

**Minute of the September 24, 2020 Meeting of
The Coastal Bend Regional Water Planning Group (Region N)
For the Senate Bill 1 Regional Water Planning Program**

The Coastal Bend Regional Water Planning Group for the Senate Bill 1 was held via virtual Zoom Conference.

Agenda Item I – Call to Order: Ms. Carola Serrato, Co-Chair of the Coastal Bend RWPG, called the meeting to order at 1:32 PM.

Agenda Item II – Roll Call: Mr. Travis Pruski began roll call.

Voting members of the Coastal Bend RWPG in attendance included:

Mr. Joe Almarez (Industries)	Mr. Scott Bledsoe III (Water District)
Mr. Chuck Burns (Agriculture)	Mr. John Burris (Other)
Ms. Teresa Carrillo (Environmental)	Mr. Carl Crull (Other)
Mr. Andy Garza (GMA 16)	Mr. Robert Kunkel (Industries)
Ms. Barbara Reaves (Municipal)	Mr. Tom Redding (River Authorities)
Mr. Charles Ring (Agriculture)	Ms. Donna Rosson (Public)
Mr. Mark Scott (Municipal)	Ms. Carola Serrato (Water Utilities)
Mr. Lonnie Stewart (GMA 13)	

Non-Voting members of the Coastal Bend RWPG in attendance included:

Ms. Nelda Barrera (TDA)	Mr. Kevin Smith (TWDB)
Mr. John Byrum (Nueces River Authority)	Ms. Kristi Shaw (HDR)
Mr. Rusty Ray (TSSWCB)	

Victoria Salinas, Sky Lewey, and Travis Pruski (Nueces River Authority) administration

Voting Members Absent:

Mr. Bill Dove (Small Business)	Mr. Lavoyger Durham (Counties)
Mr. Gary Eddins (Electric Utilities)	Dr. Pancho Hubert (Small Business)
Mr. Bill Stockton (Counties)	Mr. Mark Sugarek (GMA 15)
Mr. Jace Tunnell (Environment)	

Guest Included:

Ms. Kathleen Jackson (TWDB)	Mr. Matt Nelson (TWDB)
Mr. Dariel Ramirez	Ms. Maria Corona
Mr. John Michael	Mr. Esteban Ramos
Mr. Brian Williams	Mr. Marvin Townsend

Agenda Item III – General Public Comment

Citizens may address the Planning Group concerning an issue of interest that is not listed on the agenda. Public Comment is limited to 3 minutes.

Ms. Serrato introduced TWDB Director Kathleen Jackson who provided comments on the SB1 planning process and TWDB activities. Ms. Jackson thanked the participants for their efforts and interest. She reported that the TWDB reached a milestone by committing \$30 billion in

projects to communities across the state, of those about 50% of those commitments have been since 2013. She noted that many of the projects can be attributed to the work of the Regional Water Planning Groups putting together strategies which become projects and will provide water supplies for future generations.

Ms. Jackson added that the TWDB had a successful bond sale recently with an exceptional interest rate. Further, the funds are for wastewater projects as well as projects for water supply, as well as large and small communities.

Ms. Jackson described the TWDB's asset management program for small communities and the TWDB's new program, which created the State Flood Plan. She noted that many interested Coastal Bend residents either nominated themselves or nominated others to serve in the inaugural regional flood planning groups and the TWDB would be announcing person selected on October 1st. The new flood planning groups will meet and select a political subdivision and the flood mitigation planning process will begin.

Ms. Jackson also touched upon the TWDB's financial assistance and their website devoted to the prioritization of flood mitigation projects. She added that watershed wide planning is high on the priority list. The Development Board received a total of \$770 million in projects which the Board allocated 30% to grant and 70% to loan. In addition to mitigation projects, funding is available for Early Warning Systems. She concluded her statement by thanking the Working Group for their leadership.

Ms. Serrato thanked Director Jackson. There were no other public comments made.

Agenda Item IV – Consider Approval of Minutes of the September 3rd, 2020 Meeting of the Coastal Bend Regional Water Planning Group.

Mr. Charles Ring made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Carl Crull seconded it.

Ms. Serrato asked if there were any further questions or comments from the members.

Hearing none, Mr. Pruski started the roll call. All present members voted yes and the motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item V - Consider Authorizing the Executive Committee to Approve Non-Substantial edits recommended by HDR Engineering, Inc. (HDR) to the 2021 Coastal Bend (Region N) Regional Water Plan after Region N adoption prior to the final submittal to the Texas Water Development Board

Ms. Kristi Shaw with HDR and Mr. Kevin Smith with TWDB discussed the need for the Group's authorization for non-substantial edits. Mr. Scott Bledsoe III asked for an example of a Non-substantial change. Ms. Shaw explained that any type of graphical or editorial issues that HDR would correct.

Ms. Serrato asked for a motion to authorize the Executive Committee to approve Non-Substantial edits recommended by HDR Engineering, Inc. to the 2021 Coastal Bend Regional Water Plan after Region N adoption but prior to the final submittal to the Texas Water Development Board.

Mr. Crull made a motion to authorize the Executive Committee to approve Non-Substantial edits recommended by HDR Engineering, Inc. to the 2021 Coastal Bend Regional Water Plan after Region N adoption but prior to the final submittal to the Texas Water Development Board. Mr. Andy Garza seconded it.

Ms. Serrato asked if there were any further questions or comments from the members.

Hearing none, Mr. Pruski started the roll call. All present members voted yes and the motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item VI – Consider Approval and Adoption of the 2021 Region N Regional Water Plan

Ms. Kristi Shaw gave an overview of the plan. She indicated that there are several major components of the plan.

The main body of the report includes a planning area description, as well as population and water demand projections out to 2070. It covers all the technical administrative code requirements and Texas Water Development Board guidelines with most work focused on water strategy development.

Water management strategies take into consideration the projected needs of the region. Needs showing up on a water user group level and wherever there is a shortfall, or need is made up with water management strategies. Every need is considered and there is a projected strategy to meet the needs, so there are no unmet needs in the Plan.

Regarding strategies, the Plan considered conservation first. Several water management strategies identified for the region were fully evaluated so that they could be identified as recommended strategies. Those included re-use, a local balancing storage reservoir for Nueces County WCID#3, ASR, and Gulf Coast Aquifer supplies, subject to modeled available groundwater (MAG) limitations on groundwater.

Additional strategies evaluated included brackish seawater desalination, groundwater desalination, and water plant expansion and improvements. These strategies were used to address the supply plans for regional entities through 2070.

Other aspects in the Plan included consistency with protection of resources and evaluating drought response for Region N which has a new drought of record since the last round of planning. Water management strategies considered new information on drought which included safe yield for the Corpus Christi regional water supply system in the event a future drought is more severe than the region's historical experience.

The Plan includes legislative recommendations; many of those were developed by the subcommittee of the regional planning group and brought to Region N for consideration. New in the Plan is information on infrastructure financing. The region reached out to water user groups and wholesale water providers and sponsors to get information on how they plan to finance water management strategies in the Plan which helps the Texas Water Development Board plan for their projects. The infrastructure finance chapter summarizes responses received from

water user groups and sponsors and specifically what types of funding they could request from the Texas Water Development Board.

Chapter 10 summarizes the meetings held in developing the Regional Plan including the subcommittee meetings that provided direction for the group in considering complex responses required in the Plan.

Chapter 11 summarizes all the water management strategies considered through the previous regional water Plan, including why they were evaluated and are no longer relevant.

The Plan includes numerous appendices. Appendix F includes every comment received on the Initially Prepared Plan (IPP), including comments from individuals, comments received by the agencies as well as the responses approved by the group.

With regards to growth, the population is expected to increase. Much of the population is currently in San Patricio and Nueces counties. But the whole region in the 11-county areas is expected to increase. Total demands are expected to increase as well. The manufacturing sector is anticipating significant growth in water demands as shown in pie charts in the executive summary.

The Plan also considers changes to available supplies including modeled available groundwater (MAG) information from the groundwater conservation district process for determining groundwater supplies. The reason for the existing supplies' change is twofold. One reason is sedimentation in the surface water systems. Rural water users and non-municipal uses are expected to decline over time and are predominantly served by groundwater sources.

The executive summary includes a summary of supplies and demands and where the shortages occur for each of the 4 wholesale water providers for the region. The Plan examines the locations of the water demands in comparison to the location of the existing supplies resulting in determining where the needs are located and the development of water management strategies. First and foremost, the Plan focuses on water user groups that are showing needs in the 50-year projection period.

However, there are water user groups considering water supply projects even though the water user is not showing a need in the Plan. These projects are shown in the Plan. This is an important feature of the Plan since it provides valuable details of what water providers are considering for implementation. The Region N Plan looks at future water planning twofold—meeting needs and showing the projects that the sponsors are building.

The water management strategy evaluation section includes numerous metrics: water supply, reliability during drought conditions, environmental factors, water quality, and others summarized at the end of each water management evaluation.

In summary, there are two counties in the 11-county area that do not show any needs over the 50-year projection period, Aransas and McMullen counties. Most of the other counties reported some water user groups with needs. Drilling additional wells was shown as the strategy to

meet needs for those currently served by groundwater supplies in Bee, Brooks, Duval, Jim Wells, Kenedy and some of the other counties.

The City of Alice in Jim Wells County is an example of a water user developing water projects, including a brackish groundwater desalination project being funded through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund. That project is listed as a water management strategy. The Plan also includes a re-use project for the City.

For Kleberg County and Live Oak County, the water management strategies are predominantly water conservation and developing additional groundwater supplies.

For Nueces County and San Patricio County, additional strategies were included: a local balancing storage to firm up the run of the river rights for the Nueces County WCID#3, for the City of Corpus Christi, water treatment plant improvements, for Nueces County manufacturing and San Patricio County manufacturing users, Plan strategies include manufacturing conservation, ASR, Evangeline/Laguna LP groundwater desalination, seawater desalination with Corpus Christi's Inner Harbor project and the Port of Corpus Christi Authority's Harbor Island Project. For San Patricio County, desalination projects include the Corpus Christi's La Quinta project, Port of Corpus Christi Authority's La Quinta project, as well as the Poseidon and Ingleside seawater desalination project.

Ms. Shaw noted that during the needs assessment, existing contracts were prioritized per Water Development Board guidance. Additionally, the supplies were prioritized to fulfill municipal needs first. Shortages are placed on the manufacturing users after the municipal needs were satisfied. For San Patricio County, their water management strategies looked at desalination as well as San Patricio Municipal Water District looking at a regional industrial wastewater reuse plan. Chapter 5 details water supply plans for each individual water user group and county.

Ms. Shaw presented a summary slide which is included in the Plan and the recommended water management strategies and compares them to one another. As expected, the lower cost water management strategies are associated with conservation like municipal water conservation. However, those projects are often insufficient to meet large demands therefore other strategies are developed and shown. This summary slide shows how desalination compares with some of the other water management strategies in the region from a unit cost and yield perspective.

Mr. John Burris thanked Kristi for her outstanding job and made a motion for adoption, approval, and publication of the Plan.

Mr. Mark Scott seconded the motion.

Ms. Serrato asked if there were any further questions or comments from the members.

Ms. Teresa Carrillo, representative for the environment, stated that several people have indicated that the work related to desal were problematic for different members of our environmental community. She also indicated that rather than desal, a commitment to more conservation for the growing population needs to be considered. In conclusion, she stated that desal is new to the Texas coast and the implications are unknown on our marine environment.

Ms. Serrato thanked Ms. Carrillo for her comments and asked for any further questions or comments, hearing none she requested a roll call vote.

Mr. Pruski made the roll call.

Mr. Almarez – Aye
Mr. Bledsoe – Aye
Mr. Burns – Aye
Mr. Burris – Aye
Ms. Carrillo – Nay
Mr. Crull – Aye
Mr. Garza – Aye
Mr. Kunkel - Aye

Ms. Reeves – Aye
Mr. Redding – Aye
Mr. Ring – Aye
Ms. Rosson – Aye
Mr. Scott – Aye
Ms. Serrato – Aye
Mr. Stewart – Aye

The motion passed is 14 to 1 in favor of the ayes.

Agenda Item VII – Consider Authorizing the Nueces River Authority and or HDR Engineering to submit the following, on behalf of the regional water planning group to the Texas Water Development Board by the October 6th and November 5th Deadline for Database 22 Entry and Final Plan, respectively.

- **Final adopted 2021 Region N Regional Water Plan including non- substantial edits (if necessary) following the Region N adoption**
- **Final Approved Recommended Water Management strategies prioritization list and infrastructure financing survey results using the TWDB Templates.**
- **All Final Electronic Data Files, including those for the IFR survey and the WMS implementation Survey**
- **Final Complete GIS Data Package and TWDB DB22 Database Entry.**

Ms. Serrato asked Ms. Shaw to review the details of the agenda item.

Ms. Shaw explained that there is information that must be provided to the TWDB together with the final plan. One item is a water management strategies implementation survey, which was included in the Initially Prepared Plan (IPP) and found in the appendix. She indicated the Group had not received any additional information from sponsors on those. It summarizes the projects shown in the 2016 plan and which ones have been implemented. Another item is the spreadsheet associated with the infrastructure financing projects which was discussed and adopted at the September 3rd planning group meeting. The third is the prioritization of the recommended water management strategies. A Region N subcommittee reviewed, prepared, and provided those recommendations to the planning group during the last meeting and those were adopted. That spreadsheet will be filed with the DB22 reports as well as the GIS data files. Updates made to the Initially Prepared Plan (IPP) in response to TWDB comments were forwarded to Kevin Smith for TWDB review, and those were favorable to the board. New DB22 reports were received and will be included in the appendix. The GIS shape files will be provided as well as an electronic deliverable. In conclusion, Ms. Shaw stated that essentially this agenda item is to formalize that additional process so this information can be delivered to the TWDB in an expeditious way together with the final plan before the deadline.

Ms. Serrato asked for motion to approve the agenda item.

Mr. Lonnie Steward made a motion authorizing the Nueces River Authority and/or HDR Engineering to submit the Final adopted 2021 Region N Regional Water Plan including non-substantial edits, the Final Approved Recommended Water Management Strategies Prioritization List and Infrastructure Financing survey results, all Final Electronic Data Files, including those for the IFR survey and the WMS Implementation Survey, Final Complete GIS Data Package and TWDB DB22 Database Entry to the Texas Water Development Board by the October 6th and November 5th Deadline for Database 22 Entry and Final Plan, respectively. Ms. Barbara Reeves seconded the motion.

Ms. Serrato asked if there were any further questions or comments from the members.

Hearing none, Mr. Pruski started the roll call. All present members voted yes and the motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item VIII - RWPG/TWDB Administrative and Other Issues

Mr. Smith reported that there was a chairs conference call of the planning groups on September 10th which Ms. Serrato attended. Timelines for the planning cycle and getting the Regional water Plan approved and the major milestones for the sixth planning cycle were reviewed.

The TWDB will be reviewing Chapter 358, State water planning guidance principles starting next year.

The board is going to reopen the Chapter 357 which are the original water planning rules to revise the public notice requirements.

There could potentially be changes to these rules based on recommendations from the state committee which Mr. Carl Crull serves on as a representative for Region N. Their next meeting is September 30th when they are expected to approve their report with recommendations that would go to the Water Board; these recommendations could potentially change rules related to Regional Water Planning. The upcoming legislative session may also result in changes to the rules.

The TWDB is examining the possibility of allowing limited administrative costs for the political subdivision for reimbursement which would be consistent with the new flood planning rules. Mr. Smith acknowledged that Region N collects all of the administrative costs from the local entities.

Ms. Serrato asked Mr. Pruski to give the Nueces River Authority update.

Mr. Pruski thanked the Group. He stated that the Nueces River Authority looks forward to continuing to work with the Region N RWRG and the Authority would follow-up with Group members for guidance going forward for the next planning cycle.

Agenda Item X - Confirm Next Meeting Date – February 4th, 2021 1:30pm

Ms. Serrato stated that the next meeting is scheduled for February 4th, 2021 at 1:30pm.

XI Adjourn

Mr. Carl Crull moved for the meeting to be adjourned. It was seconded by Mr. Scott.

Mr. Pruski started the roll call. All present members voted yes and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Serrato adjourned the meeting at 2:39 p.m.

Minutes prepared by: Mr. Travis Pruski

Minutes Submitted by: _____

Lonnie Stewart
Secretary, Coastal Bend RWPG

_____ Date