

LOWER RIO GRANDE AUTHORITY (LRGA) BOARD MEETING

THURSDAY, JUNE 2, 2005 - 9:00 A.M.

**Rio Red Classroom - Texas A&M Citrus Center
312 North International Blvd. - Weslaco, Texas**

Presiding: Bobby Sparks, President

President Bobby Sparks called the meeting to order, and upon roll being called, announced that a quorum of the Board was present; however there was not a quorum present for the Conference. Voting members in attendance were:

Bobby Sparks, <i>President</i>	Valley Acres
Tito Nieto, <i>Vice-President</i>	United Irrigation Dist. #15
Gordon Hill, <i>Interim Secretary-Treasurer</i>	Bayview Irrigation Dist.
Paul Heller	Rio Queen Citrus
Joe Pennington	Delta Lake
Frank Ruiz	Cameron Co. ID #6
Harold Seiver Jr.	Donna Irrigation Dist.
Rick Smith	La Feria IDCC #3
Frank "Jo Jo" White	H&CCID #9

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Mr. Ricardo Perez (for Mayor Norberto Salinas), City of Mission
Mr. Charles Browning, NAWSC

Others Present:

Sonia Kaniger, Cameron County Water District #2
Nora Zapata, Donna Irrigation District
Jesse Barba, Attorney
Ken Jones, Executive Director, LRGVDC
Richard Hinojosa, Deputy Executive Director, LRGVDC
Anna Toye Bruton, LRGVDC

President Sparks then moved to agenda item 2. - Consider Approval of Minutes of LRGA Board Meeting of of May 5, 2005. There were no changes to these minutes, and **Mr. Rick**

Smith made a motion to approve them. Mr. Joe Pennington seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion passed unanimously.

At the conclusion of action on the minutes, President Sparks asked Mr. Gordon Hill, Interim Secretary-Treasurer to present agenda item 3. - Financial Report. Mr. Hill informed the Board that there were no changes to the Finance Report presented last month, and he had mailed out the new statements to LRGA Conference Members.

There were no requests for public comment; therefore, the Chairman proceeded to agenda item 5. - Elect Officers (President – CEO, Vice President, Secretary and/or Treasurer). Mr. Ken Jones informed the Board that the current officers were: Mr. Bobby Sparks, President; Mr. Tito Nieto, Vice-President; and Mr. Gordon Hill, Interim Secretary-Treasurer. **Mr. Jo Jo White made a motion to elect the same officers by acclamation for this term, Mr. Paul Heller seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

For clarification, the officers for the 2005-2006 term are:

Bobby Sparks, President;
Tito Nieto, Vice-President; and
Gordon Hill, Secretary-Treasurer.

At the conclusion of elections, President Sparks moved to agenda item 6. - Consider 2005-2006 Committee Appointments, and asked for comments. Following discussion, **Mr. Joe Pennington made a motion to approve the committees as listed, however to add the following members to the Federal, State & Local Representative Committee: Mr. Paul Heller, Chairman; Mr. Wayne Halbert (already on the committee); Mr. Joe Pennington; Mr. Richard Perez; and Mr. Jimmie Steidinger. Mr. Frank Ruiz seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion passed unanimously.** A copy of the Committees is attached to these Minutes.

With reference to agenda item 7. - Report from TCEQ Watermaster, the reservoir levels were included in the binders, and no action was required; therefore, President Sparks asked Mr. Jesse Barba, Attorney, to report on agenda item 9 A. - Legislative Update. Mr. Barba informed the Board that the proposed bill to include municipalities as members of the LRGA had died. Mr. Jones added that there was an updated report from Wayne Halbert. Upon review of Mr. Halbert's written report and the conclusion of discussion, Mr. Jones then mentioned two other legislative issues:

When the Morillo Drain Water Proposal was presented to the Rio Grande Water Committee in May, it was agreed that members be appointed from both water authorities to an Interlocal Cooperation Committee to discuss the coordination between both authorities.

Also, regarding the Water Rights Task Force, the following have been appointed to begin discussions on this issue:

Municipal: Charles Browning, Brian Macmanus, Roel Rodriguez, and Ron Thomas
Irrigation: Wayne Halbert, Sonny Hinojosa, Sonia Kaniger, Frank "Jo Jo" White, and Ken Jones, Ex-officio member.

Mr. Jones stated that staff would keep the LRGAs apprised of actions by these committees. At this time, upon being recognized, Mr. Ricardo Perez informed the Board that, in order to pursue legislation, Senator Hinojosa's office needs a letter from Mayor Salinas requesting that the Senator investigate resolving the differences of opinion between the two water authorities. *Later, during discussion, upon being asked to do so, Mr. Perez stated that he would ask Mayor Salinas to draft such a letter of request addressed to Senator Hinojosa.*

Discussion also occurred regarding the possibility of merging the two authorities was mentioned. Mr. Gordon Hill stated that if Senate Bill 3 did not pass, there would be no money available to continue developing the Water Plan. It was also pointed out that the LRGAs have a funding mechanism in place due to availability of local money. Mr. Chuck Browning added that he felt it would be better to confine the authority to the three-county region (Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy). In contrast, it was mentioned that the Laredo area (Webb County) should be considered as part of the proposed merged authority. Mr. Gordon Hill stated that the language in the proposed bill would merely have to be changed to allow for other counties being included. Mr. Perez then stated that this Board should present itself as trying to represent the municipal interests, and it was agreed that this was the purpose of the existing proposed legislation by LRGAs.

The President then moved to agenda item 9.B. - Treaty Update, and Mr. Hill reported that although we have 141% allocation of water, nothing has been resolved on the Treaty - no change in the attitude of Mexico representatives to comply.

At this time, Mr. Jo Jo White reported that the Inspector General's Office published a report on the IBWC. He added that the Irrigation District Managers Association was writing a letter to the Inspector General asking what will happen as a result of the reported mismanagement of the IBWC Office. It was pointed out that the report contained the following information: 1) There were contracts let without following the bidding process supplemental guidelines, and government approval; and 2) Employees whose qualifications were questionable were hired to fill engineering positions with the IBWC.

Following discussion, ***Mr. Paul Heller made the following motion: 1) Ms. Sonia Kaniger provide LRGVDC staff with copies of the letter sent by the Irrigation District Managers Association regarding IBWC management issues and a list of the recipients of this letter; LRGVDC staff draft a letter or letter(s) and with the approval of the Executive Committee, send such letter; and 3) Ratify Executive Committee's action at the next Board meeting. Mr. Tito Nieto seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.***

There was no report on agenda item 9.C. - Regional Water Planning/Bylaws/Legal Committees, and the President moved to agenda item 11.A. - Consider Ratification of Executive Committee Action RE: Approval of Letter to Ricardo Gutierrez, Rio Grande Valley Partnership. After the President so requested, ***Mr. Gordon Hill made a motion to ratify this action of the Executive Committee. Mr. Paul Heller seconded the motion, and***

upon a vote, the motion passed unanimously.

With reference to agenda item 11.B. - Status Report RE: House Bill (H-3571) and Senate Bill (SB-1857) RE: the Consolidation of the Kinney County Groundwater Conservation District into the Edwards Aquifer Authority, Mr. Jones reported that Mr. Rusty McDaniel had informed LRGVDC staff that this bill had died in Committee, and no action was necessary. He added that this item would be removed from future agendas.

The President then asked Mr. Jones to address agenda item 11.C. - Discussion RE: May 11 Presentation and Proposal to Rio Grande Water Committee. Following discussion, ***Mr. Rick Smith made a motion to ratify the action of the Executive Committee in preparing and presenting this proposal to the Water Committee. Mr. Joe Pennington seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.***

At the conclusion of action on the proposal presented to the Valley Water Committee, Chairman Sparks asked Mr. Jones to address agenda item 11.D. - Consider Appointment of Committee Members to Interlocal Cooperation Committee with Rio Grande Regional Water Authority. Following discussion, ***Mr. Tito Nieto made a motion to approve the following persons to serve on this committee: Mr. Bobby Sparks, Mr. Gordon Hill, Mr. Harold Seiver, Jr., and Mr. Jo Jo White. Mr. Gordon Hill seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion passed unanimously.*** Discussion then occurred regarding scheduling a meeting of this committee, and it was agreed to send a letter to the other authority informing them of who our appointees are and to tentatively schedule in the Weslaco area a working lunch for June 24th of the committee members.

Following the appointment of members to the Interlocal Cooperation Committee, Chairman Sparks recognized Mr. Bill Norris, NRS Consulting Engineers, and asked that he present agenda item 8.A. - Master Plan Implementation. Mr. Norris informed the Board that there were some funds available from the Bureau of Reclamation (up to \$250,000 50-50 funds). He added that the deadline for filing funding applications was June 10, 2005. Following Mr. Norris report, ***Mr. Gordon Hill made a motion to authorize NRS Consulting Engineers to prepare a resolution for this funding application and to authorize the Executive Committee to approve, with this action to be ratified by the full Board at its next meeting. Mr. Harold Seiver seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.*** It was also agreed that this Resolution would be presented to the COG Board as well.

At this time, discussion followed regarding scheduling the next LRGA Board Meeting. Following discussion, ***Mr. Frank Ruiz made a motion to not schedule a July meeting, and to schedule the next regular meeting of the Board for August 4, 2005 at this same location. Mr. Joe Pennington seconded the motion, and upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.***

Following action on the meeting schedule, there being no further business to come before the LRGA Board, President Bobby Sparks adjourned the meeting.

Bobby Sparks, President

Tito Nieto, Vice-President