

MINUTES

MEETING OF THE RIO GRANDE REGIONAL WATER PLANNING GROUP (RGRWPG) (REGION "M")

9:30 A.M. WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2017

LRGVDC MAIN CAMPUS – KEN JONES EXECUTIVE BOARD ROOM
301 W. RAILROAD STREET, WESLACO, TX
PRESIDING: SECRETARY DONALD MCGHEE, CHAIRMAN

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairman Tomas Rodriguez was unable to attend and Secretary Donald McGhee presided in his stead. Chairman McGhee called the meeting to order at 9.32 a.m. and announced that the meeting had been posted as required by statute. A quorum of the voting membership was not yet present; however a quorum was anticipated and it was the consensus of those present to hear non-action items until a quorum was attained. A quorum was attained at 10:01 a.m.

The following voting members were in attendance:

<u>Board Members</u>	<u>Category</u>
Donald McGhee, Secretary	Industries
Frank Schuster, Executive Committee	Other
Nick Benavides, Executive Committee	Small Business
Glenn Jarvis	Other
John Bruciak	Municipalities
Dennis Goldsberry	Water Utility
Jorge Barrera	Municipalities
Jaime Flores	Environmental
Armando Vela	Groundwater Management Area
Judge Humberto Gonzalez	Counties
Riazul Mia	Municipalities

The following members were not in attendance:

Tomas Rodriguez, Chairman	Public
Sonny Hinojosa, Vice Chairman	Water Districts
Sonia Lambert	Water Districts
Mayor Jim Darling	River Authorities
Carlos Garza	Small Business
Judge Joe Rathmell	Counties
Robert Pena, Jr.	Electric Generating Utility
Dale Murden	Agriculture
Dr. Neal Wilkins	Agriculture

The following items are reported in the order in which they were heard.

3. Hear Public Comment

Mr. Jaime Flores was recognized and informed the Group that the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Partnership was currently taking public comments on the recently completed Arroyo Colorado Protection Plan.

8. Discussion and Possible Action RE: Goldwater Project

Mr. Kip Averitt was recognized and stated that The Goldwater Project is directly related to water conservation. There are a variety of strategies throughout the 16 Texas Regional Water Planning

Groups (RWPG) to save water over the next 50 years. Conservation however has not been quantified, so the TWDB released a request for proposals for research on conservation strategies so that RWPGs have a better understanding of the potential for conservation. One of the goals of this project is to ensure a uniform methodology for measuring conservation in all regions that also accounts for unique situations among utilities. No action needed.

9. Presentation on Brackish Desalination – LRGV Groundwater Transport Model

Dr. Bill Hutchison was recognized and gave a presentation that provided a status report on the LRGV Groundwater Transport Model. He explained that this model is needed in order to evaluate the following: groundwater level and quality changes, impacts to surface water, and the potential for subsidence. He explained the conceptual model and went over the Numerical Model Development. The next steps in this project are to complete the model, which will include model sensitivity and uncertainty evaluation, and the model prediction using a desalination plant simulation. No action needed.

The record reflects that a quorum of voting members has now been attained and action items may be addressed.

2. Consider Approval RE: Minutes of October 5, 2016 Meeting

Mr. Nick Benavides made a motion to approve the minutes of October 5, 2016 as presented. Mr. Riazul Mia seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

4. Consider Ratification of Executive Committee Action RE: Letter of Support to North Alamo Water Supply Corporation

Chairman McGhee summarized the request for the Group and recognized Mr. Jorge Arroyo, Engineer for Freese and Nichols. Mr. Arroyo provided more detail on the Feasibility Study of Energy Efficient Methods for Desalinating Brackish Groundwater Desalination, the project for which they requested support. *Mr. Jorge Barrera made a motion to ratify Executive Committee action on the letter of support to North Alamo Water Supply Corporation. Mr. Glenn Jarvis seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.*

5. Consider Petitions from Voting Members for Additional Terms

Mr. Dennis Goldsberry made a motion to approve petitions by Mr. Glenn Jarvis, Mr. Sonny Hinojosa, and Mr. John Bruciak for additional terms of service to the Region M Group. Mr. Jorge Barrera seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

6. Election of Officers and Executive Committee

Mr. Nick Benavides made a motion to nominate the same slate of officers to serve in 2017 as served in 2016:

Mr. Tomas Rodriguez as Chair

Mr. Sonny Hinojosa as Vice Chair

Mr. Donald McGhee as Secretary

Mr. Frank Schuster as Member-at-Large

Mr. Nick Benavides as Member-at-large

Mr. Glenn Jarvis seconded the nominations.

Mr. Jorge Barrera made a motion to elect the slate of officers as nominated. Mr. Nick Benavides seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried.

7. Discussion and Possible Action RE: Water Conservation Advisory Council Final Draft of Legislative Report

Chairman McGhee noted that the document in its entirety was available for review in the online packet

and is presented to the group for information purposes only; no action needed.

10. Status Reports

A. Presentation of Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) Rio Grande Carrizo Cane Program

Mr. Aaron Wendt was recognized and began his presentation by reminding the Group that he made the initial presentation on this program in September 2015 when it had been authorized by the legislature. He gave a brief summary of Carrizo Cane as an introduced species and the myriad of negative impacts it has had along the Rio Grande. Mr. Wendt informed the Group that the purpose for this program is specifically for border security, however, his team will also document the ecological benefits achieved by controlling the cane. He stated that this is a voluntary program on the part of the landowners since the statute does not require their participation. However the key to the success of this program is the outreaching to landowners, explaining the benefits of the program, and continued control on their part. Continued control is important because of the lack of control on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande as well as from non-participating landowners upstream.

B. Follow-up and Discussion on Sierra Club Workshop

No new information was available at this time.

C. Status on Current TWDB Contract Activities

Ms. Sara Eatman, Black & Veatch, was recognized and gave a presentation on the status of the 2021 Regional Water Plan.

1. Draft Population and Demand Projections

Ms. Eatman explained that in the previous plans, city boundaries were used to define Water User Groups (WUGs); but in the 2021 Plan, WUGs will be redefined by utility service areas rather than municipal boundaries. She also explained the population projections in relation to the WUG redefinition.

2. Draft Non-Population Demand Projection Methodologies

Ms. Eatman explained that Mining demands are expected to be the same as in the previous Plan, and she went over the projections for other non-municipal demand projection methodologies such as irrigation, manufacturing, steam-electric, and livestock.

3. Request for Application (RFA) for TWDB Funding

Ms. Eatman stated that the application for the next portion of Regional Planning Funding has been prepared and posted, and the Region M application will be submitted prior to the February 21, 2017 deadline.

At 11:43 a.m. Chairman McGhee called for a recess; regular session resumed at 11:55 am.

D. Financial Report

Ms. Marcie Oviedo, LRGVDC Director of Planning & Services was recognized to address the following items:

1. Consider Approval of 2017 Annual Budget

Ms. Oviedo noted that since the Group was able to stay within the 2016 Annual Budget of \$17,250.00, she recommends using the same amounts for the 2017 Annual Budget. The draft budget she presented also includes the revenue and expenditure line items. The current budget balance is \$6,147.47, and the amount of currently available funds is \$80,091.89. Upon conclusion of the financial report Chairman McGhee called for a motion to approve. ***Mr. Riazul Mia made a motion to approve both the 2017 Annual Budget and the financial report as presented. Mr. Jorge Barrera seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

2. Demonstration and Discussion of Region M Website, riograndewaterplan.org

Ms. Oviedo noted that riograndewaterplan.org, has been brought up to date technologically by Pena Designs. She then opened the site up on the big screens for the Group to see. She demonstrated the various new features to familiarize the Group and thanked those who provided input on recommended updates. Ms. Connie Townsend, TWDB, suggested adding a place to view the progress of the DRAFT 2021 Regional Water Plan along with the previous plans. No action needed.

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

Mr. Armando Vela informed the Group that at their January 17 meeting GMA 16 approved their Desired Future Conditions (DFC), and now it is up to the local water districts to consider said DFC and take action on them.

F. Discussion of IBWC Water Accounting at Fort Quitman

There was no new information to report at this time.

G. No Charge Releases from the San Juan River

Mr. Glenn Jarvis informed the Group that this case is still pending and there is no new information to report.

H. Reports RE: Other Water Planning Groups

1. Reports from Liaisons with Regions: Region E, Glenn Jarvis; Region J, Chairman Tomas Rodriguez; Region L, Don McGhee; and Region N, Judge Humberto Gonzalez

Mr. Carl Schwing from Region J was in attendance, and Chairman McGhee welcomed him on behalf of the Group.

I. Reports on Water Conservation Plans and Drought Management Plans Filed with Region

No new plans have been received since the last meeting.

J. Report on Notices of Applications for Funding and Grants

No new notices have been received since the last meeting.

However, Mr. Glenn Jarvis asked Ms. Townsend if the Group could receive notification of projects that have been funded by the TWDB because these are the projects for which the Group creates WMS. He noted that with the implementation of the State Water Infrastructure Fund for Texas (SWIFT) this notification is relevant since each SWIFT funded project must be consistent with the Regional Water Plan.

Ms. Townsend informed the Group that after their board meetings the TWDB sends a press release to stakeholders via email with a list of projects that had been approved for funding. However, RWPGs are not included in that list, but she will look into including the Group to meet Mr. Jarvis' suggestion.

K. Status of Studies and Activities on Rio Grande Basin Groundwater Interaction with Surface Water

There is no new information on this study.

11. Reports from Federal and State Agencies

A. TWDB

1. Presentation on Summary of 2016 Regional Water Planning Rules Revisions

Ms. Townsend was recognized and began a presentation entitled "Texas Regional Water

Planning, Update on Revised 31 Texas Administrative Rules Chapter 357". She informed the Group that the purpose of the 2016 rule revisions is to implement legislative changes, address stakeholder concerns, improve the planning process, increase flexibility in planning requirements, reduce certain unessential reporting requirements, and to clarify rules and refine definitions.

Below is a list of the revised rules Ms. Townsend went over and their TAC section number for reference:

- Revised Water User Group (WUG) Definition - §357.10(19)
- Definitions of Wholesale Water Provider (WWP) and Major Water Provider (MWP) - §357.10(42) and §357.10(19)
- Water Management Strategy Projects (WMSP) and Prioritization of Projects - §357.10(39) and §357.46
- Public Notice Revisions - §357.21
- Existing Surface Water Supply Analysis - §357.32(c)
- Groundwater Availability Analysis - §357.10(d)
- Modeled Available Groundwater (MAG) Peak Factor - §357.32(d)(3) and §357.10(20)
 - In addition she noted new and revised definitions to many more rule changes.

B. IBWC

No representative from the IBWC was present and no report was provided.

C. TCEQ Watermaster

There were no representatives from the TCEQ Watermaster's Office; the report on reservoir levels was on the tablets.

D. TPWD

Mr. Willy Cupit was recognized and informed the Group that TPWD staff was working on a desalination study to help expedite seawater desalination brine discharge. The study due date is FY 2018 FY 2020.

12. Discussion and Possible Action RE: Meeting Schedule

It was the consensus of the Group to schedule the next meeting on June 14, 2017 at 9:30 a.m.

13. New Member Orientation

It was the consensus of the Group to hold this item over until the next meeting.

14. Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Group the meeting was adjourned at 1:26 p.m.

Donald McGhee, Chairman