

MINUTES

**RIO GRANDE REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY (RGRWA)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
9:00 A.M. – TUESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2008
MISSION CITY HALL COMMISSIONER'S MEETING ROOM
1201 E. 8TH STREET – MISSION, TX**

PRESIDING: JIM DARLING, PRESIDENT

The Rio Grande Regional Water Authority (RGRWA) Board of Directors held a regular meeting at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, January 15, 2008 at the Mission City Hall in Mission, Texas. In attendance were:

Board Members

President: Mr. Jim Darling, Hidalgo County
Vice-President: Ms. Sonia Kaniger
Secretary-Treasurer: Mr. Joe Barrera
Mr. Eduardo Guerra, Zapata County
Mr. Tomas Rodriguez, Starr County
Mr. John Bruciak
Mr. Wayne Halbert
Ms. Kathleen Reavis
Mr. Jimmie Steidinger

Others

Mr. Jose A. Davila, TCEQ - RGWM
Mr. Bill Norris, NRS
Ms. Laura De La Garza, TWRI-Arroyo
Watershed Partnership
Mr. Charlie Rankin
Mr. Ken Jones, LRGVDC
Ms. Carolina Leal, LRGVDC

President Jim Darling called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. and announced that a quorum of Board members was present. The President then moved to agenda item 2. – Consider approval of October 16, 2007 Meeting Minutes. ***Mr. Joe Barrera made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Mr. Jimmie Steidinger seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

The President then moved to agenda item 3. – Public Comment. President Darling stated that no one had signed up for Public Comment, and then moved to item 4. – Election of officers. Mr. Ken Jones stated that according to the bylaws the officers must be elected each year. ***Mr. Jimmie Steidinger made a motion that the current slate of officers continue service through the next fiscal year therefore nominating Mr. Jim Darling as President; Ms. Sonia Kaniger as Vice President; and Mr. Joe Barrera as Secretary – Treasurer. Mr. John Bruciak seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

Upon conclusion of action on item 4, President Darling moved to item 5. – Consider Request for Bids RE: Surety Bond Coverage for Board Members. The President stated that previously Board Members purchased surety bonds on their own. Mr. Jones suggested that the Authority could now pay for the renewals as they come due. Mr. Joe Barrera suggested that the Board go out for group rate bids for surety bonds and have all the Board Members be bonded on the same policy. Mr.

Jones stated that staff would contact TML for a quote for surety bonds for the RGRWA Board of Directors. **Mr. Tomas Rodriguez made a motion authorizing the RGRWA to purchase surety bonds for the Board Members as required by statute and for all the bonds to come from the same source. Ms. Kathy Reavis seconded the motion and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

The President then moved to item 6. – Consider Approval RE: 2008 Contract between the RGRWA and WaterPR, LLC for Professional Services. Mr. Jones stated Fernandez Group, Inc. had changed its name to WaterPR, LLC, but that as it was the same company; this was a renewal contract that included the same rates for website maintenance, etc. as before. **Mr. Joe Barrera made a motion for approval of said contract. Ms. Kathy Reavis seconded the motion and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

Upon conclusion of action on item 6, President Darling moved to item 7. – Discuss and Consider Action RE: RGRWA's Legislative Authority to Calculate Current Market Value of Water Rights. President Darling informed the Board that the Compromise Bill as it related, not directly to the RGRWA, but in the conversion bill that passed during the last legislation session delegated to the RGRWA the authority, or obligation to calculate the current market value based on passed municipal water rights sales of 100 acre feet or more beginning September 1, 2007, the date the legislation passed. President Darling stated that the data was available through the TCEQ Watermaster's office. Mr. Carlos Rubenstein, TCEQ Watermaster, stated that there was no data to report for that time period due to the fact that either there were no sales made or any sales that were made were not reported to TCEQ, or said sales occurred prior to September 1, 2007. President Darling then requested a list of all sales from the TCEQ Watermaster's office and suggested that letters could be written to all purchasers requesting that they voluntarily disclose the amount of the sale. **Mr. Jimmie Steidinger made a motion to authorize President Jim Darling, to send a letter to all the participants asking them to voluntarily disclose the amounts of their sales from January 2007 to December 2007, only for sales of 100 acre feet or more. Mr. Tomas Rodriguez seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

The President then moved to item 8. - Report from TCEQ Watermaster, and recognized Mr. Carlos Rubenstein. Mr. Rubenstein stated that TCEQ was finalizing the process of establishing two real-time monitoring stations in the El Morillo Drain to better regulate the salinity levels of the Rio Grande River. Mr. Rubenstein also stated that for the first time in 15 years Mexico does not have a water deficit. Regarding compliance with the conversion bill, TCEQ staff had been working with Mr. Wayne Halbert on advertising for sale the offers that under the legislation need to be posted for 90 days on the TCEQ website. Mr. Ed Vela, TCEQ, stated that he would be able to provide forms for these transactions. Mr. Halbert cautioned that the public should be advised that the obligations on subdivisions come from the public entity that will provide service to the Subdivision, and not the Irrigation District. **Ms. Kathy Reavis made a motion to authorize the LRGVDC staff to prepare a letter to the Irrigation Districts and the cities in the RGRWA region informing them of their rights under the new legislation. Mr. Jimmie Steidinger seconded the motion and upon a vote the motion passed unanimously.** Mr. Rubenstein requested the letters be reviewed by TCEQ staff prior to release to ensure accuracy.

Upon conclusion of the Watermaster's report, President Darling moved to item 9. – Report from IBWC; however, Mr. Reyes was unable to attend the meeting and no report was available.

Upon conclusion of the report form IBWC, President Darling moved to item 10. - Status Reports.

Regarding item 10.A. – Financial Report, President Darling again recognized Mr. Ken Jones. Mr. Jones stated that there were no expenses to approve at this time. Mr. Jones then suggested that the Finance Committee meet to discuss creating a budget for 2008 as well as the Water Rights Assessment. It was the consensus of the Board for the Finance Committee to meet on this item and provide a recommendation to the Board at the next meeting. President Darling then suggested the possibility of a project identifying the key individuals in the drainage districts and cities in the RGRWA area regarding creating an inventory of how drainage works in the RGRWA region along the Rio Grande River, the Laredo area and any other entities who might be interested and see if there may be any grant money available for such a study. Upon conclusion of discussion **Mr. Jimmie Steidinger made a motion approving staff to prepare a list of potential entities interested in participating in an inventory of how drainage works along the Rio Grande River and explore the possible grant opportunities available for said study. Ms. Kathy Reavis seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

Regarding item 10.B. – Report from Rio Grande Regional Water Planning Group (RGRWPG). Mr. Glenn Jarvis, Chairman of Region M, was unable to attend and no report was available at this time.

Regarding item 10.C. – Update on Submission of RGRWA Board Nominees to Governor's Appointments Office. Chairman Darling stated that he and most nominees received letters from the Governor's office and hopefully the Governor will act swiftly to make the Board appointments.

Regarding item 10. – Legislation, Chairman Darling stated that the legislative committee meetings would be meeting soon. Mr. Wayne Halbert stated that he would monitor the committees' progress as their activities pertain to the RGRWA.

Upon conclusion of discussion and action on Status Reports, the President then moved to item 11. – Committee Reports.

Regarding item 9.A. – Community Outreach, there was nothing new to report.

Regarding item 9.B. – Finance and Planning, there was nothing new to report.

Regarding item 9.C. – Personnel and Professional Services, there was nothing new to report.

Regarding item 9.D. – Legislation, there was nothing new to report.

Regarding item 9.E. – El Morillo Drain, there was no new information to report.

President Darling then moved to item 10. – New or Old Business. It was the consensus of the Board not to meet in February and that the next meeting be scheduled in March 2008. There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

Jim Darling, President, RGRWA

ATTEST:

Joe Barrera, Secretary-Treasurer, RGRWA