerial maps. Overlaying these maps will allow for the evaluation of urbanization in terms of a reduction in irrigable acres.
- Acquire urbanization records from the Irrigation Districts.
- Obtain and evaluate census data related to population growth. Compare this information to previously acquired urbanization records and the mapping results.
- Compare the Irrigation District water supply/demand information with previously calculated water supply/demand data from the TWDB.
- Evaluate historical water allocations and individual district usage.
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- Evaluate historical water allocations and individual district usage.
- Compare historical rainfall data and reservoir storage capacities with water allocations.
- Discuss findings with the Region M Planning Group and determine the best method for quantifying Irrigation District water supply and demand.

Regarding the last item of the action plan, Analyze Results of Completed Demonstration Projects, following are the steps to be taken:

- Set up meetings with Harlingen Irrigation District and Delta Lake Irrigation District to discuss their demonstration projects.
- Prepare a summary of the results and how the work they are doing will benefit the Region.
- Set up meetings with Brownsville PUB to discuss preliminary results of the Seawater RO Demonstration Project.
- Prepare a summary of the results and how the work they are doing will benefit the Region.

Chairman Jarvis reminded the Group that there was \$35,000 to accomplish the Surface water

right management evaluation, \$45,000 to Classify Irrigation Districts as WUGs or WWPs, and \$28,000 to Analyze Results of Completed Demonstration Projects because TWDB cut half of the funding to some projects.

Upon conclusion of Mr. White's report Chairman Jarvis moved to item 9.B. – Reports from Liaisons with Region E, J, L & N. The Chairman stated that the other Groups were also working on surveys, the scope of work for the next round and working in special projects, the same as this Group, and that the TWDB provided a summary of actions taken by each group in its last newsletter.

The Chairman then moved to item 10 – Discussion and Possible Action RE: Meeting Schedule. Upon conclusion of discussion it was the consensus of the Board that the next meeting would be scheduled for 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, November 8, 2007.

Chairman Jarvis then moved to item 11 – New or Old Business. Mr. Bob Fulbright was recognized and opened discussion regarding SB 1870. Mr. Fulbright stated that he had received information on this bill from the cattleman's association and that after review, the association's legal staff was concerned about the striking of the term "navigable waters of the United States" and replacing it with just "waters of the United States" which was defined as all water subject to the ebb and flow of the tide and included prairie pot holes and wet meadows. Unfortunately the Group would not have time to take any action on this item as it would probably be voted on in the Senate by the next meeting. However, Mr. Fulbright was asked to provide an update on this for the next meeting.

As there was no further business to discuss the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 12:46 p.m.

Glenn Jarvis, Chairman

Mary Lou Campbell, Secretary