

MINUTES

**RIO GRANDE REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY (RGRWA)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
9:00 A.M. – WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 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, February 3, 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.
Mr. Ricardo Gutierrez, Starr County
Mr. Fitzgerald Sanchez, Webb County
Mr. Wayne Halbert, Irrigation Districts
Mr. Jimmie Steidinger, Irrigation Districts
Mr. Joe Pennington, Irrigation Districts
Mr. Jo Jo White, Irrigation Districts
Mr. Bobby Sparks, Irrigation Districts
Mr. Sonny Hinojosa, Irrigation Districts
Mr. Brian Macmanus, Water Supply Corporation
Mr. Roel Rodriguez, Municipal

Others

Mr. George Ozuna, USGS
Mr. Mark Null, USGS
Mr. Salomon Torres, U.S. Rep Ruben Hinojosa
Ms. Laura Dillan, Brownsville Herald
Mr. Troy Allen, Delta Lake ID
Ms. Terrie Salinas, LRGVDC
Mr. Charles Browning, NAWSC
Mr. Glenn Jarvis, Region M

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

President Jim Darling called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. and announced that a quorum was present.

2. Consider Approval of January 6, 2010 Meeting Minutes

Mr. Joe Barrera made a motion for approval of the minutes as presented. Mr. Jimmie Steidinger seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

3. Public Comment

No Public Comments were received.

4. Election of Officers (President, Vice-President, Secretary-Treasurer)

Mr. Jimmie Steidinger made a motion to re-elect the same officers currently serving: Mr. Jim Darling as President; Ms. Sonia Lambert as Vice-President; and Mr. Joe Barrera as Secretary-Treasurer. Mr. Bobby Sparks seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

5. Discussion RE: Future Projects

President Darling noted that a few Board members had expressed interest in attending the El Paso Desalination Plant Tour, and this item will be discussed more thoroughly under item 7.G.

6. Report RE: Groundwater Conceptual Study

Mr. Jake White, NRS Consulting Engineers, was recognized and stated that in the Board folders was a draft scope of work on the Regional Water Supply Project Feasibility Study. Mr. White stated that comments had been received and incorporated into this draft. The purpose of this study is to explore a regional water supply strategy that would take into consideration all the alternative water supplies in the region, such as brackish desalination, sea water desalination and the Dimmit County project. Mr. White then summarized the tasks in the scope of work. Upon conclusion of the summary Mr. White stated that the cost of this study has yet to be determined and staff would like the Board to review this draft; once the document has been finalized staff could establish costs.

President Darling stated that the RGRWA could possibly be the facilitator for this study, but did not consider it appropriate for the Board to pay the bulk of its expenses. Mr. Roy Rodriguez agreed the RGRWA could be the agency that oversees this preliminary study, and try to seek further funding by either applying for a grant from the Texas Water Development Board or approaching individual cities with requests for funding assistance, or possibly utilize both these options. Mr. Rodriguez informed the Board that the cities are very interested in alternate water supplies to ensure a sufficient supply for the next 30 to 50 years and a regional approach will be the most effective way to achieve this goal. Mr. Rodriguez stated he would like to entertain the RGRWA partially funding this scope of work on a phase by phase basis.

After reviewing the scope of work, President Darling remarked that Task 1. 4. - Water distribution interconnection infrastructure between service providers within the study area, would be more appropriate further along in the study, not necessarily under Task 1. The President commented that he thought the Region M Group had already completed Task 1. 3. - Water supply and treatment capacity for each service provider over 10,000 population within the study area. President Darling suggested including a survey of agricultural use of groundwater, especially in anticipation of drought. After review of the scope of work President Darling asked Mr. White to prepare a definitive cost for Task 1 and estimated costs for Tasks 2, 3, and 4 to present at the next Board meeting. Upon conclusion of discussion ***Mr. Ricardo Gutierrez made a motion for NRS Consulting Engineers to prepare cost estimates for the Regional Water Supply Project Feasibility Study. Mr. Joe Barrera seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

President Darling then recognized Mr. Glenn Jarvis, Region M Chair and attorney in the field of water law. The President asked Mr. Jarvis for legal advice as it relates should the RGRWA pursue developing a Groundwater Management Area (GMA). Mr. Jarvis informed the Board that a GMA can be formed in one of three ways: by petition of land owners, by legislation, or through TCEQ. Mr. Jarvis advised that the preferable way to create a GMA is by legislation and cautioned that financing is the main problem with creating a GMA. Mr. Jarvis advised that the only way to create a GMA legislatively is to get a consensus and the RGRWA has the best opportunity to get that consensus. Mr. Jarvis suggested the Ad Hoc Groundwater Management Committee perform outreach. President Darling suggested the Committee schedule a meeting with the next House Natural Resource Committee Chair to see how this idea will be received. Prior to any legislative action, however, the RGRWA will need to establish boundaries for the proposed GMA and President Darling asked Mr. White to recommend boundaries for the proposed GMA as close the RGRWA boundaries as possible.

7. Status Reports

A. Report from TCEQ Watermaster

Mr. Erasmo Yarrito, TCEQ Watermaster, was unable to attend; however, he provided a report that was included in the Board folders for review.

B. Report from IBWC

No representative from IBWC was present and no report was available at this time. President Darling noted the appointment of Mr. Edward Drusina, the new IBWC Commissioner and suggested the Board write a letter of congratulations to him and inform him of the various projects

the Board is interested in. Mr. Jones suggested arranging a breakfast, or some sort of informal discussion as was held for Commissioner Bill Ruth. No action taken.

C. Report from Rio Grande Regional Water Planning Group

Mr. Glenn Jarvis covered this item under a previous item.

D. Report RE: Building Disaster Resilient Communities

Ms. Sonia Lambert stated that she had reviewed what was submitted and suggested the Executive Committee meet to discuss it. No action taken.

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

Mr. Jones was recognized and provided the Board with the latest information available on this Method of Distribution. No action taken.

F. San Felipe Springs Water Supply

Mr. White was recognized and stated that a draft report of the study has been received; however it has not yet been reviewed by staff. After a thorough review this study will be presented at the Region M meeting scheduled in two weeks and at the next RGRWA meeting. ***Mr. Ricardo Gutierrez made a motion to authorize payment of the \$2,369.80 invoice from NRS Consulting Engineers. Mr. Wayne Halbert seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

G. Report on El Paso Tour of Desal Facilities and Consideration of Travel Reimbursement for Board Members

Mr. Wayne Halbert mentioned that Mr. Chuey Reyes of the El Paso Irrigation District offered to show the Board members his operation and share information on irrigation while the Board members were in the area for the Desal Tour. ***Mr. Ricardo Gutierrez made a motion to approve travel reimbursement for Board Members attending this tour. Mr. Wayne Halbert seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

8. Committee Reports

A. Community Outreach

There was no new information to report.

B. Finance and Planning

1. Schedule Budget Committee Meeting

The Finance Committee will discuss potential meeting dates.

2. Financial Report

Ms. Debby Morales reported that as of December 31, 2009, the Board had a balance of \$262,335.22 and staff was requesting approval of current monthly expenses in the amount of \$628.60. ***Mr. Jimmie Steidinger made a motion for approval of payment of the current expenses as presented. Mr. Ricardo Gutierrez seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

3. 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 contact those entities with outstanding balances. It was the consensus of the Board to send out second notices to those who had not yet paid the 2010 assessment. No action taken.

C. Personnel and Professional Services

There was no new information to report at this time.

Legislation

Mr. Halbert stated that as far as the Natural Resources issues are concerned it is still undecided as far as who will sit on and/or chair which committees; this will make a big difference on how water issues will be handled in the State. No action taken.

E. El Morillo Drain

No new information to report

F. Ad Hoc Groundwater Committee

This was covered under a previous item.

9. Discussion and Possible Action RE: Meeting Schedule

President Darling stated that the First Rio Grande Regional Water Authority EDC (FRGRWAEDC) will meet jointly with the RGRWA to discuss refinancing the Sugar Mill Bond. It was the consensus of the Board to schedule the next meeting for Wednesday, March 3, 2010.

9. Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:06 a.m.

Jim Darling, President, RGRWA

ATTEST:

Joe Barrera, Secretary-Treasurer, RGRWA