

Minutes
Plateau Water Planning Group
REGULAR MEETING
Initiated and Chaired at
Guadalupe Basin Natural Resources Center (GBNRC)
125 Lehmann Drive, Ste. 100
Kerrville, Texas
May 5, 2022
10:00 AM

Notice having been given, a Regular Meeting of the Plateau Water Planning Group (PWPG) was held on Thursday, May 5, 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; William Alfaro, Texas Water Development Board; Jennifer Herrera, WSP; Monica Thibodeaux, HGCD and Matthew Wilkinson, UGRA (hosted the meeting); **Present via Zoom:** Max Martin, Edward/Val Verde/Kinney County; Feather Wilson, Bandera County; Sarah Robertson, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department; Travis Linscomb, UGRA and Monica Jacobs.

I. Call to Order, Roll Call, Certification of Quorum in Compliance with Texas Open Meetings Law.

Mr. Letz confirmed that there was a quorum.

II. Public Comments.

No public comments were made.

III. Approval of minutes from the March 17, 2022 Regular Meeting.

Motion by Charlie Wiedenfeld to approve the March 17, 2022 meeting minutes; second by Scott Loveland. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

IV. Reports.

a. Report from Chair.

-Mr. Letz stated that the balance in the banking account as of April 30th is \$12,455.22

-A nomination for the Municipalities vacancy (Val Verde County) has been received for Carlos Velarde; the nomination will be considered at the next meeting.

b. Report from Secretary.

No report was given.

c. Report from Political Entity.

No report was given

d. Report from Liaisons.

Mr. Wilson gave an update on Region K.

e. Report from GMA representatives.

Mr. Jeffery stated that GMA9 has a meeting next Monday in Boerne.

- V. **Consider, discuss and take appropriate action to approve invoices.**
Motion from Gene Williams to approve the following invoices: WSP (1/1/22 to 2/28/22 - \$114.07); WSP (3/1/22 to 4/1/22 - \$3981.79) and GMR Transcription for 3/17/22 meeting - \$208.00; second from Charlie Wiedenfeld. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

VI. Texas Water Development Board Updates.

Mr. Alfaro spoke briefly regarding:

The interregional planning council. The Board is expected to appoint all the members at their July 22 meeting. Some of the key tasks for the Council include: potentially identifying conflicts with other regions of other projects or strategies, coordination between regional water planning groups in the Texas Water Development Board and coordinate with some persons on those strategies sharing operational best practices that they use during the development process.

The upcoming contract amendment is anticipated for July 22nd. The contract will incorporate total study cost and the full scope of work for the development of the water plan as well as two updates on guidance documents.

New Regional Water Planning Rules were approved at the April 11th Board meeting and will become effective May 1st. Key revisions include:

Changes to 31 TAC - Chapter 357

1. New requirement added that planning groups must conduct interregional coordination at all stages of the development of the planning (including the pre-planning public input meeting), the technical memorandum, initial prepared plan and the adoption of the plan.
2. Clarification that the technical memorandum must include a statement, if applicable, that no infeasible water management strategies or water management strategies were identified by the planning group.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the TWDB prioritization process. Mr. Letz stated that it seemed as though more things were being taken away from local control and that the rural areas were getting pushed out by the larger metropolitan areas. He stated that originally it was set up so that the small regions were guaranteed to do their own funding and prioritization. He noted that if that is what the Legislature wants, then why not eliminate the entire regional water planning process and give it back to the Water Development Board? Mr. Alfaro referred to the SWIFT funding and Mr. Letz stated that the purpose of the water planning is for Planning Groups to develop water management strategies for their own regions – all of which will cost money and all of which are needed to be eligible for SWIFT funding. Mr. Alfaro stated that he would give that feedback to the TWDB and get back to the planning group with additional information regarding the reasoning behind that rule change.

3. Removed requirement for water planning to prioritize recommended water management strategy projects and submit the prioritization with an adopted regional water plan.
4. Clarification provided that specific allowances for certain limited costs associated with delivery of water within a water user group service area after treatment are permissible for direct reuse and conservation water management systems.

5. Several clarifications made to align the rules to be more consistent with the statute in other regulatory reporting that was required in the plan and removing non-statutorily required reporting.
6. Drought response information was revised to align with the statute. Planning Groups are required to compile information regarding drought responses, triggers, and actions.
7. The current process for minor amendments did not allow amendments that would increase unmet needs. Now there is an allowance for minor amendments to include an increase in unmet needs or new unmet needs if the amendment is the result of removing infeasible strategies.
8. The Executive Administrator will establish a deadline for planning groups to submit those amendments for infeasible water management strategies. And provide a summary of the changes of unmet needs if it's applicable.

Changes to 31 TAC – Chapter 358.

1. Clarification was provided which allows planning groups to plan for drought conditions worse than the drought record if they chose to. A brief discussion ensued regarding this change. It was noted that if planning groups individually decided what criteria they base their plan on, there is no way for it to be incorporated state-wide because each planning group could potentially be using different data. It was suggested that the TWDB require each planning group to use the same data so planning groups cannot bias the numbers and make strategies where other regions aren't making strategies.

Ms. Herrera stated that she will speak with William Alfaro and Sarah Backhouse to discuss how we create uniformity across the state if we are opening up avenues for regions to provide their own data set and perhaps massage the data to benefit certain areas within their own plan.

VII. Consider, discuss and take appropriate action regarding TWDB draft municipal WUGs. (WSP)

Ms. Herrera reviewed what was discussed at the last meeting including a look at the first set of data that the Water Development Board had released, including a portion of the non-municipal demands. The first part included livestock, manufacturing, and steam electric power (she noted that most of the conversation was around livestock). She stated that she had received a lot of emails from the group and thanked them for helping her to collect some of the data.

Ms. Herrera stated the planning group was on schedule with the data that has been released and deadlines that the Board has set. The historical population and our GPCD for municipal WUGs were released to the consultants and the planning group has until the July 29th deadline to agree with those numbers or request changes.

In August the Board will distribute the last portion of the non-municipal water demands which will include irrigation and mining.

Ms. Herrera stated that she will be reviewing the draft municipal WUGs and the “county other” water systems. She informed the members that all of the 2021 WUGs will be a part of the 2026 plan as long as they have an active community PWS. New WUGs in the 2026 plan were determined by whether or not the utility was generating more than 100-acre-feet at any point in the survey period. If they had 100-acre-feet in 2015 but then 97 in 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019

they came on as a municipal water user group. She noted that all retail public utilities are owned by political subdivisions. Privately owned utilities can be included in the plan at the request of the WUG and approved by the regional planning water group. During the last planning cycle the group did not entail any collective reporting units (CRU) information. She briefly defined a CRU then discussed sub-WUGs and stated the Board is dissolving the sub-WUG layer of detail in this planning cycle.

Ms. Herrera reviewed her handout entitled - Table 2-2 Plateau Region Water Demand Projections (Acre-Feet per Year) – handout #1.

VIII. Consider, discuss and take appropriate action regarding TWDB “county-other” Water Systems. (WSP)

Ms. Herrera reminded the group that “county other” represents the aggregation of water systems that provide less than 100 acre feet; so they are the smaller entities which include rural domestic use not served by a municipal water utility.

Ms. Herrera reviewed her handouts entitled:

Table 2-5 County-Other Water Systems Reported Water Use (Acre-feet per Year) –
Handout #2

Table 2-5 County-Other Water Systems Reported Water Use (Acre-Feet per Year) –
Handout #3

A brief discussion ensued regarding the information listed on the handouts.

Ms. Herrera stated she would coordinate with Headwaters and Aqua Texas on more data and, if allowed by TWDB, she will add the local data to the table. The Group agreed that no further meetings will be required and that Ms. Herrera can use the information provided to her from Headwaters. A brief discussion ensued regarding nonexempt wells. The Group briefly discussed how to get information for the remaining counties in the planning group (Bandera, Edwards, Real, Kinney and Val Verde County). Ms. Herrera said she would reach out to GCD General Managers for those counties and see if they have data they want to provide and will compare that data to what the Board sent out. Once Ms. Herrera compiles the information she will provide it to Chairman Letz for his review.

IX. Set next meeting date.

Ms. Herrera stated that additional data is due to be released in August, so she suggested a September or October meeting.