



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

SOUTHWESTERN TRAVIS COUNTY GROUNDWATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Wednesday, September 13, 2023, at 9:30 a.m.

A quorum of the Southwestern Travis County Groundwater Conservation District Board of Directors held a regular board meeting, fee schedule hearing, and budget hearing on Wednesday, September 13, 2023, at 9:30 a.m. at the District's office at 8656 W. Highway 71, Building A, Suite 224, Austin, Texas 78735. The meeting was open to the public and a videoconference remote participation option was provided, instructions for accessing the remote videoconference were provided with the Public Notice of Meeting.

- 1. Call to order, declare meeting open to the public, take roll and declare quorum status** – President Scadden called the public meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. on Wednesday, September 13, 2023. Five directors were present at the meeting constituting a quorum, including President Scadden, Director Hunt, Director Urie, Director Leva, and Director Van Ackeren. Also present were General Manager Lane Cockrell and District regulatory compliance specialist Virginia Smith, District volunteer Pete Golde, and Jim Truitt with Mirasol Capital. The following individuals participated remotely by videoconference call: Ty Embrey and Audrey Cooper with Lloyd Gosselink, CJ Bennett with Bullock, Bennett & Associates, LLC, Juli Hennings, and Director Ian Norton participated remotely as a member of the public.
- 2. Announcements** – President Scadden reported that he and Director Davis attended the 2023 Texas Groundwater Summit in San Antonio on August 29 through 31 hosted by the Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts ("TAGD") and provided a recap of the conference to the Board.
- 3. Public Comments** – No public comments were presented under this agenda item.
- 4. Discuss and possibly act on approving previous meeting minutes** – President Scadden presented the minutes for the August 23, 2023 regular board meeting to the Board for consideration. A motion was made by Director Hunt to approve the minutes for the August 23, 2023 meeting. Motion seconded by Director Van Ackeren. Motion carried 5 Ayes – 0 Nays – 2 Absent.
- 5. Conduct a public hearing to receive input regarding proposed District Fee Schedule for FY 2024** – President Scadden closed the open meeting at 9:38 a.m., and called the public hearing on the proposed District Fee Schedule for fiscal year 2024 to order at 9:38 a.m. No public comments were presented regarding the proposed District Fee Schedule. General Manager Cockrell reported that no changes were made to the proposed fee schedule for fiscal year 2024. President Scadden adjourned the public hearing at 9:39 a.m.
- 6. Discuss and possibly act on matters related to proposed District Fee Schedule for FY 2024, including Resolution to adopt District Fee Schedule for FY 2024** – A motion was made by Director Hunt to adopt the proposed District Fee Schedule for fiscal year 2024. Motion seconded by Director Urie. Motion carried 5 Ayes – 0 Nays – 2 Absent.



7. **Conduct a public hearing to receive input regarding proposed District budget for FY 2024** – General Manager Cockrell provided a presentation to the Board regarding the draft budget for fiscal year 2024 and provided a summary of the proposed budget line items. General Manager Cockrell reported that estimated revenue in the draft budget includes updated fee categories to help with bookkeeping for fiscal year 2024. General Manager Cockrell reported that personnel expenses for fiscal year 2024 include a ten percent increase in salary for District staff as recommended by the Director Budget Committee. General Manager Cockrell reported that the draft budget allocates additional funding for legal services for fiscal year 2024 as District staff anticipate that the Board will hold its first permit hearings in fiscal year 2024. Director Hunt raised concerns that the amount of funding allocated for equipment maintenance under the District’s groundwater monitoring program was too low. General Manager Cockrell agreed that additional funding could be budgeted to cover potential maintenance costs for the District’s monitoring equipment. President Scadden closed the open meeting at 9:47 a.m., and called the public hearing on the proposed budget for fiscal year 2024 to order at 9:47 a.m. No public comments were presented regarding the draft budget. President Scadden adjourned the public hearing at 9:48 a.m.

Director Davis joined the open meeting at 9:49 a.m., a quorum of six directors remained present, including President Scadden, Director Hunt, Director Urie, Director Leva, Director Davis, and Director Van Ackeren.

8. **Discuss and possibly act on matters related to proposed District budget for FY 2024, including Resolution to adopt District budget for FY 2024** – General Manager Cockrell suggested reallocating funds from the line item for contingencies to the line item for the maintenance of the District’s groundwater monitoring program equipment. President Scadden suggested moving an additional \$1,000.00 to the line item for equipment maintenance, bringing the total budgeted amount up to \$1,250.00. Director Norton asked approximately how much it would cost to install remote monitoring equipment at the District’s lakeside monitoring well. General Manager Cockrell reported that the District has monitoring equipment that could be installed there, but the District would need to purchase additional communications cable and pay associated data plan fees. A motion was made by Director Hunt to adopt the proposed budget for fiscal year 2024 as revised. Motion seconded by Director Urie. Motion carried 6 Ayes – 0 Nays – 1 Absent.
9. **Discuss and possibly act on matters related to Certification of Unopposed Candidates for November 7, 2023 Directors Election** – Director Van Ackeren reported that the four directors up for re-election at the November 7, 2023 election are unopposed, and that the deadline to submit declarations of write-in candidacy has passed. Director Van Ackeren reported that President Scadden, Director Norton, Director Davis, and Director Leva are all unopposed. Director Van Ackeren presented the Certification of Unopposed Candidates for President Scadden, Director Norton, Director Davis, and Director Leva for the November 7, 2023 directors election. A motion was made by Director Hunt to accept the Certification of Unopposed Candidates for the November 7, 2023 election. Motion seconded by Director Urie. Motion carried 6 Ayes – 0 Nays – 1 Absent.
10. **Discuss and possibly act on matters related to Order of Cancellation for November 7, 2023 Directors Election** – General Manager Cockrell reported that as every candidate up for election is unopposed the Board may cancel the directors election scheduled for November 7, 2023. A motion was made by



Director Hunt to adopt the Order of Cancellation for the November 7, 2023 Directors Election. Motion seconded by Director Davis. Motion carried 6 Ayes – 0 Nays – 1 Absent.

11. Receive, discuss, and take action as necessary on Board Committee Reports:

- a. **Finance** – Pete Golde provided a report to the Board regarding the financial reports dated August 31, 2023. The balance sheet indicated assets totaling \$212,697.18, and liabilities totaling \$3,459.30. The fiscal year to date profit and loss report indicated expenses totaling \$211,222.20, gross profit totaling \$229,007.56, and net income totaling \$17,785.36 through August 2023. Pete Golde provided a summary of the checks issued by the District since the last board meeting, a summary of expenses by vendor, a fiscal year to date summary of expenses by budgetary line item, and the reconciliation change report for the District’s general fund and escrow account.
- b. **Legislative** – President Scadden asked whether or not the fee increase contemplated in HB 3059 only applies to groundwater transported outside the District. Ty Embrey confirmed that the fee increase in HB 3059 only applies to transport fees. President Scadden asked that the Board consider amending the District’s enabling act next legislative session to increase the authorized production fee for groundwater not transported outside the District. President Scadden stated that he thinks the true value of water is not reflected by the production fees in the District’s Enabling Act.
- c. **Science & Outreach** – Director Hunt reported that the UT Bureau of Economic Geology plans to publish its second-year report on the Hamilton Pool study by the end of September. Director Hunt reported that his hydrogeology interns may give presentations to the Board at some point in the future. Director Norton reported on a news article published recently regarding groundwater issues in Marble Falls, Texas. General Manager Cockrell reported that website traffic in August showed a total of 1,583 unique visits to the District’s website. General Manager Cockrell reported that District staff are working with staff from Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District and Hays Trinity Groundwater Conservation District to collect water-level data for comparison with the 2018 potentiometric map of the Middle Trinity aquifer published by BSEACD, and that District staff plan to visit well sites later in September. General Manager Cockrell reported that the District also received lab results for the water samples that were collected by District staff in collaboration with the Texas Water Development Board (“TWDB”).
- d. **Rules** – Director Hunt reported that the Board Rules Committee is working to consider what measures the District could implement in the Hamilton Pool Management Zone. Director Hunt suggested forming a stakeholder group with members of the community to discuss rules changes related to the management zone.

12. General Manager’s Report:

- a. **Summary of permitting, application, and registration inquiries and submissions** – General Manager Cockrell provided a summary of the permit applications and well registrations received by the District during the month of August 2023. General Manager



Cockrell reported that the District received one (1) new well registration, nine (9) new well drilling authorization applications to drill new wells, and two (2) applications to plug or cap an existing well during the month of August. General Manager Cockrell reported that the District received six (6) water utility service connections during the month of August, and that meter readings submitted by reporting well owners for the month of August reported show total production of 42.3 acre-feet (approximately 13.8 million gallons), for a total of 401.9 acre-feet (approximately 131 million gallons) reported for fiscal year 2023 to-date. General Manager Cockrell reported that the District did not receive any new operating permit applications or general permit applications during the month of August. Director Davis asked whether water well drillers are required to notify the District when they drill a new well, or if the responsibility falls on the landowner. General Manager Cockrell reported that well drillers and landowners are expected to work together to notify the District and obtain a well drilling authorization.

- b. **Regulatory items and updates related to TWDB, TCEQ, GMAs, and other organizations** – General Manager Cockrell reported that the next GMA 9 meeting is scheduled for September 26, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. at the Cow Creek GCD offices in Boerne, Texas, and a Zoom videoconference option will be available. Director Hunt requested that General Manager Cockrell confirm the anticipated timeline for this joint planning cycle and the expected completion date for the updated Groundwater Availability Model (“GAM”) for the Hill Country Trinity Aquifer to determine if the updated GAM would be available for use in this planning cycle. General Manager Cockrell reported that GMA 9 has developed a projected timeline for the current joint planning cycle, and reported that he will distribute a copy to the Board. General Manager Cockrell reported that the TWDB plans to hold a meeting on water infrastructure funding on September 14, 2023, at 9:30 a.m. at Harlingen City Hall in Harlingen, Texas, and that a livestream option will be available.
- c. **Overview of current District groundwater monitoring program** – General Manager Cockrell presented a hydrograph showing water-level data from the District’s lakeside monitoring well and Lake Travis. General Manager Cockrell also presented hydrographs for two TWDB recorder wells, the Johansen and HEB monitoring wells, which are at or approaching record low water levels.
- d. **Other items of interest not requiring Board action** – General Manager Cockrell reported that he posted a job opening for the part-time administrative assistant position on the District’s website and with the Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts (“TAGD”). General Manager Cockrell reported that Lakeway Municipal Utility District (“Lakeway MUD”) will hold an open house on October 19, 2023, at 2:00 p.m. at the Lakeway MUD offices, and that he is scheduled to give a presentation on groundwater. President Scadden reported that he spoke with staff at Hays Trinity GCD about Aqua Texas’ consistent over pumping during Hays Trinity GCD’s drought restrictions, and the potential repercussions.

- 13. **Discuss and possibly act on matters related to District drought stage status** – General Manager Cockrell presented a map from the U.S. Drought Monitor showing drought conditions in Texas



through September 5, 2023. General Manager Cockrell reported that the entirety of Travis County is under D-4 Exceptional Drought, which requires a 40% mandatory curtailment for certain permit categories. General Manager Cockrell reported that the next U.S. Drought Monitor map will be published on September 14, based on data through September 12. General Manager Cockrell reported that he updated the District's website to provide additional information regarding water conservation measures and emphasized the importance of additional outreach and education to encourage conservation. General Manager Cockrell reported that according to the National Weather Service above average temperatures are expected through September, and that drought conditions are expected to continue. President Scadden asked whether permittees are complying with the District's drought curtailments. General Manager Cockrell reported that District staff assess drought compliance on a quarterly basis, and that nearly all permittees are complying with the District's drought curtailments. Director Davis suggested that the District purchase signs showing the current drought status and coordinate with local fire stations to post the signs throughout the District. General Manager Cockrell reported that he can obtain cost estimates from different printing companies to prepare signs for the District. Director Norton reported that Central Texas only needs roughly a quarter inch of rain to get out of D-4 Exceptional Drought, and that counties in south Texas are under lower drought stages because of recent rain from the tropical storm. No action taken under this agenda item.

14. **Discuss and possibly act on matters related to FY 2023 Interlocal Agreement with Travis County, including invoice from LRE Water for regional hydrogeologic study** – General Manager Cockrell reported that LRE Water is the consultant working to prepare the regional hydrogeologic study to extend the 3D stratigraphic model from Bell County into Burnet, Williamson, and Travis counties. General Manager Cockrell reported that the District is collaborating with Clearwater Underground Water Conservation District ("Clearwater UWCD") and other stakeholders on this project. General Manager Cockrell reported that Travis County earmarked money under the fiscal year 2023 interlocal agreement with the District to fund this regional study. General Manager Cockrell reported that the first invoice from LRE Water for the District's portion is \$18,973.75. General Manager Cockrell reported that the deliverables for this study include data collected by LRE Water and the 3D model. A motion was made by Director Van Ackeren to approve payment for the invoice from LRE Water for services related to the regional hydrogeologic study. Motion seconded by Director Davis. Motion carried 6 Ayes – 0 Nays – 1 Absent.

General Manager Cockrell presented an estimate from Geoprojects International to drill a new monitoring well in northern Travis County. General Manager Cockrell reported that the District's fiscal year 2023 interlocal agreement with Travis County also includes funding to drill a new monitoring well in Travis County north of the Colorado River. General Manager Cockrell reported that he requested estimates from several water well drillers, but Geoprojects International is the only company that can provide coring services needed for the project. General Manager Cockrell reported that Geoprojects International would likely not be able to begin drilling this monitoring well until after October. A motion was made by Director Hunt to authorize President Scadden and General Manager Cockrell to negotiate and execute an agreement with Geoprojects International to drill a new monitoring well and pay up to \$25,000.00 for a deposit to secure drilling services. Motion seconded by Director Davis. Motion carried 6 Ayes – 0 Nays – 1 Absent.

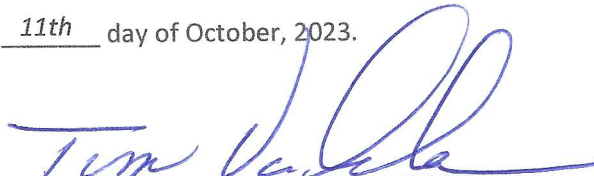


15. **Discuss and establish possible agenda items for future Board Meetings** – President Scadden reported that the next agenda may include an agenda item to reconcile the fiscal year 2023 budget versus actual spending, as well as an update on the fiscal year 2023 interlocal agreement with Travis County. Director Hunt reported that the Rules Committee may provide a presentation to the Board at the next meeting.

16. **Discuss and possibly act on setting the date, time, and location for the next Board Meeting** – President Scadden reported that the next Board meeting will be scheduled for Wednesday, October 11, 2023, at 9:30 a.m. at the District’s office.

17. **Adjourn** – A motion was made by Director Davis to adjourn the meeting at 11:31 a.m. Motion seconded by Director Urie. Motion carried 6 Ayes – 0 Nays – 1 Absent.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED THIS THE 11th day of October, 2023.


Tim Van Ackeren, Secretary