

MEETING MINUTES

Lower Colorado Regional Water Planning Group Meeting

October 26, 2022, 10:00 a.m.

LCRA Dalchau Service Center

3505 Montopolis Drive

Austin, TX

Members Signed in:

Daniel Berglund, Small Business

Christianne Castleberry, Water
Utilities

Ron Fieseler, GMA 9

Lauri Gillam, Municipalities

David Lindsay, Recreation

Barbara Johnson, Industries

Tim Loftus, GMA 10

Jim Luther, Counties

Teresa Lutes, Municipalities

Monica Masters, River Authorities

Ann McElroy, Environmental

Carol Olewin, Public

Mike Reagor, Municipalities

Robert Ruggiero, Small Business

Paul Sliva, Agriculture

Mitchell Sodek, GMA 8

Byron Theodosis, Counties

Paul Tybor, GMA 7

David Van Dresar, Water Districts

Jennifer Walker, Environmental

Voting Members Absent

Jim Brasher, GMA 15

Jason Ludwig, Electric Gen. Utilities

Charles Olfers, Agriculture

Jim Totten, GMA 12

Emil Uecker, Counties

Support/Consultants/Visitors

Neil Deeds, INTERA

Van Kelly, INTERA

Annette Keaveny, LCRA

Lann Bookout, TWDB

Amanda Covington, TWDB

Katie Dahlberg, TWDB

Sara Eatman, Austin Water

Helen Gerlach, Austin Water

Sarah Hoes, Austin Water

Jason Afinowitz, FNI

David Bradsby, Blanton & Associates

Alicia Smiley, Black & Veatch

Bob Reedy, UT BEG	Jamie Burke, Black & Veatch
Blake Neffendorf, City of Buda	Mike Thuss, WRA
Sue Thornton, CTWC and Alternate for Recreation	Jody Fauley, Alternate for Counties
Cindy Smiley, Smiley Law Firm	Paul Babb, GMA 9-8
Robert Adams, Plummer	Jason Homan, Alternate for Environmental
Charlie Flatten, HTGCD	David Young, TPWD
Earl L. Foster, LMUD	Laurence Brown, TSSWCB
Shrader Davis, CTGCD	

Quorum

Quorum: Yes

Number of voting members or alternates representing voting members present: 20

Number required for quorum per current voting membership of 25: 13

Number of voting members required for 2/3 vote: 17

Formal Actions Taken:

1. The Planning Group accepted the resignation of Judge Byron Theodosis and approved a motion to post for nominations for the vacant Counties position with LCRA to send notice to County Judges and County Clerks via email rather than physical mail.
2. The minutes from the July 27, 2022 were approved as presented.
3. The Planning Group approved a motion to hold future full Planning Group regular meetings in person and to post an audio recording of the meeting, available to the public.
4. Terry Bray was approved as the Region K Liaison to the Region G Planning Group.

Regular Meeting:

1. Chair David Van Dresar called the meeting to order at 10:01 am.
2. Chair Van Dresar welcomed all to the meeting and introduced TWDB Director George Peyton:
 - a. Director Peyton shared his appreciation for the planning groups who do the heavy lifting for planning around the state. Director Peyton noted that Texas is projecting population growth of 70% over the next 50 years and water supplies are becoming more difficult to access. The Director thanked the planning group for their participation in finding the best path forward.

3. Public comment

- a. Blake Neffendorf, City of Buda, stated that the bylaws say that the planning group may post requests for nominations publicly and he encouraged the group to post publicly, suggesting that this is the fairest way to fill a vacancy.

4. Planning Group Membership – Secretary Teresa Lutes

- a. Teresa Lutes conducted a verbal attendance roll call.
 - b. Ms. Lutes called the groups attention to the attendance report included in the packets and requested review and corrections, if needed.
 - c. Voting Member representing the Counties interest category:
 - i. Chair Van Dresar and the planning group acknowledged the resignation of Judge Byron Theodosis and his participation in Region K for 12 years; a plaque of appreciation and service was given to Judge Theodosis along with the group’s gratitude. The Judge expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to serve on the board.
 - ii. Chair Van Dresar stated that the bylaws allow for the planning group to decide whether or not to post for nominations to fill a vacancy. Barbra Johnson and others expressed support to post the vacancy and request nominations. Members suggested that the bylaws should be followed; Teresa Lutes clarified that the bylaws allow us to post or not post at the discretion of the group, but in this case she supported posting. Ms. Lutes made a motion to post the position for nominations and election, which was seconded by Daniel Berglund. Monica Masters asked for a friendly amendment to allow LCRA to send notice to County Judges and County Clerks via email rather than physical mail; Barbara Johnson clarified that the current bylaws allow for email notification, so no amendment is needed. The motion to post for nominations for the vacant Counties position, LCRA to send notice to County Judges and County Clerks via email, was approved with none opposed.
5. Chair Van Dresar asked that the planning group review and consider approval of meeting minutes from the July 27, 2022 RWPG meeting. Daniel Burglund made a motion to approve minutes as written; Ron Fieseler seconded and the motion was approved with none opposed.
6. Meeting logistics - Chair Van Dresar outlined meeting format options: in person, virtually, or in a hybrid format. The Chair noted his preference for in-person meetings and requested the group’s opinions on best logistics.

Teresa Lutes discussed the pros and cons of each, and presented some possible hybrid options, where certain individuals like presenters and the Executive Committee would attend in person but a hybrid option would be available so planning group members and individuals from the public could participate virtually. Ms. Lutes noted that another option is to hold meetings at different locations throughout the basin. Jennifer Walker asked LCRA to describe the technology

requirements of online/hybrid meetings to better understand what's practical. Monica Masters stated that LCRA has three rooms that can accommodate the virtual meetings and a fairly small AV team that helps with set up. As long as Region K meetings don't conflict with other LCRA commitments, Ms. Masters indicated that it shouldn't be a problem to accommodate online or hybrid meetings. Committee meetings have mostly been held at INTERA offices, which can also potentially host small hybrid meetings. Ron Fieseler noted that Region L and the flood planning group he is on meet in person, but either stream or post a recording of their meetings for the public to watch. He noted his preference not to have hybrid meetings because they're complicated and often have technology/audio issues. Mike Reagor noted that his alternate attends online when available, and this option is helpful. Ron Fieseler asked if it's easier to record and post the recording later as opposed to streaming the meeting live. Monica Masters said that it is easier for LCRA to audio record and post rather than host a hybrid or streaming meeting. Carol Olewin suggested that if the group selects hybrid meetings, there should be rules that ensure high sound quality for presentations. Jennifer Walker asked if it's possible to stream the meeting without having a way for people watching to provide input. Chair Van Dresar said that he thought that the public needed to have a way to provide comment, this question could be looked into further in the future. David Lindsay said that if the meeting locations moved around the basin, David would support a hybrid option. Barbara Johnson noted that she found it difficult to conduct hybrid meetings as a committee chair. Mitchell Sodek and Paul Sliva both noted their preference for in-person meetings even though they have a long drive to Austin.

Ron Fieseler made a motion for the full planning group meetings to occur in-person only and Lauri Gillam seconded the motion. Teresa Lutes offered a friendly amendment to the motion, suggesting that at least one meeting per year be held outside of Austin. After further discussion Ms. Lutes withdrew the motion, noting that this could be accomplished for individual meetings in the agenda item to consider the date and location of the next meeting. Discussion followed regarding LCRA's ability to stream or record meetings outside of Austin; Ms. Masters noted that LCRA could record but not stream meetings outside of their Austin facilities. Additionally, Ms. Lutes clarified that this is an audio recording as opposed to a video recording. David Lindsay asked for clarification if the motion applied to all Region K meetings including committee meetings; Mr. Fieseler clarified that his motion referred only to full planning group regular meetings. Mr. Fieseler's motion was revised to future full planning group regular meetings to occur in-person with an audio recording being made available online afterwards. The motion was approved.

7. Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) Report

- a. Lann Bookout, TWDB, presented a timeline for projections to be released to planning groups by TWDB. Population and municipal demand projections are expected in February of 2023, comments from Region K are due August

2023. All data released by TWDB so far is available online.¹ There are significant new requirements for 2026 Regional Water Plans, including a technical memo for anticipated sedimentation, a separate section for reuse availability, a new template checklist for hydrologic variance requests, identification of infeasible water management strategies in the approved 2021 plans, and a review of near-term water management strategies to determine implementation strategies. Daniel Berglund asked who determines whether a project is feasible or infeasible; Lann noted that the regional water planning groups are responsible for determining those criteria, but TWDB can provide suggestions and feedback.

- b. Katie Dahlberg, TWDB, presented on the irrigation projections for irrigation demands for the 2026 regional water plans. The methodology is essentially the same as the last planning cycle: draft irrigation demands are based on the average of the most recent five-year water use estimates (2015-2019) for each county, and either held constant or reduced proportionally where groundwater availability falls below baseline demands. The new projections are lower for 2027 than in 2022. Last planning cycle, Region K requested an increase in irrigation demands in near-term horizon and requested gradual decline in further-out horizons.²

Ron Fieseler explained that groundwater management area (GMA) rules allow for aquifers or portions of aquifers to be declared as not relevant for joint planning purposes.³ Non-relevant modeled available groundwater (MAG) refers to portions of aquifers that GMAs can manage but are not captured in the model. The Planning Group asked why TWDB chose to constrain irrigation demands only based on groundwater and not surface water. Ms. Dahlberg replied that there is not detailed or sufficient water use information available to apply the same methodology using surface water.

- c. Bob Reedy, of Bureau of Economic Geology, presented on the mining projections and methodology. All data is available in the report on the TWDB website. Three main sectors discussed: coal mining (smallest use), oil & gas mining (biggest user), and aggregate mining. The study considered mining use statewide, but demands are driven by the major oil and gas plays. Overall projections stay relatively constant in nearer decades and drop off towards the end of the planning horizon as oil and gas drilling is projected to decrease.⁴

¹ TWDB projections for 6th Cycle of planning:

<https://www.twdb.texas.gov/waterplanning/data/projections/2027/projections.asp>

² Irrigation projection methodology:

https://www.twdb.texas.gov/waterplanning/data/projections/2027/doc/IrrigationProjMethod_2026RWP.PDF

³ TWDB reference on Joint Groundwater Planning:

https://www.twdb.texas.gov/groundwater/docs/TWDB%20DFC%20Support_May%202020.pdf

⁴ BEG report for TWDB: <https://www.twdb.texas.gov/waterplanning/data/projections/MiningStudy/index.asp>

8. Consultant Report - INTERA

Neil Deeds and Van Kelley provided the consultant report from INTERA. Mr. Deeds noted that Stephanie Moore, who had been the Project Manager (PM), moved abroad and Mr. Deeds is the new PM.

- a. INTERA has submitted the request to TWDB for revisions to the list of Water User Groups (WUGs). Revision requests for irrigation and mining projections are due on July 14, 2023 and INTERA has begun their review.
- b. Mr. Deeds noted that INTERA will continue to review the mining and irrigation projections, evaluate availability and existing water supplies, and review the draft population and municipal demand projections when they're made available (scheduled for February of 2023).

9. Interregional Coordination Activities – Chair Van Dresar

- a. Interregional Planning Council meeting, November 9, 2022
- b. Updates from liaisons to neighboring planning regions
 - i. Liaison to Region G: empty
 - ii. Liaison to Region J: Paul Tybor did not attend the last meeting but will review the agenda and minutes.
 - iii. Liaison to Region L: Ron Fieseler plans to attend the next meeting, scheduled for November 3rd, but may have a conflict.
 - iii. Liaison to Region P: Daniel Berglund attended the last meeting, on September 19th, looked at TWDB projections and reviewed the planning process.
 - iv. Liaison to Region F: empty
 - v. Liaison to Region H: empty
- c. Consideration of vacancies
 - i. Barbara Johnson recommended Terry Bray, her alternate, as the Liaison to Region G. Mr. Bray is a lawyer who works in the water area, has strong interest in water issues. The group approved Terry Bray as Liaison to Region G.

10. Financial report was included in the meeting packet for review. Chair Van Dresar observed that the Planning Group is on track so far with projected expenses.

11. Upcoming meetings

- a. Location and date of RWPG meeting
 - i. January 11, 2023 at LCRA Dalchau Center in Austin
- b. Other committee meetings
 - i. The Population and Demand Committee meeting will be held November 2nd

12. New/other business

- a. Ron Fieseler stated his concern that this agenda heading is not specific enough to meet State of Texas meetings requirements. Recommend changing wording to "future agenda topics".

13. Public comments

- a. None.

14. Chair Van Dresar adjourned the meeting at 12:17 pm.