

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
REGION F WATER PLANNING GROUP
10:30 A.M. MONDAY, JULY 25, 2005
AT HOWARD COLLEGE
1001 BIRDWELL LANE – BIG SPRING, TEXAS**

The Region F Water Planning Group (WPG) met at 10:30 a.m. on Monday, July 25, 2005 at Howard College, 1001 Birdwell Lane, Big Spring, Texas, with the following voting members present: Marilyn Egan, Wendell Moody, Terry Scott, Andrew Valencia, Larry Turnbough, Will Wilde, Len Wilson, Buddy Sipes, Stephen Brown, John Grant, Scott Holland, Richard Gist, Steve Hofer and Caroline Runge. Voting members absent were Johnny Jones, Charles Hagood, Jr., John Gayle, Kenneth Dierschke, Stuart Coleman, Cindy Cawley and Lowell Woodward. Non-voting members present were Winton Milliff, Rick Harston, Ken Carver, Don Daniel, Sue Young, John Shepard and Sherry Cordry from the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB). Others present were Paul Weatherby, Middle Pecos Groundwater Conservation District; Allan Lange, Lipan-Kickapoo Water Conservation District; Jon Albright, Freese and Nichols; John Ashworth, LBG-Guyton; Dennis Clark, Emerald Underground Water Conservation District; Chris Wingert, Colorado River Municipal Water District; and Bob Daniel, resident of Mason County.

Call to Order

Chairman John Grant called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. He noted the purpose of the meeting was to consider approval of the Initially Prepared Plan and mark the beginning of the 120-day comment period. A quorum was present.

Introductions and Opening Remarks

Voting and non-voting members and audience attendees introduced themselves.

Consider Approval of Minutes for the Region F WPG Meeting May 23, 2005

Motion was made by Stephen Brown, seconded by Buddy Sipes that the minutes of the May 23, 2005 Region F WPG meeting be accepted. The motion passed unanimously.

Consider Ratification of Payments/Financial Report

Richard Gist made a motion, seconded by Marilyn Egan, that the group approve the financial report and ratify the payments as noted in the printed report. The motion passed unanimously.

Reports from Standing Committees

There were no committee reports.

Discuss Membership Nominations

The chair noted that there are two types of membership nominations before the group. Charles Hagood had notified Region F WPG of his intention to resign and the terms of seven other members (Len Wilson, John Gayle, Lowell Woodward, Steve Hofer, Steven Brown, Scott Holland and Cindy Cawley) are scheduled to end September 1. Thus far, only two nominations have been received in spite of the official postings and letters of notification sent out by the Region F group. According to the bylaws, all of the members can serve until they are reappointed or replaced, and none have expressed unwillingness to continue. Since the group is nearing the end of this phase of planning, with only public hearings, comment period and adoption of the final plan, it was the consensus of the group that the members continue to serve at this time in the absence of additional nominations.

Report from TWDB: Announcements and General Update

Ms. Cordry commended the group on the work completed to date and noted the importance of the mission and accomplishments of the regional planning groups. She said the TWDB had utilized much of the information to lobby Congress through Texas Water Day in Washington, D.C. She detailed efforts to establish links and cooperative programs between TWDB and federal agencies including the U.S. Geological Service, Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation with an end goal of obtaining federal assistance and grants to build and finance the water projects developed through the regional planning groups. She pointed out the importance of water to the economy of Texas, and the rank of Texas in world economies. She quoted a study which revealed that if Texas were a country, it would rank eighth in the world in economic production. The size of the regional planning groups and their economies illustrates the importance of planning for water supplies for the future. Region C (the Dallas-Fort Worth area) would rank 26th and Regions H (Houston) and F (West Texas) would rank 30th and 72nd respectively

Ms. Cordry said the TWDB was able to get almost its entire requested budget approved at the state level, including \$1.6 million to complete this round of planning, \$2.3 million for pilot projects for brackish water desalination to meet the needs of small communities and 10 large grants for conservation and agriculture projects related to better utilization of water. As a matter of information, she said two new publications are available on the TWDB website, a "Water Loss Manual for Utilities" and a "Manual for Rainwater Harvesting".

Report from Consultants: Consider Adoption of Initially Prepared Plan

Mr. Grant noted that adoption of the Initially Prepared Plan (IPP) will in no way mean that it cannot be changed. Adoption would merely begin the 120-day comment period (90 days for public comments and 120 days for comment from state agencies) that would eventually lead to adoption of any amendments or changes prior to the adoption of the final plan in December.

Jon Albright gave an overview of the plan and sections that were completed since the last meeting. He provided a full copy of the IPP to members and went over areas of potential controversy including needs allocation order, unmet needs in the plan, subordination and the Colorado River basin WAM Run 3. He asked members to read through the plan and send him written comments as soon as possible, but noted that the draft was already being printed in order to meet the deadline of July 28 for mailing of the IPP to the county libraries and other sites for public posting. Mr. Grant recessed the meeting for lunch at 12:08 p.m. and reopened it at 12:45 p.m. to ask for comments or changes. The primary suggestion was that the water management strategy table be amended to split the conservation strategy quantification into separate items for traditional conservation methods (for municipal and irrigation needs) and new conservation technologies for electric generation, which carry a very high price tag. Steve Hofer made a motion seconded by Carolyn Runge that the Region F WPG adopt the Initially Prepared Plan and officially begin the public comment phase. The motion passed unanimously. Will Wilde complimented Jon Albright and all the consultants on excellent work in preparing this plan and noted a significant improvement over the first plan approved by Region F in 2000.

Other Reports or Discussion: Groundwater Policy Discussion

Mr. Grant reminded members of the groundwater policy statements submitted by Cindy Cawley as well as the other policy statements and asked that the items be reviewed before the next meeting for discussion and adoption at that time.

Other Reports or Discussion: Water Resources Discipline Survey

Mr. Grant asked members to complete and return the U.S. Geological Service information on significant springs of historical value. Ms. Cordry indicated that this study is independent of and less detailed than similar information being developed by TWDB.

Next Meeting Dates: Region F Calendar

The chair proposed dates for the public meetings and Region F WPG proceedings necessary to meet the deadline of final plan approval and submission to the TWDB by January 5, 2006. It was agreed to schedule and post official notice for the required public meeting for oral comments on the IPP for Monday, August 29, 2005. An agenda will be posted in case a quorum is present and the group would like to approve amendments or changes. The public will have 60 days from the hearing to provide written comments to the plan and the WPG will meet Monday, October 24 to consider changes suggested by members or the public at large. The public comment period will close November 7 and the TWDB will have 120 days, until November 28th, to provide written comments. Tentatively the group will meet December 5 to review all the comments and adopt any changes. The plan could be adopted on that date, or if necessary, another meeting could be called on December 19 for final adoption.

Adjourn

There was no further discussion and the meeting adjourned.

Will Wilde, Secretary
Region F Water Planning Group

John Grant, Chair
Region F Water Planning Group