



**LOWER RIO GRANDE AUTHORITY (LRGA) MEETING  
THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 2004 - 9:00 A.M.  
Rio Red Classroom - Texas A&M Citrus Center  
312 North International Blvd.  
Weslaco, Texas**

**Presiding: Bobby Sparks, President**

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Mr. Bobby Sparks, President, called the meeting to order, and it was announced that there was a quorum present. A copy of the roll call sheet is attached to these Minutes for verification.

The Chairman then proceeded to agenda item 2. - Consider Approval of Meeting Minutes of November 6, 2003, and asked for any changes or amendments. There were none, and **Mr. Jimmy Steidinger made a motion to approve them. Mr. Paul Heller seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

The Chairman then moved to agenda item 3. - Financial Report, and asked Mr. Joe Barrera, Secretary-Treasurer, to report. Mr. Barrera informed the Board that there was currently \$37,815.27 in the Treasury. Following Mr. Barrera's report, **Mr. Jimmy Steidinger made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Mr. Frank "Jo Jo" White seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.** Then, following discussion, the following Budget Committee was formed: *Mr. Joe Barrera, Ms. Sonia Kaniger, and Mr. Tito Nieto. It was also agreed that this committee would meet and develop a budget for presentation at the Conference Meeting.*

*There were no requests for Public Comment, and the President moved to agenda item 5. - Discussion of Mexico Water Debt, and recognized Mr. Neil Haman. Mr. Haman requested that the LRGA develop a resolution in support of the repayment of the Mexico Water Debt to be endorsed by municipalities, water districts and water supply corporations. Following discussion, it was the consensus of the Board that the Regional Planning Committee be instructed to develop such a resolution, and to include updated information regarding the status of the water repayment in this resolution.*

*Following discussion on the Mexico Water Debt, President Sparks proceeded to agenda item 6. A. - Consider Resolution of Support for Hidalgo County Irrigation District (HCID) No. 16 (United Irrigation District) Rehabilitation Project, and recognized Mr. Tito Nieto, Manager, United Irrigation District. Mr. Nieto explained that this resolution was in support of a funding proposal to the Bureau of Reclamation and the North American Development Bank for infrastructure improvements to HCID No. 16. Following Mr. Nieto's report, **Mr. Joe Barrera made a motion to approve the resolution of support for HCID #16. Mr. Gordon Hill seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.***

The President then moved to agenda item 6.B. - Consider Resolution of Support for Donna Irrigation District RE: Rehabilitation Project, and asked Mr. Jimmie Steidinger, Donna Irrigation District, to report. Mr. Steidinger stated that this resolution was also in support of a funding proposal to the Bureau of Reclamation and the North American Development Bank for modified infrastructure improvements to Donna Irrigation District. At the conclusion of Mr. Steidinger's report, **Mr. Paul Heller made a motion to approve the resolution supporting Donna Irrigation's proposed modified project. Mr. Jimmie Steidinger seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

At this time, Mr. Jo Jo White, Manager, Hidalgo & Cameron County Irrigation District #9, requested approval of a similar resolution. Following his request, *it was the consensus of those present that the Executive Committee would approve this resolution, and bring this item back to the February meeting for ratification.*

At the conclusion of action on the irrigation district resolutions, President Sparks proceeded to agenda item 7. - Report from TCEQ Watermaster, and recognized Mr. Carlos Rubinstein, TCEQ Regional Director. Among other issues, Mr. Rubinstein reported the following:

The water levels at the reservoirs was at 51.72%, the most water in them since January, 1994; the salt level in the water had become high, but was now lowered; the new IBWC Commissioner has not yet been appointed; the treaty date for compliance has elapsed; there is approximately 1.3 million acre-feet presently owed by Mexico; the next six months will "tell the tale" regarding the debt repayment; and this month, storage will probably increase to about 56% by the end of this month.

Mr. Rubinstein also mentioned that Amistad Reservoir is approximately 50% more efficient at storing water than Falcon Reservoir, and it was agreed that TCEQ should be involved with drafting the resolution in support of Mexico's repayment of the water debt.

Following Mr. Rubinstein's report and discussion, the President moved to agenda item 8. - Consider Amendment to Bylaws RE: Article V., Section 4. - Meetings, and asked Mr. Ken Jones, to report. Mr. Jones explained that in order to comply with legislation, the following sentence should be added to the Bylaws: Seven (7) members shall constitute a quorum of the Board, and a favorable vote from six (6) members shall be required on all decisions made by the Board. Following Mr. Jones' request, **Mr. Tito Nieto made a motion to approve this amendment as presented. Mr. Paul Heller seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

Following action on the Bylaws amendment, President Sparks proceeded to agenda item 9. - Consider Agreement for Professional Legal Services RE: Jones, Galligan, Key & Lozano, L.L.P., and again recognized Mr. Ken Jones. Mr. Jones introduced Mr. Victor Morales, LRGVDC Procurement Officer, and Mr. Jimmie Steidinger, Chairman, Legal Committee, introduced Champ Jones of the law firm. Mr. Champ Jones thanked the Board, and Mr. Jones reported that LRGVDC staff had reviewed this contract, and was recommending approval. **Mr. Gordon Hill moved to approve the contract, and to have a letter designating a single point of contact for the legal firm and to write a letter**

**from LRGA designating its single point of contact. Mr. Joe Barrera seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.** President Sparks then stated that the LRGA Board looked forward to working with the law firm.

Following approval of the agreement for legal services, the Chairman moved to agenda items 10. A. - Legislative Update, and 10.B. - Treaty Update, and asked Mr. Jones to report. Mr. Jones stated that there was no new information, and the President then moved to agenda item 10.C. - Regional Water Planning Committee, and asked Mr. Jones to report. Mr. Jones stated that a meeting of this committee would be scheduled, as mentioned previously under agenda item 5.

The President then moved to agenda item 12. - Discuss Scheduling Annual Conference and Agenda. Following discussion, it was agreed that a schedule of the water district board meetings would be provided to LRGVDC staff to assist in scheduling the Annual Conference. At the conclusion of discussion, **Mr. Gordon Hill made a motion to schedule the Annual Conference in March, 2004, and to finalize the date and time at the February meeting. Mr. Jimmie Steidinger seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

Following discussion and action on the Annual Conference, President Sparks proceeded to agenda item 11.A. - Master Plan Implementation, and recognized Mr. Bill Norris, NRS Consulting Engineers. Mr. Norris informed the Board that the TWDB had currently received 11 applications, (LRGA's was included), and it may be necessary to rework the scope of work. He added that he would continue to update the LRGA on the status of the application for funding. During discussion, Mr. Gordon Hill requested that staff contact the cities regarding the application status and how it would impact municipalities, and ask for their support. At this time discussion occurred regarding the regional water authority, and Mr. Jones informed the LRGA Board that Mr. Jim Darling was tentatively scheduled to provide the LRGVDC Board at its January 29<sup>th</sup> meeting with a report on the actions of the LRGA Planning Committee.

With regard to agenda item 11.A.1. - Consideration of the NRS Work Order, Mr. Norris explained that this was an agreement for his work in developing the Master Plan, which would have either a \$15,000 cap or payment for his time and expenses. Following his report, **Mr. Jo Jo White made a motion to approve the work order. Mr. Gordon Hill seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

The President then proceeded to agenda item 11.B. - Summit on Water Supply Issues in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, and discussion followed, during which several members of the LRGA Board requested that the Mexico Water Treaty be added as a specific agenda item for this function. It was agreed that Ms. Fernandez would be contacted regarding this request, and registration forms for the Summit were distributed.

With reference to agenda item 11.C. - Water Market Project, there was no discussion, and the President moved to agenda item 13. - Discuss and Act on Future Meeting Dates and Locations, and again asked Mr. Jones to report. Following discussion, *it was the*

*consensus of the Board members to schedule the next meeting for 9:00 a.m., Thursday, February 5, 2004, at the Texas A&M Citrus Center, and to finalize the date for the Annual LRGAs Conference in March..*

Following discussion on meeting dates, Chairman Sparks proceeded to agenda item 14. - New or Old Business, and recognized Mr. Joe Barrera. Mr. Barrera stated that the Budget Committee would meet to discuss recommendations to present at the Conference.

Discussion then followed regarding listing the Mexico Water Treaty as an item on the agenda of the Valley Water Summit, and following that discussion, Mr. Gordon Hill briefed the Board on the Water Conservation Task Force. He stated that 25% of the water in Texas was surface water, 75% was ground water, 85% of the water usage by municipalities was underground water. He added that drip sprinkler systems were being considered as a conservation method, and the Task Force was considering giving credit of \$1.00 per square foot to city residential users of these sprinkler systems. Among other items being considered are mandatory per capita usage by cities was also being studied and inverted rates.

Following Mr. Hill's briefing, President Sparks ascertained that there was no further business to be discussed, and adjourned the meeting.

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*Bobby Sparks, President*

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*Joe Barrera, Secretary/Treasurer*