

MINUTES

RIO GRANDE REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY (RGRWA)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
9:00 A.M. – WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2009
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, August 5, 2009 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. 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
Mr. D.V. Guerra, Public

Others

Mr. Victor Morales, LRGVDC
Mr. Bob Joseph, USGS
Mr. Herman Settemeyer, TCEQ
Mr. Jaime Flores, TWRI
Mr. Michael Gabrielson, Willis HRH
Ms. Connie Townsend, TWDB
Ms. Maribel Guerrero, Ambiotec
Ms. Robyn Hadley, WaterPR
Mr. Glenn Jarvis, Region M
Mr. David Salinas, City of Edinburg,
Mr. Felipe Chalons, CILA
Mr. Gary Whittington, Unifirst, Region M
Mr. Rodolfo Montero, US-IBWC
Mr. Mark Lingo, TPWD
Ms. Esmeralda Macas, City of Los Fresnos
Ms. Laura De la Garza, Comile Res, Inc.
Mr. Tomas Rodriguez, City of Laredo, Reg M
Mr. Bill Norris, NRS
Mr. Willy Cupit, TPWD
Ms. Debby Morales, LRGVDC
Mr. Ken Jones, LRGVDC

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 June 3, 2009 Meeting Minutes

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

3. Public Comment

President Darling noted that no one had signed up for Public Comments.

4 Consider Certification of Water Rights List from Watermaster

Mr. Joe Barrera was recognized and stated that to date there had been one sale this year, but it was

not applicable. If there are no further sales this year then the price will stay the same as last year, which is \$2,218. No action taken.

5. Consider Action RE: Request for Qualifications to Plan and Develop the Regional Economic Adjustment Plan for Building Disaster Resilient Communities

Ms. Sonia Lambert was recognized and stated that a \$3.5 million grant was awarded and a Request For Qualifications (RFQ) was established at the last committee meeting. Ms. Lambert then turned the floor over to Mr. Victor Morales, LRGVDC Procurement Officer for further discussion on the RFQ. Mr. Morales reviewed the changes recently made to this draft RFQ by the committee and stated he would welcome further input from the Board regarding additional revisions. Mr. Ken Jones stated that the anticipated RFQ process would be for the drainage committee to short list, interview and score the respondents and make a recommendation back to the RGRWA Board. That action would then be considered for ratification by the LRGVDC Board of Directors.

At the conclusion of discussion ***Mr. Joe Barrera made a motion to approve the RFQ; Mr. Jimmie Steidinger seconded the motion.*** Mr. Roy Rodriguez suggested revising the Responsiveness to RFQ section in the Evaluation Matrix on page 10 by deleting the word “brevity” so only “clarity” is evaluated as opposed to “clarity and brevity”. ***Mr. Barrera then amended his motion to approve the RFQ with the above revision; Mr. Steidinger seconded the amended motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

6. Consider Funding Project RE: Analyze Potential Impact of Increased Groundwater Withdrawal from San Felipe Springs

President Darling stated that the Board has evaluated Region M's unfunded special projects and has received a request to fund the San Felipe Springs study. The President then recognized Mr. Sonny Hinojosa who is also President of the Lower Rio Grande Water Committee, Inc. (Water Committee). Mr. Hinojosa stated that at the last meeting of the Water Committee it was decided by the Board and membership to solicit the RGRWA to see if they would fund the San Felipe Springs study. This spring is a tributary of the Rio Grande and is located below the Amistad Dam and Reservoir. It has been stated that the spring's flows increase when the reservoir levels are up and decrease when the reservoir levels are lower. There has been some interest in development of groundwater in that area and the Water Committee questions if groundwater development would impact the flow of the Rio Grande. Since the Water Committee does not have funding the Board is making a request that the RGRWA fund this task.

Mr. Jones added that the quote NRS Consulting Engineers, Inc. (NRS) provided to the Region M Group to complete this task was just under \$14,000. Mr. Bill Norris stated that this project would probably take four or five months to complete. Mr. Jones suggested the best way to proceed would be to amend the existing contract Region M has with NRS as the RGRWA would not have a contract directly and it would be funded through the Region M Group. Upon conclusion of discussion ***Mr. Jo Jo White made a motion to approve the RGRWA funding the San Felipe Springs Study, and to request an amendment the TWDB Contract. Ms. Sonia Lambert seconded the motion, and upon a unanimous vote the motion carried.***

7. Consider Possible Action RE: Support of Trans Pecos Water Trust Forgotten River Reach Projects

President Darling stated that items 7 and 8 could be discussed together and reminded the Board that Ms. Karen Chapman of the Trans Pecos Water Trust gave a presentation on this item at the last meeting which stated the Trust was leasing water rights in order to keep the water flowing in the river specifically through the Forgotten River Reach. Mr. Jones informed the Board that the Region M Group had consideration of a resolution of support for the efforts of the Trans Pecos Water Trust on their agenda at their next meeting; Mr. Jones then read a portion of that draft resolution. Mr. Hinojosa stated

that he was not sure if there was any benefit to the Board participating in this effort because the water would flow downstream regardless if it was leased or not. Upon conclusion of discussion and hearing no motion, no action was taken.

8. Approval RE: Formation of a Trans Pecos Water Trust or Forgotten River Reach Committee
No Action Taken.

9. Status Reports

A. Report from TCEQ Watermaster

No TCEQ representative was able to attend, no report was available.

B. Report from IBWC

No one from IBWC was present and no report was available at this time.

C. Report from Rio Grande Regional Water Planning Group

President Darling recognized Mr. Glenn Jarvis, Chairman of the RGRWPG, who informed the Board that the Group was meeting immediately following this RGRWA meeting and at the beginning of that meeting the Group will conduct a public hearing to discuss population projections and water supply and demand. Mr. Jarvis explained that 23 cities in the region have surpassed their projected population growth and TWDB is providing an opportunity to adjust the water plan accordingly. The public hearing will also address how the region will go about selecting water management strategies.

10. Committee Reports

A. Community Outreach

President Darling announced that he has been reappointed to the Board by Hidalgo County Commissioner's court and will serve another term.

B. Finance and Planning

1. Financial Report

Ms. Debby Morales was recognized and stated that staff was requesting Board approval to pay expenses in the amount of \$1,238.93 which include the quarterly web maintenance fee. ***Mr. Ricardo Gutierrez made a motion for approval of payment of the current expenses. Mr. D.V. Guerra seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

2. Status of Assessments

President Darling recognized Mr. Joe Barrera who stated that the 2010 Assessment invoices needed to be sent in September in order to offer the early payment discount of 3% if paid in October, 2% if paid in November and 1% if paid in December. Mr. Barrera also suggested adding any past due amounts on the invoices and including a copy of the legislation. ***Brian Macmanus made a motion to make the early payment discounts a permanent policy on the assessment invoices. Mr. Wayne Halbert seconded the motion and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

C. Personnel and Professional Services

There was no new information to report at this time.

D. Legislation

Mr. Wayne Halbert was recognized and stated there were no significant changes to pertinent legislation since the detailed report he gave at the June meeting.

E. El Morillo Drain

Mr. Jones was recognized and informed the Board that the first bill has been received from IBWC since the RGRWA assumed responsibility for El Morillo Drain. The total due is \$30,703.08, which is 50% of the total Operation and Maintenance cost converted from pesos into dollars. Mr. Jones asked the Board if they would prefer to pay the total amount due prior to collecting from the counties or to first collect the 45% (\$13,816.39) each from Cameron and Hidalgo Counties and 10% (\$3,070.30) from Willacy County. Upon conclusion of discussion **Mr. Joe Barrera made a motion to forward payment to the IBWC prior to collecting form the Counties. Mr. Ricardo Gutierrez seconded the motion and upon a unanimous vote the motion carried.** President Darling suggested checking the counties' budgets to see if El Morillo Drain was included as a line item.

Mr. Jones informed the Board that Mr. Al Riera, US – IBWC El Paso office was in the process of developing a master plan to identify improvements to the drain; the master plan is anticipated to be completed in approximately six months. In addition, IBWC is considering including a separate El Morillo Drain line item in the budget for the first time to try to seek federal funding. Mr. Ricardo Gutierrez suggested the Board organize a tour of El Morillo Drain.

11. Discussion and Possible Action RE: Meeting Schedule

Mr. Steidinger suggested the Board modify the meeting schedule to meet the first Wednesday of every other month. Mr. Barrera stated that if that were to happen the Executive Committee would need to convene to consider approval of the assessments prior to the next scheduled meeting date. Mr. Halbert stated that by law the Board has to meet in January to set the water right price. Upon conclusion of discussion **Mr. Jimmie Steidinger made a motion to next meet on October 7, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. and to meet every other month in 2010 beginning in January; Mr. Steidinger further moved to authorize the Executive Committee to consider approval of the assessments. Ricardo Gutierrez seconded the motion and upon a unanimous vote the motion carried.**

12. Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:16 a.m.

Jim Darling, President, RGRWA

ATTEST:

Joe Barrera, Secretary-Treasurer, RGRWA