

Interregional Planning Council Meeting Minutes

July 29, 2020, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

held via Zoom Videoconference

Council decisions bolded and italicized in document

Participation: Number of Interregional Planning Council Members present 12 of 16:

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|---|----------------------|---|-------------------|---|--------------------|
| A | Steve Walthour | E | Scott Reinert-absent | I | Kelley Holcomb | M | Tomas Rodriguez |
| B | Russell Schreiber | F | Allison Strube | J | Ray Buck - absent | N | Carl Crull |
| C | Kevin Ward | G | Gail Peek | K | David Wheelock | O | Melanie Barnes |
| D | Jim Thompson | H | Mark Evans | L | Suzanne Scott | P | Patrick Brzozowski |

Facilitator: Suzanne Schwartz

Senators/Representatives/Other VIPs in Attendance:

TWDB Board Members and Staff: Temple McKinnon, Sarah Backhouse, Ron Ellis, Elizabeth McCoy, Kevin Smith, Jean Devlin, Bryan McMath

MEETING GENERAL

Chair Suzanne Scott (Region L) called the meeting to order. Temple McKinnon (TWDB) determined that a quorum was present. Meeting facilitator, Suzanne Schwartz, reviewed the agenda and meeting materials.

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Public Comment – No public comments were offered.

2. Consideration of Meeting Minutes from June 29, 2020 Meeting

The Council considered the minutes of the June 29, 2020 meeting and reviewed minor edits. Steve Walthour (Region A) made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Gail Peek (Region G) seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved.

3. Consider Committee and Workgroup Reports and Recommendations

Ms. Scott thanked the committee chairs for their leadership and members for their efforts on committee work. Ms. Scott requested Ms. McKinnon review the location of Council documents on the TWDB webpage and share general observations of committee work to identify any duplicate efforts by committees.

Temple McKinnon shared the TWDB website and provided an orientation of the Interregional Planning Council webpage and the new webpage for Council committees. The Interregional Planning Council webpage includes information on upcoming meetings, past meetings, Council working documents, and

resources. Topical information on issues that have since become committees are provided in the resource section. At the top of the Council webpage is a link to the committee site. The committee webpage includes committee meeting agendas and materials. Ms. McKinnon invited members to reach out to TWDB support staff if they have questions.

Ms. McKinnon then provided an overview of staff observations of committee work to date. A summary document of TWDB committee observations was included in the meeting materials. Staff observed some overlap in the discussion of liaisons and project development at the Enhancing Interregional Coordination Committee and Planning Water Resources Committee meetings. Ms. Scott noted the observations document includes a page with the Council's goal and problem statements.

a. Planning Water Resources for the State as a Whole Committee

Committee Chair Mark Evans (Region H) reported on the progress of the Planning Water Resources for the State as a Whole Committee. The committee has met twice and focused on broad discussion and brainstorming. The committee is scheduled to meet again on August 6, 2020, to refine observations and recommendations. Mr. Evans added that the committee doesn't have a general sense of the number of recommendations they will make. There may be items considered for recommendations that may only end up being included as observations in the final committee report. The committee doesn't have any proposed changes to the problem and goal statements drafted by the Council. Additional committee meetings are also scheduled for August 20 and August 27.

b. Ways to Enhance Interregional Coordination Committee

Committee Chair Ms. Peek provided a report on the Enhancing Interregional Coordination Committee. The committee held a meeting on July 15, 2020 and began brainstorming issues and recommendations. Committee discussion has focused on using regional and TWDB resources efficiently. The committee has also discussed ways to be cooperative and collaborative and better coordinate concerns on water management strategies, funding, and other shared interests. The committee is considering appropriate roles for coordination between stakeholders, sponsors, liaisons, and regional water planning group (RWPG) committees. Members have expressed that coordination occurs too late in the planning process. Ms. Peek provided an example of cooperation between RWPG committees, such as a scope of work committee, RWPG consultants, and liaisons to identify cooperative projects. The committee wants to find ways to utilize liaisons more effectively without overwhelming them with tasks. Ms. Peek shared that the goal is for members to know what resources are available and find ways to collaborate early in the planning process. The committee is looking at points of entry for regions to work with TWDB in the process. The next committee meeting is scheduled for August 6, and the committee should have a sense of recommendations and observations after the meeting. Ms. Peek indicated that the committee did not have any revisions to the problem and goal statements from the Council.

Ms. Scott noted that there appears to be some overlap related to project development, early coordination, and the role of liaisons. Mr. Evans submitted that liaisons were discussed by the Planning Water Resources Committee, but the committee would not be making recommendations on liaisons. Melanie Barnes (Region O) agreed with Mr. Evans adding that the committee's perspective is focused on how to implement 50 and 100 year projects. Liaisons may have a role in this process, but the committee is primarily focused on projects for the state as a whole. She offered that liaisons may be more appropriate for Enhancing Interregional Coordination Committee to address. Members agreed that the role of liaisons and opportunities for coordination would be assigned to the Enhancing Interregional Coordination Committee to consider for recommendations.

On the issue of project development, it was noted that although two committees have discussed project development, the committee work on the topic did not appear to overlap. The Enhancing Interregional Coordination Committee is reviewing the nuts and bolts of the current project development process. The Planning Water Resources for the State as a Whole Committee is looking at large multiregional projects that may not exist today and considering a process to facilitate development of these large projects. Members agreed that both committees move forward with this approach.

c. General Best Practices for Future Planning Committee

Steve Walthour (Region A) reported that the Best Practices for Future Planning Committee has held three meetings and is working on drafting recommendations. The committee is reviewing the following topics: simplified planning, membership engagement, TWDB information dissemination to membership, ex-officio member participation from other agencies, TWDB funding administrative planning costs, web-based video conferencing authorization under the Open Meetings Act, RWPGs using the guides and documents already prepared by the TWDB, and regional water planning process improvement. Mr. Walthour estimated the committee may have around eight recommendations although it could be less. He offered that the committee doesn't have any revisions to Council the problem and goal statements but recommended that as committees continue their work they continue to have the ability to propose amendments to the problem and goal statements.

The committee intends to have draft recommendations by August 6. TWDB staff will compile committee documents into a draft committee report by August 20. The committee plans to finalize its report before the end of August. The committee will be prepared to present initial succinct recommendations at the August 12 Council meeting.

d. Interregional Conflict Work Group

Ms. Schwartz provided a report on the Interregional Conflict Working Group. The work group held a teleconference on July 20. The call included Jim Thompson (Region D), Kevin Ward (Region C), Council Chair Suzanne Scott, TWDB staff Temple McKinnon and Matt Nelson, and facilitator Suzanne Schwartz. Discussion emphasized that at this point interregional conflict is not a widespread problem in planning. The work group proposed that a mechanism is needed earlier in the planning cycle to identify when a proposed strategy involves use of a water resource in another region or otherwise impacts another region, and when coordination and the opportunity for joint planning should occur early between the regions to determine if the regions are in agreement over the strategy.

If a conflict exists, or is likely to develop, concerning the proposed strategy, and it appears unlikely that the conflict would be resolved through the current planning process, an alternate process could be initiated that assures those impacted by the proposed strategy are able to work together to craft a solution. Alternative processes might include elements such as:

- Including stakeholders representing all major interests from both regions;
- Developing joint studies and fact finding that all stakeholders would trust;
- Placing all parties on an equal footing related to access to information and discussion;
- Allotting sufficient time and funding to provide for its success. The Council might consider recommendations for sources of potential funding.

It was noted that any process that is recommended should be evaluated to confirm it does not undermine what is currently a generally effective process. The work group proposed that it would be best if this topic was further considered by Enhancing Interregional Coordination Committee.

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Mr. Thompson agreed with Ms. Schwartz report. Ms. Scott asked Ms. Peek if the Enhancing Interregional Coordination Committee would be willing to take on this topic and consider a coordination process to identify and address potential conflicts early on. Ms. Peek agreed that the committee will review the interregional conflict coordination process. Ms. Scott added that this could be an earlier stakeholder process and require additional support and funding.

Mr. Ward added that it is important to include in the proposal that the stakeholders affected by an interregional conflict need to be brought together in a process, as described by Ms. Schwartz, and to have stakeholders buy into the process and information generated. Conflicts that have occurred each cycle should be addressed early. The process should be set into motion automatically when an existing or old conflict is known. A problem with the interregional conflict process that Regions C and D have been through is that Region D did not have ownership of the studies that Region C conducted. Mr. Ward offered himself and Jim to consult with the Enhancing Interregional Coordination Committee on his experience with the interregional conflict process.

Ms. Scott agreed that the earlier engagement on this issue can occur the better. She added that the process needs occur as water management strategy evaluations move forward. Ms. Peek added that the Council should consider the durability of any proposed approach. The process needs to be balanced and inclusive and produce results that can last more than one planning cycle and not wedded to any single position. Mr. Ward suggested this process may require additional funding to balance out needs for a project. He added that often the regional water plan goes for the least cost alternative. Larger water management strategy projects tend to have the most controversy. Mr. Ward added that if you want an entity to come up with another project it would help to provide incentives. Often alternative projects have greater risks and more unknowns. He suggested that the RWPGs may not be the best option to administer an interregional conflict process. Ms. Scott suggested that it could be an offshoot of the RWPGs and would need to tie back into the regional water plans. She added that the Enhancing Interregional Coordination Committee may need to revise their problem and goal statement to also address interregional conflict. Ms. Scott added that the report will include a separate section on interregional conflict but still be generally discussed in the Enhancing Interregional Coordination Committee's section.

Ms. Barnes observed that all committees have identified the need for a mechanism for regions to talk to each other earlier and consideration that some of the funded scope of work items may overlap between regions. Ms. Scott noted that the committee work is complementary and will not overlap. Mr. Evans noted the Planning Water Resources Committee is considering a recommendation for a specific funded task in the planning contract scope of work for consultants to perform long range, big picture planning.

Ms. Scott reminded members that the committees have the flexibility to revise the wording of their problem and goal statements. Changes to problem and goal statements should be brought to the Council in track changes so members can understand any recommended changes.

Ms. Scott proposed breaking up review of committee recommendations over the next two Council meetings if committees are ready to share initial recommendations. At the August 12 Council meeting committees will present initial succinct recommendations and outline justification and resulting benefits. This will allow an initial vetting of recommendations to see where there is consensus.

At the September 15 Council meeting all recommendations with succinct justification and benefit will be presented and reviewed. Mr. Holcomb added that the Best Practices for Future Planning Committee

should be prepared to present recommendations at the August 12 Council meeting. He asked if there was a preferred format for the recommendations. Ms. Scott requested recommendations include who it is directed to and what the benefit is.

Mr. Evans offered that his committee is planning to have several initial recommendations at the August 12 meeting. Ms. Scott offered that TWDB staff can help prepare committee documents and requested TWDB staff provide an outline for committee recommendations. Ms. McKinnon agreed that TWDB staff will prepare and send out an outline for committee recommendations.

4. Consider Council Report Development

Ms. Scott presented the draft Council report outline. Mr. Walthour shared that the Best Practices for Future Planning Committee is following the report outline to write up discussion topics. He added that his biggest concern is that TWDB staff know what the report should look like so staff can start preparing the report. Mr. Walthour then asked for clarification if the committee should develop a problem statement for each issue they are reviewing or if committee work should just utilize the adopted problem statements from the Council. Ms. Scott clarified that the adopted Council problem statements should guide committee work.

Members discussed that the committees need to complete a review of existing practices/conditions, develop recommendations, outline the benefits that could result from a recommendation, and describe who a recommendation is directed to. Mr. Walthour asked if the report should be formatted as: problem statement, goal statement, existing practices/conditions, and then recommendations. Ms. Scott offered that the outline includes discussion of existing practices/conditions before the problem and goal statements to provide readers additional background before presenting the problem statement.

Mr. Holcomb offered that review of existing practices/conditions could include a general overview. More detailed information could be provided with specific recommendations. Mr. Ward shared that recommendations can't be presented without describing what the specific issue is that needs to be resolved. He agreed with the approach that a general discussion of existing practices precede the problem and goal statement and then recommendations also include observations to some degree. Ms. Scott offered that committees have leeway to include additional context with their recommendations. Mr. Walthour agreed.

Ms. Peek noted as a housekeeping issue that the Enhancing Interregional Coordination Committee may need to revise its problem statement to address interregional conflict. The committee will bring proposed revisions back to the Council for consideration. Ms. Scott offered that Ms. Schwartz can help support the Enhancing Interregional Coordination Committee on interregional conflict.

Ms. Scott recommended that interregional conflict have a separate section in the Council's report in order to address Representative Larson's requests on the topic. Mr. Holcomb suggested there may be time at the end of the process for the Council as a whole to discuss the interregional conflict process. Ms. Scott agreed.

5. Discussion of Next Steps

Ms. Scott reviewed the Council meeting schedule and asked if any background materials or other information was needed for the committee and Council work. The Council is currently scheduled to

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meet on August 12, September 15, and September 30. The Council report is due to the TWDB on October 16, 2020.

Ms. Schwartz asked if the Council needed to schedule a placeholder meeting between the September 30 meeting and October 16 report deadline. Ms. Scott agreed this was a good idea in case additional work is needed to finalize the Council report. Ms. Scott requested that TWDB staff poll members for availability to meet between September 30 and October 5. Members agreed.

6. Discussion of Agenda for Future Meetings

The next Council meeting is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. on August 12, 2020. No additional discussion.

7. Public Comment – No public comments were offered.

8. Adjourn – Ms. Scott adjourned the meeting at approximately 2:50 p.m.