

MINUTES

RIO GRANDE REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY (RGRWA)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
9:00 A.M. – WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6, 2010
LRGVDC TRANSPORTATION CENTER BOARD ROOM
510 S. PLEASANTVIEW DRIVE, WESLACO, TX

PRESIDING: JIM DARLING, PRESIDENT

The Rio Grande Regional Water Authority (RGRWA) Board of Directors held a meeting at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, January 6, 2010 at the LRGVDC Transportation Center Board Room in Weslaco, Texas. In attendance were:

RGRWA Board Members

President Jim Darling, Hidalgo County
Vice President Sonia Lambert, Irrigation Dist.
Secretary-Treasurer Joe Barrera, Irrigation Dist.
Ms. Karran Westerman, Zapata County
Mr. Fitzgerald Sanchez, Webb County
Mr. John Bruciak, Cameron County
Mr. Wayne Halbert, Irrigation Districts
Mr. Paul Heller, Irrigation Districts
Mr. Jimmie Steidinger
Mr. Joe Pennington, Irrigation Districts
Mr. Sonny Hinojosa, Irrigation Districts
Mr. Brian Macmanus, Water Supply Corporation
Mr. Roel Rodriguez, Municipal
Mr. D.V. Guerra, Public

Others

Ms. Robyn Hadley, WaterPR
Mr. Jaime Flores, TNRI
Ms. Terrie Salinas, LRGVDC
Ms. Gloria Banda, LRGVDC
Mr. Bill Norris, NRS
Mr. Charles Browning, NAWSC

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

President Jim Darling called the meeting to order at 9:11 a.m. and announced that a quorum was present.

2. Consider Approval of November 18, 2009 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Wayne Halbert requested a correction to page 2 paragraph 2 line 7 from "EDA does not have confidence in the LRGVDC" to "The EDA does not have confidence in the RGRWA". ***Mr. Joe Barrera made a motion for approval of the minutes with correction. Mr. Brian Macmanus seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

3. Public Comment

No one had signed up for Public Comments. President Darling took this opportunity to announce the loss of Mr. James Matz, Chairman of Valley Proud Environmental Council and voting member of the Region M Group; it was the consensus of the Board to make a \$250.00 contribution to Valley Proud Environmental Council in his honor.

4. Consider Approval RE: Interlocal Agreement to Evaluate the San Felipe Springs Water Supply between RGRWA and Rio Grande Regional Water Planning Group (Region M)

Mr. Ken Jones was recognized and stated this was a housekeeping item and that the Board had previously approved providing the funding for this study. This agreement has been approved by the Region M Group at their December 16, 2009 meeting. President Darling requested monthly status reports from NRS Consulting Engineers on this project. ***Mr. Wayne Halbert made a motion for approval; Mr. Joe Barrera seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

5. Discussion RE: Future Projects

President Darling commented that the future projects would be related to groundwater and will be thoroughly discussed under the next item.

6. Report RE: Groundwater Conceptual Study

President Darling recognized Mr. Roy Rodriguez, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Groundwater Management Committee (Committee). Mr. Rodriguez stated that there is growing interest from municipalities regarding exploring options in groundwater. Most communities rely on the Rio Grande for potable water and have had potable water production plants that have become very effective. Mr. Rodriguez informed the Board that the City of McAllen has approved construction of a pilot project for brackish groundwater desalination and added that there is interest in exploring the benefit of a regional district where entities could assist each other in the sale of potable water for this region.

Mr. Rodriguez then gave the floor to Mr. Bill Norris, NRS Consulting Engineers. Mr. Norris stated that there were very few ways to create a new water supply, and it was the Dimmit County pipeline that spurred interest in this topic, it cause the Committee to consider what other options might be available. Mr. Norris then gave a presentation on the basics of desalination, including information on the Brownsville PUB and North Alamo Water Supply Corporation desalination projects and concluding with possible directions the RGRWA might want to take.

Upon conclusion of the presentation Mr. Jones asked what would be the next steps in terms of a more detailed study and cost. Mr. Norris stated that a scope of work would need to be developed detailing what the Board was interested in accomplishing and added that working regionally carries more political clout that could be beneficial in seeking funding. Mr. Norris offered to assist the Board in developing a detailed scope and discussing different funding sources.

President Darling commented that it would be logical to consolidate or regionalize the irrigation districts and have a "super" canal to increase the efficiency of the delivery system. Mr. Rodriguez stated that the Committee would continue working with groundwater and is looking for support from the RGRWA. If a scope of work can be developed the Committee would also seek financial support. Mr. Rodriguez stated that groundwater efforts will continue to move forward, and noted that one of the purposes of the RGRWA was to unite regional efforts on water issues and that is what the Committee is requesting.

President Darling asked for more information on the conceptual study. Mr. Norris stated it is a technical/ financial feasibility paper study and explained that 10% is usually spent to get a 70% reliable answer to see what is available in the study area. Aquifer testing would be the second phase, and that is quite expensive.

President Darling asked if there was any benefit to make this a combination study of irrigation and potable water. Mr. Norris stated that staff would need to determine the quantity and quality of water in the aquifer and how accessing it would affect different areas; the goal being to have a sustainable water supply.

President Darling requested that Mr. Wayne Halbert and Mr. Glenn Jarvis, Water Law Attorney and Region M Chairman, develop a proposal for a legislative analysis to determine if there was a need to combine the RGRWA into a Groundwater District. The President requested that Mr. Jarvis develop a simple budget to be presented at the February meeting, and suggested adding the irrigation aspect into the scope of work.

Mr. D.V. Guerra mentioned that the City of El Paso has a tremendous water conservation and reuse program with many conservation projects and one of the largest desalination plants in the world. Mr. Guerra suggested it would be worth while for the Board to visit the plant and see the operation. President Darling agreed and suggested at the next meeting the Board could plan a trip to El Paso for March and could provide for travel reimbursement if requested. Several Board members indicated that they would be

interested in participating in such a trip.

Mr. Brian Macmanus made a motion to task the Ad Hoc Groundwater Management Committee and the Legislative Committee to develop a scope of work including cost estimates to be presented to the Board for consideration and to plan a visit to the El Paso Desalination plant. Mr. Roy Rodriguez seconded the motion and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.

7. Status Reports

A. Report from TCEQ Watermaster

Mr. Erasmo Yarrito was unable to attend but provided the reservoir level information and information needed to determine the water right price. Based on the information provided, the water right price will remain at \$2,218. ***Mr. Brian Macmanus made a motion to keep the water right price at \$2,218. Mr. Paul Heller seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

B. Report from IBWC

No representative from IBWC was present however Mr. Jones informed the Board that IBWC staff was still anticipating the final capital improvements listing for El Morillo Drain and will hopefully have that information available at the next meeting.

C. Report from Rio Grande Regional Water Planning Group

Mr. Jones reported that the Region M Group is scheduled to meet next week to review Chapters 1 and 2 of the Initially Prepared Plan.

D. Election of Officers to be Considered at February Board Meeting

President Darling advised any Board Member who would like to be considered for a position as an officer to prepare to present their nomination at the February meeting.

E. Report RE: Building Disaster Resilient Communities

President Darling reminded the Board that at the last meeting there was controversy regarding who was the applicant for this grant, the RGRWA or the LRGVDC. The documentation requested of LRGVDC staff was provided to the Executive Committee which contains information on how the EDA processed the application. The full Board was interested in reviewing this information and Terrie Salinas, LRGVDC Economic Development Director will provide copies to the Board members.

F. Report RE: Texas Department of Rural Affairs Hurricane Dolly Disaster Recovery Funding Method of Distribution

Mr. Jones was recognized and informed the Board that the Regional Drainage Committee, Chaired by Ms. Lambert was a key catalyst for the recommendation submitted to the LRGVDC Board of Directors regarding the recommendation for project funding with additional Hurricane Dolly Disaster Recovery funds available through HUD for infrastructure. The LRGVDC Board of Directors approved the Committee's recommendation and it was submitted to HUD for processing.

8. Committee Reports

A. Community Outreach

There was no new information to report.

B. Finance and Planning

1. Financial Report

Mr. Jones reported that as of November 30, the Board had a balance of \$246,184.44 and staff was requesting approval of current monthly expenses in the amount of \$224.81. **Mr. Joe Barrera made a motion for approval of payment of the current expenses as presented. Mr. Jimmie Steidinger seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

2. Status of Assessments

Mr. Joe Barrera was recognized and informed the Board that 2010 assessments in the amount of \$57,468.08 had been received to date and encouraged the Board to note which entities had outstanding balances. Mr. Barrera encouraged the Board to make reminder calls to entities delinquent on payment.

C. Personnel and Professional Services

There was no new information to report at this time.

D. Legislation

Texas Water Day is scheduled for February 10, 2010 and information was provided in the Board folders.

E. El Morillo Drain

8. Discussion and Possible Action RE: Meeting Schedule

It was the consensus of the Board to schedule the next meeting for Wednesday, February 3, 2010.

9. Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Jim Darling, President, RGRWA

ATTEST:

Joe Barrera, Secretary-Treasurer, RGRWA