

Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District
Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

May 8, 2025

Board members present at commencement: Vanessa Puig-Williams, Jon Cradit, and Christy Williams.

Staff present: Tim Loftus, Erin Swanson, Jacob Newton, Jeff Watson, Bri Moore, Justin Camp, 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 5:13pm.

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

There were no public comments at this time.

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 March 13, 2025, Regular Meeting.**

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

Director Cradit moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Secretary Williams seconded the motion, and it passed 3-0.

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 will meet in June. He noted that LRE Water is currently conducting a study on the Lower Trinity Aquifer, and Jeff Watson has resumed work on the TAS model. Additionally, LRE is preparing a proposal to study development of a groundwater management zone.

c. Committee news

Dr. Loftus noted that the Budget Committee is scheduled to meet on May 21st to discuss a preliminary budget. He also reported that the Rules and Enforcement Committee met on Tuesday to discuss updates to the Drought Chart, which are expected to be presented at the June Board meeting.

d. Summer Board meeting schedule

Dr. Loftus stated that a quorum is expected to be present for all scheduled Board meetings throughout the summer.

e. 2025 TAGD Summit in August

Dr. Loftus announced that the 2025 TAGD Summit will be held in San Antonio this August and encouraged any interested Board members to contact Hannah Riggs for more information or to coordinate attendance.

f. Antioch Cave Operations House

Dr. Loftus noted that he will follow up with Brian Sledge regarding an easement or purchase offer for a small portion of private land needed to access the Antioch property to install power lines.

g. Aquifer status update.

Justin Camp provided the drought update. He reported that in April 2025, the District continued in Stage III Critical Drought, marking 34 consecutive months of drought. Rainfall remained below average, contributing to an estimated 35-inch deficit since January 2022. Despite record heat, timely rain helped avoid a move to Stage IV, with Barton Springs flow holding near 20 cfs and the Lovelady well just above the critical threshold. Forecasts for May show potential for above-average rainfall.

Justin introduced a new monthly chart that tracks current water levels in five monitoring wells across the Trinity and Edwards aquifers, comparing them to historic lows and highs. This chart will be updated and included each month alongside the Drought Chart.

h. Upcoming events of possible interest.

Dr. Loftus called attention to several events of possible interest.

5. Staff Presentation: “From Rain Gauges to Spring Flows: Optimizing precipitation data for hydrogeologic analysis in the BSEACD region”

The presentation, given by Bri Moore, analyzed how different precipitation datasets and geographic boundaries influence hydrogeologic analysis in the District. The study found that the PRISM dataset best reflects local climate patterns and that using the hydrogeologic boundary provides the most accurate characterization of recharge and spring flow in the District. These findings are being incorporated into drought reporting and will support future modeling and water management planning.

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 presented the UDCP, updated through April.

b. Discussion and possible action related to a contested-case hearing in the event a Texas Land Application permit is issued by the TCEQ to Milestone Community Builders for the Hays Commons development.

Dr. Loftus explained that this item concerns a potential Texas Land Application Permit (TLAP) for the Hays Commons development, which is located over the recharge zone. He noted that the District aims to be positioned to submit a formal comment or pursue a contested-case hearing if the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) moves forward with issuing the permit.

At 6:05 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 6:27 p.m., the Board President announced board was reconvening in an open public session. No further action was taken by the Board.

Secretary Williams moved to authorize the General Manager to submit a formal comment and, if necessary, pursue a contested-case hearing with the support of the District’s General Counsel should the TCEQ approve the TLAP permit for the Hays Commons development. Director Cradit seconded the motion, and the motion passed, 3-0.

c. Discussion and possible action related to amending the District’s Purchasing Policy.

Dr. Loftus presented the proposed amendments to the Purchasing Policy, which had been reviewed by the Rules & Compliance Committee and SledgeLaw. The policy, last updated in 2011, includes changes such as increasing the General Manager’s spending authority from \$5,000 to \$10,000, reducing the required number of quotes needed for professional services from three to two, and granting the General Manager authority to approve out-of-state travel. Director Cradit asked for clarification on signature authority, which was addressed by referencing the QuickBooks expense form process.

Director Cradit motioned to approve the amendments. Secretary Williams seconded, and the motion passed 3-0.

d. Discussion and possible action related to amending the Employee Policy Manual.

Dr. Loftus introduced proposed amendments to four Employee Policy Manual policies: Travel Policy, Parental Leave, Inclement Weather, and Flex Time. These updates had been reviewed and vetted by the Personnel Committee.

Secretary Williams moved to approve the amendments. Director Cradit seconded, and the motion passed 3-0.

e. Discussion and possible action related to a new task order for additional work on the database by LRE Water.

Dr. Loftus presented a new task order for additional work on the database by LRE Water. There were no questions from the Board.

Secretary Williams moved to approve the task order. Director Cradit seconded, and the motion passed 3-0.

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.

Brian Sledge provided an update on the 89th Texas Legislative Session. No further discussion or action was taken.

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.

During Director Reports, Director Williams noted that there is increased federal funding available for water initiatives, particularly aimed at supporting small systems. Director Cradit stated he had no updates to share. President Puig-Williams reported that she recently provided testimony at the legislature.

9. Adjournment.

With no objection, President Puig-Williams adjourned the meeting at 7:01pm.

Approved by the Board on June 12, 2025.

By: _____
Blayne Stansberry, Board Vice President

Attest: _____
Christy Williams, Board Secretary