

Minutes
Plateau Water Planning Group
REGULAR MEETING
Initiated and Chaired at
Guadalupe Basin Natural Resources Center (GBNRC)
125 Lehmann Drive, Ste. 100
Kerrville, Texas
September 15, 2022
10:00 AM

Notice having been given, a Regular Meeting of the Plateau Water Planning Group (PWPG) was held on Thursday, September 15, 2022, beginning at 10:00 A.M. The meeting was initiated and chaired at GBNRC, 125 Lehmann Drive, Ste. 100, Kerrville, Texas. **Present in person:** Ray Buck, Kerr County; Jonathan Letz, Kerr County; Charlie Wiedenfeld, Kerr County; Gene Williams, Kerr County; Scott Loveland, Kerr County; David Mauk, Bandera County; David Jeffery, Bandera County; Jess Erlund, Kerr County; Homer Stevens, Bandera County; Max Martin, Edward/Val Verde/Kinney County; Dell Dickinson, Val Verde County; Carlos Velarde, Val Verde County; Brian Leiker, Real County; Jerry Simpton, Val Verde County; Ron Ellis, Texas Water Development Board; Jennifer Herrera, WSP; Andrew Feigenbaum, WSP Monica Thibodeaux, HGCD, Tara Bushnoe, UGRA; Luke Whitmire; Diane McMahon; and Matthew Wilkinson, UGRA (hosted the meeting); **Present via Zoom:** Feather Wilson, Bandera County; Sarah Robertson, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department; Frances Lovett.

- I. Call to Order, Roll Call, Certification of Quorum in Compliance with Texas Open Meetings Law.**
Chairman Letz determined that a quorum was present.
- II. Public Comments.**
No public comments were given.
- III. Approval of minutes from the May 5, 2022 Regular Meeting.**
Motion by Charlie Wiedenfeld to approve the May 5, 2022 minutes; second by David Jeffery. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.
- IV. Reports.**
- a. Report from Chair.**
Chairman Letz gave the following report:
- The administrative account that is handled locally has a balance of \$12,095.97
 - The Bylaws still need to be updated - as was mentioned at the last meeting. He said that Max Martin said he would be interested in being on the committee to update the Bylaws, but had not heard from anyone else. He said he would appoint the committee in the next few weeks.
 - Lee Sweeten submitted his resignation from the PWPG
 - There will be another Interregional Planning Council meeting in November
 - Ray Buck is retiring and will no longer be a member of the PWPG
- b. Report from Secretary.**
No report was given.
- c. Report from Political Entity.**
No report was given.
- d. Report from Liaisons.**
Feather Wilson gave a brief report regarding desalinization well in Bastrop County.
- e. Report from GMA representatives.**
No report was given.
- V. Consider, discuss and take appropriate action to approve invoices.**
Motion by Gene Williams to approve invoices for: WSP4/2/22 to 5/6/22) - \$3,800.11; WSP (5/7/22 to 6/3/22) \$219.83; WSP (6/4/22 to 7/1/22) \$2,167.25; WSP – (7/2/22 to 8/5.22) \$1,140.67 and GMR Transcription - \$151.25; second by Charlie Wiedenfeld. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

VI. Consider, discuss and take appropriate action to approve administrative expenses, and certify that the expenses are eligible for reimbursements and are correct and necessary.

Chairman Letz stated that currently there are not any items to consider. Mr. Ellis said this is something that has always been required in the rules, but none of the planning groups were doing it, and TWDB wasn't enforcing it. However, TWDB was audited so it is now being enforced. He said the Planning Group has the option to certify the administrative expenses for the entire cycle at one meeting or do it at every meeting. When invoices are submitted to TWDB they must state when they were certified by the Planning Group – whether it's done at once or every time an invoice is submitted. No action is required at this time as there are no invoices to certify.

VII. Texas Water Development Board Updates.

Chairman Letz informed the Group that William Alfaro has taken a new position with TWDB and Ron Ellis, the Team Leader for the Regional Water Planning Group, will be filling in for William until a new person is hired. Mr. Ellis' update included the following information:

TWDB is preparing contract amendments to submit to UGRA which will be done either this month or early next month. The contract amendments will include the total project cost for the sixth planning cycle, the full scope of work for the sixth planning cycle, and updated contract guidance documents. Those are exhibits C and D.

The Interregional Planning Council will meet on November 9th in Austin.

He gave an overview of the projections timeline. He emphasized that this cycle is a different than previous cycles because it is a census cycle. Therefore it's more compressed but he noted that the census data is really late this cycle. TWDB has not received the final census numbers from the Texas Demographic Center. They hope to have them soon. They anticipate releasing the population projections, plumbing code savings, and municipal demand projections in February of 2023. The revision requests for population and municipal demand projections will be due in August of 2023. The Planning Group has already received the non-municipal numbers to consider but the municipal numbers will be on a very compressed time frame. TWDB has interactive dashboards on their website for the non-municipal numbers. The Planning Group is encouraged to meet soon after the release of the draft population and draft municipal projections to discuss them and come up with a strategy for meeting the August 2023 deadline. He also strongly encouraged the Group to submit the non-municipal revisions before the municipal data comes out in February. The deadline is July 2023, which will not be changed, but TWDB is requesting planning groups to submit their information early.

Declines in population will be reflected in the draft population projections this cycle, which have not been reflected in the past. If a county's or a WUG's population was declining, it was always held constant. However, since population is growing very rapidly in some places, and declining slowly in other places, they cannot let it remain flat anymore, and must actually reflect declines in population. He did not have information regarding what it might look like or which counties or WUGs would be affected but said TWDB would share the information once they had it. A brief discussion ensued regarding the issues PWPG has had in the past, specifically in Edwards County and Kinney County, where the population of people who are registered to vote went down, but the population of property visitors was going up substantially (due to second homes, ranchettes etc.). Populations might be going down, but water demands are going up. The Group also discussed the lack of funding provided to prove that there is increased water usage (via electrical connections/water wells). That cost must be borne by the entity and most entities do not have adequate funding to do so. Mr. Ellis stated that the planning groups can use funding to help the entities until they numbers are adopted by the Board. Jennifer Herrera stated that those funds are minimal (\$6000) which doesn't cover much over what is mandated (writing the chapter,

percolating the material coming from the board, creating meeting material, working with TWDB etc.). Mr. Ellis suggested that the group meet with Katie Dahlberg regarding the draft projections. He will ask her to attend the next PWPG meeting.

Ms. Herrera stated that the planning group is on track to meet the deadlines.

VIII. WSP Update on Regional Water Planning Schedule.

Jennifer Herrera recapped where the planning group is in the planning cycle. The group received the irrigation and mining draft water demand numbers in August. All population and municipal projection revisions are due back to the water development board in mid-August of 2023. They are currently working on Task 2A, which is non-municipal water demands.

IX. Consider and discuss draft non-municipal water demand projections: Irrigation and Mining.

Jennifer Herrera reviewed the irrigation numbers and discussed the TWDB “Irrigation Water Demand Projections Methodology for the 2026 Regional and 2027 State Water Plans” handout with the group. She stated that there are no key changes from the previous planning cycle on how TWDB reviewed and calculated the draft irrigation water demand projections. The baseline methodology used is a five-year average of annual water use between 2015 and 2019. She then discussed her handout labeled “Table 1 – Irrigation Water Demand Projections (2021 & 2026 Plans) in Acre-Feet per Year”. She summarized things by stating that the values are trending pretty close to the values that we were carrying in our previous plan.

A brief discussion was held regarding Val Verde County as Mr. Simpton didn’t believe the information was accurate. Ms. Herrera said she will work directly with Katie Dahlberg and connect with representatives from each county to work together so we can justify to the projection team at the Board that our data speaks differently.

Ms. Herrera noted that we’re noticing similar challenges in other categories, including livestock. She’s met with Katie Dahlberg and the TWDB projection team on multiple occasions and they are working through things before finalizing the numbers. Chairman Letz suggested that she reach out to Charlie Seale with the Exotic Wildlife Association also.

Ms. Herrera discussed the mining numbers. She stated that TWDB was using some USGS-granted funds to study the mining water use and projections through the water use and research data programs; that report is located on their website. She reviewed her handout entitled “Table 2 – Mining Water Demand Projections (2021 & 2026 Plans) in Acre-Feet per Year”. It was noted by the planning group members that the information used to calculate the numbers was done on a voluntary basis so the data is not complete. A brief discussion ensued regarding the possibility that there might be more accurate data that can be obtained for these numbers. Ms. Herrera stated she will continue to work on the projections and draft numbers. She will ask Katie Dahlberg to come speak more in-depth to the planning group about mining.

X. Consider, discuss and take appropriate action to appoint Carlos Velarde to fill the Municipalities vacancy for Val Verde County (previously held by Otila Gonzalez).

Chairman Letz stated that 2 nominations had been received to fill the vacancy (Carols Velarde with Val Verde County and Gregory Velasquez with the City of Del Rio). However Mr. Velarde’s nomination was the only one we received timely. The nomination for Mr. Velasquez was received in September, and the deadline was May. Therefore, the only nomination that can be considered is Mr. Velarde’s nomination.

Chairman Letz introduced Mr. Velarde to the Planning Group. Mr. Velarde briefly discussed his background.

Motion by Max Martin to appoint Carlos Velarde to fill the municipalities' vacancy for Val Verde County; second by Charlie Wiedenfeld. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

XI. Consider, discuss and take appropriate action regarding River Authority position (Kerr County) due to the pending retirement of Ray Buck.

Chairman Letz explained that a vacancy notice must be posted to fill the position left by Ray Buck, though Tara Bushnoe is the logical choice because she will fill Rays spot at UGRA (our political subdivision). Therefore we will post a vacancy for the River Authority position/member of the board.

XII. Consider, discuss and take appropriate action to appoint a new alternate for the Interregional Planning Council (on March 17, 2022 Jonathan Letz was appointed as the representative and Ray Buck was appointed as the alternate).

Chairman Letz suggested that Tara Bushnoe be appointed as the representative. **Motion by Dell Dickinson to appoint Tara Bushnoe as the alternate for Chairman Letz on the Interregional Planning Council; second by Charlie Wiedenfeld. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.**

XIII. Consider, discuss and take appropriate action to approve/ratify the expense budget submitted for the upcoming contract amendment.

Mr. Buck explained that this was something new, that we had not done in the past, and falls under Task 10. It deals with contractor expenses. UGRA is the contractor entity, and charges some minor expenses (approximately \$10,000.00 per planning cycle) for the duties they perform. There will be a new category included in the upcoming contract to cover salaries and wages for the time need to set up the meetings/record the meetings/post the meetings/post notices etc. (the tasks done by Jody Grinstead). Those tasks can now be charged back to the planning group. Jody is an employee of Kerr County and they have paid her for the work she does for PWPG with no charge to the planning group. With this amendment \$15,000.00 has been put in this category for the 5-year planning cycle to help offset some of the expenses incurred by Kerr County. The revised budget is still \$378,730.00. The \$15,000 came out of the subcontract services and the group is being asked to approve the amendment. **Motion by David Jeffery to approve the \$15,000 contract amendment that was submitted by the political subdivision; second by Jerry Simpton. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.**

XIV. Consider, discuss and take appropriate action to authorize Chair to submit a letter to TWDB regarding project prioritization and drought planning.

Mr. Ellis spoke briefly regarding the project prioritization being used by the planning groups and the elimination of the prioritization aspect of the SWIFT loan program.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the use of the Drought of Record or planning for worse conditions and what mechanisms are in place to keep the state uniformed in their approach for how regions will determine what's worse than the 1950 drought. There is no requirement to plan for drought worse than drought record. However if the planning group does plan for drought worse than drought record they must explain what they did.

No motion was made with regards to sending a letter to TWDB.

XV. Set next meeting date.

It was determined that the next meeting would be held on January 19th or January 26th depending on Katie Dahlberg's availability.