

**Southwest Regional Water Planning  
Steering Committee Meeting  
February 26, 2004  
Minutes**

**Attendees:**

Tom Bates- Planning Manager, Pansy McDonald- Hidalgo Solid Water, George Pintar- DSWCD, Gerald Schultz- Black Range RC&D, Jerry Donaldson- PD NM Operations, Louis Jenkins – City of Deming, John Burkstaller- DBS&A, John Kay- DBS&A, Mary Alice Murphy- SC Daily Press, Vance Lee- Hidalgo County, Wayne Ericson- Engineers Inc., Howard Hutchinson- SFS&W, Alex Thal- Catron County, Walter R. Biebelle I- San Lorenzo, Walter R. Biebelle III- San Lorenzo, and Charity Teague- City of Deming

**Call To Order/Introductions:**

Mr. Bates called the meeting to order at approximately 2:15 pm, and introduced the members of the Steering Committee.

**Minute Approval:**

Mr. Bates asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the January 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. It was motioned to approve the minutes by George Pintar, seconded by Louis Jenkins, and carried unanimously.

**Award of Contract for Phase II**

Mr. Bates stated that the City of Deming had awarded Daniel B. Stephens, and Associates the contract for Phase II, in the amount of \$200,000.

Mr. Bates asked the members of the committee when they would like to cutoff public input portion for Phase I. Mr. Schultz stated today was a good day to cutoff. Mr. Pintar agreed, mentioning that they had gotten all the comments that they were going to get. It was agreed that it had been plenty of time, considering that they were going to give it 90 days, which was up in November. Mr. Burkstaller said the consultants would now start working on addressing the comments and start preparing for brainstorming and alternatives.

**JPA Update**

Mr. Bates gave a brief update of the three-hour meeting. Jack Hyatt, the Grant County Attorney, chaired the meeting. It was decided that four or five attorneys would get together to finalize the JPA, and bring it back to the local government entities to sign it. They will try to have it signed as quickly as possible, to start contracting for the 18,000 acre-feet. This is a once in a lifetime chance. If we don't get the 18,000 acre-feet, we won't have a second opportunity. It's important that we show a need for it, and show how we can make more effective use of the 18,000 acre-feet. Howard and Vance expressed the urgency to show that there will be a future need. Howard was disappointed that many of the issues that the different parties had were not addressed then and there.

### **Daniel B. Stephens**

Mr. Bates turned it over to Daniel B. Stephens, mentioning the 18,000 acre-feet will have to be a priority. Mr. Burkstaller said conservation needed to be considered as part of the regional planning process. He believed the 18,000 acre-feet was out there, also mentioning that the argument could be made that we have lots of groundwater in storage, so we can mine for a number of years more. However, we don't have a lot of recharge, so that's the source that would keep us sustainable. Howard mentioned that trying to surface store the water was not the logical thing to do. He also stated that the Mimbres basin has all the geologic characteristics for recharge capacity. Tom stated that negotiations could possibly be made. Rather than taking it out of surface and putting into the aquifer, use the surface water and leave the aquifer.

Mr. Burkstaller directed a question to Jerry Donaldson, asking if there would be quality issues. Jerry stated historically they had used the diversion off of the Gila for mining purposes, and didn't think there would be quality issues. Howard mentioned Tyrone's restoration process requires a higher amount of ground water, and subsequent treatment of that water, that it might be better to switch it around. Phelps Dodge would take the surface water, in exchange for the municipality to take the treated water. Tyrone has two major production wells in that area, so it would be up to them to look at the cost benefits, and the higher quality water. Mr. Burkstaller stated those are the kind of alternatives that need to be looked at. Howard mentioned additional alternatives such as the potential water that can be taken off peak flows on the Gila. On the San Francisco side of it, right below Luna Lake, the water drops off into a steep canyon, presenting a good holding facility. It would also create an opportunity to have a negotiation point with Arizona. Howard also mentioned the storage gained from chains of beaver dams, which allows water to be released slowly over time. Alex stated that we weren't going to get anywhere if the meeting weren't going to be organized. He suggested agendas should be developed, circulated to participating entities, get it approved and stick to the agenda. He stated that the time was critical, and was wasted by having public comment drive and divert attention.

Tom turned it back over to Daniel B. Stephens. Mr. Burkstaller wanted to talk about the scope for Phase II and clear up the areas that still had questions, and the meetings going forward. He also mentioned if there was time, he had a PowerPoint presentation to show the committee. Mr. Burkstaller asked for general comments. Howard mentioned that the water budget should be by basin by county. Mr. Burkstaller stated they would do it by basin, then try to extract out balances by county as well, so that they have both figures. Mr. Kay added that they would have to start with the geologic basins to determine the water supply, taking a look at how much of each county is within that basin. A report will show the breakdown of water supply within each county, separated out by geologic basin.

George Pintar directed a question to Mr. Burkstaller, asking if breaking it out by county would do anything to discredit original planning. Mr. Burkstaller stated the plan has to be in balance. There is going to be an issue with what's feasible economically, and what people need in that particular location. He also mentioned that the way this region is split up geographically and politically, you almost have to satisfy the questions of the individual political entities. He added that hopefully it wouldn't bog them down in trying

to split up a pie that isn't feasible. Mr. Burkstaller stated that they wanted to do a balance regionally and come up with alternatives for supply that are economically feasible.

George stated that he had hoped Mr. Burkstaller understood his concern, because if we do not address this early on, we would be bogged down for more than Phase II is going to get paid for. Mr. Burkstaller agreed and said that was a good point, and stated that the key point is feasibility.

Gerald asked about the 8 alternatives, and Mr. Burkstaller answered by stating that they were going to go through a process of brainstorming alternatives, including conservation and new supply alternatives. They also want to identify decision criteria for deciding how to rank the alternatives. They will develop, in detail, 8 alternatives, with some of them not applying to all counties. He continued to say that they will look at everything, gathering the ideas that everyone has. Mr. Burkstaller added that it will be 8 or fewer alternatives.

Mr. Burkstaller asked for permission to talk to Craig about getting more budget or shuffling around more money for possible technical support of JPA efforts, and Tom agreed. Mr. Burkstaller said it would give us flexibility. Mr. Bates mentioned that he would like to talk administratively after they finished with the technical side of it. Mr. Burkstaller stated that this was a good time to start talking about how to proceed with meetings. It was discussed and agreed that it would be the afternoon of April 1<sup>st</sup>, and finish up in the morning of April 2. It was decided at a later date that an all day session starting at 9:00 am on April 5, 2004, would be a better date. The meeting will be held at the Bayard Community Center. It was asked if there was an obligation to advertise the meeting. Louis Jenkins stated we had to advertise it, but we weren't obligated to have it open for public input. It was discussed that a limit of 3-5 minutes can be set for public input.

Mr. Bates then let the members of the committee take a short break. When everyone returned, Mr. Burkstaller presented a PowerPoint presentation about groundwater recharge and aquifer storage. A printed copy of the presentation was handed out to everyone and will be attached to the hard copy of these minutes.

After the presentation, Mr. Bates informed the committee that he and Henry were approached by Dr. Turner of Lions Gate. Dr. Turner would like Henry to allow him to be a co-applicant for the 18,000-acre ft, using it for agriculture, until the region grows to the point where the growth demands it. Dr. Turner would then give it up to the municipalities. Mr. Bates mentioned this to Congressman Pierce. Congressman Pierce stated that if this thing smacks the politics, favoritism or profit by a non-government entity, it would kill the whole deal in Washington.

Mr. Burkstaller said they had been focused so far on supply and demand, that one of the things they would try to do between now and the next meeting is to look at some of the past feasibility studies, so they can be up to speed.

Mr. Bates thanked everyone for coming, especially John Burkstaller, and John Kay. Meeting adjourned.