

Meeting Minutes  
 Region 14 Upper Rio Grande Flood Planning Group Meeting  
 Thursday, 5.20.2021  
 9:03 AM  
 GoToWebinar Virtual Meeting

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

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

<u>Others Present:</u>	
Annette Gutierrez, RGCOG	Chris Wright, AECOM
Matt Nelson, TWDB	Steve Ainsa, AECOM
James Bronikowski, TWDB	Jeff Irvin - AECOM, PIC
Gilbert Andujo, AECOM	Marina Monsisvais, Barracuda Communications
Bryan Blaisdell, AECOM	Martin Bartlett, Barracuda Communications

**1. Welcome and call to order**

Chairman Omar Martinez welcomed the group and confirmed that a quorum was present. The meeting started at 9:03 am.

**2. Recognition of guests and designated alternates**

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

**3. Member updates**

Chairman Omar Martinez started the updates. He first recognized the current flooding the Lower Rio Grande Valley was dealing with and offered any assistance. He also mentioned that on April 22, 2021, the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) approved 3.2 million dollars in funding of which 1.6 million is in grant funds from the state flood infrastructure fund that will be used for design planning, acquisition, design, and construction of a detention ponds and channel improvements projects in El Paso County. He congratulated El Paso County and AECOM for their success in receiving the grant. He also mentioned the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation awarded the Pecos Watershed Conservation Initiative 1.45 million to restore and sustain the Pecos River, its streams and grassland systems that provide important wildlife habitat in the Pecos Watershed and adjacent areas of New Mexico and Texas. He reminded the group part of the Flood Plan is to include environmental concerns in our region and the project mentioned goes to that initiative. Chairman Martinez also informed the group that TWDB is having a webinar from 2:00pm to 3:30pm for the Planning Group Sponsors, Chairs, and technical consultants from the Regional Flood Planning Groups. TWDB will present on the technical guidelines for regional flood planning and regional flood planning data. A significant portion of the webinar will be devoted to questions and answers. Finally, Chairman Martinez mentioned to the group that on June 24, 2021, the International Water Boundary Commission will host the Rio Grande Citizens Forum via webinar. He said these meetings are focused on work related to the Rio Grande River.

**4. Review and approve the minutes for the meeting held on April 15, 2021.**

Gisela Dagnino made a motion to accept the Minutes from April 15, 2021 with the changes noted. Sal Masoud seconded the motion. Chairman Martinez called for a vote and the motion was approved.

**5. Review and approve recommendations from the Executive Committee members for the member positions for Water Utilities, Public and River Authority.**

Jeff Benett made a motion to accept Rick Tate as the representative for Flood River Authority. Gisela Dagnino seconded the motion. Chairman Martinez called for a vote and the motion was approved unanimously.

Gisela Dagnino made a motion to accept Levi Bryand as the representative for Water Utilities. Jay Ornelas seconded the motion. Chairman Martinez called for a vote and the motion was approved unanimously.

Sal Masoud made a motion to accept Carlos Velarde as the representative for the Public. Gisela Dagnino 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 an update to the group.

**7. 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 from the Lower Rio Grande Regional Flood Planning Group did not have any updates to provide to the group.

**8. Introduction and presentation from AECOM-Technical Consultants to the Region 14-Upper Rio Grande Flood Planning Group**

Annette Gutierrez informed the group it was the Rio Grande Council of Governments (RGCOG) intention to present the contract between RGCOG and AECOM at its board of directors' meeting on May 14, 2021. However, based on discussions between TWDB and RGCOG and the need to revise some of the language in the contract, RGCOG will not present the document until its June board meeting.

Members asked if the group will be able to meet the deliverables considering the contract delay. Mr. Bagans informed them all parties are working to get the contract finalized and reminded them all technical work is reimbursable to the contractor prior to signature. Jeff Irvin, AECOM, requested for RGCOG to send an email stating AECOM could commence work on Task 1. Ms. Gutierrez stated that she would do so.

Ms. Gutierrez, next introduced the Project Manager, Gilbert Andujo, PE, CFM, AECOM. Mr. Andujo provided some background on his professional experience and then introduced the team and asked for each of the team members to explain what their experience is and what role they will be playing. The team includes Steve Ainsa, PE, Principal in Charge, Jeff Irvin, PE, Quality Assurance/Quality Control, PE, Chris Wright, Assistant Project Manager, PE, CFM, Bryan Blaisdell, PE, and Baracuda Public Relations, that includes Martin Bartlett and Marina Monsisvais, who will be doing the public outreach. Mr. Andujo also informed the group that AECOM will also be using nine subcontractors for this plan. The Chairman as well as several others complimented AECOM on the team and were in agreement they will be able to get the work done.

Annette Gutierrez asked Richard Bagans if TWDB is going to allow future meeting to be conducted in a hybrid manner where members may be in person or virtual if the suspensions to the Open Meetings Act as is lifted. Mr. Bagans stated the TWDB has not provided any direction as of yet. It would depend on any future legislative action and the RGCOG's Legal Counsel's interpretation.

**9. Discussion of Old Business**

Chairman Martinez asked Annette Gutierrez if there was any old business to discuss. Ms. Gutierrez mentioned the developers are working on the flood website and she anticipates that it will be ready soon to allow the flood members and the public a place to where they can get their information. Dave Hall mentioned there was a discussion on having the Pre-Planning meeting in the eastern area. He suggested that perhaps Baracuda could assist with this meeting and Ms. Gutierrez stated she would contact them. Gisela Dagnino asked Ms. Gutierrez if there was any activity with the discussion of the group paying dues similar to the water planning group. Ms. Gutierrez mentioned she will not know if funding is needed until she submits the first request for payment to TWDB. She said will keep the group informed. Mr. Hall also asked if the Bylaws were signed and Mr. Gutierrez said they were.

**10. General public comments**

There were no comments made.

**11. Consider date and agenda items for next meeting**

Chairman Martinez asked when do we have to have the next meeting. Ms. Gutierrez mentioned the Pre-Planning meeting can be next for the group and that it can be in the Tri-County area since it will

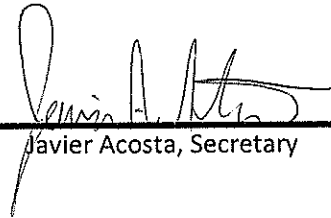
need to be a hybrid. She told the group she did not want to commit to a date until she has more information on the location. In terms of having a flood planning group meeting, she asked the group if she can coordinate with AECOM to determine the next meeting date. However, Richard Bagans did confirm there is no deadline to have the Pre-Planning meeting but it should be early in the cycle. He also reminded the group it requires a fourteen-day notice. She mentioned she will look at the June 25<sup>th</sup> week to schedule the meeting in Alpine.

**12. Adjourn**

Dave Hall made a motion to adjourn. Jay Ornelas seconded the motion. Chairman Martinez called for a vote and the motion was approved unanimously.

9/7/2021

Date



Javier Acosta, Secretary