

MINUTES

**RIO GRANDE REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY (RGRWA)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
9:00 A.M. – TUESDAY, AUGUST 19, 2008
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 Tuesday, August 19, 2008 at the LRGVDC Transportation Center Board Room in Weslaco, Texas. In attendance were:

RGRWA Board Members

President: Mr. Jim Darling, Hidalgo County
Secretary-Treasurer: Mr. Joe Barrera, Irrigation Dist.
Ms. Karran Westerman, Zapata County
Mr. Ricardo Gutierrez, Starr County
Mr. Fitzgerald Sanchez, Webb County
Mr. John Bruciak, Cameron County
Mr. Wayne Halbert, Irrigation Districts
Mr. Paul Heller, Irrigation Districts
Mr. Bobby Sparks, Irrigation Districts
Mr. Sonny Hinojosa, Irrigation Districts
Mr. Brian Macmanus, Water Supply Corporation

Others

Mr. Erasmo Yarrito, TCEQ
Mr. Martin Salazar, TDA
Mr. Charles Browning, NAWSC
Mr. Ken Jones, LRGVDC
Ms. Debby Morales, LRGVDC

President Jim Darling called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. and announced that a quorum was present. The President then moved to item 2. – Announcement of Governor Appointment and Swearing in of New Board Member. President Darling announced that Mr. Paul Heller was appointed by the Governor's Office to replace outgoing Board Member Ms. Kathleen Reavis. State Representative Eddie Lucio, III then administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Heller.

President Darling then moved to item 3. - Consider approval of June 17, 2008 Meeting Minutes. ***Mr. Joe Barrera made a motion for approval of the minutes as presented. Mr. Ricardo Gutierrez seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

The President then moved to agenda item 4. – Public Comment; there being none, President Darling moved to item 5. – Presentation RE: Update on Arundo donax, Carizo Cane Biological Control Program in the Rio Grande Basin. Unfortunately due to an emergency meeting at the Research Center Dr. John Goolsby was unable attend. By consensus of the Board this item will be held over until the next meeting.

President Darling then moved to item 6. – Consider Ratification of Executive Committee Action RE: Contribution to Aquatic Weed Control Effort. The President informed the Board that at the July Rio Grande Regional Water Planning Group (Region M) meeting the RGRWA Executive

Committee pledged \$4,000 toward the \$25,000 match sought by Texas Parks and Wildlife for Aquatic Weed Control. **Mr. Brian Macmanus made a motion for ratification of the Executive Committee Action to contribute \$4,000 to the Aquatic Weed Control Effort. Mr. Bobby Sparks seconded and upon a unanimous vote the motion carried.**

The President then moved to item 7. - Report from TCEQ Watermaster, and recognized Mr. Erasmo Yarrito. Mr. Yarrito gave the status of the river flows after Hurricane Dolly and the recent heavy rains in Starr County as well as the status of the Mexican reservoirs, which are at approximately 80%. Mr. Yarrito also had information from the Palmer Drought Index that indicated this region was no longer in a drought. However Mr. Yarrito mentioned drought in this region is gauged by the elevation levels of the reservoir system, and based on lake levels the Lower Rio Grande Valley is still in a drought.

Upon conclusion of the Watermaster's report, President Darling moved to item 8. – Report from IBWC; Commissioner Carlos Marin was unable to attend, however a status report was provided to Mr. Ken Jones. Mr. Jones reported that in addition to Mexico's \$25,000 match contribution for aquatic weed control, Mexico committed 3,000,000 pesos (\$300,000 U.S.) in 2008 and 5,000,000 pesos (\$500,000 U.S.) in 2009 for El Morillo Drain maintenance and repairs. Mr. Jones asked if the Board would like to submit requests to Senator Hutchison's office to try for the next appropriations cycle to at least match what Mexico has committed for 2008 and 2009. It was the consensus of the Board that Mr. Jones urge the funding for the next appropriations cycle up to one million dollars.

President Darling moved to item 9. - Status Reports.

Regarding item 9.A. – Financial Report, President Darling recognized Mr. Jones who announced the balances and stated that there was \$195.78 in administrative expenses that required Board approval. **Mr. Ricardo Gutierrez made a motion for approval of the administrative expenses. Mr. Joe Barrera seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.**

Regarding item 9.B. – Report from Rio Grande Regional Water Planning Group (RGRWPG). Mr. Glenn Jarvis was unable to attend, however President Darling stated that the TWDB would consider the Group's application for funding at a meeting on August 25, 2008. Included in the application was getting Irrigation Districts designated as Water User Groups (WUGs).

President Darling then moved to item 10. – Committee Reports.

Regarding item 10.A. – Community Outreach, there was no new information to report.

Regarding item 10.B. – Finance and Planning, Chairman Darling recognized Mr. Joe Barrera, Chairman of the Finance Committee. Mr. Barrera reported that on item 10.B.1. – Status of Assessments the Board received \$65,902.86 to date of the \$72,800 billed and discussed possible improvements to the Assessment billing process for 2009 and possibly offering discounts for early payment.

Regarding item 10.C. – Personnel and Professional Services, there was nothing to report.

Regarding item 10.D. – Legislation, Mr. Wayne Halbert distributed a list of projects the Irrigation Districts have been involved with since 2000; the proposed legislation consisted of projects in the amount of \$73,612,291, and there was a total of \$32,620,602 in projects that

were completed. President Darling suggested that Mr. Halbert, as the Chairman of the Legislative Committee could branch out to a Regulatory Committee and develop a budget for legislative advocacy. Mr. Halbert added that a strong RGRWA contingency at the Texas Water Days in Washington, D.C. would be good opportunity to make progress with legislation. President Darling then mentioned there would be a Texas Water Conservation Association meeting October 8 – 10, 2008 in San Antonio and suggested the Board advise staff if they wished to attend. A budget for this event could be considered at the September meeting.

Regarding item 10.E. – El Morillo Drain, Mr. Barrera asked about the status of the El Morillo Drain Committee coming under the authority of the RGRWA. President Darling suggested that a meeting with the LRG Water Committee, Inc. be held and a report should be given at the September meeting. Ken Jones stated he would follow-up with the Water Committee's President, Dr. Joe Coulter.

Regarding item 10.F. – Committee Appointments Mr. Barrera suggested replacing Ms. Kathleen Reavis on the Finance & Planning Committee and the Personnel & Professional Services Committee with Mr. Paul Heller. Mr. Heller agreed and that change was made.

President Darling then moved to item 11. – New or Old Business and recognized Mr. Halbert. Mr. Halbert addressed concerns regarding high salinity levels in the Rio Grande and suggested the Board look into a method of directly obtaining information regarding the El Morillo Drain pump status, especially during storm events. Mr. Halbert stated that the salinity levels sometimes spike for no apparent reason, and suspects a connection between those spikes and the pumps at the El Morillo Drain being turned off. Mr. Sonny Hinojosa suggested an electronic status system that would provide frequent monitoring of the pumps. President Darling suggested hiring a part-time employee in Mexico to provide monitoring. Mr. Joe Barrera asked Mr. Erasmo Yarrito to find out if the RGRWA should go through the TCEQ Watermaster's office or through the IBWC for more information on this issue. President Darling stated that the RGRWA El Morillo Drain Committee members were Mr. Joe Barrera, Mr. Wayne Halbert, Mr. Sonny Hinojosa, and himself. Mr. Ken Jones stated he and Mr. Yarrito would provide a status report to the Committee prior to the next meeting.

There being no further business to come before the Board the meeting was adjourned at 10:02.

Jim Darling, President, RGRWA

ATTEST:

Joe Barrera, Secretary-Treasurer, RGRWA