



**LOWER RIO GRANDE AUTHORITY (LRGA) MEETING
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2003 - 9:00 A.M.
Rio Red Classroom
Texas A&M Citrus Center
312 North International Blvd.
Weslaco, Texas**

Presiding: Bobby Sparks, President

Chairman Bobby Sparks, President, called the meeting to order, and asked Mr. Richard Hinojosa, Deputy Executive Director, LRGVDC, to call roll. Mr. Hinojosa announced that there was a quorum present. (A copy of the roll call sheet is attached to these minutes for reference.)

The Chairman then moved to agenda item 2. - Consider Approval of Meeting Minutes of August 7, 2003. There being no request for changes, **Mr. Gordon Hill made a motion to approve these minutes as presented. Mr. Jimmie Steidinger seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

Following acceptance of the minutes, President Sparks proceeded to agenda item 3. - Financial Report, and recognized Mr. Joe Barrera, Secretary-Treasurer. Mr. Barrera reported that there was \$40,314.78 in the LRGA account. At the conclusion of the 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.**

At the conclusion of action on the Financial Report, the Chairman moved to agenda item 4. - Report from TCEQ Watermaster, and asked Mr. Carlos Rubinstein, TCEQ Regional Director, to report. Mr. Rubinstein stated that he would send updated reports to the Water District Managers. He added that surveys by boat had been performed by the U.S. Corps of Engineers and extremely heavy growth of hydrilla had been discovered near Eagle Pass. He also reported the following: All of the sterile grass carp had been introduced into the Rio Grande; we are receiving about 4,000 acre-feet of water a day coming into Amistad from the Big Bend area. He then alluded to Mexico's promises, one that Mexico would not fail to meet its obligation of repaying 350,000 acre-feet a year (81,000 acre-feet is still owed for this year and due by October 1, 2003); and the other, that Mexico would provide an additional 50,000 acre-feet in July. The 50,000 acre-feet have not yet been provided to the U.S. Mr. Rubinstein also informed the Board that he will continue to serve as Water Master as well as being the TCEQ Regional Director. The Board then expressed its appreciation of the work Mr. Rubinstein does for the water districts and the LRGA.

Following Mr. Rubinstein's report, the President moved to agenda item 5. - Discuss Request to Reconsider Letter of Support RE: TCEQ Commission Appointment, and introduced Mr. Andy Scott and Mr. Jesus Flores, Engleman Irrigation District. Mr. Scott stated that Engleman Irrigation District was not in agreement with the LRGAs position in support of Mr. Huston continuing as TCEQ Commissioner. He added that the Engleman District is a conference member and should have been part of the decision-making in this action. At the conclusion of Mr. Scott's report and following discussion, there was no action; however, *it was the consensus of the LRGAs Board to place the Status of Engleman Irrigation District on future LRGAs meeting agendas as needed under Old or New Business.*

Following discussion on the request from Engleman Irrigation District, President Sparks proceeded to agenda item 6. - Consider Resolution of Support RE: Donna Irrigation District. ***A motion was made by Mr. Jimmie Steidinger to approve this resolution in support of Donna Irrigation District's project to construct and rehabilitate the Upper System Lateral Irrigation Facilities. The motion was seconded by Ms. Sonia Kaniger, and upon a vote, was passed unanimously.***

Following action on the Resolution of Support for Donna Irrigation District, the Chairman moved to agenda item 7.A. - Legislative Update, and asked Mr. Wayne Halbert to report. Mr. Halbert informed the Board that applications for appointments to the other water authority (Regional Water Authority) should be submitted to the Governor's Office. During discussion, Mayor Norberto Salinas suggested that this group work with Mr. Hollis Rutledge on this issue, and following discussion, the Chairman moved to the next agenda item-7.B.

With reference to agenda item 7.B. - Treaty Update, it was ascertained that this item had been addressed earlier in the meeting, and the President then moved to agenda item 7.C.

- Regional Water Planning Committee. He then recognized Mr. Richard Hinojosa, and Mr. Hinojosa reported that the Committee had met on August 27th, and was recommending approval from the LRGAs Board of the following priorities: 1) Protection of municipal/industrial and agricultural water supply sources; 2) Improvement of the infrastructure hydrology system for both municipal/industrial and agricultural uses; 3) Address Right-of-Way management issues on a regional basis, such as blanket easements, clear title to easements, etc.; 4) Address the need for increased flexibility on water conversion and usage between municipal and irrigation users; 5) Participate in development and implementation of Valley Water Summit; and 6) to move forward in developing "draft amendment language to existing legislation that created the LRGAs, which would expand the municipal role to include the ability of municipalities to contribute financial resources in support of Authority activities. As this process moves forward, recommended avenues for municipalities to provide immediate financial support to the Authority will also be submitted to the LRGAs Board for consideration. At the conclusion of Mr. Hinojosa's request and following discussion, ***Mr. Gordon Hill made a motion to authorize the Planning Committee to move forward with these priorities and in developing "draft language" to change the legislation mentioned above to include municipalities as voting members in the LRGAs. Mr. Joe Barrera seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.*** Discussion followed regarding communicating to the cities that this Board wanted participation from the cities.

It was the consensus of those present that the other items should be explained more comprehensively at a future meeting and at that time will be considered for action.

Following action on the Water Planning Committee's requests and discussion, President Sparks proceeded to agenda item 7.0. - Bylaws, and again asked Mr. Richard Hinojosa to report. Mr. Hinojosa stated that the Bylaws Committee had met on August 27, and was recommending the corrected bylaws for approval. **Mr. Gordon Hill made a motion to approve the Bylaws as presented, Mr. Jimmie Steidinger seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

Following action on approval of the Bylaws, the president moved to agenda item 8.A. -RFQ for Legal Services, and recognized Mr. Richard Hinojosa. Mr. Hinojosa informed the Board that the RFQ for legal services was on both the LRGA and LRGVDC websites, and eight RFQ packages had been sent to attorneys by LRGVDC staff, and the deadline for responses was September 12, 2003.

At the conclusion of Mr. Hinojosa's report on the RFQ for Legal Services, the President moved to agenda item 8.B. - Master Plan Implementation, and asked Mr. Bill Norris, NRS Consulting Engineers, to report. Mr. Norris distributed copies of an updated Master Plan for consideration by the Board, and asked that they assist him with its development. (For information, a copy of that document is attached to these Minutes.) Discussion followed during which Mr. Gordon Hill suggested that this Board invite representatives from the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and other environmental groups to future LRGA meetings. Following discussion, Discussion then followed regarding identifying funding sources, **a motion was made by Mr. Gordon Hill that the LRGA write a letter to Margaret Hoffman, Executive Director, TCEQ, asking that the LRGA be designated as a recipient of funds for supplemental environmental projects. The motion was seconded by Mr. Paul Heller, and upon a vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Paul Heller then made a motion that the President appoint a Committee composed of Joe Barrera, Gordon Hill, Ken Jones, and Sonia Kaniger to work with Mr. Norris in studying potential funding sources and developing application(s) for funding, Mr. Jimmie Steidinger seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.

In line with work on the Master Plan, it was agreed that the above committee meet with Mr. Norris and Mr. Ken Jones prior to the Region M Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, September 10, 2003.

Following action on the Master Plan presented by Mr. Norris, the Chairman moved to agenda item 8.C. - Summit on Water Supply Issues in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, and again asked Mr. Norris to report. Mr. Norris distributed information on the summit, and informed the Board that another meeting was scheduled following the Region M Meeting on September 10th.

At the conclusion of Mr. Norris' report on the Summit, and following discussion, the President proceeded to agenda item 9. - Consider Adoption of Public Input Policy, and asked Mr. Richard Hinojosa for a report. Mr. Hinojosa explained that LRGVDC staff was recommending adoption of this policy in order to limit the time of presentations requested by persons attending the meeting and not on the agenda. **Mr. Paul Heller made a motion to approve adoption of the Public Input Policy. Mr. Jimmie Steidinger seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

Following approval of the Public Input Policy, the Chairman moved to agenda item 10. - Discuss and Consider Approval of Water Market Project, and again recognized Mr. Richard Hinojosa. Mr. Hinojosa reported that several of the LRGAs voting members had met with LRGVDC staff, and staff was recommending approval of the water market project with the following fee structure:

Administrative fee charged will be \$1.00 per acre-foot up to 250 acre-feet, and \$0.50 per acre-foot thereafter, up to a maximum of \$750.00 for any single transaction. The minimum fee charged for any transaction will be \$50.00.

Following Mr. Hinojosa's request and after discussion, **Mr. Paul Heller made a motion to approve the Water Market Project. Mr. Jimmie Steidinger seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Norris then distributed an example of the water market information available on the LRGA Website.

At the conclusion of action on the Water Market Project and following discussion, Chairman Sparks moved to agenda item 11. - Discuss and Act on Future Meeting Dates and Locations, and the Board discussed scheduling the October and November meetings. Following discussion, **Mr. Joe Barrera made a motion to approve October 2, 2003 and November 6, 2003 both at the Texas Citrus Center at 9:00 a.m. Ms. Sonia Kaniger seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Norris suggested at this time that the Master Plan include interconnects for future applications, and there being no further business to be conducted by the Board, President Sparks adjourned the meeting.

Bobby Sparks, President

Joe Barrera, Secretary/Treasurer