

Meeting Minutes
Region 14 Upper Rio Grande Flood Planning Group Meeting
Thursday, 4.15.2021
9:00 AM
GoToWebinar Virtual Meeting

<u>Voting Member</u>	<u>Interest Category</u>	<u>Present (x) /Absent () / Alternate Present (*)</u>
Oscar D. "Jay" Ornelas	<i>Agricultural interests</i>	X
Gilberto Saldana Jr.	<i>Counties</i>	X
Jessica Christianson	<i>Electric generating utilities</i>	
Jeff Bennett	<i>Environmental interests</i>	X
Sal Masoud	<i>Industries</i>	X
Javier Acosta	<i>Municipalities</i>	X
David "Dave" Hall	<i>Public</i>	X
Rene Rodriguez	<i>Small business</i>	X
Omar L. Martinez	<i>Water districts</i>	X
Gisela Dagnino	<i>Water utilities</i>	X
Vacant	<i>Flood districts</i>	
Vacant	<i>River authorities</i>	

<u>Non-voting Member</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Present(x)/Absent()/ Alternate Present (*)</u>
James Weaver	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	
Tim Frere	Texas Division of Emergency Management	X
Larissa Place	Texas Department of Agriculture	
Ben Wilde	Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board	X
Sarah Douglas	General Land Office/Region 14 Liaison	X
Richard Bagans	Texas Water Development Board	X
Anita Keese	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	
Vanessa Rosales-Herrera	Region 15 Liaison	X

Others Present:	
Annette Gutierrez (RGCOC)	Jeff Irvin
Morgan White (TWDB)	Heather Harris (Carollo)
Delbert Humberson (IBWC)	Matt Hiland (APPGEO)
Levi Bryand	Gilbert Andujo (AECOM)
Art Reinhardt (WSP)	Daniel Zell (AECOM)
Atri Sen (WSP)	Ross Gordon (CONSOR)
Justin Lennon (WSP)	Zina Schwartz (CONSOR)
Rohit Goswami (WSP)	Trudi Garrett (CONSOR)

1. Welcome and call to order

Chairman Omar Martinez welcomed the group and confirmed that a quorum was present. The meeting started at 9:08 am.

2. Recognition of guests and designated alternates

Chairman Martinez recognized voting, non-voting members, and guests.

3. Member updates

There were no member updates provided.

4. Review and approve the minutes for the meeting held on March 16, 2021.

Dave Hall made a motion to accept the Minutes from March 16, 2021, with the request to add the Liasion titles to the individuals who are holding these titles. Jay Ornelas seconded the motion. Chairman Martinez called for a vote and the motion was approved except for Gisela Dagnino who abstained because she was not present at the meeting.

5. Review, discuss and take action on the recommendation from the Executive Committee members for the proposed Technical Consultant finalist.

The Executive Committee recommended to the general membership that AECOM serves as the Technical Consultant to the Flood Planning Group based on the scoring and ranking from Executive Committee. Gisela Dagnino made a motion to accept the recommendation for AECOM. Dave Hall seconded the motion. Chairman Martinez called for a vote and the motion was approved unanimously.

6. Texas Water Development Board (TWDB)- Updates and Presentation

Richard Bagans, Planner, TWDB Regional Flood Planning, provided a presentation about the Regional Flood Planning Group's Responsibilities through the Scope of Work. Mr. Bagans covered Tasks 1 through Task 10. Annette Gutierrez, Rio Grande Council of Governments (RGCOG), informed Mr. Bagans that RGCOG is updating the Hazard Mitigation Plan for five of their six counties. She mentioned the City and County of El Paso are updating their Plan. She asked if he had discussions with the other regions that he covers about how collaboration will be conducted between the two. Mr. Bagans said to be sure there is no duplication of efforts being made and all sources of information are identified to allow the Technical Consultant can work on other items. Chairman Martinez asked to invite every participant possible to our meetings because he explained how difficult it is to tap into FEMA funding if you are not included in the plan. Ms. Gutierrez said she would check with the City/County of El Paso to see where they are in the process of updating their Hazard Mitigation Plan.

7. Pre-Planning Public Input – Public input regarding suggestions and recommendations as to issues, provisions, projects, and strategies that should be considered during the flood planning cycle and/or input on the development of the regional flood plan (as required per Texas Water Code §16.062(d) and 31 Texas Administrative Code §361.12(a)(4))

Richard Bagans covered this item. He informed the group for every cycle moving forward the group will be required to have pre-planning public meetings to allow the public to comment on what items they would like the group to consider moving forward. He provided a general overview of what the flood planning process is about.

Dave Hall asked if the group wants to ensure there is public participation from the entire region, can TWDB make presentations at different locations, such as Alpine? Mr. Bagans said that initiative will be determined by the planning sponsor and the group but TWDB will assist in determining who is the best person to speak on this item. He said it is appropriate and suggested moving the meetings to different locations but it is contingent on what is most feasible. Post pandemic there will be opportunities to have a hybrid meeting allowing for in-person and virtual.

Dave Hall raised concern that the group should do as much as they can to inform the public of this process to ensure they are aware and engaged soon. However, TWDB staff is the best suited to inform these groups because of their expertise. Mr. Bagans reminded the group they will still need to conduct a second pre-planning meeting as requires, so they could look at having the meeting in a different location. Annette was tasked by the group to look at possible locations to include Alpine, Ft. Stockton, or somewhere further east in late May or early June.

Gisela Dagnino asked Annette Gutierrez how soon could the RGCOG secure a contract with AECOM because she is concerned about getting the public on board soon. Annette explained it will be at the May board meeting but the date is not solidified yet. Dave Hall raised concern about the need to secure the contract soon since they are due dates coming up from TWDB based on the conceptual schedule. Richard Bagans mentioned the dates identified are target dates and they are flexible except for the technical memo and the Final Plan. Annette Gutierrez said she would aim for a May 7th board meeting.

Rene Rodriguez mentioned the community of Socorro has had difficulty participating in virtual meetings because of technology. Jay Ornelas suggested the group could utilize Sul Ross University as a possible venue.

8. Consideration of appropriate changes to the Region 14 Bylaws.

Annette Gutierrez asked for the general membership to consider amending the bylaws to 4.1 Filling Vacancies and reduce the deadline for submission of nominations between thirty and forty-five calendar days from the date that public notice was posted to fifteen days. Dave Hall made a motion to reduce the time from thirty and forty-five days to fifteen days. Rene Rodriguez seconded the motion. Chairman Martinez called for a vote and the motion was approved unanimously.

9. Take action to consider adding additional members from interest categories

Annette Gutierrez, RGCOG, informed the group there is an opportunity for them to increase their membership base. She mentioned in the previous meeting the group expressed interest in adding another position for Water Utilities. Rene Rodriguez mentioned his only concern is that the membership does not become lop-sided. Dave Hall made a motion to increase the membership for Water Utilities and the Public. Rene Rodriguez seconded the motion. Chairman Martinez called for a vote and the motion was approved unanimously.

10. Take action to consider adding the International Water Boundary Commission as a non-voting member. Dave Hall made a motion to add the International Water Boundary Commission (IBWC) as a non-voting member as a non-voting member representing the International Water Boundary Commission. Jay Ornelas seconded the motion. Chairman Martinez called for a vote and the motion was approved unanimously. Chairman Martinez informed the group that IBWC internally decided to appoint Delbert Humberson as their representative.

11. Consider posting the River Authority vacancy.

Gisela Dagnino made a motion to post the River Authority vacancy. Rene Rodriguez seconded the motion. Chairman Martinez called for a vote and the motion was approved unanimously.

12. Update from Liaisons from both Region 15 – Lower Rio Grande Regional Flood Planning Group, Vanessa Rosales-Herrera, and Region 14-Upper Rio Grande Regional Flood Planning Group, Sarah Douglas. Vanessa Rosales-Herrera, who serves as the Liaison to Region 14 from Region 15, mentioned her region is in the same timeline as ours where they just recently approved their technical consultant. Dave Hall asked if our group should be also coordinating with other surrounding planning besides Region 15. Richard Bagans explained we are only required to liaise with Region 15 since there is an Upper and Lower to the region.

Ms. Sarah Douglas, who serves as the Liaison to Region 15 from Region 14, was unable to attend the most recent meeting but mentioned she will be able to attend future meetings.

13. Update to the Region 14-Upper Rio Grande Flood Planning Group website.

Annette Gutierrez informed the group that she was able to secure a quote from the Rio Grande Council of Governments' web developer. She mentioned the quote is for \$5,500. When including the indirect cost rate the total cost for this effort is \$7,219.90. Ms. Gutierrez explained the contributions that will be made from El Paso County Water Improvement District #1 and El Paso Water Utilities will cover these costs, based on her understanding that the website creation was unallowable. Chairman Martinez reminded the group that contributions like the ones made by these two entities will allow the Rio Grande Council of Governments to administer the program. Gisela asked how often would they make the contributions. Chairman Martinez mentioned if this group is to follow the Water Planning Group, the dues would be yearly. Ms. Dagnino also mentioned that part of AECOM's proposal included public relations activities from Barracuda Public Relations firm. Chairman Martinez agreed they would be doing this function but also mentioned it would be good for the RGCOG to have some of their equipment if needed. Ms. Gutierrez also mentioned to the group she would work with the Chair to see what kind of dues structure can be created for the future. Richard Bagans informed the group that this cost is an allowable expense. Annette Gutierrez then informed the group that she will not be asking El Paso Water Utilities for the previously mentioned funding. Gisela Dagnino asked Annette to still send an invoice to them to assist in starting the fund.

14. Discussion of Old Business

Dave Hall requested that AECOM should be made aware of the suggested dates from TWDB for the tasks mentioned in the Scope of Work. Dave reminded the group Tasks 1-3 should be completed by July of 2021. Gisela Dagnino informed the group that El Paso Water Utilities has worked with AECOM previously and said they always stay on task on finish the work on time.

15. General public comments

There were no public comments.

16. Consider date and agenda items for next meeting

The group decided to set the next meeting on May 20, 2021, at 9:00 AM, Mountain Time, and an Executive Committee meeting on May 18, 2021, at 9:00 am. The agenda items include voting on the

vacancies for the positions mentioned, pre-planning, discuss any old business, receive updates from both liaisons and have AECOM present to the group.

17. Adjourn

Gisela Dagnino made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:50 am, Mountain Time. Javier Acosta seconded the motion. Chairman Martinez called for a vote and the motion was approved unanimously.

4/15/21
Date

Javier A. Acosta
Secretary