

## Enhancing Interregional Coordination (EIC) Committee Meeting Minutes

July 15, 2020, 10:00 a.m. held via GoToWebinar

**Committee Members present (4 of 5):** Gail Peek, Chair; Patrick Brzozowski; Jim Thompson; Ray Buck. Scott Reinert was absent.

**Senators/Representatives/Other VIPs in Attendance:** Council Chair Suzanne Scott

**TWDB Board Members and Staff:** Participants: Temple McKinnon, Ron Ellis. Attendees: Patrick Lopez, Bryan McMath

**MEETING GENERAL:** Ron Ellis (TWDB) checked roll and determined that a quorum was present.

### AGENDA ITEMS

- 1. Call to Order and Welcome** – Chair Gail Peek called the meeting to order and welcomed the committee members.
- 2. Public Comment** – None.
- 3. Committee Member Feedback and Discussion of Committee Charges** – Ms. Peek gave an overview of the committee's charges and encouraged the committee members to draw on their experiences to inform the discussion. She then asked to move to a presentation of the formal TWDB interregional conflict resolution process (Agenda Item 5). Temple McKinnon displayed the TWDB overview document (Agenda Item 4h) and gave an overview of the interregional conflict process in TWDB rules.

Ms. Peek then stated that she wants to seek a way to “short circuit” the formal TWDB process, which adds complexity and time because the Executive Administrator has to return to the groups of origin for a solution, by coordinating to avoid such complexity. Suzanne Scott, Chair of the Interregional Planning Council (IPC), stated that she hoped the committee could identify best practices that could include planning groups coordinating earlier to avoid conflict. She also pointed out that interregional coordination goes beyond conflict. Ms. Scott discussed SWIFT eligibility if strategies are excluded from a plan due to unresolved conflict and whether such strategies could be included as alternative strategies in a plan until the conflict was resolved. Patrick Brzozowski added that the evaluation of water management strategies WMSs occurs late in the planning cycle (~two years in) and that there is a problem with identifying who speaks for planning regions. He stated that the TWDB has a process, but the planning groups need to identify spokesperson(s) to work together and coordination on WMS' needs to begin earlier in the process. The liaison process exists; the appropriate person needs to be selected and sponsors of the larger projects aren't necessarily RWPG members.

Jim Thompson agreed with Mr. Brzozowski's remarks and reiterated that coordination at the end of the process leaves very little time to appropriately study impacts on a region. Ms. Scott asked if the project sponsors have their own plans and know what projects they want to implement. If so, she

said, they could be presented to the planning group earlier in the process. Mr. Thompson stated that the Region D experience is over a project that isn't recommended in Region D so planning is occurring in another region and review happens at the end of the planning cycle rather than coordination during the planning cycle.

Ms. McKinnon reminded the committee of the mid-point technical memo, which is required to identify potentially feasible WMSs. The technical memo for each planning group is posted and available for other regions to examine. She suggested that the committee could consider the technical memo information as an earlier starting point. Mr. Brzozowski stated that project sponsors should know the potential points of conflict and potential impacts for their projects, and Ms. Scott suggested that planning groups be required to identify potential conflicts and impacts in the technical memos. Ms. Peek added that no one is charged with examining technical memos for potential conflicts; the information may be there earlier but action isn't taken until later in the planning process. Ms. Peek suggested the committee look at roles of planning group members and liaisons because there are several points of connection currently existing in the process.

Mr. Brzozowski made the point that all the planning group members have full time jobs outside of the planning process and that the consultants have the detailed information about the projects. He stated that he relies on the consultants to keep up with what's happening in other regions. Mr. Thompson agreed with the point regarding the time limitations on planning group liaisons during meetings to report and with respect to their volunteer nature. He stated the liaisons don't necessarily convey the information that RWPGs need; Ms. Scott agreed.

Ms. Peek stated that her goal is to identify resources available for coordination and find ways to utilize them efficiently, especially since RWPGs rely on volunteers already giving significant time. Ms. Scott agreed with the role of the consultants as being the experts and added that they would need to be required by the TWDB to identify potential conflicts among WMSs. The planning group would then be required to further explore whether a conflict actually exists. Ms. McKinnon summarized the points as adding a requirement to the planning contract scope of work to look for potential conflicts (or issues) and setting the timing of that task to coincide with the technical memo. She added that once potential conflicts are identified, TWDB could provide supporting draft data to RWPGs as needed. Mr. Brzozowski suggested that sponsor data on project impacts of concern could be provided earlier to the RWPG; Ms. Peek agreed.

Ms. Peek then noted that examining projects early in the process could also identify opportunities for water projects that go beyond a region. Ms. Scott stated that the planning groups should identify issues of concern rather than just conflicts and subsequently discuss to prove or disprove whether there is an issue. Ms. Peek then recapped by stating that TWDB will look at the planning contract scope of work to explore adding a task for analyzing WMSs that might be issues of concern. Ms. McKinnon stated that TWDB will provide the committee a planning cycle timeline and draft scope of work.

Ms. Peek noted that the committee should focus on identifying and maximizing the use of planning group resources with the goal of being more efficient. Ms. Scott stated that examining WMSs could also be an opportunity to think inter-regionally and identify multi-benefit projects. Ray Buck interjected that in Region J they have not experienced much conflict but are looking outside the region to upsize projects. Ms. Peek agreed that it's important to look for opportunities of geographic proximity to benefit smaller communities to help them access funds and other resources. Ms. Scott

stated water suppliers can be hesitant to share information of proprietary negotiations but sharing information and coordinating can also create opportunities to develop additional customers. Mr. Brzozowski returned to prior recommended additional planning task of identifying potential issues and suggested the coordination analysis should also identify opportunities of cooperative water development to serve multiple groups. He said this may be a consultant action or a TWDB action or both. Ms. Peek agreed and said there could be opportunity on source development and also on distribution.

Ms. Peek then asked Ms. McKinnon to move to the slide for agenda item 7, the IPC's Problem Statement and Goal Statement for the EIC Committee. Ms. Peek read the Goal Statement and noted that is what they've been covering in this discussion. She then asked to return to Agenda Item 6 and other agenda items as noted below.

4. **TWDB Reference Materials** – Provided on the agenda for the committee members to reference. Not specifically covered in the meeting.
5. **Overview of Formal Interregional Conflict Process by TWDB** – Presented at beginning of Agenda Item 3 at Chair Peek's request. See above.
6. **Discussion and Action as Appropriate - Committee Action Plan** – Ms. Peek noted that the committee's goal is to come up with an action plan and recommendations to accomplish the IPC Goal Statement for the EIC Committee.
7. **Discussion and Action as Appropriate - Ways to Enhance Interregional Coordination** – Agenda Item 7 was covered concurrently with Agenda Item 3. See above.
8. **Consideration and Action as Appropriate – Committee Recommendations to the Interregional Planning Council Regarding Ways to Enhance Interregional Coordination** – Ms. Peek directed the committee toward the guidelines for committee recommendations. She emphasized that the recommendations must be specific and actionable, which she said is hard to do.

Ms. Scott asked about what might happen with issues or opportunities identified if a new process is required by the planning scope of work. She asked if TWDB would bring regions together through a Chairs' Meeting or create some process to elevate the issues beyond the liaisons or planning groups. Ms. McKinnon responded that TWDB could convene a Work Session with our Board at the tech memo milestone. She also stated that the Chairs could discuss how smaller groups might convene to resolve specific issues. Ron Ellis said that other vehicles such as the Interregional Planning Council itself and quarterly Chairs' Conference Calls could be available for preliminary discussion of identified issues and opportunities by the Chairs. Ms. Peek commented that she'd like to see more sharing by regions during the conference calls. She stated that it could help Chairs practice sharing information with each other. Mr. Brzozowski added that during the existing meetings, there is little time for focused conversation between regions where issues may exist. He said that there may need to be meetings of smaller groups of regions.

Ms. McKinnon made the point that the TWDB has tried to keep the Chairs' conference calls limited to an administrative information-sharing function for the Chairs, and then we distribute meeting notes to the consultants and political subdivisions. She also stated that once a cycle, near the

beginning, we hold a technical meeting for the consultants to help us identify ways to improve our technical guidance. She stated, however, that if the committee sees ways to improve those meetings to serve you better, we'd appreciate hearing those specifics. It would be worthwhile for the committee to think about how to improve the vehicles TWDB has for information sharing.

Ms. Peek said her goal for the meeting was to try to ensure the committee members have a baseline, to know what resources exist. The committee also needs to ensure they are using time and energy well. Ms. Scott said it's important to look for incentives. She asked if there are any extra points in prioritization for projects that create interregional opportunities. Ms. McKinnon responded that there are points for regionalization and the number of entities served in the lending side of the process. Ms. Scott asked if more incentive could be added to the planning group prioritization side. Ms. McKinnon said that TWDB can bring information on scoring and how all of the facets feed in, but she reminded that the uniform standards committee would have to change the scoring formula for the planning groups. Mr. Brzozowski stated that project sponsors must be involved in such regionalization decisions.

Mr. Brzozowski asked about capturing draft recommendations discussed. Ms. Peek stated collective notes would be reviewed with the minutes and draft recommendations would be discussed at subsequent committee meetings.

**9. Discuss Next Steps: Methods to Move Forward Including Scheduling of Meetings, Background Materials for Meetings, or Discussion Steps that Can be Accomplished Before Future Meetings –**

Ms. Peek noted that the next meeting is scheduled for July 22, at 10:00 am. She asked the committee members to consider whether there are any background materials, in addition to the minutes from this meeting, that they need for next meeting.

Ms. Scott noted that there is a flow chart of the planning process, and that it may be helpful to visually show where it would be beneficial to put coordination requirements in the process. Ms. Peek agreed and said she'd take a look at the flow chart and recommend timing; Mr. Ellis will assist in providing materials. Ms. McKinnon stated that it would be helpful to hear recommendations regarding how TWDB staff can help planning groups consume the information we produce.

**10. Discussion of Agenda for Future Meetings –** Ms. Peek stated that the agenda would be pretty standard for future meetings, but that she's open to recommendations. Mr. Ellis noted that the agenda for the next meeting is already posted due to Open Meetings Act requirements.

**11. Report and Possible Action on Report from Chair –** Ms. Peek stated that she will have a report at the next meeting.

**12. Public Comment –** None.

**13. Adjourned –** Mr. Brzozowski motioned adjournment; Mr. Thompson seconded. Adjourned at 11:24 a.m.