

South Texas Watermaster Advisory Committee Minutes
July 20, 2010

Members present:

Charles Ahrens
Stuart Barron
Patrick Brzozowski
Mario Escobar
Wesley Hamff
Ann Kercheville
Richard Ocker
Steve Raabe
Bryan Serold

Members not attending:

Gustavo Gonzales
Frank Granieri
Lynn Short

TCEQ Staff in attendance: Cesar Alvarado, Albert Garces, Ramiro Garcia, Tracy Miller, Amy Settemeyer

Others attending: Doug?, Philip Richard, Ian Taylor, James Lee Murphy

Interim Watermaster, Ramiro Garcia, Jr., welcomed the members and guests. He introduced TCEQ staff in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 1:32 p.m. by Chair, Mario Escobar. Members and guests introduced themselves.

The minutes from 2009 meeting were reviewed and approved.

Ramiro Garcia, Jr. provided a program update. He indicated that the hope was to have a new watermaster in place by October or November.

Discussion of Budget:

Tracy Miller asked if there were any questions on the budget.

WAC members wanted to know if the new watermaster will require additional training. It was explained that the training is expected to be mostly "on-the-job" training, but that yes, there would be training available for the new watermaster.

A question was raised regarding how many vehicles the program has and how old each of them is. A request was made for a schedule of vehicle replacement. Additionally, WAC members would like to see a line item of the Facilities, Furniture, and Equipment budget category to show what vehicle expenses are being made each year. There is an overall concern that vehicles be maintained

and replaced, if necessary, on an appropriate schedule to provide reliable vehicles for the deputies to perform their necessary duties.

A final question was raised as to whom Committee comments reach. It was explained that the TCEQ staff listens to the WAC members' comments and concerns and addresses them as best they can, and still maintain an operating budget to sustain the program. Staff then present the assessment orders to the commission and provide Committee support or concern in the backup materials.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the budget. The budget was approved.

New business:

Steve Raabe mentioned that he was at the Bay & Basin Area Environmental Flows meeting in June. He commended Albert on the presentation that was given. A discussion on Domestic and Livestock (D&L) users followed. Members asked if the Watermaster has any authority to keep a list of the exempt D&Ls. It was also asked if TCEQ has the authority to seek the D&L users out and require the D&Ls to register with the Watermaster. TCEQ staff explained that under statute the agency does not have the authority to require D&Ls to register with the Watermaster office but staff indicated that it would be researched to see if it was plausible to attempt to keep track of the D&L users when they are located.

Discussion of Members:

Wesley Hamff will be retiring soon and will recommend replacement for WAC Committee. This will likely be his replacement at New Braunfels Utilities, Ian Taylor.

A discussion of the vacant positions was held. Currently, there are 3 vacant positions. Bryan Serold stated he would contact Kenny Draper who was mentioned as a possible replacement for the CP & L position. A decision was made that the Watermaster program would send a letter to solicit nominations for the vacancies.

Members decided to keep Mario Escobar as the Chair and Steve Raabe as the Secretary. Patrick Brzozowski will be the new Vice Chair.

The meeting adjourned at 2:36 p.m.