

Meeting Minutes

Region 6 San Jacinto Regional Flood Planning Group

December 14, 2023 at 9:00 AM

Hybrid Meeting | Virtual Registration: [Link](#)

United Way: 50 Waugh Drive; Houston, TX 77007

Roll Call:

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

<u>Non-voting Member</u>	<u>Agency</u>	<u>Present(x)/Absent ()/ Alternate Present (*)</u>
Hope Zubek	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department	
Michelle Ellis	Texas Division of Emergency Management	
Kristin Lambrecht	Texas Department of Agriculture	
Joel Clark	Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board	
Santiago Franco	Texas General Land Office	
Megan Ingram	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	X
Lisa Mairs	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	

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

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

<u>Technical Consultant Team Members</u>	<u>Entity</u>	<u>Present(x)/Absent()/ Alternate Present (*)</u>
Cory Stull	Freese and Nichols Inc.	X (In-Person)
Maggie Puckett	Freese and Nichols Inc.	X (Virtual)
Brian Edmondson	Freese and Nichols Inc.	
Andrew Moore	Halff, Associates	
Jacob Torres	Torres & Associates	
Evan Adrian	Torres & Associates	
Rachel Herr	Halff, Associates	
Mariah Najmuddin	Hollaway Environmental + Communications	

<u>Project Sponsor</u>	<u>Entity</u>	<u>Present(x)/Absent()/ Alternate Present (*)</u>
Lea Sanford	Harris County Engineering Department	X (In-Person)
Mike Garcia	Harris County Engineering Department	X (In-Person)
Timothy Williams	Harris County Engineering Department	X (In-Person)

Quorum: Yes

Number of voting members or alternates that were present: 9

Number required for quorum per current voting membership of 15: 8

Attendees:**

Remote:

Bob Kosar	Reem Zoun	Amanda Ashcroft
Larry Dunbar	Ian Hudson	Anita Machiavello
Mike Kelly	Vogler Mark	Ian Hudson
Jonathan St. Romain	Kristin Lambrecht	
Lisa McCracken Mairs	R. Fiederlein	

****Meeting attendee names were gathered from those who entered information on the WebEx meeting registration.**

All meeting materials were available for the public at: [Meetings - San Jacinto Regional Flood Planning \(sanjacintofloodplanning.org\)](http://Meetings - San Jacinto Regional Flood Planning (sanjacintofloodplanning.org))

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1: Call to Order

Tim Buscha called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2: Welcome and Roll Call

Tim Williams took attendance, and a quorum was determined to be present.

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

Mr. Buscha opened the floor for any registered public comments, and none were made.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4: Texas Water Development Board

Megan Ingram stated that they were still reviewing the RFI responses for the Regional amended plan submission. A newsletter was sent out in November with information for the consultant and sponsors. TWDB announced that Mike Kelly will be the new regional flood planning manager. Mike Kelly with TWDB joined the meeting and introduced himself. Tina Petersen welcomed Mike to the team in support of his participation.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5: Approval of Meeting Minutes - October 12, 2023

Matt Barrett commented that there were proofreading errors in the minutes provided at the meeting. Matt and Alia Vinson did not remember receiving minutes after the October meeting. Alia moved to table approval of these minutes and the issue was deferred until the next meeting. Mike Garcia will edit the October minutes and resend out to board members for review.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6: Announcement of New Alternate Members

Alia Vinson introduced Larry Goldberg as her new alternate voting member. Alia further introduced and explained that her previous alternate is now a voting member. Larry was reminded to take open meeting and public information training.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7: Liaison Reports Pertaining to Other Region(s) Progress and Status and other Related Entities:

- a. Trinity Region – Todd Burrer was unavailable to provide an update.
- b. Neches Region – Stephen Costello was unavailable to provide an update.

- c. Lower Brazos Region – Brandon Wade was unavailable to provide an update.
- d. Region H Water- Mike Turco (rep) was unavailable to provide an update.
- e. Gulf Coast Protection District (GCPD) – Sally Bakko had technical difficulties and couldn't speak.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8: Update by the Project Sponsor Regarding the Application for Grant Funds and Contract with TWDB, on behalf of the RFPB

Mike Garcia reported that RRD is working on the grant application and plans to submit in late January.

Tim Buscha suggested SJRFPG reserve funds in allocation to do a future amendment at the end of Cycle 2 to have the opportunity to amend the regional plan. He requested to reserve these funds in the contract when it's put together. Tim opened the floor for questions/comments regarding this matter since the next meeting won't take place until the deadline for this has passed (January 2024).

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9: Discussion and Possible Action Related to Issuing the Request for Qualifications and Beginning the Procurement Process of a Technical Consultant for the 2028 Regional Flood Planning Cycle in Accordance with Applicable Federal, State, and Local Sponsor's Procurement Requirements.

Tim Buscha plans to put together the RFQ after the grant application is submitted and will probably have more discussion at February's meeting.

Sally Bakko was able to speak and give an update (GCPD report). Last week they went to Washington D.C in pursuit of funds from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Greater Houston Port representatives and USACE reps attended as well. The funding request focuses on the Bolivar Road gate system project, developing acquisition strategy and a scoping delivery plan, beginning the sand sourcing work on the beach and dune system along Bolivar and West Galveston Island, and work on South Padre Island beach and dunes. This also includes ecosystem restoration projects; there are 4 projects that are in compliance and ready. They met with representatives from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) along with Senator Cornyn, Representative Weber, and Representative Henry Cuellar's staff. They're awaiting word on the decision for this funding. They likely won't know until sometime after February or March 2024. They were able to submit several support letters. Sally stated that they have good momentum.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 10: Presentation and Update from the Technical Consultant on the Development of the Regional Flood Plan.

Maggie Puckett shared updates that were made by Freese and Nichols (FNI). Technical Consultant submitted the amended regional flood plan to TWDB in July. TWDB issued RFI's on the Amended RFP on November 7th. Responses and updated materials were submitted on November 20th. FNI made corrections and updates to inconsistencies that they located. Updates were made to the Technical Documents tab and Story Map on the website to reflect latest version of RFP.

TWDB published Flood Infrastructure Fund Intended Use Plan.

Notable Milestones:

- **December 2023**
 - RFPG meeting to authorize local sponsor to issue RFQ.
 - Final reimbursable date for 2023 RFP Technical Consultant is December 29th.
- **February 2024**
 - Deadline for local sponsor to apply for grant funds
 - Local sponsor to begin/continue contracting with TWDB
 - Procurement for Technical Consultant can occur in parallel to contracting with TWDB.
- **September 2024**
 - TWDB anticipates contracting across the state between sponsors and technical consultants to be executed, at the latest, by September 2024.

Tim Buscha asked who hosts SJRFPG website. Answer – Hollaway. He expressed concern about changing consultants and losing the website. Erwin Burden stated that the sponsor is addressing issue to prevent problems with possible transition.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 11: Approval and Certification of Administrative Expenses Incurred by the Project Sponsor for the Development of Regional Flood Plan

Connie Pothier moved to approve the expenses. Tina Petersen seconded. No discussion. Approved.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 12: Presentation by the Technical Consultant and Discussion of the TWDB released Draft FY2024-2025 FIF Intended Use Plan (IUP)

Cory Stull with FNI gave a brief overview. He emphasized that the end goal was to maximize flood funding eligibility that we can bring from the state to our region. Cory then brought in Maggie Puckett to discuss public comments on the draft FIF Intended Use Plan (IUP).

Maggie reminded everyone that comments are due to TWDB on January 1, 2024, that they should be submitted to TWDB's email (FIF@twdb.texas.gov), and the documents are available on TWDB's website. She provided a review of the contents of the draft IUP plan.

Maggie also reviewed the Anticipated FIF Application Process. She then opened the floor for discussion with a stated objective of determining how Region 6 would like to coordinate comments.

Megan Ingram stated that her team anticipates the Abridged application to be posted in the next couple of weeks and expects a 3-month deadline after it's posted.

Tim Buscha inquired about the timing of putting out the information so that someone can do an Abridged application at the same time comments are being requested for the IUP.

Megan expressed optimism about them not overlapping due to the 3-month period to work on the applications.

Tim encouraged people to read the IUP and provide comments. He stated that SJRFPG will be submitting a letter and gave deadlines to the board to submit their feedback. Comments need to be provided to Cory by Wednesday, so Tim can have it by Friday December 22, 2023.

Tina Petersen asked for the comments that were submitted in the previous cycle. Cory will send a two-page letter focused on scoring to Mike so that he can send it out to the board.

Alia Vinson stated that Region 6 should comment. She further commented on the challenges of funding when using loans vs. grants and on the language that is used in the FIF IUP. Items in FIF IUP were not in original legislation, creating additional limitations not required by legislation. Two areas she'd like Region 6 to address again are benefits cost ratio (BCR) and memorandum of understanding (MOU). She believes that guidelines should be increased around the alternative that allows you to submit evidence of notification to the non-responsive political subdivisions when completing the application.

Matt Barrett also made comments on the IUP and inquired if the group needed to bless the contents of the letter before sending.

Tim stated there was no time for a formal meeting due to short deadline. Comments can be sent individually, not necessarily as a group.

Tina agrees with comments from Alia and Matt about funding limits. She stated that HCFCF is digging through the IUP and will provide comments.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 13: Presentation of 2023 Planning Group Key Dates and Deadlines

- a. Upcoming Planning Schedule Milestones
- b. Next RFPG Planning Meeting to be held on Feb 8, 2024

Per Tim Buscha, Region 6 will have an executive meeting in January to discuss the status of the grant application and the RFQ process in preparation for the February 8, 2024 public meeting.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 14: Update and Discussion Pertaining to In-Person RFPG Meeting Location(s)

Tim Buscha stated his support for United Way as a meeting location and stated his appreciation to staff for making the meeting work.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 15: Discussion Regarding Necessary Changes or Updates to the SJRFPG By-Laws

Tim Buscha – no changes.

Alia Vinson– no changes.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 16: Consider Agenda Items for Next Meeting

There will be continued discussion about the grant application, RFQ, and comments that were submitted for the FIF IUP.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 17: Public Comments – Limit 3 Minutes Per Person

There were no public comments. There were no hands raised.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 18: Adjournment

Tim Buscha Adjourned the meeting at 10:03 am.



Erwin Burden, Secretary



Tim Buscha, Chair