

TEXAS ALLIANCE OF GROUNDWATER DISTRICTS

Executive Committee Meeting
Tuesday July 25, 2023, 9:00 AM
GoToMeeting Video Conference Call
Minutes

- A. **Call to order & roll call.** President Amber Blount called the meeting to order at 8:59 am. Andy Garza, Diana Thomas, David Bailey, Zach Holland, Doug Shaw, Kelley Cochran, Stephanie Keith, and Janet Adams were present. Also present were Executive Director Leah Martinsson, Programs & Operations Manager Julia Stanford, and Administrative & Event Assistant Annick P. Maddox.
- B. **Discussion and possible action on Executive Director employee evaluation.** President Amber Blount requested that Julia Stanford and Annick P. Maddox to leave the call and asked Executive Director Leah Martinsson to provide an overview of TAGD staff performance reviews. Leah Martinsson shared that the performance evaluations were highly positive and discussed primary roles and responsibilities. Amber Blount then ask Leah to leave the call for the Executive Committee to conduct her employment evaluation. Amber presented Leah's self-evaluation and TAGD officer comments to the Executive Committee and expressed how fortunate TAGD membership is to have Leah leading the organization. Many echoed the sentiments of not only the job and representation provided by Leah but also that of Julia, and Annick. Further discussions and points included having conversations with the full membership on the demand and desires of the membership on TAGD staff; current salaries and how they compare to other organizations with our budget size; how if dues were to increase that some districts will have questions or concerns with lower valuations and operating budgets within their own GCD; looking at possible longevity pay and how that could be structured; and a commitment from the Executive Committee to have open discussions with the membership on these items. After discussion, Kelly Cochran made the motion to increase Leah's salary to \$125,000 for the FY23-24 Budget. Doug Shaw seconded the motion. The motion carried 7-1 with Diana Thomas opposed. Following that motion, Zach Holland made the motion to send a budget amendment to the full membership to increase Leah's FY 22-23 compensation by \$10,000 in the form of a one-time payment. Doug Shaw seconded the motion. The motion carried 7-1 with Diana Thomas opposed. President Amber Blount invited Leah Martinsson, Julia Stanford and Annick Maddox to re-join the call. She then directed Leah Martinsson to prepare a proposed budget amendment for FY23 to reflect the one-time payment and payroll taxes (not subject to retirement contribution) and to revise the proposed FY24 consistent with the action of the Executive Committee.
- C. **Review and possible action on minutes of the May 17, 2023 meeting.** President Amber Blount presented the minutes from the previous Executive Committee meeting. Andy Garza moved to approve the minutes. Doug Shaw seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

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- D. **Executive Director report.** President Amber Blount asked Leah Martinsson to provide a report on TAGD activities. Leah provided an update on the Texas Groundwater Summit, legislative happenings, GCD Index update, recent TAGD webinars/trainings, upcoming officer elections, and investments to the committee. Diana Thomas asked a question about how TAGD management of the Summit is going. Leah Martinsson shared that things are going well and in many cases even more smoothly than expected. No action was required.
- E. **Discussion and possible action on FY23 Q3 finances.** President Amber Blount asked Treasurer David Bailey to present the FY23 Q3 finances. David indicated that the Finance and Budget Committee had met to consider the finances and recommended approval. David asked Leah Martinsson to provide some additional detail on the quarterly finances. She then reviewed the FY23 Q3 Budget vs. Actuals report. There was a brief discussion CDs and interest earned. Diana Thomas made a motion to approve FY23 Q3 finances for presentation to the full membership. Doug Shaw seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
- F. **Discussion and possible action on engagement for FY22-23 Agreed Upon Procedures Report.** Treasurer David Bailey presented a proposal from Montemayor Britten Bender PC, to perform a financial review of the past two fiscal years and asked Leah Martinsson to provide some additional details. She explained that this quote is from the same company that prepared the past two agreed upon procedures reports. She reminded the group that this is not a comprehensive audit, but this review provides a good overview and oversight mechanism at a reasonable cost consistent with the TAGD Financial Policy requirements. She did share that the cost is slightly higher than from two years ago and that figure has been revised in the draft proposed budget in the next agenda item. Doug Shaw made a motion to move forward with the proposal from Montemayor Britten Bender PC, and Kelley Cochran seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
- G. **Discussion and possible action on proposed FY24 budget.** President Amber Blount presented the proposed FY24 budget, subject to modifications based on Executive Committee action to raise the Executive Director salary to \$125,000 annually. Diana Thomas asked a question concerning the sufficiency of funds budgeted for travel and hotel given that TAGD has a third employee. Leah Martinsson explained that room charges for employees at TAGD events are part of the meeting expenses category and therefore feels that the proposed budgeted amount is remains sufficient. Doug Shaw made a motion to approve the proposed FY24 budget as adjusted to increase the Executive Director salary to \$125,000 for presentation to the full membership. Zach Holland seconded the motion. Motion carried 7-1 with Diana Thomas opposed and all others voting in favor.

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H. **Discussion and possible action on TAGD honorary membership nominations.**

President Amber Blount shared that TAGD has received nominations for honorary memberships for Ron Fieseler and Steve Walthour, both of whom are retiring. There was some brief discussion on both candidates' exceptional dedication to TAGD. Andy Garza made a motion to approve TAGD honorary memberships for both Ron Fieseler and Steve Walthour for consideration by the full membership. David Bailey seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

I. **Discussion and possible action on template legislator resolutions.**

Amber Blount asked Leah Martinsson to share information of the legislator resolutions. Leah Martinsson explained that TAGD has provided legislators serving on both the House Natural Resources Committee and the Senate Water, Ag., and Rural Affairs Committee with signed resolutions in the past and that these are the same templates used in previous years. She also indicated that it may be appropriate to provide more personal resolutions for both Rep. King and Rep. Price since they are not seeking reelection and have been strong voices in groundwater policy. Zach Holland made a motion to approve the template legislator resolutions and for Leah Martinsson to distribute an electronic vote for revised templates for Rep. King and Rep. Price. Doug Shaw seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

J. **Discussion and possible action on other matters before the committee.**

Leah Martinsson asked the Executive Committee for some direction on FY24 business meetings – whether there was interest in returning to the same location in Pflugerville or if they would like TAGD to research alternate venues. Amber Blount shared that she really liked the Pflugerville location, but suggested TAGD request a quote from another venue for price comparison. There was a brief discussion about some other options and considerations. Leah indicated they would get proposals for future consideration by the Executive Committee.

Leah Martinsson asked the committee if they would like TAGD to provide a letter of support for proposed revisions to a number of residential real estate forms intended to better inform buyers about GCDs. She explained that she has been working on these revisions with Charles Porter and Brian Sledge through a subcommittee at TWCA. The Executive Committee expressed support for TAGD providing such a letter and Amber Blount directed Leah Martinsson to prepare a draft and send out the electronic vote for the Executive Committee.

Leah Martinsson then asked the Executive Committee how they wanted to proceed with the membership renewals of Starr County GCD and Saratoga UWCD. She shared that both districts have not renewed their memberships and are facing severe challenges with financing and staffing. She explained that TAGD could either discontinue their memberships or consider waiving their membership dues for one

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year to encourage their continued engagement. There was a brief discussion of agreement in supporting both districts to maintain membership. Zach Holland made a motion to waive membership dues for both districts for one year. Andy Garza seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Amber Blount provided an update on the Nominating Committee and their nominations as follows; David Bailey as President, Doug Shaw as Vice President, Stephanie Keith as Secretary, Janet Guthrie as Treasurer, and Kelley Cochran as Parliamentarian. Amber Blount shared that the three seats on the Finance & Budget Committee that are appointed by the President will need to fill those seats quickly in order to maintain their progress. She also expressed her gratitude to the Executive Committee for serving and thanked everyone for the last 6 years as an officer of TAGD.

K. **Adjournment.** Zach Holland made a motion to adjourn and Doug Shaw seconded the motion. President Amber Blount adjourned the meeting at 10:36am.