

**REGION H WATER PLANNING GROUP
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
MAY 3, 2023**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

David Bailey, John Bartos, Arthur Bredehoft, Brad Brunett, Carl Burch, Jun Chang, Mark Evans, Ken Kramer, Marvin Marcell, Mike O'Connell, Byron Ryder, Loyd Smith, Michael Turco, and Brandon Wade (Alisa Max was present following appointment to the Regional Planning Group).

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Samantha Reiter for Gary Ashmore, Ekaterina Fitos for Yvonne Forrest, Matthew Barrett for Jace Houston, Jason Gerrard for Glenn Lord, and Jim Sims for Kevin Ward.

MEMBERS ABSENT: W.R. Baker, James Comin, Caleb Cooper, Robert Istre, Ivan Langford, and Danny Pierce.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Evans introduced Heather Rose, Texas Water Development Board's contract manager for Region H. He stated that the Department of Agriculture provided a letter naming Kristin Lambert as their representative with Manuel Martinez as alternate.

3. REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 1, 2023 MEETING.

Mr. Bredehoft made a motion to approve the minutes of February 1, 2023, with a correction to identify Mr. James Comin and Mr. Ivan Langford as not present at the February 1, 2023, Region H Water Planning meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Marcell and carried unanimously.

4. RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC ISSUES RELATED TO AGENDA ITEMS 5 THROUGH 7.

There were no comments.

5. PLANNING GROUP MEMBERSHIP

a. RECEIVE NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT AND CONSIDER TAKING ACTION TO APPROVE MEMBERS TO FILL VACANCIES ON THE REGION H WATER PLANNING GROUP (RHWPG)

Mr. Chang stated that the Nominating Committee met on May 3, 2023, to discuss nominations to fill the water utilities vacancy. Mr. Chang stated that the Nominating Committee recommends Alisa Max to fill the water utilities vacancy. Mr. Wade made a motion to accept the Nominating Committee's recommendation to appoint Ms. Alisa Max to the Region H Water Planning Group representing water utilities. The motion was seconded by Ken Kramer and carried with 18 ayes and 1 nay (Mike O'Connell).

6. PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

a. RECEIVE UPDATE FROM CONSULTANT TEAM AND NON-POPULATION DEMANDS COMMITTEE REGARDING RECOMMENDED REVISIONS TO DRAFT TEXAS WATER DEVELOPMENT BOARD (TWDB) PROJECTIONS FOR THE 2026 REGION H REGIONAL WATER PLAN (RWP) AND CONSIDER APPROVING SUBMITTAL TO TWDB.

Mr. Taucer provided information related to the various recommendations from the Non-Population Demands Committee regarding the draft Texas Water Development Board projections for the 2026 Region H Water Plan. He provided the committee's recommendations related to irrigation, manufacturing, mining, and steam electric power. Mr. Taucer stated that the proposed recommendations for this cycle are similar to the last cycle's projections. Mr. Ken Kramer asked that the Texas Water Development Board take into consideration agricultural use. Discussion ensued. Mr. Bredehoft made a motion to approve the submittal to TWDB along with Mr. Kramer's comments. The motion was seconded by Mr. Marcell and carried unanimously.

b. RECEIVE UPDATE FROM CONSULTANT TEAM AND POPULATION DEMANDS COMMITTEE REGARDING RECOMMENDED REVISIONS TO DRAFT TWDB PROJECTIONS FOR THE 2026 REGION H RWP AND CONSIDER APPROVING SUBMITTAL TO TWDB

Mr. Taucer provided information related to the various recommendations from the Population Demands Committee regarding the draft TWDB projections for the 2026 Region H Regional Water Plan. Mr. Marcell provided a brief history of the methodology used over the last several years to project population water demand. He stated that the committee recommended using the Joint Regulatory Plan Review (JRPR) populations where available, utilize TWDB projections in remaining counties, and for select counties, use 0.5 migration projection. Discussion ensued. Mr. Kramer made a motion to approve the Population Demands Committee's recommendations to submit said recommendations to TWDB. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bredehoft and carried unanimously.

c. RECEIVE PRESENTATION ON AND DISCUSS THE REGION H WUG SURVEY

Mr. Taucer explained that the WUG survey is a regular part of the planning process. He stated that the information obtained is utilized in projections, identifying existing supplies and infrastructure, interconnect facilities, future projects, and conservation and drought contingencies.

d. RECEIVE UPDATE FROM CONSULTANT TEAM REGARDING IDENTIFICATION OF MAJOR WATER PROVIDERS (MWPS) FOR REGION H AND CONSIDER TAKING ACTION DIRECTING THE CONSULTANT TEAM TO SUBMIT A LIST OF RECOMMENDED MWPS TO THE TWDB

Mr. Taucer stated that TWDB incorporated the Major Water Provider concept in the previous cycle. He stated that TWDB gave each Regional Water Planning Group the latitude in determining entities of key significance in the region's supplies. He explained that last cycle, the planning group recommended designating any entity that had more than 25,000 acre-feet per year of anticipated current or future supply to itself or others, with the Population Demands Committee recommending an additional criterion of at least 10,000 acre-feet per year of anticipated current or future supply to recipients outside of the entity's retail service area. Mr. Taucer then provided a list of the potential MWPS meeting these criteria for Region H. Mr. Bredehoft made a motion to direct the consultant team to submit a list of recommended MWPs to the TWDB. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bartos and carried unanimously.

e. RECEIVE REPORT FROM CONSULTANT TEAM REGARDING UPCOMING GROUNDWATER SUPPLY ANALYSES AND CONSIDER TAKING ACTION TO AUTHORIZE CONSULTANT TEAM AND GROUNDWATER SUPPLY COMMITTEE TO COORDINATE WITH GROUNDWATER REGULATORY ENTITIES TO DEVELOP MAG PEAK FACTORS FOR REGION H AND SUBMIT AN ASSOCIATED REQUEST TO TWDB.

Mr. Taucer provided information related to the groundwater supply analyses. He explained that MAG peak factors allow the Regional Water Plan to better reflect situations where groundwater conservation districts allow temporary production in excess of Modeled Available Groundwater. The MAG peak factors do not change the MAG or any regulatory entity's regulatory approach and are related specifically to the Regional Water Plan. He explained that MAG peak factors must be studied by any Planning Group requesting their use, approved by each of the applicable groundwater conservation districts and groundwater management areas, and by TWDB. Mr. Taucer stated that this process was utilized by the Region H Water Planning Group for the 2021 Regional Water Plan. Mr. Turco made a motion to authorize the consultant team and Groundwater Supply Committee to coordinate with groundwater regulatory entities to develop MAG peak factors for Region H and submit an associated request to TWDB. The motion was seconded by Mr. Chang and carried unanimously.

- f. RECEIVE UPDATE FROM CONSULTANT TEAM REGARDING UPCOMING SURFACE WATER SUPPLY ANALYSES AND CONSIDER TAKING ACTION TO AUTHORIZE THE CONSULTANT TEAM AND SURFACE WATER SUPPLY COMMITTEE TO DEVELOP AND SUBMIT TO THE TWDB A REQUEST FOR POTENTIAL EXCEPTIONS TO SURFACE WATER MODELING REQUIREMENTS.**

Mr. Taucer explained that surface water availability in the regional plan is required to be examined through TCEQ's Water Availability Model ("WAM") Run 3 which includes a very specific set of assumptions that looks at existing permanent rights in the priority system, historical hydrology, full authorized diversions, and no/limited return flows. He stated that TWDB specified utilizing WAM Run 3 due to its cautious assumptions. Mr. Taucer stated that TWDB requires any group utilizing any other model or a modified WAM to request an exception to the surface water modeling requirements. He stated that Region H is requesting the use of Region G's modified model as well as information and model elements from Region C. Mr. Sims made a motion to authorize the consultant team and Surface Water Supply Committee to develop and submit to the TWDB a request for potential exceptions to Surface Water Modeling requirements. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bredehoft and carried unanimously.

7. GENERAL UPDATES AND OUTREACH

- a. RECEIVE UPDATE REGARDING SCHEDULE AND MILESTONES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE 2026 REGION H RWP.**

Mr. Taucer stated that the next four to six months will be busy for various committees with a Technical Memorandum due to TWDB in March of 2024.

- b. RECEIVE UPDATE FROM LIAISONS TO OTHER PLANNING GROUPS.**

Mr. Wade stated that he was invited by Region G to give a presentation on the Brazos Alluvium. Ms. Rose stated that Mr. Evans was elected as Chair of the Interregional Planning Council.

- c. RECEIVE REPORT REGARDING RECENT AND UPCOMING ACTIVITIES RELATED TO COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF THE RHWPG.**

Mr. Taucer had no information at this time.

d. AGENCY COMMUNICATIONS AND GENERAL INFORMATION.

Ms. Rose provided information related to administrative logistics. Mr. Bredehoft stated that infrastructure surcharges at the retail level will be the topic of discussion in The Woodlands in the near future.

8. RECEIVE PUBLIC COMMENTS.

Mr. Sarkis provided comments related to agenda item 6a.

9. NEXT MEETING:

It was announced that the next Region H Water Planning meeting is scheduled for July 5, 2023.

10. ADJOURN.

Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 11:32 a.m.

