

MINUTES

**RIO GRANDE REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY (RGRWA)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
9:00 A.M. – WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4, 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, August 4, 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.
Ms. Karran Westerman, Zapata County
Mr. John Bruciak, Cameron County
Mr. Wayne Halbert, Irrigation Districts
Mr. Paul Heller, Irrigation Districts
Mr. Jimmie Steidinger, Irrigation Districts
Mr. Bobby Sparks, Irrigation Districts
Mr. Sonny Hinojosa, Irrigation Districts
Mr. Brian Macmanus, Water Supply Corporations
Mr. Roel Rodriguez, Municipal
Mr. D.V. Guerra, Public

Others

Ms. Marcie Oviedo, LRGVDC
Ms. Ludy Saenz, LRGVDC
Ms. Robyn Hadley, Water PR
Mr. Jake White, NRS
Mr. Troy Allen, Delta Lake ID
Mr. Dennis Goldsberry, NAWSC
Mr. Larry B. Thomas, USGS
Mr. Tomas Rodriguez, City of Laredo
Mr. Robert Fulbright, RGRWPG
Mr. Willie Cupit, TPWD
Mr. Rodolfo Montero, US-IBWC
Mr. Juan Trevino, TDA

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

President Jim Darling called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. and announced that a quorum of the Board was present.

2. Consider Approval of May 5, 2010 Meeting Minutes

Mr. D.V. Guerra 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. Discussion RE: Future Projects

President Darling noted this item will be discussed later in the agenda.

5. Consider Approval RE: Sponsorship of Valley Environmental Summit

Mr. Ken Jones noted that there was a letter from Representative Eddie Lucio III in the Board folders that provides information about the Rio Grande Valley's Environmental Summit. Mr. Erasmo Yarrito stated that TCEQ staff will assist with the Summit and it is scheduled for September 24 at the TSTC campus in Harlingen. President Darling posed the question of sponsorship to the Board. Upon conclusion of discussion ***Mr. Roy Rodriguez made a motion for approval of a \$1,000 sponsorship of the Valley Environmental Summit. Mr. Wayne Halbert seconded the motion and upon a vote the motion carried.***

6. Consider Approval RE: Agreement between the RGRWA and WaterPR, LLC for Professional Service for Texas Irrigation Expo

Mr. D.V. Guerra made a motion to approve the Agreement between the RGRWA and WaterPR, LLC for Professional Services for the Texas Irrigation Expo as presented. Mr. Paul Heller seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

7. Consider Establishment of Drainage Committee

President Darling stated that Senator Mario Gallegos, Jr., District 6, is on the Senate Subcommittee on Flooding and Evacuations and there have been discussions regarding whether the region should concentrate on drainage and the relationship between irrigation districts and drainage and the differences of how Cameron County and Hidalgo County function in that capacity. To truly consider a regional drainage entity that could actually perform drainage services it would have to be one that would have taxing ability, similar to that of a South Texas school district that overlays the cities/counties involved. It would have a relatively small tax rate and farmers would have agricultural use. The RGRWA has been approached because we are a regional facility. The question is do we want to create a Drainage subcommittee to work with Senator Gallegos' staff. President Darling stated he feels this would be important from a legislative standpoint in order to monitor which direction the drainage focus is going, and at the very least this Board should be cognizant of what the legislature is doing in the area because we would want to be a participant in that process. Upon conclusion of discussion ***Mr. Wayne Halbert made a motion to approve establishment of a Drainage Committee. Mr. Paul Heller seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.*** The members of the newly created Drainage Committee are: Mr. Jim Darling, Mr. Wayne Halbert, Mr. Jo Jo White, Ms. Sonia Lambert, Mr. Sonny Hinojosa and Mr. Roy Rodriguez. A chairman will be selected at the first meeting tentatively scheduled for Friday, August 13.

8. Status Reports

A. Report from TCEQ Watermaster

Mr. Erasmo Yarrito was recognized and informed the Board that since Hurricane Alex hit this region in July, the IBWC has not had the opportunity to continue updating the water delivery data; the last update was June 26, he added that the region is no longer considered in a drought. Currently, the U.S. and the Mexican reservoirs are 100% full. Mr. Yarrito then provided statistics on the various Mexican reservoirs. Mexico has 6 reservoirs that are over 100% full. Mr. Yarrito cautioned that should there be another heavy rain event in Mexico, this region could experience more flooding. Amistad reservoir is currently at 1,120.79, which is 3.7 feet above conservation level; Falcon reservoir is at 302.27, which is 1 foot above conservation level. Mr. Yarrito informed the Group that IBWC began releasing water on July 7 and stopped releases on July 31 and during that four week period a total of 2.4 million acre feet, approximately the amount of water the region uses in 2 years, flowed from the reservoirs into the river. Regarding the 5-year Water Cycles outlined in the 1944 Treaty, Mr. Yarrito informed the Board that the way Mexico interprets the 1944 Treaty is that when Falcon and Amistad Reservoirs reach conservation level, the current cycle stops and all water debts are paid in full. Mexican officials insist that the instant conservation level is reached a new 5-year cycle automatically begins. The United States' interpretation is that the two reservoirs must fall below conservation level in order for a new 5-year water cycle to begin. In order to alleviate this situation TCEQ staff is working closely with IBWC staff in El Paso to drop the level of Falcon Reservoir below 301.2 feet, then immediately bring it back up so both Mexico and the United States will agree that one water cycle has ended and a new one has begun. According to Mexican officials all water delivered between July 10 and today counts as a water cycle; however the United States does not count it as a cycle.

B. Report from IBWC

No representative from IBWC was in attendance and no report was available at this time.

C. Report from Rio Grande Regional Water Planning Group

Chairman Glenn Jarvis was unable to attend, however, Mr. Jake White, NRS was available to provide a status report. Mr. White stated that the Rio Grande Regional Water Planning Group (Region M) has submitted the Initially Prepared Plan (IPP) to TWDB, and staff received responses back from the TWDB and at today's meeting the Group plans to review the last set of comments in the IPP and submit it to TWDB by the end of August.

D. Regional Water Supply Study

Mr. Roy Rodriguez was recognized and informed the Board that the committee met a couple of months ago with NRS staff and agreed on a proposal; however that proposal was not available for this meeting.

E. Texas Irrigation Expo 2010

Mr. Wayne Halbert stated that plans for the Expo are going forward and are on schedule. Ms. Robyn Hadley was recognized and summarized the speakers and events that are planned for the Expo.

F. Report on Middle Pecos County GCD Pending Permit Application Submitted by Fort Stockton Holdings

President Darling stated that there was no new information available.

9. Committee Reports

A. Community Outreach

There was no new information to report.

B. Finance and Planning

1. Financial Report

Ms. Debby Morales was recognized and stated that the current cash balance is \$276,239.86 and a total of \$1,273.45 in expenses was submitted for approval.

Mr. Jimmie Steidinger made a motion for approval of payment of the current expenses as presented. Mr. D.V. Guerra seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously. Ms. Morales stated that the Board was currently \$85,681.95 under budget for 2010.

2. Status of Assessments

A total of \$96,750.18 has been received from the 2010 Assessment fees.

C. Personnel and Professional Services

There was no new information to report at this time.

D. Legislation

There were no pertinent updates on legislation pertaining to the RGRWA.

E. **El Morillo Drain**

Mr. Sonny Hinojosa was recognized and referred to a cost estimate and schematic in the binders for the El Morillo Drain Pumping Plant SCADA Project. Mr. Hinojosa stated that for several months this Board has discussed El Morillo Drain and how entities in the U.S. are unable to get information from Mexico regarding pump operations. Mr. Hinojosa and Mr. Jones met with staff from IBWC and TCEQ several months ago and requested that a SCADA monitoring system be included in their budgets. Unfortunately that will probably not pan out for those entities. The Board requested a generic proposal to get a cost estimate for the system to determine if it would be possible for the RGRWA to sponsor installation of a SCADA system in Mexico. The Board has not yet discussed this project with IBWC, and of course their approval is required. If IBWC does approve, they would then need to meet with Mexican officials and request their approval. However, the first step is for this Board to determine if we are interested in sponsoring this project. If the Board approves, the other meetings could take place to see if Mexico would agree to installation of the system.

Mr. Hinojosa stated that he didn't believe the RGRWA could retain ownership of the system if it is installed in Mexico, but the vision he has would be for the SCADA system to be installed at the pumping plant and the remote site would probably be at Pier 4 or the TCEQ office and possibly have satellite transmissions that provide on demand access to data. The Host site could be at Pier 4 or the IBWC office in Mercedes. Mr. Hinojosa added that if the Board approves this proposal the project would have to go out for bids.

Mr. Ken Jones added that if the Board approves to move forward with the project and utilizes the financial plan that is being presented, staff would make contact with IBWC to get the other logistics and approval agreements initiated.

Mr. Erasmo Yarrito informed the Board that the Mexican Section of IBWC's is poised to take over operation of El Morillo Drain soon; once that happens and the IBWC is in charge, U.S. entities should have better information and management of El Morillo Drain. Mr. Brian Macmanus suggested that if the Board is going to go out for bids, then bidders should be qualified first to make sure a proprietary system is not installed that only one company is able to operate. Upon conclusion of discussion ***Mr. Paul Heller made a motion to move forward and provide Board support for the SCADA system project for El Morillo Drain. Mr. Brian Macmanus seconded the motion and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

F. **Ad Hoc Groundwater Committee**

No new information was available at this time.

G. **Scholarship Committee**

1. Consider Approval RE: Gift Agreement Between RGRWA, Jimmie Steidinger and Texas A&M University-Kingsville for the Charles Browning, Jr., Water Conservation Scholarship Award.

Mr. Paul Heller stated that the Scholarship Committee reviewed the gift agreement and recommends approval. Mr. Brian Macmanus made a motion for approval of the Gift Agreement as presented. Ms. Sonia Lambert seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.

10. Discussion and Possible Action RE: Meeting Schedule

It was the consensus of the Board to schedule the next meeting for Wednesday, September 1, 2010 at 9:00 a.m.

8. Adjourn

There being no further business to come before the Board the meeting was adjourned at 10:13 a.m.

Jim Darling, President, RGRWA

ATTEST:

Joe Barrera, Secretary-Treasurer, RGRWA