PANHANDLE WATER PLANNING GROUP

Minutes

June 13, 2000

The regular meeting of the Panhandle Water Planning Group was held on Tuesday, June 13, 2000, at 1:30 p.m. in the PRPC Board Room, 415 West Eighth Avenue, Amarillo, Potter County, Texas.

Mr. C.E. Williams, Chairman, presided.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Judge Jim Forrester, Childress County; Joe Minshew, Texas Department of Agriculture; Mickey Black, USDA-NRCS; Grady Skaggs, Oldham County; Charles Cooke, TCW Supply, Inc., Borger; Rusty Gilmore, Rita Blanca Well Service; Janet Tregellas, booker; David Landis, City of Perryton, Richard Bowers, North Plains Groundwater Conservation District No. 2; Dr. Nolan Clark, USDA/ARS; John Williams, CRMWA; Dan Coffey, City of Amarillo, Judge Vernon Cook, Roberts County; C.E. Williams, Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District; Rima Petrossian; Ben Weinheimer; Jim Derington, Palo Duro River Authority; Ben Weinheimer, TCFA; Therese Abraham, Canadian; Kent Satterwhite, CRMWA; Charles Munger, TPWD; Trish Neusch, S.T.A.N.D.; Dr. John Sweeten, TAES-TAMU

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Rudie Tate, Memphis; Ron Bertrand, Texas Department of Agriculture; Frank Simms, Panhandle; Stefan Schuster, TWDB; Gale Henslee, SPS; Bobbie Kidd, Greenbelt Municipal and Industrial Water Authority; Mike Page, Phillips Petroleum Company; B.A. Donelson, Stratford; Bill Hallerberg, Pampa

OTHERS PRESENT:

Gary Pitner, Executive Director, PRPC; Jarrett Atkinson, Water Planning Coordinator, PRPC; Janice Blandford, Word Processing; Obie Kelley, USDA-NRCS; Nathan Kuhnert, Oklahoma Water Resources Board; Steve Stevens, Mesa Water, Inc.; Linda Colman, Panhandle; Paul Colman, Cactus Feeders, Inc; Dave Venhaus, Cactus Feeders, Inc., Ricky George, Amarillo Globe News; Phil Posada, KGNC Talk Radio; Leann Kensey, KAMR TV; Michelle Scott, KAMR TV; Donna Kirby, Lugert-Altus Irrigation District; Lewis Britt, Congressman Mac Thornberry’s Office; Cleon W. Namken, USDA-NRCS; Dean Looper, City of Canadian

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. C. E. Williams called the meeting to order and noted that a quorum was present.
2. **ESTABLISH ATTENDANCE & RECOGNIZE DESIGNATED ALTERNATES**

Four Designated Alternates were recognized: Judge Jim Forrester for Rudie Tate; Ben Weinheimer for Frank Simms; Joe Minshew for Ronald Bertrand and Rima Petrossian for Stefan Schuster.

3. **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Charles Cooke made the motion to accept the minutes as presented Grady Skaggs seconded the motion; motion carried by unanimous vote.

4. **RATIFICATION OF ACTION ITEMS FROM THE MAY 10, 2000 MEETING OF THE PANHANDLE WATER PLANNING GROUP**

C.E. Williams asked Jarrett Atkinson to explain this agenda item. Mr. Atkinson explained that the PWPG has quite an extensive notification process for meetings, which includes notification of 21 county clerks, all members of the PWPG, all interested parties, web posting, posting at the meeting site, and posting with the Secretary of State's office. He explained that all requirements of the May 10 meeting posting rules were met with the exception of the Secretary of State's posting, which was not received a full 72 hours ahead of the meeting. Due to this occurrence, it would be appropriate for the Planning Group to ratify or reaffirm the actions taken at the last meeting.

David Landis made the motion to ratify that the actions taken at the last meeting, held on May 10, 2000, be ratified. Judge Vernon Cook seconded the motion; motion carried by unanimous vote.

5. **CONSIDERATION OF MESA WATER, INC. REQUEST**

C.E. Williams stated that Mesa Water, Inc. has requested that the PWPG designate or include their name as a major water provider or as a management strategy potentially feasible as a new supply development.

Copies of Mesa’s request were made available as well as the Texas Water Development Board's definition of a major water provider.

C.E. Williams asked Mr. Steve Stevens, Mesa Water, Inc., if he had anything to add to the request or wished to speak to the PWPG. Mr. Stevens stated that the report should answer most questions anyone would have, but that he would be happy to take questions for the group.

Dr. Nolan Clark stated that there are two issues here. There is a difference in "major water provider" and "management strategy". At this point, Jarrett Atkinson directed members to the definition of "major water provider" as provided by the Texas Water Development Board. He stated that the PWPG has designated three major water providers. They are Greenbelt Municipal and Industrial Water Authority, Canadian River Municipal Water Authority and the City of Amarillo. John Williams asked Mr. Stevens if any other planning group has designated Mesa as a major water provider. Mr. Stevens stated that none had at this time.
C.E. Williams stated that it would be very difficult for the PWPG to make the designation. Charles Cooke asked if the committees had looked at other providers that had not qualified. C.E. Williams said that they had and cited the Palo Duro River Authority as an example.

Rusty Gilmore asked Mr. Stevens what cities in Region A would benefit from this designation. Mr. Stevens stated that any city that wishes to tie on to the system would benefit if that city needed an additional water supply. C.E. Williams asked, with the exception of Greenbelt, is there any city that Mesa has had direct contact with. Mr. Stevens said there was not.

C.E. Williams asked Mr. Stevens how many acres of water Mesa has at this point in time. Mr. Stevens stated that they have in excess of 100,000 acres.

Mr. Stevens stated that it is Mesa's understanding that if they are considered a potentially feasible new supply, they could be included in the plan. After Mesa's being included in the plan, any community that wanted water from them could apply to receive funding (for infrastructure), if needed, to purchase water from Mesa.

C.E. Williams asked Rima Petrossian, TWDB, if being designated as a major water provider in the plan has any weight to it at all. Ms. Petrossian said that the question being asked is if small cities can receive funding. She stated that if the city is designated as having a shortage and is mentioned in the plan, then they would be eligible for funding. A strategy wouldn't necessarily have to be identified. Therefore the source of additional water is not important, but rather the need being identified in the plan.

C.E. Williams asked if the PWPG would be giving any advantage or disadvantage to Mesa by designating them as a major water provider. Ms. Petrossian said the advantage would be for planning purposes only. As far as being designated in the plan, she did not see an advantage.

C.E. Williams stated that in his opinion this action would be premature, with no information as to where the water is coming from or who the customers would be. Asking for designation puts a strain on this Planning Group because the information required for this designation is not available.

Richard Bowers stated that we are working on a draft of management strategies. We are basically telling everyone to be looking for additional water supplies. Our job is to make sure the cities are identified and it is up to the cities to decide where they get the water.

Rima Petrossian reiterated that if a city is mentioned at all in the plan, it complies with the rule that states "if mentioned in the plan. . . . eligible for funding. The city and NOT the provider or strategy must be mentioned in the plan. The need rather than the supply is what triggers state funding. Jarrett Atkinson asked if the group could include a list of all cities in the region and that would satisfy the requirement and cover all and in turn, strategies chosen would have to fill a need. Ms. Petrossian also stated that if a need comes up after a plan has been done, you can certainly go back and revise the plan.
C.E. Williams stated that he doesn't believe that way our plan is written that it precludes anyone from selling or providing water.

Steve Stevens stated that Mesa's intent is to provide water to any small community when it is economically feasible. Mesa doesn't want any small communities to be excluded because Mesa was left out in the planning process.

Dan Coffey asked Ms. Petrossian, what was the intent of the TWDB in defining major water providers. He explained that the group has gone through this discussion internally and wonders what is the advantage or purpose. Ms. Petrossian said that she could not answer that question directly, but that the TWDB will be using numbers provided to them by the major water providers for the tables in the plan. One advantage is that the group will see from both perspectives and not have so many missing links. The group will see where the water is actually going.

Therese Abraham made the motion to table the issue of designating Mesa Water, Inc. as a major water provider or as a management strategy potentially feasible as new supply development. Judge Vernon Cook seconded the motion. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

6. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

C.E. Williams reported that John Williams, Dan Coffey, John Sweeten and himself had traveled to Austin for the May 16 meeting to discuss planning group issues. John Williams and Dr. Sweeten offered comments on the meeting.

This was not an action item.

7. AGRICULTURAL DEMANDS AND PROJECTIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Dr. Nolan Clark stated that the Agricultural Demands and Projections Committee has met and reviewed the draft report on Task 5. The consultants have taken the management strategies for the annual water savings by county/by decade as provided by the Committee. The Committee will meet again on June 21 to review the consultant's revisions. This was not an action item.

8. MUNICIPAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEMANDS AND PROJECTIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Dan Coffey explained that the Municipal and Industrial Demands and Projections Committee met and discussed draft water management strategies. The general consensus of the Committee is that Task 5 still needs work and suggestions were given to the consultants. The Committee will meet again on June 21 to review the consultant's revisions. This was not an action item.

9. CONSULTANT REPORTS

1. Freese Nichols, Inc. – TAMU TAES/TAEX: Tammy Sullivan stated that the intent of the Task 5 memo was to flesh out management strategy cost and environmental evaluations. Staff is currently finishing strategy sections and moving into cost analyses. Staff has electronically submitted Tasks 3 and 4 to PRPC staff for submittal to TWDB.
2. **Bureau of Economic Geology:** Dr. Alan Dutton reported that the main thing BEG is working on in Task 5 is determining projected drawdown results. In Task 4 BEG is evaluating the potential impact of water availability across the state lines. They are also trying to get information on the location of possible aquifer recharge projects.

10. **TASK 6 REVIEW**

Tammy Sullivan stated that Task 6 Item in the Scope of Work is other recommendations, an itemization of problems encountered during the planning process. She directed attention to her discussion memo included in the agenda packet. This is a "wish list" of things the group would like changed. In addition to her memo, she mentioned John Williams' suggestion for a salinity-control project, Dan Coffey's discussion about inter-basin/intra-basin transfer of water and Dr. Sweeten's comments about changing the definition of a major water provider.

Ms. Sullivan stressed that if there is anything to be added, this is the section of the report to put it in.

After a discussion on including an economic analysis on the cost of water in Task 6, Dan Coffey suggested that this initial planning process is intended to establish needs. He further suggested coming back in 5 years and at that point the group could provide a cost analysis. He suggested that at this point we are not providing an economic response, but rather establishing needs. Tammy Sullivan suggested that maybe the approach in Task 6 is to recommend that in the next planning cycle, an economic analysis be included as an element.

John Williams stated that unique to this area is our extreme reliance on groundwater. The numbers given us to use for agriculture demands are based on dry year's demands. In essence, we are planning for 50 years of dry weather. He stated that his concern is that this a little unrealistic. Another concern is the tables we are talking about tend to treat groundwater supplies the same as we treat surface water supplies. You can't treat groundwater the same way because it is not going to be there in perpetuity. We use groundwater up.

C.E. Williams stated that one of his concerns is that on a CRP-type program, water becomes more a federal issue than state. Do we need those separate? Tammy stated that the TWDB and TNRCC are having coordinating meetings and if there is something this group wants addressed - - now is the time to throw it out there.

Richard Bowers asked Rima Petrossian where the funding will come from for the next five years (for both planning and maintenance. Judge Vernon cook expressed the need to address surface water retention and brush control. Dr. Nolan Clark stated that this is addressed in the water supply strategies. But that right now all we have is educational programs. He suggested we pursue some type of funding incentive or cost-share programs to implement surface water retention and brush control.

John Williams questioned why we have not identified Sweetwater Creek as a strategy. Tammy explained that if we do, we have to do a economic analysis. This way, we don't lose funding but it saves us the work of an economic analysis.
Jarrett Atkinson suggested we include a copy of the resolution speaking to preservation of all future reservoir sites. Tammy Sullivan agreed to include that. This was not an action item.

11. OPEN DISCUSSION

- Mr. Phil Nelson, and attorney representing Lugert-Altus Irrigation District and Donna Kirby expressed an interest in our discussion at a previous meeting regarding a reservoir on Sweetwater Creek and in particular the compact between Oklahoma and Texas. He stated that primarily their purpose at this meeting was to state their position and provide information so that the planning group understands their concerns. He then deferred to Ms. Kirby. She stated that the district consists of 46,000 acres of assessed land and supplies flood control for the City of Altus. The main crop of the district is cotton and they are in their 55th year of irrigating. Ms. Kirby also noted that the Lugert-Altus Irrigation District typically delivered around 107,000 af of water for irrigation on 46,000 acres. She stated that while they are concerned about a reservoir, their main issue is water quality rather than quantity.

- Trish Nuesch commented that in light of the contamination in the groundwater on the north side of Pantex, she believes it might be our responsibility as a planning group to share this information. This is a potential loss of groundwater. It would be difficult to calculate potential loss. Tammy Sullivan suggested that we include in this information in Task 6 and recommend that a study be made in detail on the impact that contamination might or might not have on future water supplies nearby. Trish Nuesch stated that it is not just DOE, but SPS as well. Dr. Nolan Clark said everything in the planning process is focused on surface water and that water quality issues need to be addressed.

12. COMMITTEE ACTIONS

C.E. Williams stated that there are no new committee actions at this time. This was not an action item.

13. PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETINGS

Judge Vernon cook asked for authorization from the group to set locations for a short series of public hearings on July 13. These meetings will be by remote T.V.

Nolan Clark stated his concern over the time element since there is another PWPG group meeting on 7-5-00. This puts a strain on the presenters. After much discussion, the group decided to let the Public Participation Committee make the call. Jarrett Atkinson said that they will meet and come back to the group with a recommendation. This was not an action item.

14. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Report from Kent Satterwhite on Region O – Kent reported that Bo Brown, a new Vice Chairman had been elected.

B. Report from the Water Development Board – Rima Petrossian reported that the Groundwater Availability Model draft has gone out. She also stated that the Bureau of Reclamation has proposed that several projects be
implemented at the Canadian River area with money available through September, 2000, as well as looking for long-term projects seeking water availability in the area.

Ms. Petrossian also covered the following and asked for input (from the group) to take back to Austin:

- GIS mapping of the watershed
- Cost-sharing involving all regions
- The Bureau is developing a stream accretion/depletion model to complement the WHAM.
- The Bureau will review documentation of all regulatory conditions, i.e., compacts, water rights, etc.
- **Brush Control Research and Inventory** - The Bureau will compile an inventory of brush infestation in the watershed and develop a list of comprehensive approaches to management
- There will be more data layers developed for the DOQQ's collected under the strat map project.

Ms. Petrossian stated that the group has two weeks to respond to the above-mentioned items, as they are on the fast track.

TWDB will conduct a Chairs conference call on June 21 at 2 p.m., agenda is not available, yet.

Ms. Petrossian was asked to give a general overview. She stated that she has seen the tables coming to State offices and all regions are looking at management strategies.

The TNRCC has a report on stream accretion and depletion due on 8-31-00.

In response to requests for input from the Group, John Williams stated that all of the reservoirs in this part of the world have less inflow than originally anticipated. He suggested that the Bureau of Reclamation use some of their funding to identify some of the reasons that these reservoirs do not live up to their expectations.

This was not an action item.

15. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Planning Group, the meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.