

LOWER RIO GRANDE AUTHORITY (LRGA) MEETING

THURSDAY, MAY 6, 2004 - 9:00 A.M.

Rio Red Classroom - Texas A&M Citrus Center

312 North International Blvd.

Weslaco, Texas

Presiding: Bobby Sparks, President

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

Following roll call, the President then moved to agenda item 5. - Report from TCEQ Watermaster, and recognized Mr. Carlos Rubinstein, TCEQ Regional Director. Mr. Rubinstein reported that at April 24th, the reservoir levels were at 66.22%. Additionally, the Watermaster's Office would be allocating between 110,000 and 130,000 acre-feet. He added that the TCEQ anticipated no-charge pumping to continue through May and possibly into June. Mr. Rubinstein also stated that the current Mexico water debt stands at 1.15 million acre-feet. According to IBWC it stands at 910,000 acre-feet. (IBWC takes the 350,000 average acre-feet and divides it into 52 periods. TCEQ begins with a 350,000 owed at the beginning of each year, and then works down.) It was mentioned that 3.3 million acre-feet is the conservation level on the two reservoirs for the U.S., and we are at 2.2 million acre-feet level at present. If the U.S. side is full, then a new cycle of water debt begins. On an average, at present 1,680 acre-feet of water per day is not having to be released from Falcon. Discussion followed regarding the El Morillo Drain and the salt level in the river. Mexico's reservoir water level is at 62.97% in the interior basin, compared to this time last year, at 37.79%, and he stated that he would send this updated information to those requesting it.

At the conclusion of Mr. Rubinstein's report and following discussion, President Sparks then introduced Ms. Gen Long, Mayor Pro-Tem, City of Mission, and Mr. Roy Rodriguez, Utility Director, City of McAllen.

The President then moved to agenda item 2. - Consider Approval of Conference and Board Meeting Minutes of March 16, 2004. There were no corrections or amendments, and **Mr. Jimmie Steidinger made a motion to approve them. Mr. Joe Barrera seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

Following action on the Minutes, Chairman Sparks moved to agenda item 3. - Financial Report, and asked Mr. Joe Barrera, Secretary-Treasurer, to report. Mr. Barrera listed the checks which had been written and informed the Board that there was \$60,853.82 in the Treasury at present. At the conclusion of Mr. Barrera's report, **Mr. Paul Heller made a motion to approve the Financial Report as presented. Mr. Jimmie Steidinger**

seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion passed unanimously.

There were no requests for public comment; therefore, the President proceeded to agenda item 6.A. - Master Plan Implementation, and requested that Mr. Bill Norris, NRS Consulting Engineers, report. Mr. Norris informed the Board that his organization had been working on the scope of work and planning activities, to ensure no duplication with work being performed on Region M. He added that he anticipated sending out a survey to each water user group (WUG) later during the month requesting information, and NRS staff would be physically visiting those WUGs.

Mr. Norris then reported on agenda item 6.B. - Summit on Water Supply Issues in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. He stated that there were two meetings scheduled next week to discuss these issues.

The President then proceeded to agenda item 7.A. - Legislative Update, and recognized Mr. Wayne Halbert. He added that annual appropriations for water projects could amount to as much as \$6 million in 2005. Following discussion, President Sparks asked Mr. Jesse Barba, attorney, what the status was on drafting legislation to include municipalities as voting members of LRGAs. Mr. Barba responded that a draft had been formulated, and following discussion, *it was agreed that a meeting of the Regional Water Planning Committee would be scheduled to review this draft.*

Mr. Ken Jones informed the Board that six members (county appointees) had been chosen to serve on the Rio Grande Regional Water Authority, however, the Governor had not officially named the remaining appointees at this time. The six Board Members named were: Bill Card, III, Cameron County; Jim Darling, Hidalgo County; Joe Escamilla, Starr County; Tomas Rodriguez, Webb County, Frank Torres, Willacy County; and Eduardo Guerra, Zapata County.

Following discussion on legislation, President Sparks proceeded to agenda item 7.B. - Treaty Update, and asked Mr. Gordon Hill to report. Mr. Hill stated that he and Mr. Barrera had visited Washington, D.C. officials recently, and their visit revealed that negotiations between Mexico and the U.S. continued to be unproductive.

With regard to agenda item 7.C. - Regional Water Planning Committee, Mr. Jones stated that letters and an assessment of matching funds had been sent to the counties and cities requesting local contributions for the TWDB grant received by LRGAs.

Mr. Jones then reported that a press conference was tentatively scheduled at the Hoblitzelle Auditorium, Texas A&M Experiment Station, Weslaco, for 3:30 p.m., May 27th and distributed a brochure addressing the LRGAs. Mr. Barrera added that Susan Combs, Commissioner of Agriculture, and Mission Mayor Norberto Salinas were on the agenda at that press conference..

Following the report on the press conference, the President moved to agenda item 8. - Discuss and Act on Future Meeting Dates and Locations, and requested Mr. Jones to suggest a date for the next meeting. Following Mr. Jones' suggestions and discussion, ***Mr. Joe Barrera made a motion to schedule the next meeting of the LRGAs Board for June***

10th at the Texas A&M Citrus Center in Weslaco. Mr. Jimmie Steidinger seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Under agenda item 9. - New or Old Business, Mr. Jim Darling, McAllen City Attorney, was recognized by the President. Mr. Darling asked for a draft of the proposed legislation to include municipalities as voting members of the LRGA. He also requested letters of support and/or resolutions to reduce the cost of electric service by contracting with an electrical power provider offering a lower rate.

Following Mr. Darling's report, there being no further business to discuss, President Sparks adjourned the meeting.

Bobby Sparks, President

Joe Barrera, Secretary-Treasurer