

LOWER RIO GRANDE AUTHORITY (LRGA) BOARD MEETING

THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 2005 - 9:00 A.M.

Rio Red Classroom - Texas A&M Citrus Center

312 North International Blvd.

Weslaco, Texas

NO QUORUM AT THIS MEETING

Presiding: Bobby Sparks, President

President Bobby Sparks called the meeting to order, and announced that a quorum was not present. Voting members in attendance were:

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| Bobby Sparks, President | Valley Acres |
| Tito Nieto, Vice-President | United Irrigation Dist. #15 |
| Joe Pennington | Delta Lake |
| Rick Smith | La Feria IDCC #3 |

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Mr. Wayne Halbert, Harlingen CC #1, WD

Others Present:

Jesse Barba, Attorney

Richard Hinojosa, Deputy Executive Director, LRGVDC

Anna Toye Bruton, Executive Secretary, LRGVDC

The following agenda items requiring action were discussed. However, no action was taken, and it was agreed that they would be carried over to the next regular LRGA meeting scheduled for April 7, 2005:

2. - Consider Approval of Minutes of LRGA Board Meeting of February 2, 2005'

3. - Finance Report;

5. - Scheduling of Annual Conference Meeting;

7.A. - Master Plan Implementation, Bill Norris, NRS Consulting Engineers;

8.A. - Legislative Update, Jesse Barba, Attorney, Jones, Galligan, Key & Lozano, LLP;

9. - Discussion and Action RE: Meeting Schedule, Ken Jones;

10.A. - Consider Adoption of Resolution of Support RE: Lower Rio Grande Flood-Control Project-Levee Rehabilitation, Ken Jones; and

10.B. - Consider Approval of Letter of Support for Water Conservation Projects, Ken Jones.

No action was taken on the following discussions; however, during discussion, it was agreed to schedule the LRGA Conference meeting immediately prior to the regular LRGA Board Meeting on April 7th.

Those present were informed by Mr. Jesse Barba, LRGA legal counsel, that the

proposed bill (to include representatives from municipalities as voting members of the LRGAs) was being introduced as a local bill in order to avoid some restrictions and deadlines. Intent to file the bill has been published, and we are awaiting a number to be assigned to the bill.

Mr. Wayne Halbert stated that he anticipated funding requests for various projects would go through the other authority, such as a request for \$800,000 to establish project criteria (Willacy County brackish water desalination). Discussion followed regarding merging both the LRGAs and the Rio Grande Regional Water Authority, and it was agreed to consider that as a possible option during the next legislative session.

At the conclusion of discussion on the two water authorities, the President recognized Mr. Bill Norris, NRS Consulting Engineers. Mr. Norris distributed information regarding tasks in the Master Plan, and as no action could be taken, he stated that he would present this again at the next meeting.

Mr. Tito Nieto informed the Board that an interlocal management agreement between Hidalgo County Irrigation District #3 and United Irrigation District had been signed. He added that State Representative Kino Flores had stated that he was not going to pursue legislation to do away with District #3. Mr. Wayne Halbert advised the Board that there is a difference between water rights adjudicated by the court system and those adjudicated by the legislature. Mr. Jesse Barba added that there were different laws applying to surface water and ground water. (Groundwater is subject to the Groundwater Conservation Districts (Red River in Hidalgo.)

Mr. Wayne Halbert stated that he and several Water District Managers were planning on being in Washington to lobby for (S519) and (HR386) appropriations in the amount of \$43 million and authorization of 19 water conservation projects). Following discussion, it was agreed that LRGVDC staff would coordinate a faxing campaign to seek support documents for this endeavor, and to include them in a presentation to hand-carry to Washington the first part of April, 2005.

Mr. Halbert then stated that he and others were working on the appropriations request for the Watermaster. Mr. Rubinstein had explained how funds were appropriated to the Watermaster, and approximately 7% cuts this year were expected. The Legislative Budget Board refuses to look at fees even though they're tied to a budget, and handles them as taxes. Warren Chisum filed a rider to the bill and a senator to file a rider on the Senate Appropriations side.

There being no further items for discussion, the meeting was adjourned.