

## Water Users Coalition

Minutes of meeting 2 September 2014

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 PM

- 1.) Jerry Homan, General Manager of HCFWSD#61, introduced himself as the organizer of the meeting and the evening's facilitator. He recognized David Kauffman, Manager of City of Tomball Water Services, and thanked him for the generous use of their facility for the meeting. He then called for each of the attendees to introduce themselves.
- 2.) Mr. Homan first presented some of the reasons it was necessary to organize the Coalition.
  - a. Comments upon the deficiencies in the NHCRWA drought contingency plan feel upon deaf ears
  - b. Request to re-establish the NHCRWA's User Committee was dismissed summarily
  - c. MUD's are left to answer to water customers on NHCRWA decisions and policies without support and communications.
- 3.) Mr. Homan next suggested that organizing and mobilizing the Coalition was the best way to show overall support by a large number of MUDs and to present unified policy recommendations and support with one voice that cannot be dismissed.
- 4.) Mr. Homan explained the proposed purpose of the coalition, to assist the NHCRWA to make informed decisions and to give members a common, controlled voice at meetings
- 5.) The Coalition webpage was introduced and the Mission Statement was presented.
- 6.) Future plans of the Coalition were discussed
  - a. A meeting for interested operators is planned for September 11 to discuss their role in the coalition and how they may express ideas and concerns to the NHCRWA through the Coalition. Going forward, the operators will meet on a quarterly basis to communicate with one another, prioritize the problems they foresee or experience with NHCRWA, and to brain-storm possible solutions for presentation to NHCRWA.
  - b. The Region 1 Director Election (November 4) is the only contested seat on the NHCRWA's board. The candidates are Todd Burrer and Ron Graham (incumbent). The Coalition plans a public meeting prior to the election where each candidate may present his platform.
  - c. Each region will have a yearly MUD directors meeting at which the NHCRWA's director for the region will be invited to speak and share with their constituents and the Coalition
  - d. Additional meetings will be scheduled as needed, however the goal is to keep meetings to a minimum so as not to become an imposition upon the members.
- 7.) Jerry ended his introduction by suggesting that the Coalition does not replace individual contact with the NHCRWA for daily issues. The Coalition is for major policy and operations planning/execution issues
- 8.) Jerry opened the floor to discussion of topics for consideration by the Coalition. There were six major topics of concerns about the NHCRWA presented by the floor:
  - a. Communications (some issues blend with Transparency below):

- i. Meetings *appear* to be rubber-stamp of decisions made prior (no discussion)
  - ii. Public comments are not taken seriously
  - iii. Public comments are often dismissed with a “I’ll get back to you on that”, which never happens (removes the issue from the public’s attention)
- b. Over-Reaching:
  - i. Controlling the pumpage and permits from wells in Districts not yet serviced by NHCRWA.
  - ii. Drought contingency with limited input.
  - iii. Expanding role beyond the authority’s original mandate.
- c. Transparency (see Communications above also):
  - i. Charitable(?) donations are buried deeply in budget breakdown and difficult to discern.
  - ii. Individual bills are not listed nor available.
  - iii. Notice of important meetings (budget, other meetings with Directors quorum) are not posted or made public. Mr. Homan encouraged participants to make sure that their email info was sent to the Authority with the authorization to receive blast. He also stated that he believed that the Authority was meeting their legal obligation of notification.
  - iv. Mr. Homan stated that the Authority puts out more information at their monthly meeting than most. He also pointed out that additional information should be available through the Open Records Act should individuals want additional information.
- d. Attitude:
  - i. The Board’s response to most community comments (blue cards) is dismissive (See a.iii. above)
  - ii. Unresponsive (not returning phone calls / e-mails), minimum action on communications.
- e. Policy Development, water use and reuse:
  - i. Inconsistent policies on water use; demanding minimum usage while encouraging conservation
  - ii. Need assistance / guidelines on mixing ground and surface water in times of necessity.
  - iii. Need clear policy on public vs. private use of water (is NHCRWA subsidizing private use, such as golf courses, etc.)
  - iv. Reuse policy
- f. Future Growths Plans, Quality and quantity of water:
  - i. With regional population growth booming, what are the future plans for water use? NHCRWA struggles to supply surface water to its customers now. What are future water source plans? Mr. Homan thought that the Lucy Bayou project was a very good move by the authority to open an inter basin transfer and improve water availability.

9.) The meeting adjourned around 8:30. Mr. Homan thanked those who attended.