

**LCRA Water Conservation Incentives Program Review Committee  
Meeting Minutes: May 10, 2017**

The Water Conservation Incentives Program Review Committee convened at 2 p.m. Wednesday, May 10, 2017. The following members attended:

- Karen Bondy, LCRA Water Resources
- Stephen Cooper, LCRA Board of Directors
- George Russell, LCRA Board of Directors
- Mike Hodge, City of Marble Falls, Committee Chair
- Ken Gorzycki, Horseshoe Bay Resort
- Drema Gross, Austin Water Utility
- John Hoffman, South Texas Project (participated by phone)

LCRA staff members John Hofmann, Valerie Miller, Brett Briant, Victor Garcia and Stacy Pandey also participated. Committee member Joseph Crane, of the LCRA Board of Directors, was absent.

Briant presented the City of Marble Falls cost-share project proposal. The city requested \$58,000 to extend its existing treated effluent lines to the City of Meadowlakes to irrigate 39 acres of the Hidden Falls Golf Course. This will allow the Hidden Falls Golf Course to be completely sustained with treated effluent. The estimated annual water savings would be about 50 acre-feet per year, with an annualized cost to LCRA of \$97 per acre-foot saved. Committee members asked several questions about the current system effectiveness and future expansion. Committee members unanimously approved the staff-recommended grant amount of \$58,000.

Pandey presented the Dripping Springs Water Supply Corporation cost-share project proposal. The city requested \$56,480 to install advanced metering infrastructure to shift from monthly to hourly meter readings and integrate data with analytic software to identify customer leaks more quickly. The estimated annual water savings would be about 48.7 acre-feet per year, with an annualized cost to LCRA of \$96 per acre-foot saved. Committee members asked if projected savings are based on actual billed adjustments, which they were. Committee members unanimously approved the staff-recommended grant amount of \$56,480.

Pandey gave a status update on savings for projects funded since 2012 and gave an update on the Corix project, which was completed in April 2017. The committee asked for an ongoing status report of water conservation goals for each project.

Earl Wood with the Hurst Creek Municipal Utility District gave a presentation on the water treatment plant backwash recovery project funded by LCRA's cost-share program. This innovative project used a fully automated process to remove chloramine, ammonia and chlorine byproducts, conserving about 70 percent of backwash water as of April 2017. Wood expects the process to conserve 90 percent of backwash water once it has been operational for a longer period.

Dave Stewart with the City of Lago Vista gave a presentation on the various water loss projects Lago Vista has implemented since 2009, including a water line looping project funded by LCRA's cost-share program, and a low-cost solution to reduce flushing in ground storage tanks through water circulation and aeration within the tank. He also highlighted the Highland Lakes Golf Course reuse project, an additional project funded by LCRA's cost-share program.

Keith Parkan with the West Travis County Public Utility Agency gave a brief update on the status of their leak detection cost-share project, which is scheduled to be complete in September 2018.

Miller discussed potential Water Conservation Incentives Program rule changes. She said staff met with firm customers to seek guidance of how they would like to see the rebate and grant programs develop. Staff sought out other water authorities and utilities with well-established rebate programs to discuss pros and cons. Miller said customers asked for a more flexible and user-friendly rebate program and increased resources for customers to market and implement the rebates program. She said staff is recommending a more flexible small grant program under the cost-share program that will not be tied to acre-feet savings; can focus on education, outreach or technology advancements; and can be adopted within other communities. Committee members discussed the SMART controller rebate and the rainwater harvesting rebate in detail. Gross asked how staff developed the SMART controller rebate amount and whether flow sensors would be required. Staff indicated it was based on 50 percent of the cost of available, quality controllers. Gross stated research her staff has done suggests the savings does not yet justify rebate cost. Gross also explained that the City of Austin staff has been trying, unsuccessfully, to make improvements to its rainwater harvesting program since 2012 and recommended incorporating several elements to make the program more cost-effective, such as: 1) requiring justification of tank sizing to take into account the roof collection area and landscaping area to be watered with rainwater; 2) requiring an operations and maintenance plan; 3) offering the same rebate amount per gallon of storage regardless of whether the system is pressurized; and 4) lowering the rebate amount to 25 cents per gallon of storage. She also recommended LCRA consider allowing potable use of rainwater and consider starting with a pilot program with a fixed budget. Gorzycki asked how city ordinances (such as backflow prevention requirements) interface with rainwater harvesting programs and indicated he was uncomfortable with the maximum rebate amount for rainwater harvesting systems. He suggested it should be 50 percent or less of the cost like other rebates.

Committee members suggested staff schedule another meeting in August to vote on new rebates and said they would like staff to set up a file-sharing website in the interim to maintain dialogue and feedback between staff and committee members regarding proposed rebates. Committee members did not have a preference on the November meeting date.

The meeting adjourned at 3:59 p.m.