

# MINUTES

**RIO GRANDE REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY (RGRWA)  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
9:00 A.M. – TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 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, September 16, 2008 at the LRGVDC Transportation Center Board Room in Weslaco, Texas. In attendance were:

RGRWA Board Members

President: Mr. Jim Darling, Hidalgo County  
Vice President: Ms. Sonia Kaniger, Irrigation Dist.  
Secretary-Treasurer: Mr. Joe Barrera, Irrigation Dist.  
Ms. Karran Westerman, Zapata County  
Mr. Fitzgerald Sanchez, Webb County  
Mr. John Bruciak, Cameron County  
Mr. Paul Heller, Irrigation Districts  
Mr. Jimmie Steidinger, Irrigation Districts.  
Mr. Glenn Wilde, Irrigation Districts  
Mr. Jo Jo White, Irrigation Districts  
Mr. Bobby Sparks, Irrigation Districts  
Mr. Sonny Hinojosa, Irrigation Districts  
Mr. Brian Macmanus, Water Supply Corporation

Others

Ms. Blanca Villalpando, Sen. Eddie Lucio's Office  
Ms. Leticia Flores, Office of the Governor  
Mr. Bill Norris, NRS Consulting Engineers  
Mr. Jake White, NRS Consulting Engineers  
Ms. Cheryl Flores, TWDB  
Dr. John Goolsby, USDA – ARS  
Mr. Juan Trevino, TDA  
Mr. Erasmo Yarrito, TCEQ  
Ms. Luisa Gallegos, Congressman Solomon P. Ortiz  
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. - Consider approval of August 19, 2008 Meeting Minutes. ***Mr. Joe Barrera made a motion for approval of the minutes as presented. Mr. John Bruciak seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.***

Upon conclusion of action on the minutes President Darling moved to agenda item 3. – Public Comment; there being none, President Darling moved to item 4. – Presentation RE: Update on Arundo donax, Carrizo Cane Biological Control Program in the Rio Grande Basin and recognized Dr. John Goolsby. Dr. Goolsby's presentation centered on the successful research the USDA-ARS has completed in finding biological controls for the invasive Arundo donax reed. The USDA is hoping

to release the first bio-control, the Tetranez fly, in November or December 2008. In addition to controlling *Arundo donax*, the USDA is researching ways to control water hyacinth, salt cedar, and guinea grass. Dr. Goolsby stated he would be glad to come back with further updates for the Board. Mr. Joe Barrera stated that keeping the RGRWA informed on these projects would allow the Board to continue supporting the USDA's efforts.

Upon conclusion of Dr. Goolsby's presentation President Darling then introduced, Ms. Blanca Villalpando, from Senator Eddie Lucio's office and Leticia Flores, from the Governor's office. With the consensus of the Board, President Darling took item 7.E. – El Morillo Drain out of order. The President stated that on September 10, 2008 the Lower Rio Grande Water Committee, Inc. (Water Committee) held a joint meeting with the RGRWA to discuss turning over the responsibility of the El Morillo Drain to the Authority. Mr. Ken Jones stated according to the IBWC, the requirements necessary for this transfer are for the Water Committee to recommend the transfer of responsibility, the RGRWA to accept the responsibility, and Cameron Hidalgo, and Willacy Counties would need to pass resolutions and execute contracts acknowledging the transfer of responsibility from the Water Committee to the RGRWA. At the conclusion of the September 10<sup>th</sup> joint meeting, the Lower Rio Grande Water Committee, Inc. met separately and the following motion was made: *“Mr. Bill Summers made the motion to transfer the responsibility of management of El Morillo Drain from the Lower Rio Grande Water Committee, Inc. to the Rio Grande Regional Water Authority. Mr. Charlie Rankin seconded the motion, and by unanimous consent from a quorum of directors, the motion passed”*. At the conclusion of discussion **Mr. Jimmie Steidinger made a motion to proceed with the transfer of responsibility for the maintenance of El Morillo Drain from the Lower Rio Grande Water Committee, Inc. to the RGRWA. Mr. Joe Barrera seconded the motion, and upon a unanimous vote the motion carried.** President Darling then suggested that the Water Committee members become members of the RGRWA's El Morillo Drain Committee and asked Mr. Sonny Hinojosa to serve as Chairman.

President Darling then moved to item 5. - Presentation RE: Status of Rio Grande Valley Hazard Mitigation Plan. Mr. Jones noted that at the last meeting Mr. Wayne Halbert mentioned that he attended a Hazard Mitigation Meeting and felt it would be beneficial to share this information with the Board in terms of funding and coordination efforts between irrigation districts and municipalities. Mr. Jones then turned the floor over to Mr. Manuel Cruz, LRGVDC Director of Homeland Security. Mr. Cruz gave a presentation entitled “Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation”. At the conclusion of the presentation Mr. Jimmie Steidinger commented that the Rio Grande Valley's drainage system was more than twenty years behind on improvements. Chairman Darling suggested inviting Mr. Godfrey Garza, Hidalgo County Drainage District #1 and a representative from Cameron County to address the topic of Drainage at a future meeting. Mr. Brian Macmanus asked about RFC funding and how it would apply to drainage or to areas that recurrently flood during heavy rain

events. Mr. Cruz stated that with RFC funds the government would be able to purchase those areas that flood regularly and added that Regionalism is important because it allows several entities to apply as a team, giving them a greater chance to secure said funds. Mr. Macmanus inquired if Drainage goes beyond the legislative mandate of the RGRWA; Mr. Jones stated he would check the legislation for that answer.

Chairman Darling then recognized Ms. Blanca Villalpando from Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr.'s office. Ms. Villalpando read aloud a letter Senator Lucio wrote to Governor Rick Perry's office expressing displeasure at the inaction on the Hazard Mitigation Plan and how this inaction is costing this region funding dollars.

The Chairman next recognized Ms. Cheryl Flores, TWDB. Ms. Flores stated that the TWDB has grant specialist for many of the above mention types of grants and added that the Hazard Mitigation Plan is important for some specific grants. Ms. Flores explained that once a disaster occurs, the Hazard Mitigation Grant opens to the entire State on a competitive basis. Ms. Flores offered to arrange to have a Grant Specialist speak to the Board at the October meeting.

President Darling moved to item 6. - Status Reports.

Regarding item 6.A. – Report from TCEQ Watermaster and recognized Mr. Erasmo Yarrito. Mr. Yarrito informed the Group that due to the recent heavy rainfall there were full allocations to all water right accounts, and unfortunately there was a serious flood in the Presidio area that the Watermaster's office was assisting with. In addition, according to the Palmer Drought Index, this region is not in a drought any longer.

Regarding item 6.B. - Report from IBWC President Darling recognized Mr. Rodolfo Montero. Mr. Montero informed the Group that earlier in the month there was a meeting with Dr. Earl Chilton regarding aquatic weed control. It was agreed by both Mexico and the United States that Glyphosate would be used to eradicate water hyacinth. The work was scheduled to begin this fall and be completed by the spring 2009.

Regarding 6.C. – Report from Rio Grande Regional Water Planning Group (RGRWPG). Mr. Glenn Jarvis was unable to attend and President Darling recognized Mr. Bill Norris, NRS Consulting Engineers, Inc. Mr. Norris informed the Board that the Region M Group requested approximately \$400k in funding from TWDB for this next round of planning and was awarded \$287K for the next four years of planning, and the contract should be available by October 15. Mr. Norris stated the Region M Group may approach the RGRWA to request funding for items that were not funded by the TWDB.

President Darling then moved to item 7. – Committee Reports.

Regarding item 7.A. – Community Outreach, there was no new information to report.

Regarding item 7.B. – Finance and Planning, on item 7.B.1. - Chairman Darling recognized Mr. Ken Jones who reported that staff was requesting approval of expenses in the amount of \$770.91. **Mr. Jimmie Steidinger made a motion for approval of these expenses. Mr. Paul Heller seconded the motion, and upon a vote the motion carried unanimously.** On item 7.B.2. – Status of Assessments the President recognized Mr. Joe Barrera. Mr. Barrera reported that to date the RGRWA has received \$68,280.99 of the \$72,800 billed, and that the format of the invoices for 2009 has been revised to include more detail and explanation of the fees.

Regarding item 7.C. – Personnel and Professional Services, there was nothing to report.

Regarding item 7.D. – Legislation, there was no new information to report.

Finance committee and Legislative Committee meeting in between monthly meetings.

President Darling then moved to item 8. – New or Old Business, there being none the meeting was adjourned at 10:56.

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Jim Darling, President, RGRWA

ATTEST:

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Joe Barrera, Secretary-Treasurer, RGRWA