

## **MINUTES**

### **CAPITAL AREA GROUND WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

*February 11, 2020*

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#### **I. Call to Order**

The Capital Area Ground Water Conservation Commission met for a regular meeting at 9:30 a.m. on February 11, 2020 in the Louisiana State Capitol, House Committee Room 5, 900 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Nelson Morvant.

#### **II. Roll Call**

The following members were present: Ronnie Albritton, William Daniel, Kenneth Dawson, Mark Frey, Barry Huggins, Dennis McGehee, Nelson Morvant, Joey Normand, Matthew Reonas, Tom Stephens, Todd Talbot, Hays Town and Mark Walton. The following members were absent: Julius Metz, Thomas Perkins, "J.A." Rummler and Ryan Scardina.

Others attending the meeting were: Anthony Duplechin and Shawn Scallan, Capital Area Ground Water Conservation District; David Mitchell, The Advocate; Lindsay Gouedy, Sparta Ground Water Commission; John Lovelace and Max Lindaman, U.S. Geological Survey; Alyssa Dausmann, The Water Institute of the Gulf; Jesse Means III, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality; Roy Waggenpack, Owen & White; Johan Forsman, Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals; Danny Lee, ExxonMobil; Russel Honore, Green Army; Hunter Odom & Kyle Marionneaux; Marionneaux Kantrow, LLC; Megan Terrell, Plauche and Carr; and Tyler McCloud & Su King, Louisiana House of Representatives.

#### **III. Minutes**

Mr. Huggins made a motion that the minutes of the December 9, 2019 be approved. Mr. Dawson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

#### **IV. Report from the Administrative Committee**

At the request of Chairman Morvant, Mr. Todd Talbot reported on the meeting that was held January 21, 2020 at 8:30 a.m. Following is a summary of items discussed at the meeting and further discussion and action at the regular Commission meeting on February 11, 2020 at 9:30 a.m.

- Mr. Talbot stated that comments on the by-laws were received from the following Commissioners: Jennings, Morvant, Normand, Reonas & Walton. The District staff also submitted comments. The committee reviewed the by-laws document through Article III: MEETINGS, Section 5 Committees. The committee will resume reviewing the document beginning with Article IV: OFFICERS, DUTIES OF OFFICERS at their next meeting.
- Mr. Talbot discussed that the administrative committee will be taking another look at the Commission's financial status. There were several items that were not considered in the Commission's five year plan. He stated that the Commission did not realize the full extent of phase II of The Water Institute of the Gulf concerning the large amount of funding required. Mr. Talbot added that the scope of phase II needs to be finalized. Mr. Talbot also commented that the pumpage fee increase was expected to take place in January 2020 which did not happen. The fee increase will take effect on April 1, 2020. Another item not considered was the hiring of a full time Executive Director. Mr. Reonas added that the priority of the Office of Conservation is to complete the management plan process. When asked if the Office of Conservation would help with funding, Mr. Reonas stated that the Commission has the ability to raise its own fees.

#### **V. Report from the Technical Committee**

The report of the Technical Committee was made by Barry Huggins. Following is a summary of topics discussed at the meeting on January 21, 2020 at 1:30 p.m. and further discussion and action at the regular Commission meeting on February 11, 2020.

- A presentation was given by Kenny Havard, West Feliciana Parish, on a proposed reservoir on Bayou Sara Project.
- Alyssa Dausmann of The Water Institute of the Gulf discussed the scope of work for phase II. Mr. Huggins urged the Commissioners to attend the March 2020 meeting to discuss the scope.
- The committee discussed the rule making process to legally enforce the pumping limits.

#### **VI. Executive Director's Report**

Director Duplechin attended the annual Ground Water Management Districts Association meeting. The focus of the meeting was saltwater intrusion. He made a presentation to the Wednesday Club in Jackson, LA on the groundwater resources in the Felicianas. Director Duplechin continued to coordinate sampling of the observation well. There have been delays due to weather. Mr. Duplechin stated that he has been working on updating existing and new regulations. He attended a symposium at LSU on water law. Director Duplechin reported that he has been working on a follow up for the Louisiana Legislative Auditor. He also is working on fee payment compliance with the Attorney General's office.

#### **IX. Chairman's Report**

Mr. Morvant reported that the contract extension with CPRA was signed on December 31, 2019. This involves only the length of the contract with no additional funds. There will be more discussion on the availability of funds for this project. Chairman Morvant also stated that the Executive Committee addressed some of the Louisiana Legislative Auditor's findings. He stated that the response will be reviewed before sent. Mr. Morvant stated that the Commission as anticipated is seeing a decrease in pumpage from Georgia Pacific.

Chairman Morvant discussed the qualifications and a timeline for the Executive Director search. Mr. Morvant stated that the Commission received two quotes from two consulting firms to assist the Commission with the search. He stated that the Commission needs to decide if they wish to hire a firm or do a search on their own. Mr. Normand urged the board to vote on a firm today. Mr. Stephens stated that he thinks a vote today is premature and that the Director's qualifications and timeline are incomplete. Mr. Stephens made a motion to defer voting on a firm until more information is available. Mr. Morvant seconded the motion. Mr. Huggins stated that he thinks it's a small investment to hire a professional firm. Mr. Town stated that he believes the Commission should proceed with the selection of a firm. Mr. Daniel agreed with Mr. Huggins on the need for hiring a firm and also agreed with Mr. Stephens that the board doesn't need to act on this item today but take time to review. Mr. Talbot questioned Mr. Daniel about the two quotes. Mr. Talbot stated that the services seem similar but there is a difference of \$11,500 between the two firms. Mr. Daniel stated that he feels that the proposals are similar in scope but the big difference was in price. Mr. Reonas is in agreement with hiring an outside firm. Mr. Reonas stated that the funds for this firm would need to be included in the budget. Mr. Reonas mentioned the criticisms of the Commission and is in more agreement that the Commission needs a manager. Mr. Normand stated that his concern is that if the Commission continues to put off decisions that hiring a new Director by July will be difficult.

Mr. Town made a substitute motion to give the Executive Committee the authority to hire one of the firms to search for a full time Executive Director and sign a contract. Mr. Normand seconded the motion. Mr. Reonas asked if the qualifications for the Director were final. Chairman Morvant stated that qualifications stated in the document were a starting point that will be discussed with the firm. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Honore made a public comment. He asked if the Executive Director's salary has been finalized. He also stated that he is working on a drinking water bill and asked for time with the Commission's director. Mr. Honore questioned the makeup of the membership on the Commission and asked that it be reviewed.

#### **X. Commission Member Comments**

Mr. Normand made a comment on committee appointments and the makeup of the Executive Committee. Mr. Huggins made a comment that there has been much discussion about funding.

Mr. Huggins stated that if more funding is needed then the Commission may need to search for another funding source.

**XI. Public Comment**

Mr. Henson made a public comment. He brought to the Commission's attention the cost of clean drinking water. EPA stated that it cost \$33 to bring clean water to your front door. Mr. Henson stated that the fee structure for water needs to be reviewed.

**XII. Adjournment**

Mr. Talbot made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Huggins seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:27 a.m.

*Mark Fey*  
Mark Fey, Treasurer

*Nelson Morford*  
Nelson Morford, Chairman