

Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting
March 13, 2025

Board members present at commencement: Vanessa Puig-Williams, Blayne Stansberry, Jon Cradit, and Lily Lucas. Staff present included: Tim Loftus, Erin Swanson, Jacob Newton, Jeff Watson, Bri Moore, Shay Hlavaty and Hannah Riggs. These minutes represent a summarized version of the meeting; the complete discussion of the following items is recorded digitally.

Note: The Board of Directors of the Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District reserves the right to adjourn into Executive Session at any time during the course of this meeting to discuss any of the matters listed on this agenda, as authorized by the Texas Government Code Sections §551.071 (Consultation with Attorney), 551.072 (Deliberations about Real Property), 551.073 (Deliberations about Gifts and Donations), 551.074 (Personnel Matters), 551.076 (Deliberations about Security Devices), 551.087 (Economic Development) 418.183 (Homeland Security). No final action or decision will be made in Executive Session.

1. Call to Order.

President Puig-Williams called the meeting to order at 5:03pm.

2. Citizen Communications (Public Comments of a General Nature).

Hayden Taylor and Chris Kaffer from Centex and Texas Lehigh attended the meeting to discuss water conservation efforts in collaboration with the District. They expressed interest in assessing their water usage on an annual basis rather than monthly, as it allows for more effective conservation. They noted that while their total yearly usage remains within limits, occasional monthly overages can occur due to unforeseen circumstances, such as broken pipes during freezing conditions. To mitigate this, they prefer to keep their plant operational during freezes to prevent pipe damage, though planning for such weather events remains a challenge. They are also exploring the integration of rainwater use.

Blayne Stansberry inquired about how they compensate for any water usage differences and whether alternative water sources are utilized in their planning. Dr. Loftus clarified that the District only monitors pumpage on a monthly basis during drought conditions and outlined recent changes to the assessment/enforcement process. He offered to arrange a meeting with himself, Erin Swanson, and Jacob Newton to discuss potential solutions further.

3. Consent Agenda. (Note: These items may be considered and approved as one motion. Directors or citizens may request any consent item be removed from the consent agenda, for consideration and possible approval as a separate item of Regular Business on this agenda.)

- a. **Approval of Financial Reports under the Public Funds Investment Act, Directors' Compensation Claims, Specified Expenditures greater than \$5,000.**
- b. **Approval of minutes of the Board's February 13, 2025, Regular Meeting.**
- c. **Seeking approval for staff request for out-of-state travel.**
- d. **Preapproval for payment of scholarships**

There were no questions or comments on any item in the Consent Agenda.

Vice President Stansberry moved to approve the financial reports, the three invoices over \$5,000, the February 13, 2025, minutes, the out of state travel request, and the preapproval for payment of scholarships. Director Credit seconded the motion, and it passed 4-0.

4. General Manager's Report. Discussion and possible action.

Topics

a. Review of key team activities/projects.

Dr. Loftus called attention to the Status Report and Team Summaries prepared by Staff in the Board Back-Up materials.

b. Trinity Sustainable Yield.

Dr. Loftus reported that the Trinity Sustainable Yield Committee has met since the last Board Meeting. The committee's resolution from that meeting includes a recommended proposal to study the Lower Trinity Aquifer. This proposal will be discussed later in the meeting as there is a DPA item addressing this matter.

c. Next well-water checkup

Dr. Loftus noted that a Well Water Checkup is scheduled for April, offering community members the opportunity to participate.

d. Town-hall meetings anyone?

Dr. Loftus noted that staff is available to provide support if Board members decide to schedule a town hall meeting. Shay Hlavaty will send an email with details, and Board members can respond as needed.

e. EPA-Interagency MAR workshop

Dr. Loftus reported that he presented on ASR systems and the District's experience with Ruby Ranch Water Supply Corporation at an EPA Interagency Managed Aquifer Recharge workshop, alongside Blake Neffendorf from the City of Buda who presented on Buda's ASR project.

f. Upcoming City of Buda proclamation for National Groundwater Week

Dr. Loftus said that he and Vice President Stansberry accepted a Proclamation for National Groundwater Awareness Week from the City of Buda.

g. Aquifer status update.

Jeff Watson provided the drought update, stating that Stage IV is likely to be triggered by late April. Current projections indicate below-average rainfall, which could put the region in a challenging position heading into summer.

h. Upcoming events of possible interest.

Dr. Loftus called attention to several events of possible interest

5. Staff presentation by Bri Moore: "Vulnerability and Risk Mapping for the Protection of Karst Aquifer Waters"

Bri Moore presented on the abandoned well risk assessment project, designed to meet a commitment outlined in the District's Habitat Conservation Plan. Recognizing the substantial threat abandoned wells pose to groundwater quality, especially in vulnerable karst aquifers, and drawing insights from other GCDs, Bri developed a comprehensive risk assessment model. This model, leveraging geospatial analysis and an index tool, evaluates vulnerability, hazard intensity, and overall risk to prioritize wells that present the greatest risk to public health and ecological integrity.

6. Discussion and possible action.

a. Discussion and possible action related to the performance and compliance of District permittees with their User Drought Contingency Plan curtailments.

Jacob Newton went through the UDCP.

c. Discussion and possible action related to Texas Old Town and a Notice of Alleged Violation for noncompliance with their User Drought Contingency Plan.

Erin Swanson presented, with owner of Texas Old Town, Larry Kruzic, and manager, Eric McGeehee, in attendance. They explained that their facility primarily uses water for irrigating grass around the buildings, maintaining three water features, and general indoor usage, including restrooms. Historically, their annual pumpage remains 30-50% below their permitted amount. In January, they experienced leaks that took two months to repair. They have since taken measures to improve water efficiency, including metering their water features, updating toilets and sinks, adjusting irrigation schedules and coverage, and optimizing sprinkler heads. Due to the nature of their business model, predicting peak water usage months a year in advance is challenging.

Dr. Loftus inquired if they have data on their water usage breakdown between indoor and outdoor consumption. President Puig-Williams asked if they have considered utilizing rainwater for irrigation. They had not explored this option but expressed interest in learning more.

Before determining an outcome on this matter, President Puig-Williams opened up item 6d for discussion.

d. Discussion and possible action related to an application for a Major Amendment to a Class D Conditional Production Permit filed by Ruby Ranch Water Supply Corporation.

Dr. Loftus presented an overview of the District's work with Ruby Ranch Water Supply Corporation (RRWSC), with Thomas Doebner and Dale Olmstead from RRWSC in attendance. RRWSC requested the indefinite suspension of the Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Program due to the current drought conditions, which make ASR unfeasible. RRWSC has 25 million gallons of stored water in Trinity well #5 (i.e., ASR buffer water) and plans to blend it with Edwards well #4, while also seeking to utilize their unused 20.3 million gallon Trinity permit if drought persists and the ASR buffer is exhausted. They requested a waiver of certain fees, including the ASR permit fee and Major Amendment application fee, and requested that extraction and blending be done at their discretion while meeting water quality standards.

At 6:25 p.m., the Board President announced that the Board would recess into a closed executive session to discuss items 6c and 6d under Section 551.071, Government Code, for consultation regarding attorney-client matters.

At 6:52 p.m., the Board President announced board was reconvening in an open public session. No further action was taken by the Board.

Once the Board convened, President Puig-Williams opened the floor to motions on item 6c. Director Lucas motioned to move forward with staff's recommendation and the lowest penalty amount of \$4,240. Vice President Stansberry seconded the motion, and it passed 4-0.

President Puig-Williams then opened the floor to motions on item 6d. Vice President Stansberry motioned to suspend the Class D storage and recovery permit effective June 1st. Director Lucas seconded the motion, and it passed 4-0.

b. Discussion and possible action related to a Combo Application for Drilling Authorization & Production Permit by Far South Mining for 1,500,000 gallons from the Middle Trinity Aquifer for industrial water use. The well is to be located near Fulton Ranch Rd. Wimberley, Texas, at Lat: 29° 56' 25" N, Long: 98° 1' 14" W.

Jacob Newton presented on the Combo Application for Drilling Authorization & Production Permit by Far South Mining. Staff recommendation is to approve the application as it meets all District standards. Jeff Watson added that that this is a relatively small permit amount and we don't expect unreasonable impacts.

At 7:07 p.m., the Board President announced that the Board would recess into a closed executive session under Section 551.071, Government Code, for consultation regarding attorney-client matters.

At 7:17 p.m., the Board President announced board was reconvening in an open public session. No further action was taken by the Board.

Director Lucas motioned to approve the Combo Application for Drilling Authorization & Production Permit by Far South Mining. Vice President Stansberry seconded the motion, and it passed 3-1, with Director Credit opposed.

e. Discussion and possible action related to a proposal from LRE Water to study the Lower Trinity Aquifer.

Dr. Loftus presented the Lower Trinity Aquifer study, which was discussed in the last TSY committee meeting. The study aims to enhance understanding of the Lower Trinity Aquifer and improve the District's ability to evaluate permit applications for Lower Trinity water in the future. Wally Darling from LRE Water was in attendance.

President Puig-Williams inquired about the Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) in the Lower Trinity, and Jeff confirmed that the water quality in the district is favorable, with TDS levels below 1000.

Vice President Stansberry motioned approve the proposal from LRE Water. Director Lucas seconded the motion, and it passed 4-0.

f. Discussion and possible action related to drought declaration or authorizing GM to declare the next stage of drought.

This item was tabled as it was determined that granting the General Manager the authority to declare the next stage of drought before the next Board meeting was unnecessary.

g. Discussion and possible action related to the 89th Texas Legislative Session.

Items 6g and 7 were opened together.

7. Review of the Performance of the General Manager: HR and GM Quarterly Reports: FY 25, 2nd qtr. (December through February)

At 7:25 p.m., the Board President announced that the Board would recess into a closed executive session to discuss item 6g and item 7 under Section 551.071, Government Code, for consultation regarding attorney-client matters.

At 8:06 p.m., the Board President announced board was reconvening in an open public session. No further action was taken by the Board.

8. Director Reports.

Directors may report on their involvement in activities and dialogue that are of likely interest to the Board, in one or more of the following topical areas:

- Meetings and conferences attended or that will be attended;
- Board committee updates;
- Conversations with public officials, permittees, stakeholders, and other constituents;
- Commendations; and
- Issues or problems of concern.

No updates were reported.

9. **Adjournment.**

With no objection, President Puig-Williams adjourned the meeting at 8:07pm.

Approved by the Board on April 10, 2025.

By: _____
Vanessa Puig-Williams, Board President

Attest: _____
Christy Williams, Board Secretary