

# Victoria County Groundwater Conservation District

THE STATE OF TEXAS  
VICTORIA COUNTY

The Board of Directors of the Victoria County Groundwater Conservation District convened a meeting at the Dr. Pattie Dodson Health Center, 2805 N. Navarro St., Room 108, Victoria, Victoria County, Texas, 77901 on August 9, 2024, at 9:00 AM.

## Meeting Attendance:

Precinct 1:	Mr. Jerry Hroch, Vice President	Present
Precinct 2:	Mr. Thurman Clements, Jr., Director	Present
Precinct 3:	Mrs. Barbara Dietzel, Secretary	Absent
Precinct 4:	Mr. Mark Meek, President	Present
At Large:	Mr. Kenneth Eller, Director	Absent
General Manager:	Mr. Timothy Andruss	Present
Legal Counsel:	Mr. James Allison	Absent

## Agenda Items -

### 1. Call the meeting to order and welcome guests.

**Meeting Discussion:** Mr. Meek called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

**Board Action:** None.

### 2. Receive public comments.

**Meeting Discussion:** None.

**Board Action:** None.

**3. Consideration of and possible action on matters related to Groundwater Management including efforts and activities of the District regarding permitting, complaints, investigations, violations, and enforcement cases associated with permitting.**

**4. Consideration of and possible action on matters related to groundwater protection including complaints, investigations, violations, and enforcement cases related to groundwater contamination and waste.**

**5. Consideration of and possible action on matters related to groundwater monitoring.**

**6. Consideration of and possible action on matters related to groundwater conservation.**

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7. Consideration of and possible action on matters related to groundwater resource planning including Groundwater Management Area 15 Joint Planning and regional water planning.

8. Consideration of and possible action on matters related to groundwater policy including the Management Plan of the District and the Rules of the District.

9. Consideration of and possible action on matters related to administration and management including the minutes of previous meetings, the annual budget of the district, financial reports of the district, bills and invoices of the district, management goals and objectives of the district, administrative policies, staffing, consultant agreements, interlocal cooperation agreements, and support services provided to and from other groundwater conservation districts.

## 9.0 – Report regarding Administration and Management

**Meeting Discussion:** Mr. Andruss provided the following report:

### **Regarding Employment Management for FY2024.**

No report.

### **Regarding Employee Health Benefits Enrollment.**

No report.

### **Regarding Employee Retirement Plan Review.**

No report.

### **Regarding Election Coordination for CY2024.**

No report.

### **Regarding Financial Audit for FY2023.**

No report.

### **Regarding Investment Management for FY2024.**

No report.

### **Regarding Financial Record Processing and Reporting for FY2024.**

No report.

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## **Regarding Budget Development for FY2025.**

On August 5, 2024, staff received notice that the County of Victoria would conduct a hearing regarding a tax abatement request for Portside Energy for a proposed battery energy storage and solar energy generating facility at the Port of Victoria Industrial Park South near Tx Hwy 185 and McCoy Road, Victoria County, Texas.

## **Regarding Asset Tracking for FY2024.**

No report.

## **Regarding Public Funds Training for FY2024.**

No report.

## **Regarding Website Improvements.**

No report.

## **Regarding GIS Data Quality Control.**

No report.

## **Regarding Public Notice and Meeting Coordination for FY2024.**

No report.

## **Regarding Public Notice and GMA 15 Meeting Coordination for FY2024.**

No report.

## **Regarding Performance Audit for FY2023.**

No report.

## **Regarding Project Management for FY2024.**

No report.

## **Regarding Administrative Policy Review for FY2024.**

No report.

## **Regarding Transparency Reporting for FY2024.**

No report.

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## **Regarding Cybersecurity Training for FY2024.**

No report.

## **Regarding Consultant Review for FY2024.**

No report.

## **Regarding Open Government Training for FY2024.**

No report.

## **Regarding District Liability Insurance Review and Renewal.**

No report.

## **Regarding Emergency Management Training for FY2024.**

No report.

## **Regarding GCD Support for FY2024.**

No report.

## **Regarding Digital Record Archiving for FY2024.**

No report.

## **Regarding Physical Record Archiving for FY2024.**

No report.

**Board Action:** None.

## **9.1 – FY2025 Budget**

**Meeting Discussion:** Mr. Andruss explained that staff developed a recommended budget for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025, that attempts to fund the operations of the District in a manner that provides for 1) the accomplishment of the management plan goals and objectives, 2) the completion of certain projects and tasks associated with the administration of the district, groundwater conservation, groundwater management and permitting, groundwater monitoring, groundwater policy development, groundwater protection, groundwater research, and groundwater resource planning, and 3) avoid a budget deficit in Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

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Staff developed the proposed budget anticipating continued support of district operations of Calhoun County GCD, Refugio GCD, and Texana GCD with funding contributed to the district through new long-term interlocal cooperation agreements with Calhoun County GCD, Refugio GCD, and Texana GCD. This budget anticipates significant increases in expenses related to full-time employees, employee wages and benefits, and office-related expenses.

Staff developed the proposed budget anticipating the commitment of the monies of the Reserve Fund in Fiscal Year 2024-2025 in accordance with the following schedule:

- Groundwater Conservation: 5%
- Groundwater Management: 10%
- Groundwater Monitoring: 25%
- Groundwater Protection: 25%
- Groundwater Research: 5%
- Groundwater Resource Planning: 5%
- Legal Contingencies: 25%

Staff developed the proposed budget anticipating the approval of a tax rate equal to the No-New-Revenue Tax Rate calculated by the Tax Assessor - Collector for Tax Year 2024. The proposed revenue exceeds the proposed expenses for the operating fund by \$53,800.

Staff developed an alternate budget for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2025, that attempts to fund the operations of the District in a manner that provides for 1) the accomplishment of the management plan goals and objectives, 2) the completion of certain projects and tasks associated with the administration of the district, groundwater conservation, groundwater management and permitting, groundwater monitoring, groundwater policy development, groundwater protection, groundwater research, and groundwater resource planning, and 3) avoid a budget deficit in Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

Staff developed the alternate budget anticipating discontinued support of district operations of Calhoun County GCD, Refugio GCD, and Texana GCD without funding contributed to the district through interlocal cooperation agreements with Calhoun County GCD, Refugio GCD, and Texana GCD. This budget anticipates significant decreases in expenses related to full-time employees, employee wages and benefits.

Staff developed the alternate budget anticipating the commitment of the monies of the Reserve Fund in Fiscal Year 2024-2025 in accordance with the following schedule:

- Groundwater Conservation: 5%
- Groundwater Management: 10%
- Groundwater Monitoring: 25%

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Groundwater Protection: 25%  
Groundwater Research: 5%  
Groundwater Resource Planning: 5%  
Legal Contingencies: 25%

Staff developed the alternate budget anticipating the approval of a tax rate equal to the No-New-Revenue Tax Rate calculated by the Tax Assessor - Collector for Tax Year 2024. The proposed revenue exceeds the proposed expenses for the operating fund by \$20,200.

**Board Action:** Mr. Clements moved to adopt the recommended budget for Fiscal Year 2025 by order and authorize the presiding officer to execute the draft interlocal agreements with the Calhoun County Groundwater Conservation District, the Refugio Groundwater Conservation District, and the Texana Groundwater Conservation District upon acceptance of the agreements by each cooperating district before August 30, 2024. Mr. Hroch seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## 9.2 – Tax Rate for TY2024

**Meeting Discussion:** None.

**Board Action:** Mr. Clements moved to open the public hearing regarding the proposed tax rate at 9:21 AM. Mr. Hroch seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Clements moved to close the public hearing after receiving no public comments regarding the proposed tax rate. Mr. Hroch seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Clements moved to approve and adopt the proposed tax rate as the adopted tax rate by order. Mr. Hroch seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## 9.3 – Appraisal Roll for Tax Year 2024

**Meeting Discussion:** None.

**Board Action:** Mr. Clements moved to accept and approve the appraisal roll for Tax Year 2024 and adopt the Order Approving the 2024 Appraisal Roll. Mr. Hroch seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## 9.4 – Employee compensation and Benefits

**Meeting Discussion:** Mr. Andruss explained the District established pay scales for each type of employee with the previous adoptions of the budgets of the district. The scales are comprised of 5 steps with each incremental step representing a 5%

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increase in wage. The scales are used to 1) establish budget recommendations and 2) establish pay rates for new employees, and 3) develop recommendations regarding merit-based pay increases for individual employees.

The recommended budget expenditures of the budget anticipating long term cooperation with Calhoun County GCD, Refugio GCD, and Texana GCD for employment totals -\$641,300. The total reflects the following changes: an increase of 2 full-time employee positions and reclassification of the office assistant position to an administrative coordinator position, the 5% increase of the pay scale for the specialist position, the adjustment of the wage charts by 2.9 % based on the change of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the southern region for the 12 months ending in June 2024. The recommended budget expenditures for employment represents an increase of \$174,900 as compared to Fiscal Year 2024 and are based on Step 5 wage rates. The budgetary increase related to employment is offset by anticipated increases to revenue related to the long-term interlocal cooperation agreements extended to Calhoun County GCD, Refugio GCD, and Texana GCD as requested by the Board.

Based on their performance during the current fiscal year and the state of the labor market, consideration of approving the following pay scheduled their pay scale steps is recommended for existing employees if each cooperating district adopts and approves the long term interlocal cooperation agreement as offered.

The recommended budget expenditures of the budget anticipating no cooperation with Calhoun County GCD, Refugio GCD, and Texana GCD for employment totals -\$304,870. The total reflects the following changes: a decrease of 2 full-time employee positions through the elimination of the administrative coordinator position and office assistant position, the 5% increase of the pay scale for the specialist position, the adjustment of the wage charts by 2.9 % based on the change of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the southern region for the 12 months ending in June 2024. The recommended budget expenditures for employment represents a decrease of \$129,740 as compared to Fiscal Year 2024 and are based on Step 5 wage rates.

Based on their performance during the current fiscal year and the state of the labor market, consideration of approving the following pay scheduled their pay scale steps is recommended for existing employees if any cooperating district fails to adopt and approve the long term interlocal cooperation agreement as offered.

**Board Action:** Mr. Clements moved to approve the recommended budget anticipating the long term cooperative arrangements with Calhoun County GCD, Refugio GCD, and Texana GCD, and each cooperating district adopts and approves the long term interlocal cooperation agreement as offered, move to:

1. eliminate the office assistant position and layoff the existing employee effective September 30, 2024,

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2. establish the new administrative coordinator position, the new compliance specialist position, and the new monitoring technician position effective October 1, 2024,
3. authorize the general manager, in coordination with the board president, to fill vacant positions during Fiscal Year 2025 in accordance with the adopted budget, and
4. approve the recommended pay scales and pay steps for existing employees for fiscal year 2025.

Mr. Hroch seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## 9.5 – DoD SkillBridge Program

**Meeting Discussion:** Mr. Andruss explained Previously, the District has employed college students in internship positions to obtain temporary assistance with internal, administrative projects. These project have addressed needs in records management and database management. The internships have been successful but not without employment costs.

Management has recently learned of a program offered by the U.S. Department of Defense, referred to as SkillBridge. The district could obtain similar valuable services, previously provided by college interns employed by the district, from service members leaving the military attempting to re-enter the civilian workforce. Additionally, the program would offer the district the opportunity to evaluate potential employees for future vacancies in technical positions.

Per the webpage of the U.S. Department of Defense regarding SkillBridge (<https://skillbridge.osd.mil/program-overview.htm>):

The DOD SkillBridge program is an opportunity for service members to gain valuable civilian work experience through specific industry training, apprenticeships, or internships during the last 180 days of service. DOD SkillBridge connects transitioning service members with industry partners in real-world job experiences.

For service members, DOD SkillBridge provides an invaluable chance to work and learn in civilian career areas. For industry partners, DOD SkillBridge is an opportunity to access and leverage the world's most highly trained and motivated workforce at no cost. Service members participating in DOD SkillBridge programs continue receiving their military compensation and benefits, while industry partners provide the civilian training and work experience.

Per the webpage of the U.S. Department of Defense regarding SkillBridge (<https://skillbridge.osd.mil/faq.htm>)



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Is the SkillBridge program partner responsible for a participating service member's medical care, disability, and workman's compensation if they are injured or die while participating in the SkillBridge program?

No. The service member remains employed by the Department of Defense. The service member's parent service will continue to be responsible for all pay and benefits for the member during their period of participation in the SkillBridge program.

Can an industry partner participate in the SkillBridge program if they are not located near a military installation?

Yes. Service members may seek command approval to relocate to participate in a SkillBridge opportunity that is not located near their current installation.

Are authorized SkillBridge industry partners required to accept every service member that applies?

No. Industry partners are responsible for screening and selecting candidates for participation in their SkillBridge opportunity. Industry partners are encouraged to display the qualifications for their SkillBridge opportunity on the website.

Does an industry partner have to maintain a minimum number of participants in their SkillBridge program?

Yes. Industry partners must agree to accept at least the minimum number of SkillBridge candidates annually based on organizational size. Minimum requirements include: small business organization with 200 or fewer employees – at least 1 candidate per year; ...

**Board Action:** Mr. Clements moved to authorize the general manager to submit an inquiry form and apply to the SkillBridge Program. Mr. Hroch seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## 9.6 – Review of Consultants

**Meeting Discussion:** Mr. Andruss explained that the district has obtain services from Jim Allison of Allison, Bass and Magee, Steve Young of Intera, Inc., and Dr. Venkatesh Uddameri in the past under approved agreements. The deliverables submitted through the services provided by each consultant have been considered acceptable by the district. The District entered into an agreement with Daniel B. Stephens and Associates in FY2024 but has not yet sought support from the firm nor received any deliverables to evaluate.

**Board Action:** Mr. Clements moved to 1) authorized the general manager to seek term extensions until September 30, 2025, to the existing agreements with Intera, Inc., Daniel B. Stephens and Associates, and Venkatesh Uddameri, and 2) the president to approve the extensions to the respective service agreements. Mr. Hroch seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## 9.7 – FY2025 Budgetary Authorizations

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**Meeting Discussion:** Mr. Andruss explained in order to efficiently administer the operations of the district, the board has granted limited authority to the general manager to spend funds on certain expenses that are referred to regular and routine expenses within the constraints of the approved budget. This authorization applies to expenses such as payroll, subscription services, lease payments and so on. Other expenses require board consideration and explicit authorization from the board to pay such as invoices from technical consultants and contractors as well as any non-payroll-related payment to the general manager (e.g., travel and expense reimbursements). Regardless of the procedure under which authorization is obtained to spend funds, all expenditure transactions (as well as revenue transactions) are presented to the board for review and oversight within the meeting packets of regular meetings.

When appropriate, the authorization to make payment on non-routine expense is obtained when the associated financial obligation is authorized by the board. This frequently occurs when the Board accepts a proposal from a technical consultant.

However, in some instances, this procedure proves to be inefficient and hinders ability management to administer the projects of the district designed to achieve the operational objectives of the district. This circumstance frequently arises in instances where the district seeks to sponsor external activities such as proposals to promote water conservation or have a technical matter addressed by a consultant.

**Board Action:** Mr. Clements moved to 1) authorized general manager to engage and pay consultants under the agreements approved by the board and 2) authorize the general manager to award sponsorships and pay the corresponding expenses in accordance with the approved operational budget of the district. Mr. Hroch seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## 9.8 – FY2024 Budget Amendments

**Meeting Discussion:** Mr. Andruss explained based on a review of the financial transactions recorded by the district through May 31, 2024 and correction of assignment of expenses to budget programs and budget categories, the following amendments are recommended for consideration by the Board.

If approved, the budget surplus anticipated at September 30, 2024 would increase from \$127,800 to \$263,800.

**Board Action:** Mr. Clements moved to approve the recommended amendments to the FY2024 Budget. Mr. Hroch seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## 9.9 – Annual Report of the District

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**Meeting Discussion:** Mr. Andruss explained on July 19, 2024, the board accepted and approved the annual performance report for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2023.

On July 22, 2024, management identified and corrected errors within the report.

**Board Action:** Mr. Clements moved to accept and approve the annual performance report for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2023, as revised on July 22, 2024. Mr. Hroch seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**10. Consideration of and possible action on matters related to legal counsel report.**

**11. Adjourn.**

**11.0 – Adjourn Meeting**

**Meeting Discussion:** None.

**Board Action:** Mr. Clements moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:43 AM after concluding all business of the District. Mr. Hroch seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

THE ABOVE AND FOREGOING MINUTES WERE READ AND APPROVED ON THIS

THE 18 DAY OF October A.D. 2024.



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Director of the Victoria County Groundwater Conservation District

ATTEST:

# Victoria County Groundwater Conservation District



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Director of the Victoria County Groundwater Conservation District