

RWPG Chairs Conference Call Meeting Notes

Type of Meeting: RWPG Chairs Conference Call (CCC)

Date of Meeting: January 27, 2020

Location of Meeting: TWDB Offices SFA Building Room 500I

TWDB Staff in Attendance: Temple McKinnon, Sarah Backhouse, Sabrina Anderson, Annette Mass, Ron Ellis, Kevin Smith, William Alfaro, Elizabeth McCoy, and Jean Devlin.

Number of Planning Group Members in Attendance: 15 regions represented

Senators/Representatives/Other VIPs in Attendance: N/A

Report filed by: Elizabeth McCoy

Report filed on: January 30, 2020

Agenda Items Discussed:

1. Introductions, Opening Comments, and Agenda Order

Sarah Backhouse welcomed participants, took a roll call of representatives from each regional water planning group (RWPG) and introduced the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) staff present. She asked for approval of agenda items and indicated that written notes of what was covered under each agenda item will be provided.

RWPG participants:

A – Dustin Meyers (Panhandle Regional Planning Commission)

B – Randy Whiteman, Stacey Green, and Danna Bales (Red River Authority)

C – Kevin Ward (Chair)

D – Jim Thompson (Chair)

E – Jesus Reyes (Chair)

F – John Grant (Chair)

G – Gail Peak (Vice-Chair)

H – Mark Evans (Chair)

I – None

J – Jonathan Letz (Chair)

K – John Burke (Chair)

L – Suzanne Scott (Chair)

M – Tomas Rodriguez (Chair)

N – Carola Serrato (Co-Chair)

O – Aubrey Spear (Chair)

P – Phillip Spenrath (Chair)

Handout A: [Initially Prepared Plan and Final Plan Process Schematic](#)

Handout B: [Interregional Conflict Summary Document](#)

2. Status of Interregional Planning Council and Regional Water Planning Rule Revisions

Sarah Backhouse provided an update on the status of the Interregional Planning Council (Council) and timeline for regional water planning rule revisions.

- a) Interregional Planning Council
 - i. The TWDB Board appointed Council members on January 16. About half of the Council members are RWPG Chairs.
 - ii. The TWDB Executive Administrator (EA) sent a letter to Council members that covers the purpose of the Council and provides information on anticipated public meetings and the timeframe to develop the Council's report.
 - iii. The Council is subject to the Texas Open Meetings Act. Council meetings will need to be held in person and must be open to the public.
 - iv. The TWDB has pre-authorized the use of regional water planning contract voting member travel funds for Council member attendance at Council meetings. Use of these funds needs to be authorized by the RWPG, and there must be funds allocated to the voting member travel expense item. Council members are encouraged to work with the political subdivision for availability and limitations of these funds.
 - v. Council member terms will expire upon adoption of the 2022 State Water Plan. Since there is a limited timeframe for this first Council to meet and deliver a report to the TWDB, and in order to provide the Council support in this process, TWDB is strongly considering hiring a facilitator to lead the process for the Council. Logistics are being worked out. Staff will be in contact with Council members soon to set up their first meeting.
 - vi. Proposed planning rules will include deadlines for the required Council report to be submitted to the TWDB. Council members are encouraged to review the proposed rules and provide comments.
 - vii. Suzanne Scott, Region L, asked if there was an approximate date for the first Council meeting and suggested polling members to set tentative meeting dates before schedules fill up. Sarah noted there may be one Council meeting this spring and one in the summer. The TWDB will reach out to Council members soon.
- b) Regional Water Planning Rules
 - i. The TWDB Board will consider approval to publish the proposed revisions to Chapter 357 of the Texas Administrative Code on February 13. The revisions primarily implement legislative changes from House Bill 807 and also clarify some existing rules.
 - ii. Proposed rules are expected to be published in the February 28 issue of the Texas Register. Following publication in the Texas Register, there will be a 30 day public comment period through March 29. Staff anticipate presenting final rules for adoption at a June Board meeting.
 - iii. Information on the public comment period and where stakeholders can find the proposed rules online will be sent out following the February 13 Board meeting.

3. 5th Cycle Remaining Timeline and Reminders

Sarah Backhouse provided updates on the following items:

- a) Initially Prepared Plan (IPP) adoption, submittal, and public process
 - i. [Handout A](#) covers the IPP submittal and public process. Note that there are two tracks related to public comment periods. The 120-day timeframe for TWDB comments is tied to when the IPP is submitted and considered administratively

- complete. If IPPs are complete and delivered on March 3, TWDB comment letters will be provided no later than July 1.
- ii. Comment periods for the public and other state and federal agencies is tied to when a RWPG holds the required public hearing. Public and agency comment periods remain open following the hearing for an additional 60 and 90 days, respectively. Please also note that the public hearing requires a 30-day public notice.
 - iii. Make sure to consider the timeframe for these varying comment periods when setting a meeting date to adopt the final plan in order to allow time to address all comments received.
 - iv. TWDB project managers are available to assist in reviewing the IPP public hearing notices. As a reminder, the [Regional Water Planning Public Notification Tool](#) is available on the TWDB website to help calculate dates associated with various public notice and comment periods.
 - v. Some of the entities required to receive notice of the IPP Hearing include public water systems and water right permit holders. TWDB staff are coordinating with TCEQ to obtain updated contact lists for these entities. Sarah will send an email when the updated lists are posted on the TWDB website.
- b) Post Initially Prepared Plan activities
- i. Following submittal of the IPP, planning groups have 60 days to assert a potential interregional conflict. Any planning group that may wish to assert a potential conflict must do so in writing to the TWDB EA, within 60 days of the IPP deadline, no later than May 2, 2020.
 - ii. [Handout B](#) provides information on how interregional conflicts are defined in rule, steps a RWPG must take if they identify a potential conflict, and steps that the TWDB may take. Please review this document and share with RWPG members.
 - iii. Other items that will require work effort post IPP include the infrastructure finance report (IFR) survey and prioritization of recommended projects in accordance with the Uniform Standards.
 - iv. TWDB staff will send out data collection templates for both the IFR survey and prioritization list once we receive confirmation from consultants that the recommended project list is complete.
 - v. Prior to adopting the final plan, RWPGs must also consider and address all comments received on the plan. This may result in actual changes to the plan or providing information as to why no revisions were necessary. For addressing TWDB comments, RWPGs are strongly encouraged to send draft responses and associated changes to the TWDB project manager for feedback to ensure TWDB comments are adequately addressed when the final plan is submitted.
- c) Final plan adoption and submittal process
- i. The final plan and prioritization list are due to the TWDB on October 14, 2020. Information on the final plan deliverables will be sent out closer to that time. Once TWDB staff have reviewed the final submitted plans and found them to be acceptable, the final plans will be presented to the TWDB Board for approval.

4. DB22 (State Water Planning Database) Updates

Sabrina Anderson provided updates on the following items:

- a) Closure of DB22
 - i. Access to the DB22 application will be closed after the March 3 IPP submittal deadline to allow for a thorough review of the static dataset. Consultants will still be able to review data through reports. If data updates are required after the IPP submittal, the Water Supply & Strategy Analysis (WSSA) team will review any proposed changes and update the database as necessary.
- b) 2022 Interactive State Water Plan
 - i. Once DB22 is closed, TWDB plans to release a 2021 version of the Interactive State Water Plan to facilitate public review of the IPP data. TWDB staff will notify the RWPGs when the 2021 Interactive State Water Plan is released.
- c) Chair's feedback
 - i. Kevin Ward, Region C, asked for clarification on the database closure and how and when regions will be able to review IPP data. Sabrina Anderson noted that though DB22 will be closed for data entry, IPP data will be available to review on the 2021 Interactive State Water Plan website. WSSA will also be available to provide DB22 data through spreadsheets to RWPGs and their consultants after DB22 data entry is closed on March 3. IPP documents for every region will be made available on the TWDB website within a week of the IPP deadline.

5. Round 6 initial timeline

Sarah Backhouse provided an update on the timeline for Round 6:

- a) Estimated timeline for Round 6 kickoff
 - i. The request for applications (RFA) process for initial Round 6 funding is expected to start in early 2021. A firm deadline to execute initial Round 6 contracts is set for August 31, 2021. RWPGs will need to take certain actions in advance of the RWPG's administrator submitting funding applications, including selecting the political subdivision for the 6th cycle and authorizing them to apply for funds on behalf of the RWPG. These items would need to occur prior to the RFA deadline. More details on the timing and necessary actions will be provided later in the year.

6. Region Round Robin

Sarah Backhouse invited regional representatives to share updates with the group. Region G provided information on three recent sub-regional meetings.

7. Wrap-up and next call topics and date

The next RWPG Chairs Conference Call meeting will be scheduled for August 2020 in order to discuss the 6th cycle timeline and touch base before final plans are due in October.