



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
Water Resources Board
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The Big River Groundwater Development Project Ad Hoc Committee

Minutes of Meeting

June 5, 2006

Members Present:

William Penn
Robert Griffith
June Swallow
Henry Meyer
Harold Ward

Members Absent:

Jon Schock, Chairman
Paul Nordstrom

Staff Present:

Juan Mariscal
Romeo Mendes
Kathy Crawley

1. Call to Order

With a quorum present, Mr. Griffith called the meeting to order at 10:08 AM.

2. Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Mr. Penn, second by Mr. Ward, the committee unanimously approved the minutes of the May 1, 2006 meeting.

3. Big River Groundwater Development Project: RFQ/P Review and Approval

Mr. Mariscal distributed a second draft RFQ/P document that he felt was very close to what a final version would look like but may not be acceptable to the committee at this point since it did need some additional work. Mr. Mariscal noted that State's standard contract language included in the form which was part of the BRMA groundwater RFQP was confusing and should be extracted at this point and then appended upon a contractor being selected. The current version of the proposal was reorganized to make it more understandable beginning with background on the Water Resources Board and concluding with descriptions of alternatives for a business plan and USGS studies that would need to be reviewed at the outset of the project. The question now is how much guidance should be provided in the document. He noted that there should be enough guidance so that proposers know what is required but not so much that creative approaches are stifled.

The new version provides a general purpose and conceptual scope of work section which details a broad outline of what is to be accomplished. Some more work on blending this section with some of the detail in the scope of work outline section stills needs to be done but basically the idea is to give proposers a broad base to start and then ask them to provide a detailed proposal on how the issues would be addressed. Mr. Mariscal handed out two inserts that would replace existing pages 6 and 19 and explained each. The page 6 insert, titled General Purpose and Conceptual Scope of Work lists the three phases of the project and then provides more detail on each. Phase I is intended to be a planning effort which will pull together USGS, Supplemental water Supply studies I, II and WSSMP data for WRB and Statewide Planning staff to use in updating pertinent elements of the state guide plan. The effort would begin with the central part of the state and eventually be done for the entire State. Evaluation of management and infrastructure

alternatives such as desalination and reservoir construction would be considered as well. Additionally, the initial design of the withdrawal system is to utilize USGS Management Model #09 as its starting point and focus on resource conservation and stewardship.

Mr. Penn interjected that too much is included in the RFQ/P at this point. The Board's approved motion was very specific, he added, to deliver 5 to 10 million gallons of water per day with an eye toward resource conservation (i.e. supply is not overburdened) while still maintaining stewardship of the open space. Mr. Griffith asked if the consultant was basically being required to write a report summarizing all the data that the board had been gathering over the years and if the data was going to be available for the purpose of preparing such a report why didn't staff just do it. Mr. Mariscal responded that existing staff were very busy with the implementation of the many programs overseen by the Board. Mr. Mariscal added that the work that is included here would be compiling existing data that the WRB has. He also noted that since the PWSB provides much of the water to Kent County it is difficult to discuss Central Rhode Island water needs without knowing about statewide needs.

Mr. Penn suggested that the work be split among two consultants, one to prepare the final report and another to deal with the delivery of the water from Big River. Mr. Meyer agreed stating that primary focus should be on the directive to design a system to withdraw 5 – 10 million gallons per day. This effort should proceed independently of the greater charge that the Board has on a statewide basis. Mr. Griffith concurred but could also understand Mr. Mariscal's dilemma that the solution fit into the most current analysis (larger context) that could be brought to bear. He felt that this could be accomplished by staff. Ms. Swallow then asked for clarification regarding the work of the two consultants in question if that were the option the committee wanted to pursue. Specifically was Mr. Penn suggesting that two separate contracts be put into place? Discussion ensued regarding what the intent of the Governor's office was in issuing the directive. The conclusion was that an analysis of the central part of the State was the primary requirement and that a statewide analysis would then naturally follow therefore, having one contract for each might be the way to go.

Mr. Griffith made it clear that from a financing point of view both the Governor's and Budget offices were under the impression that a Statewide analysis had either already been completed or was in the process of being completed therefore additional financing for this effort was not required. Mr. Mariscal clarified that financing was not being sought to conduct a statewide analysis. However, from a planning perspective, what would eventually be necessary would be to pull all information together to get a handle on the big picture for this project.

Mr. Meyer interjected that Mr. Penn's point was correct regarding an initial design for the delivery 5 to 10 million gallons of water per day. The project needs to be designed to some degree so that a determination regarding what can be done and at what cost may be made. If the determination is that the project is marketable then take it through the permitting process. During permitting all the aforementioned issues as well as additional issues that have not yet been considered will arise and have to be addressed. Mr. Penn agreed adding that an analysis of the potential revenues would also be very important. Mr. Mariscal relayed that all indications are that water rates for the proposed system will be higher than existing rates in the area so at what point do you say don't build it.

Mr. Meyer then replied that from a sound planning perspective (reliability, redundancy, fire flow capability, etc.) it may have to be built even though the cost of the water is higher compared to what will exist when the project is completed. Basically, the project will not have a substantial revenue base for quite some time and may even have to be subsidized by the State but should still be explored to ensure the well being of the citizens of the State.

After a number of suggestions were made to delete or rework various aspects of the document's scope of work, the Committee members generally agreed that reformatting and streamlining the RFQ/P was necessary to improve it.

Mr. Mariscal and Mr. Mendes will revise the current draft of the RFQ/P and distribute to the committee for comment prior to the next meeting.

The group agreed to meet again on June 19th at 10 a.m.

4. New Business-None

5. Other Business-None

6. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Penn, second by Mr. Meyer, the committee adjourned at 11:24 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Romeo N. Mendes, P.E.
Supervising Engineer