Meeting Minutes
Region 6 San Jacinto Regional Flood Planning Group
April 11, 2024 at 9:00 AM
Hybrid Meeting
United Way: 50 Waugh Drive; Houston, TX 77007

Roll Call:

Voting Member	Interest Category (Executive Committee role)	Present (x) /Absent ( ) / Alternate Present (*)
Timothy E. Buscha	Industries (Chair)	x
Alia Vinson	Water Districts (Vice Chair)	x
Erwin Burden	Counties (Secretary)	x
Augustus Campbell	Public #1 (At-Large member)	x
Matthew Barrett	River Authorities (At-Large member)	x
Elisa Macia Donovan	Agricultural Interests	x
Connie Pothier	Small Business	x
Paul E. Lock	Electric Generating Utilities	x
Hanadi Rifai	Environmental Interests	x
Stephen Costello	Municipalities	x
Tina Petersen	Flood Districts	(*)
Todd Burrer	Water Utilities	x
Brian Maxwell	Coastal Communities	Bob Kosar (*)
Christina Quintero	Public #2	x
Vacant	Upper Watershed	

Non-voting Member	Agency	Present(x)/Absent ( )/ Alternate Present (*)
Hope Zubek	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	
Michelle Ellis	Texas Division of Emergency Management	
Kristin Lambrecht	Texas Department of Agriculture	x
Joel Clark	Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board	
Santiago Franco	Texas General Land Office	
Mike Kelly	Texas Water Development Board	x
Melinda Johnston	Texas Commission on Environmental Quality	
Justin Bower	Houston-Galveston Area Council	
Ellie Alkhoury	Texas Department of Transportation	
Tom Heidt	Port Houston	

Michael Turco	Harris-Galveston Subsidence District	
Brandon Wade	Region H Regional Water Planning Group	
Sally Bakko	Gulf Coast Protection District	
Lisa Mairs	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	

Liaisons from RFPG	Regional Flood Planning Group	Present(x)/Absent( )/ Alternate Present (*)
Todd Burrer	Trinity Region RFPG	x
Stephen Costello	Neches Region RFPG	x
Michael Turco	Lower Brazos RFPG	

Liaisons from Other Entities	Entity	Present(x)/Absent( )/ Alternate Present (*)
Mark Vogler	Lower Brazos RFPG	x
Scott Harris	Trinity Region RFPG	
Liv Haselbach	Neches Region RFPG	
Brandon Wade	Region H Regional Water Planning Group	

Project Sponsor	Entity	Present(x)/Absent( )/ Alternate Present (*)
Lea Sanford	Harris County Engineering Department	x
Mike Garcia	Harris County Engineering Department	x
Timothy Williams	Harris County Engineering Department	x

Quorum: **Yes**
Number of voting members or alternates that were present: (14) total, (13) at time of quorum
Number required for quorum per current voting membership of 15: 8

Attendees: Remote:**

Bob Kosar	Kim, Johnny	Imelda Diaz
Brian Koch	Larry Goldberg	Trae Camble
Brian Ramm	Lisa McCracken Mairs	Stephanie Zertuche
Briana Gallagher	Luci Correa	Maggie Puckett
Dan Stuckert, TDEM	Neil Gaynor	Gary Bezemek
Harvey (Port of Houston)	Peggy Zahler	Rachel Herr Halff

***Meeting attendee names were gathered from the WebEx meeting platform.*

Meeting Minutes
Region 6 San Jacinto Regional Flood Planning Group
April 11, 2024 at 9:00 AM
Hybrid Meeting | Virtual Registration: Link
United Way: 50 Waugh Drive; Houston, TX 77007

MEETING START TIME: 9:00 am

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1: Call to Order

Discussion/Action Items:

Tim Buscha called the meeting to order.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2: Welcome and Roll Call

Discussion/Action Items:

Tim Williams called roll. Online participants were reminded to turn on their cameras. Quorum identified.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3: Registered Public Comments on Agenda Items

Discussion/Action Items:

There were no registered public comments.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4: Texas Water Development Board Update

Discussion/Action Items:

Mike Kelly, Regional Flood Planning Manager of TWDB, gave the update.

- TWDB has received the Cycle 1 pay request number 14. They are working on processing this request. Once complete, they will process retainage and close the Cycle 1 contracts.
- TWDB has received the SJRFPG grant application for Cycle 2. They anticipate having the contract sent to SJRFPG in early May.
- FIF abridged applications are due to TWDB on Monday 4/15. Webinar instructions are available on their website.
- TWDB requested an update on the progress towards selecting a technical consultant for the SJRFPG. This was discussed later in meeting.
- TWDB has posted information on the website regarding the process for amending Regional State Flood Plans to potentially update the State Flood Plan. The Sponsor has provided this information to the SJRFPG Board.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5: Approval of Meeting Minutes

Discussion/Action Items:

Minutes from October 2023, December 2023, and February 2024 were provided in the meeting materials packet and posted online.

Comments were offered and revisions were made to the meeting minutes for October 2023 and December 2023.

Matt Barrett offered comments for the February 2024 minutes along with additional comments for October 2023 and December 2023.

Alia Vinson moved to accept the October 2023, December 2023, and February 2024 minutes as amended. Steve Costello seconded the motion. Motion Passed. Matt will send written edits to the Sponsor.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6: Liaison Reports Pertaining to Other Region(s) Progress and Status and other Related Entities.

Discussion/Action Items:

a. Trinity Region – Todd Burrer reported that the Trinity Region's ongoing work is following a course similar to the San Jacinto Region.
b. Neches Region – There was no report from the Neches Region.
c. Lower Brazos Region – Mark Vogler reported that the Lower Brazos Region's work is also in line with the San Jacinto Region.
d. Region H Water – There was no report from Region H Water.
e. Gulf Coast Protection District (GCPD) Discussion/Action Items: Gulf Coast Protection District was not present. Steve Costello noted that GCPD has been in Washington in support of one of its projects.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7: Recommendation for selection of Upper Watershed Representative

Discussion/Action Items:

Tim Buscha offered thanks to Neil Gaynor for his past service as Upper Watershed representative.

The Sponsor has gone through the solicitation process to fill the vacancy for the Upper Watershed board position. This position has a geographic limitation requiring the representative to live in the upper San Jacinto watershed area. This limitation was set when the Upper Watershed position was created. Three applicants responded to the solicitation. The Executive Committee met to review the application packages. One applicant did not meet the geographic requirement.

Mr. Buscha reported that Imelda Diaz, based on her qualifications, was recommended to the membership to serve as the Upper Watershed representative.

Ms. Vinson offered support for the selection of Ms. Diaz. Mr. Barrett offered comments of support for Ms. Diaz.

Mr. Costello moved to accept the recommendation of the Executive Committee to have Imelda Diaz fill the Upper Watershed representative position. Augustus Campbell seconded the motion.

Motion passed.

Mr. Buscha welcomed Ms. Diaz. Imelda Diaz accepted the role as Upper Watershed representative and stated her commitment to SJRFPG. The Sponsor will send Ms. Diaz information on training opportunities and get the name of her alternate.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8: Update by the Project Sponsor regarding the application for grant funds and contract with TWDB, on behalf of the RFPG.

Discussion/Action Items:

The application for grant funds is complete and submitted. An executive summary of the application was provided to SJRFPG members.

It was asked who the parties in the topic contract are. Harris County Engineering Department (HCED) is the Sponsor and the contract is between TWDB and HCED. It provides $3.7M from TWDB to fund SJRFPG. This grant is the only funding source. No other funding sources are available to SJRFPG.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9: Discussion and possible action related to issuing the Request for Qualifications for and beginning the procurement process of the Technical Consultant for the 2028 Regional Flood Planning Cycle in accordance with applicable federal, state and the local sponsor's procurement requirements.

Discussion/Action Items:

The history of the discussions about procurement of a Technical Consultant and the RFQ process was reviewed. It is important for the SJRFPG voting membership to have greater input into the selection of the Technical Consultant. Tim Buscha and Erwin Burden were selected to sit on the RFQ review team, representing SJRFPG.

There are two regional flood planning groups who are choosing to move forward with their Technical Consultant from the first planning cycle into the second planning cycle without completing the procurement process. TWDB has provided guidance that the procurement process is not required by statute.

As sponsor, HCED has provided an email to SJRFPG stating the importance of the procurement process. Mr. Burden commented that sponsor Harris County, as the third largest county in the US, recommends following the Harris County RFQ process and reprocuring the technical consultant. They view this option as an appropriate demonstration of leadership.

Ms. Vinson expressed appreciation for Harris County's recommendation. She reiterated that there is no legal requirement for completing the procurement process through RFQ. It was further noted that procurement, if pursued, is anticipated to be a 4-month process. Sponsor provided a procurement schedule to the group. Ms. Vinson questioned whether the RFQ process was wise, given that based on history, only a few submittals may be received. Ms. Vinson added that she is willing to accept the Sponsor's recommendation to proceed with procurement.

Mr. Campbell inquired as to when the current contract with the Technical Consultant will expire. Mr. Buscha explained that the current contract is expired and cannot be extended.

The Harris County RFQ process via the Harris County Purchasing Department was explained to the group. The RFQ contains scope, level of effort and other documents provided by TWDB. Three to four firms are expected to submit. A scoring committee will score the RFQs. Two of the committee members will be the SJRFPG president and secretary. HCED Purchasing may interview a short list of firms. Purchasing will take a recommendation from the scoring committee to execute a contract. The SJRFPG membership will vote on the firm recommended by the scoring committee and the final selection will go to the Harris County Commissioners Court.

Voting membership should not have contact with consulting firms.

The Sponsor has reviewed the schedule and documents that will be provided to Harris County Purchasing for the creation of the RFQ. Mr. Costello supported going forward with the RFQ process due to the large size of the contract.

It was asked if Harris County would award the contract if only one proposal is received. The Sponsor believes it can be awarded with one qualified applicant but will need to verify with Purchasing.

Dr. Petersen expressed support of the Harris County position of procurement for the Technical Consultant to ensure obtaining the best value for SJRFPG.

Matt Barrett stated that the procurement process gives transparency and accountability and for this reason, he supports procurement.

Mr. Buscha stated his understanding that the majority of the voting membership supports Harris County initiating the procurement process for the Technical Consultant. He further expressed SJRPFG's strong desire that there be no minimum number of responses required to complete the process.

SJRFPG should be a part of the RFQ process. SJRFPG requested that the Sponsor send the RFQ documents to the executive committee when they are submitted for processing. The Sponsor is encouraged to proceed with the RFQ process quickly and with a sense of urgency to ensure that a Technical Consultant is obtained in a timely manner.

Mr. Buscha expressed support to the Sponsor on behalf of SJRFPG to provide any assistance that may be needed in completing the RFQ process.

There was discussion concerning the Technical Consultant's contract regarding whether contract language could be added or anything done now or in the future to extend the Technical Consultant's contract, so that the group could have coverage during this process. Extending the contract is not possible; however, SJRFPG can limit the gap between contracts by beginning the RFQ process for the Cycle 3 Technical Consultant six months prior to the Cycle 2 contract ending. There was discussion regarding the 3-week duration to advertise the RFQ, because this is a short time for a firm to prepare an RFQ of this complexity. The Sponsor will send notification of the RFQ in advance so firms can begin preparing submittals. The Sponsor will suggest making the advertisement time longer.

It was reiterated that firms planning to submit proposals for Technical Consultant refrain from contacting SJRFPG members. Members were advised to direct any questions about the RFQ to HCED.

The Sponsor was directed to proceed with the procurement process for the Technical Consultant and to keep SJRFPG members updated on the progress.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 10: Discussion of potential level of effort/cost impacts for amending the current Region 6 Flood Plan during the next planning cycle on the TWDB published scope for technical consultant.

Discussion/Action Items:

Background was given for this agenda item. SJRFPG has received requests for projects to be included in the 2023 plan, making those projects eligible for future FIF grants prior to the 2028 plan. The State will amend their plan between 2025 and 2028. Any RFPG can also amend their plans, but there are no funds provided for plan amendments.

Mike Kelly clarified that the regional flood planning groups cannot use new grant funds to amend previous plans. Members expressed concern for amending the plans without funds to support it and the unfavorable impact it would have on smaller jurisdictions. Members offered comments in support of asking TWDB and State leadership for funding for amending the current Regional Flood Plans. In addition to entities who will wish to add a plan to the existing Regional Flood Plan, there may also be entities who wish to amend already submitted projects to improve their position for funding.

TWDB was asked to provide guidance to SJRFPG on implementation of plan amendments. The Sponsor will draft guidance to provide for entities who may wish to submit projects for the amended 2023 plan or the 2028 plan.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 11: Presentation of 2024 Planning Group Key Dates and Deadlines:

Discussion/Action Items:

a. Upcoming Planning Schedule Milestones
b. Next RFPG Planning Meeting to be held June 13, 2024 – will be at United Way

Dates and schedule were discussed.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 12: Consider Agenda Items for Next Meeting

Discussion/Action Items:

Items 8 and 9 will be combined. Item 10 will remain on the agenda.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 13: Public Comments – Limit 3 Minutes Per Person

Discussion/Action Items:

There were no public comments.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 14: Adjournment

Discussion/Action Items: N/A

MEETING END TIME: 10:05 AM

Erwin Burden, Secretary

Timothy E. Buscha

Tim Buscha, Chair