

**Minutes of the South Central Texas Regional Water Planning Group  
August 05, 2021**

Chair Andruss called the virtual meeting to order at 9:30 a.m., held through the GoToMeeting online platform.

23 of the 26 voting members, or their alternates, were present.

**Voting Members Present:**

Tim Andruss	Roland Ruiz
John Byrum	Blaine Schorp for Diane Savage
Rey Chavez	Mitchell Sowards
Curt Campbell	Heather Sumpter
Charlie Flatten	Thomas Taggart
Steve Graham	Ian Taylor
Vic Hilderbran	Dianne Wassenich
Thomas Jungman	Adam Yablonski
Russell Labus	
Glenn Lord	
Daniel Meyer	
Jonathan Stinson for Kevin Patteson	
Robert Puente	
Humberto Ramos	
Weldon Riggs	

**Voting Members Absent:**

Will Conley  
Gary Middleton  
Steve Ramsey

**Non-Voting Members Present:**

Kelley Kowal for Marty Kelly, TX Department of Parks and Wildlife  
Elizabeth McCoy, Texas Water Development Board (TWDB)

**Non-Voting Members Absent:**

Iliana Delgado, TCEQ  
Ronald Fieseler, Region K Liaison  
Jami McCool, TX Dept. of Agriculture  
Don McGhee, Region M Liaison  
Charles Wiedenfeld, Region J Liaison  
Carl Crull, Region N Liaison  
Rusty Ray, Texas Soil & Water Cons. Board

*Beginning with the February 11, 2016, meeting of the South Central Texas Regional Water Planning Group, all recordings are available for the public at [www.regionltexas.org](http://www.regionltexas.org).*

## **AGENDA ITEM NO. 1: (9:30 AM) ROLL CALL**

Ms. Kendall Hayes, San Antonio River Authority, called the role, and confirmed a quorum.

## **AGENDA ITEM NO. 2: PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comments.

## **AGENDA ITEM NO. 3: APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FROM MAY 06, 2021, MEETING OF THE SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS REGIONAL WATER PLANNING GROUP (SCTRWPG)**

Mr. Puente noted that the second sentence under Agenda Item No.10 is incorrect, “Holding this process in open meetings would be subject to the Open Meetings Act, thereby making the process public for contractors’ rivals’ review”. With the recorded understanding that this statement is incorrect, Mr. Puente would approve the minutes.

Mr. Taggart abstained from voting on minutes, as he was not present at the last meeting.

Chair Andruss suggested that the group identify the sentence as an inaccuracy and proceed with the adoption of the minutes.

Ms. Heller asked for clarification on the inaccuracy. Mr. Puente explained that the meeting would only be subject to the Open Meetings Act if a certain number of planning group members were present.

Mr. Yablonski remembered that this clarification was made during the meeting.

Chair Andrus asked for objections to amending the minutes. Mr. Byrum moved that the minutes from May’s meeting be amended to fix the inaccuracy and under that condition, adopt the amended minutes. Mr. Riggs seconded the motion as amended, and the motion was adopted by consensus.

## **AGENDA ITEM NO. 4: STATUS REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS BY TEXAS WATER DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

Ms. McCoy, TWDB, noted that the Regional Water Planning rules pamphlet and public notice have been updated with newly revised rules and are now available online. The 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle planning contracts has been sent and Region L’s has been fully executed.

The 2022 State Water plan has been adopted as of July 7 and has an interactive feature online. The inaugural Interregional Planning Council dissolved and TWDB will need nominations for those to serve on the next council. This council will serve until the 2027 state water plan is adopted.

Ms. McCoy provided a legislative update. House Bill 1907 relieves the RWPGs from assessing financing needs to implement water management strategies and no longer requires an Infrastructure Financing Report. The bill relieves SWIFT Applicants from submitting an

Infrastructure Financing Survey for financial assistance and also relieves the RWPGs from prioritizing projects within the regional water plans. This will go into effect on September 1<sup>st</sup>.

Chair Andruss asked to confirm that they are not going to have to prioritize projects from lowest to highest priority. Ms. McCoy confirmed that they will not.

#### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 5: STATUS REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS RELATED TO REGIONAL WATER PLANNING INCLUDING REPORTS BY THE CHAIR, REGIONAL LIAISONS, GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AREA REPRESENTATIVES, AND MEMBERS OF THE PLANNING GROUP**

Chair Andruss provided his Chair Report. He encouraged members of the RWPG to explore TWDB's interactive statewide water plan online. He reminded the committee that Greg Sengelmann has resigned from the planning group. He encouraged RWPG members to contact Ms. Hayes if they are not receiving TWDB's newsletters.

Chair Andruss provided an update on Region P. They have not selected a technical consultant at this time. Their next meeting will be August 23<sup>rd</sup>. He provided an update on GMA 15. On April 8<sup>th</sup>, the representatives proposed a desired future condition for adoption and the public comment period opened on May 4<sup>th</sup> for 90 days. Their next meeting will be in October.

Ms. Dianne Wassenich, Liaison for Region K, provided an update on Region K. She noted that they had a long discussion regarding filling the vacancy of the public interest category. She was asked to provide an explanation on how Region L fills their vacancies. Ms. Wassenich asked that the planning group discuss today how it conducts public outreach to notify the public of a vacancy on the planning group.

#### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 6: PRE-PLANNING PUBLIC INPUT**

Ms. Hayes presented the Pre-Planning Public Input presentation. She provided a brief overview of the foundation and responsibilities of the SCTRWPG and the Regional Water Planning process. She then opened the floor to the public and asked if there are specific issues that should be addressed or provisions that should be included in the 2026 Regional Water Plan and the 2027 State Water Plan. There were no public comments.

Ms. Hayes invited the planning group to participate in a deliberate discussion on interregional cooperation strategies. Chair Andruss noted that technical consultants have historically played a large role in coordinating with other regions. He asked if there will be additional funding provided by TWDB for these efforts. Ms. McCoy stated that this would be accomplished with the funds currently available. Chair Andruss confirmed with Ms. Hayes that Region L's current use of interregional liaisons fulfills TWDB's expectations for this effort.

Mr. Taggart asked Ms. McCoy if there have been any issues or deficiencies in coordination in forming this past cycle's water plan. Ms. McCoy explained that they haven't evaluated any such issues, but the Interregional Council identified a need for planning groups to coordinate with other regions earlier in the planning cycle.

Chair Andruss suggested that an agenda item be added on each future meeting related to Interregional Coordination. He requested documentation of strategies from the 2021 Regional Water Plan that rely on water from another region as well as other regions' plans that rely on water from Region L. Ms. Wassenich supported Chair Andruss' suggestion. Ms. McCoy stated that TWDB has that information available and will provide it to Chair Andruss. Ms. Wassenich asked where that information can be located. Ms. McCoy stated that it is available online.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 7: DISCUSSION AND APPROPRIATE ACTION REGARDING RECOMMENDATION BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON VACANCIES OF SCTRWPG VOTING MEMBER TERMS EXPIRING AUGUST 2021**

Chair Andruss stated that the Executive Committee met on July 29 to review and discuss the nominations. The Executive Committee's recommendation is to fill the uncontested seats with the nominees. With regard to the Municipalities interest category, the Executive Committee recommends that the incumbents fill vacancies: Tom Taggart, Robert Puente, and Gary Middleton.

Mr. Riggs moved to accept the Executive Committee's recommendation in full.

The planning group requested future agenda items specify the Region L vacancies and who the Executive Committee is suggesting fill them.

Ms. Wassenich suggested that term limits be added to the website.

The Committee asked how certain applications were categorized if they had not selected a box at the top of the application. Some applicants expressed their interest group directly to the Region L Administrator and that's how applications were categorized.

Mr. Taggart abstained from voting on the Municipalities category.

Hearing no other comments, Mr. Ramos seconded Mr. Riggs' original motion.

Chair Andruss separated the vote by interest groups and adopt the Executive Committee's recommendation by consensus.

Chair Andruss asked for any objections to adopting the Executive Committee's recommendation for the Agricultural interest group vacancies to be filled by Weldon Riggs and Adam Yablonski. Hearing no objections, the motion was adopted by consensus.

Chair Andruss asked for any objections to adopting the Executive Committee's recommendation for the Environmental interest group vacancies to be filled by Charlie Flatten and Vanessa Puig-Williams. Hearing no objections, the motion was adopted by consensus.

Chair Andruss asked for any objections to adopting the Executive Committee's recommendation for the Industries interest group vacancy to be filled by Rey Chavez. Hearing no objections, the motion was adopted by consensus.

Chair Andruss asked for any objections to adopting the Executive Committee's recommendation for the Municipalities interest group vacancies to be filled by Thomas Taggart, Robert Puente, and Gary Middleton. Mr. Byrum objected. Ms. Wassenich told Chair Andruss that this interest group was not part of the original motion; however, Mr. Riggs, the one who made the original motion, stated that this interest group was in the intention of his motion. Knowing this clarification, Chair Andruss asked again for any objections. Mr. Byrum objected, stating that the smaller cities need a voice in this interest group.

Chair Andruss moved on and asked for any objections to adopting the Executive Committee's recommendation for the River Authorities interest group vacancy to be filled by Jonathan Stinson. Hearing no objections, the motion was adopted by consensus.

Chair Andruss asked for any objections to adopting the Executive Committee's recommendation for the Small Business interest group vacancy to be filled by Darren Simmons. Hearing no objections, the motion was adopted by consensus.

Chair Andruss asked for any objections to adopting the Executive Committee's recommendation for the Water Districts interest group vacancies to be filled by Russell Labus and Debbie Farmer. Hearing no objections, the motion was adopted by consensus.

Chair Andruss asked for any objections to adopting the Executive Committee's recommendation for the Water Utilities interest group vacancy to be filled by Amber Beard. Hearing no objections, the motion was adopted by consensus.

Chair Andruss returned to the Municipalities interest group. Mr. Byrum stated that he will move forward with the hope that the SCTRWPG will conduct deliberate public outreach to smaller, rural communities. Ms. Wassenich stated that she personally reached out to the Goliad County Judge to request that someone apply.

Chair Andruss asked for any objections to adopting the Executive Committee's recommendation for the Municipalities interest group vacancies to be filled by Thomas Taggart, Robert Puente, and Gary Middleton. Hearing no objections, the motion was adopted by consensus.

## **AGENDA ITEM NO. 8: DISCUSSION AND APPROPRIATE ACTION REGARDING THE RECOMMENDATION OF A TECHNICAL CONSULTANT FIRM TO THE SCTRWPG FOR THE 2026 REGIONAL WATER PLAN**

Ms. Heller explained that per their contract with TWDB, SARA had to stick to its own procurement process. This process was voted on in the last SCTRWPG meeting, where three members were selected to represent the planning group on a scoring committee. Those committee members were Charlie Flatten, John Byrum, and Humberto Ramos.

Mr. Flatten spoke to the technical consultant procurement process. The committee met multiple times. Applicants submitted proposals and gave presentations virtually. The margin of the final vote was slim. The committee unanimously recommended Black & Veatch.

Several members of the RWPG expressed concern with the amount of information available to the full committee for it to be comfortable supporting the evaluation committee's recommendation. Mr. Puente moved that the planning group postpone this decision until the applicants can be interviewed by the group. Mr. Ramos seconded this motion. Discussion of the information needed for the RWPG to make an informed recommendation of which respondent technical consultant SARA should commence contracting with ensued.

Based on the committee discussion, Mr. Taylor recommended that the planning group allow SARA to review its solicitation. He is in favor of giving the entire group access to the Statements of Qualification and evaluation criteria. He then proposed having the respondent consultant firms present at the next meeting so that the planning group may ask questions of the firms.

Mr. Taggart asked that the planning group adopt Mr. Taylor's suggestion and allow the responsive consultant firms to give presentations.

Mr. Taylor moved that SARA review the solicitation, that all members of the planning group receive Statements of Qualification and evaluation criteria, and that in the next Planning Group meeting, the responsive consultant firms be present to respond to questions. Mr. Graham seconded the motion.

Ms. Allison Elder, Director of Legal Services at the San Antonio River Authority, reminded Chair Andruss that there is an existing motion made by Mr. Puente. Mr. Puente withdrew his motion.

Chair Andruss asked for additional discussion on the motion made by Mr. Taylor and seconded by Mr. Graham. There was no additional discussion. The motion was adopted by consensus.

Chair Andruss asked if there is a scheduling requirement for placing this item on the next meeting's agenda. Ms. Heller explained that the SCTRWPG can call a special meeting with at least 2 weeks' notice. Chair Andruss stated his preference to conduct this agenda item at the next scheduled meeting in November. Ms. McCoy stated that TWDB will provide the RWPG's with data for the next step in the planning process in December. Chair Andruss stated that this agenda item will be placed on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled meeting in November, pending the River Authority's review of procurement documents. There were no objections and no additional discussion on the matter.

#### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 9: PUBLIC AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING**

Mr. Yablonski stated that he currently serves as the planning group's liaison for Region J. He has spoken with Mr. Byrum and would like to nominate Mr. Byrum to serve as Region J's liaison and name this as an agenda item for the November meeting.

Ms. Heller stated that filling the remaining vacancies under the Counties and Electric Generating Utilities interest groups will be added to November's agenda with the requested specific language.

#### **AGENDA ITEM NO. 10: PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comments.

**AGENDA ITEM NO. 11: ADJOURN**

Chair Andruss called the meeting to adjourn at 11:20 AM.