

**MINUTES OF THE
REGION I - EAST TEXAS REGIONAL WATER PLANNING GROUP MEETING
Wednesday, January 10, 2024 – 10:00 A.M.**

1. **Call to Order** – Chairman John Martin called the meeting to order at 10:08 A.M.
2. **Invocation/Pledge** – David Alders led the invocation. John Martin led the Pledge.
3. **Notice of Meeting** – Notice was sent to Voting Members and posted as required.
4. **Roll Call/Determination of Quorum** – The roll was called by Cheryl Bartlett and quorum was determined as follows:

Voting Members Present: (15 of 22)

David Alders - Agriculture
Chris Davis – Counties (*Virtual*)
David Gorsich – Industry (*Virtual*)
Scott Hall – River Authority (*Virtual*)
Kelley Holcomb – River Authority
Fred Jackson – Counties
John Martin – GMA-14
Matthew McBroom - Environmental
John McFarland – GMA-11
Matthew Mettauer - Agriculture
David Montagne – River Authority (*Virtual*)
Monty Shank – River Authority
Mike Snyder – Electric Power (*Virtual*)
Terry D. Stelly – Public
Christopher Wiesinger – Small Business

Voting Members Absent: (3)

Kate Dietz - Municipality
Rob Starr – Water Utilities
Emily Whitworth – Water District

Voting Member Category Vacancies: (4)

Municipality
Small Business
Public
Industry

Other Attendees

Agencies:

Lann Bookout - Tx Water Development Board (*Virtual*)
Teresa Griffin – Panola County GCD
Stephen Lange, Daniel Price – Tx Parks & Wildlife

Staff and Consultants:

Cheryl Bartlett - City of Nacogdoches
Brigit Buff, PE – Plummer Asso.
Cody McCann – Plummer Asso. (*Virtual*)
Jordan Skipwith – Freese & Nichols
Andy Donnelly – Advanced Groundwater Solutions (*Virtual*)
James Beach – Advanced Groundwater Solutions (*Virtual*)

5. Public Comments: None

6. Consideration and Approval of the minutes of the June 21, 2023 meeting

Fred Jackson made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 4, 2023 meeting as presented, 2nd by Terry Stelly, passed unanimously.

7. Report from City of Nacogdoches: Cheryl Bartlett

The new City Manager, Rick Beverlin, started in November. No other updates to report.

8. Reports of adjoining regions activity:

- a. Region C – David Montagne: no report.
- b. Region D – John McFarland: no update; group will meet in February.
- c. Region H – Scott Hall: no report.
- d. Interregional Liaison – Kelley Holcomb:
Interregional Planning Council met Nov 30th – The IPC has been facilitating coordination between regions to develop the Technical Memo report that is due March 5th. Next Meeting is Feb 8th. All members are encouraged to attend these virtual meetings.
(Reminder: activities of the Interregional Council can be found on the TWDB website.
<https://www.twdb.texas.gov/waterplanning/rwp/ipc/index.asp>)

9. Report from Standing Committees:

- a. Executive Committee – John Martin: No report.
- b. Finance Committee – Kelley Holcomb: No report. Working on developing a report format to present at future meetings. Backlog on processing pay requests from TWDB is improving – caught up through November.
- c. Bylaws Committee – David Alders: Still working on minor formatting changes voted on last meeting – will distribute soon.
- d. Technical Committee – Scott Hall: No report.
- e. Nominations Committee – Monty Shank: committee did not have a formal meeting. Requested confirmation on vacancies. John confirmed vacancies in Industry, Municipality, Public and Small Business.

10. Discussion and possible action to approve recommendations from the Nominations Committee for the appointment of voting members of the East Texas Regional Water Planning Group: no action.

**11. Report from consultant team – including discussion and possible action by RWPG:
Brigit Buff (Plummer Asso.), Jordan Skipwith (Freese & Nichols) and
Andy Donnelly & James Beach (Advanced Groundwater Solutions LLC)**

- a. Update on TWDB Adopted Revisions to the Population and Demand Projection in the 2026 Regional Water Plan (2026 RWP) – Brigit Buff
The purpose of this meeting is to update, review and answer questions about the data and information to be contained in the Technical Memorandum that is due March 5th. No action will be taken today – final updates and official approval of the TM by the group will be at the February 15th meeting. Brigit reviewed the project schedule. We received approval for final projections for population and demand from TWDB Nov 9th. There were some minor adjustments made due to overlap with surrounding regions. Brigit reviewed the data, graphs and calculations for updated water demands which basically results in a projected 12% increase from the previous cycle.
- b. Discussion of updates on Surface Water Supply Projection – Jordan Skipwith
Two steps are involved in evaluating surface water supply projections: 1) assess the available surface water in the region, 2) then determine the accessibility of that surface water to water users in the area. Surface water is a resource of the State and the TCEQ assigns the water right permits by priority dates. Jordan reviewed the assumptions made developing the WAM (Water Availability Model) and the modifications regional water planning groups are allowed to make. Planning for maximum water availability from reservoirs is determined individually, using projected supply and demands under a repeat of the historic drought-of-record condition, and also taking projected sedimentation into account. Methodology of determining the sedimentation rates, as well as the actual rates (from TWDB) will be included in the TM. Run-of-river water availability is determined in a similar manner. Non-permitted local water supplies are estimated from TWDB surveys. Jordan showed more detailed data related to specific water supply areas in the region.
- c. Discussion of Updates on Groundwater Supply Projection – Andy Donnelly, James Beach
The different Groundwater Management Areas (GMA) assist the regional water planning groups in developing Models of Available Groundwater (MAG) so that each RWPG can determine supply and water management strategies for groundwater. Andy discussed the MAG and non-MAG for specific aquifers in Region I and presented tables showing the data relevant to this planning cycle. The data shows the available groundwater supply is increasing up in the Gulf Coast area but stayed the same or decreased in all other areas. Andy reported that some of the GMAs received an updated groundwater availability model in the middle of their planning cycle and the groups did not have time to make the adjustments needed. John McFarland pointed out that GMA 11 used the updated model and pumping estimates from the State but time was not an issue in calculating water availability. The consultants for the GMA determined that the resulting impacts were largely due to changes in the model, and they are also using actual monitoring data in the analysis. James Beach explained some of the possible problems with the model updates and that the data may need to be adjusted in future planning cycles. Kelley Holcomb asked if these anomalies in the model will be noted in our report and James reported that it should be. Andy discussed strategies for water management in the counties where the MAG availability declined. We still need to determine how to allocate the decreases in water supply to each of the individual WUGs.

- d. Discussion of Draft Water Needs and Updates on Demand Allocations – Brigit
Brigit went through the checklist for basic water planning - water demands minus water supply equals water needs or surplus. We discussed and determined demand projections in previous meetings and discussed the data to determine existing supply here today. We are in the process of adjusting the allocation of supply in each WUG to determine the need within the region. We will then determine which water management strategies are most appropriate to meet those water needs. The reports and data for supply, demands, needs and water management strategies in Region I will be submitted to the TWDB in the TM.
- e. Discussion of Conservation and Reuse Methodology – Brigit
The State requires RWPGs to consider conservation and reuse as a water management strategy. We are in the process of collecting the strategies used for conservation from each of the WUGs in our region. The users should be updating their conservation plans with TCEQ by May 1. Brigit reviewed strategies in the previous 2021 plan, which did not include reuse in our region. We will be studying the viability of reuse as a possible management strategy in some areas in the region and whether or not it should be incorporated in the current plan.
- f. Status update on Infeasible Water Strategies – Brigit
We do not anticipate having any infeasible water strategies in the 2026 plan.
- g. Status Update on the Hydrological Variance Request for Surface Water Supplies – Brigit
We have received approval from TWDB for our variance requests as discussed during our October meeting.

Chapters 1 & 2 have been drafted and will be sent out to members soon for review.

12. Reports from other state agencies, as necessary:

- a. Texas Water Development Board – Lann Bookout
The Texas Water Fund was passed the last legislative session and TWDB is seeking public input. Dates for workshops concerning financial applications are available on the website. The state is busy processing loan applications for clean water and drinking water. Water use surveys from all water users in the state are due March 4th.
- b. Texas Department of Parks & Wildlife – Stephen Lange
Introduced Daniel Price, the new Pineywoods Ecosystem Project Leader who is located in Nacogdoches. Proposition 14 passed and TSPW received one billion dollars Jan 1st to be held and earn interest to provide approximately 20 million dollars per year for the acquisition of property and development of new parks throughout the state. TDPW also received funding for acquisition of wildlife management and demonstration areas. The agency has funds available from the Farm Bill for water quality/quantity improvements for individual property owners. Explained the process for managing and encouraging prescribed burning.
- c. Texas Department of Agriculture – not present; no report.
- d. Texas Soil and Water Conservation Board – not present; no report.

- e. Groundwater Management Areas –
John McFarland (GMA 11) – GMA 11 is planning to meet in April in Nacogdoches. Region I members will be notified and are invited to attend.
John Martin (GMA 14) – GMA 14 has very active participation in meetings. They are working on a request for possible adjustments to the new model developed and adopted by the TWDB for the Upper Gulf Coast Area. Next meeting is Feb 29th in Conroe.

13. General Discussion – John requested that all members should have taken PIA and OPA trainings and several still need to submit their certificates to Cheryl as soon as possible. He also requested that everyone check the contact information listed in the draft directory on the front table and add their cell phone, if possible, for last minute text communications.

14. Set Next Meeting Dates –
Next Meeting is **Thursday, February 15th** to vote on final approval of the Technical Memorandum. Brigit emphasized the importance of attendance and having a quorum for this meeting. She reviewed a short list of the information already discussed and the three new items to be presented in this February meeting before taking action to approve the TM.

15. Adjourned at 12:20 pm.

APPROVED THIS _____

John Martin, Chair
ETRWPG – Region I

ATTEST: _____
Terry Stelly, Secretary