

REGION H WATER PLANNING GROUP
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
MAY 7, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Bailey, John Bartos, Arthur Bredehoft, Brad Brunett, Jun Chang, Mark Evans, Robert Istre, Sarah Kouba, Ken Kramer, Ivan Langford, Marvin, Marcell, Alisa Max, Loyd Smith, and Michael Turco.

ALTERNATES PRESENT: Ekaterina Fitos for Greg Eyerly, Matt Barrett for Aubrey Spear, and Doug Haude for Kevin Ward.

MEMBERS ABSENT: WR Baker, Carl Burch, Caleb Cooper, Jason Garrard, Mike O'Connell, Danny Pierce, Byron Ryder, and Cynthia Wagener.

1. Call To Order

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

2. Introductions

Mr. Evans recognized and welcomed Ms. Sarah Kouba as the new member representing GMA 14, a position previously held by Mr. Gary Ashmore.

3. Review and approve minutes of the February 5, 2025 meeting

Mr. Bredehoft made a motion to approve the minutes of February 5, 2025, as submitted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Chang and carried unanimously.

4. Receive public comments on specific issues related to agenda items 5 through 7

There were no public comments.

5. Planning Group Membership

a. Accept the resignation of Brandon Wade as voting member of the Region H Water Planning Group (RHWPG) and declare a vacant position for a voting member representing Water Utilities.

Mr. Langford made a motion to accept the resignation of Mr. Wade as a voting member of the RHWPG and declare a vacant position for a voting member representing Water Utilities. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bartos and carried unanimously.

b. Receive Nominating Committee Report.

Mr. Chang, Chair of the Nominating Committee, stated that the committee met on May 7, 2025, to confirm the vacancy created by Mr. Wade's resignation. He stated that the vacancy was posted on the website as required, and that the committee received three nominations for this position. Mr. Chang stated that the Nominating Committee discussed each of the nominees and ultimately recommended Mr. Jake Hollingsworth to serve as the voting member of the RHWPG representing Water Utilities.

c. Discuss and consider taking action to approve a member to fill the vacancy on the RHWPG.

Mr. Istre made a motion to accept the Nominating Committee's recommendation that Mr. Hollingsworth fill the vacancy on the RHWPG representing Water Utilities. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bredehoft and carried unanimously. Mr. Evans then welcomed and invited Mr. Hollingsworth to join the water planning group at the table.

6. Plan Development and Administration

a. Receive update from the Consultant Team regarding the Initially Prepared Plan (IPP) public hearing and comment process.

Mr. Philip Taucer announced that public hearings to receive comments on the 2026 Region H IPP are scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on May 8, 2025, at the Houston-Galveston Area Council, on May 13, 2025, at the San Jacinto River Authority, and on May 15, 2025, at the Truman-Kimbrow Center in Madisonville, Texas. He stated that the deadline for written comments is July 18, 2025, and stated that all written comments will be included within the appendix to Chapter 10 in the Regional Plan. Mr. Taucer continued by noting the various avenues available for public access to the IPP.

b. Discuss potential revisions for the development of the Final 2026 Region H Water Plan (RWP).

Mr. Taucer stated that while the public comment process is ongoing, the group is making some fine-tuning adjustments to the plan. He stated that the Texas Water Development Board ("TWDB") is working on their socioeconomic impacts analysis of not meeting needs, which is helpful context for the cost of the plan. Mr. Taucer stated that they continue to receive water conservation and drought contingency plans which are then updated in the respective chapters to capture the updated data. Mr. Taucer expressed that several water systems are much more engaged this cycle and have expressed a desire to discuss various strategies and projects to be included in the plan. Ms. Max inquired about ongoing legislation. Mr. Kramer inquired about the new strategies and projects.

c. Receive update from Consultant Team and Water Management Strategy (WMS) Committee and discuss drought management as a potential WMS.

Mr. Taucer explained that the WMS Committee met recently and discussed this topic in detail. He stated that the committee developed many observations related to drought management as a potential water management strategy. For context purposes, Mr. Taucer mentioned the six Regional Planning Groups (Regions D, J, K, L, M and P) that have recommended drought management as a formal management strategy. Mr. Taucer discussed the various benefits and challenges related to its inclusion in the plan. He stated that the committee observed that the plan must strongly promote proper drought response, regardless of the direction the planning group takes this cycle. Discussion ensued regarding the benefits and legislation related to drought management. Mr. Kramer made a motion to incorporate drought management as a recommended water management strategy with the understanding that all water utilities required to have drought contingency plans implement their plans during a drought of record. Mr. Bredehoft seconded the motion. Several members provided comments related to the various benefits and challenges. Following discussion, Mr. Kramer withdrew his original motion with a second from Mr. Bredehoft. Mr. Kramer then moved that the Region H Water Planning Group adopt drought

management as a recommended water management strategy in the context that means the implementation of drought contingency plans as part of the regional strategy, and put into the plan a minimal number that can be reviewed later in the next cycle of planning. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bredehoft. The motion passed with a vote of 13 ayes, 3 nays (Mr. Burnett, Mr. Chang, and Mr. Istre), and 1 abstention (Ms. Fitos).

d. Receive report from Consultant Team and WMS Committee regarding remaining Task 5 funds and consider taking action to approve a notice-to-proceed request and authorizing the Consultant Team and SJRA to coordinate with TWDB and execute the subsequent contract amendment issued.

Mr. Taucer explained that Task 5 funds are related to Water Management Strategies. He explained that the Planning Group must develop mini scopes or mini projects for WMS based on the key areas that the planning group thinks are the most important for this cycle to cover the strategies for the region. Mr. Taucer explained that \$144,450 was left in reserve for use in the event additional work was needed for WMS, which the WMS Committee discussed on November 7, 2024. Mr. Taucer explained that the recommendation is to review input from stakeholders and identify requests to adjust recommended WMS and projects included in the IPP. Further, he stated that this may include the addition of new projects that have not been identified to date and will require further analysis and study in order to make them eligible for inclusion in the Final RWP. He stated that effort will include revisions to DB27 to incorporate new projects as necessary. Mr. Bartos made a motion to approve the notice to proceed request and authorize the consultant team and the San Jacinto River Authority to submit the request to TWDB; coordinate with TWDB as needed on follow-up information; and execute the subsequent contract amendment issued. The motion was seconded by Mr. Turco and carried unanimously.

e. Review and consider taking action to amend the budget for the development of the 2026 Region H RWP.

Mr. Taucer explained that TWDB gives the planning groups quite a bit of flexibility in adjusting the budgets from TWDB's allocations related to task categories. He explained that this amendment does not impact the over budget but only adjust funds among tasks to align with the effort. He stated that funds from Task 5B WMS Evaluation in the amount of \$75,000 would be redistributed to the following tasks: Task 2B Population Demands (\$3,000), Task 3 Supply (\$22,000), Task 7 Drought Response (\$32,000), and Task 10 Adoption (\$18,000). Mr. Bredehoft made a motion to approve the budget amendment for the 2026 round of Regional Water Planning. The motion was seconded by Mr. Burnett and carried unanimously.

f. Discuss and consider authorizing SJRA to consider and execute a TWDB contract amendment to increase committed funds and execute amended contracts with subconsultants.

Mr. Taucer explained that TWDB establishes a certain budget for each Regional Planning Group each planning cycle, however the actual commitment of the funding takes place in several increments throughout the planning cycle as the funding is appropriated by the legislature. He explained that the planning group has an overall budget of \$2,427,091 and there is a small portion that has not yet been committed. Further, Mr. Taucer explained that the portion of the overall region's budget (\$282,071) that TWDB anticipates committing will take place in September. Mr.

Langford made a motion to authorize the San Jacinto River Authority to consider and execute a TWDB contract amendment to increase committed funds and execute amended contracts with subconsultants. The motion was seconded by Mr. Smith and carried unanimously.

7. General Updates and Outreach

a. Receive update regarding schedule and milestones for the development of the 2026 Region H Regional Water Plan.

Mr. Taucer provided an update related to the development of the 2026 Region H Regional Water Plan, announcing upcoming due dates for several scheduled events and tasks.

b. Receive updates from liaisons to other planning groups.

There were no updates to report.

c. Receive report regarding recent and upcoming activities related to communications and outreach efforts on behalf of the RHWPG.

Mr. Taucer announced various meetings, activities, and outreach opportunities.

d. Receive update from TWDB

Ms. Heather Rose discussed various details related to the 2024 Water Use Surveys and also the upcoming Financial Assistance Workshop scheduled for July 10, 2025, in Madisonville, Texas.

e. Other agency communications and general information.

There were no other agency communications or general information to report.

8. Receive public comments.

There were no public comments.

9. Next Meeting:

Mr. Evans announced that the next meeting of the Region H Water Planning Group will take place on August 6, 2025.

10. Adjourn

Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 11:47 a.m.