

South Texas Water Master Advisory Committee

Minutes

7/22/09

Watermaster, Al Segovia was not able to attend the meeting due to illness. Tracy Miller welcomed the members and guests.

The meeting was called to order at 11:05 p.m. by Chair, Mario Escobar.

Watermaster Deputy, Albert Garces updated the Committee and guests about the extreme drought conditions in South Texas, the Upper Guadalupe and Medina Rivers. All temporary permits in the Hill Country are cut off and temporary permits in other areas of the South Texas Watermaster jurisdiction are being evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Some junior water rights are either suspended or curtailed from diversion.

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes from July 2, 2008. The motion carried.

New Members – New Expiration of Terms of Office.

Senate Bill 3 revised the Texas Water code to specify that watermaster advisory committee member's terms expire on August 31st of odd number years. This means that the terms of all members of the South Texas Watermaster Advisory Committee expire on August 31, 2009.

Mario Escobar was re-elected as Chair of the WAC. The current WAC Members agreed to serve on the WAC for another two year term. Absent WAC members will be contacted to confirm their participation on the committee. Current members will receive letters from Austin confirming their additional term. New terms will expire August 31, 2011.

Stuart Barron suggested the committee meeting more than once a year due to the current drought. Chuck Ahrens agreed to additional meetings.

Budget

Tracy Miller asked if anyone had questions about the FY 2010 budget. She also mentioned that being it being a bienium year STWM funds can be carried forward to 2011.

Tracy Miller presented the proposed FY10 budget. The FY10 Operating Budget needs totaled \$544,027.60. The assessment necessary based on 97% collection rate is \$560,853.00.

Chuck Ahrens asked Tracy about the reduction in the proposed salary budget and she stated that the reduction was due to the program no longer paying for the full time staff person working on database program development.

Chuck Ahrens also asked if the STWM program was adequately staffed to which Tracy answered that staffing levels at TCEQ are "capped" by the legislature and no further staff could be added at this time.

The topic about sending Rio Grande Watermaster staff to assist with STWM staff was mentioned. Tracy Miller replied that if Rio Grande staff were able to assist with STWM program, all travel funds would be paid by Central office and not the STWM program.

Tracy touched on Rider 33. Rider allows excess Watermaster funds received to be requested from Comptroller for use by the program. Additional back fees collected may be placed back into budget to cover additional budget needs.

Stuart Barron asked if Al Segovia would be able to operate the program sufficiently with the reduced level of spending proposed. Tracy Miller said that costs were calculated very carefully and that although the anticipated expenditures are minimal, there is confidence that the program will not suffer from the reduced costs.

Wesley Hamff asked about previous fund balances. Tracy explained about fund balance and that attempts to receive those funds have been unsuccessful. Although there were lobbying efforts this year from the CRWAC, the legislature did not release funds from Fund 158 which is usable by the state to cover deficits in the state budget.

Lynn Short moved and Charles Ahrens seconded to recommend approval of the FY10udget. The motioned carried.

New Business

Chuck Ahrens mentioned that he may not remain on the Committee but that SAWS wished to remain represented and would provide a replacement for SAWS.

Stuart Barron recommended a motion for WAC to meet on September 22, 2009 to discuss drought issues. No quorum required.

Meeting adjourned at 11:33 pm. Wesley Hamff motioned and Frank Granieri seconded motion. Motion carried.