

MINUTES – AUGUST 14, 2025
BIG BEND GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT #5
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The monthly board meeting of the Big Bend Groundwater Management District #5 was held at the District office in Stafford, Kansas on Thursday August 14, 2025. The board members present were Tom Taylor, Darrell Wood, Marlyn Spare, Joe Schlessiger, Kerry Froetschner, Gary Hornbaker, John Janssen, and Fred Grunder. The board member who was not present was Craig Zwick. The District staffs present were Orrin Feril and Vanessa Marks. The guests present were Jeff Lanterman (Zoom) and Jason Norquest (Zoom).

The August regular board meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Tom Taylor.

A discussion regarding the District's areas of concern was added to the agenda as item 5a.

Kerry Froetschner moved, and Gary Hornbaker seconded to approve the July minutes as presented. Motion carried 8-0.

Orrin Feril provided the board and public with the August treasurer's report and highlighted the unique items for further board review. It was requested that Orrin check into whether Stinson expenses related to the Watershed Plan-EIS could be reimbursed by NRCS. John Janssen moved, and Kerry Froetschner seconded to accept the August treasurer's report as presented. Motion carried 8-0.

The upcoming Governor's Conference on the Future of Water in Kansas will take place on November 12 & 13 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Manhattan. Recently, the GMD managers have been considering the value of providing sponsorship for this conference collectively to promote the activities of the GMDs in Kansas water policy. An overview of the sponsorship options was provided to the board for consideration. Currently, GMD3 and GMD4 have approved up to \$600 each for this effort. GMD1 and GMD2 have board meetings next week to consider this same question. John Janssen moved, and Darrell Wood seconded to approve up to \$600 to provide collective sponsorship to the conference with the other four groundwater management districts. Motion carried 8-0.

The Kansas Water Office has invited all Regional Advisory Committee members whose terms expire in 2025 to reapply for a new term, should they wish to continue serving. Currently Orrin Feril serves on the Great Bend Prairie RAC with a term that expires this year. Following discussion, Marlyn Spare moved, and Darrell Wood seconded to nominate Orrin Feril to serve on the Great Bend Prairie Regional Advisory Committee to fill the At Large Public (cc) position. Motion carried 8-0.

In accordance with K.S.A. 82a-1044, the District board identified areas of concern in June 2024. Since that time, the District has been coordinating with KDA regarding areas in Edwards and Kiowa county that could also be identified. To assist with this process, the 2023 revision to the Estimated Useable Lifetime map from KGS was georeferenced into GIS to assist with the process. The board discussed these regions as having stable water tables but thin saturated thickness. Recently, Balleau Groundwater Inc (BGW) provided a scope of work to further assist with this process and determine if management actions could improve the hydrology in the areas. Further discussion regarding the status of the model update was provided to the board. Following discussion, Fred Grunder moved, and John Janssen seconded to approve the scope of work provided by Balleau Groundwater Inc for \$19,200.00. Motion carried 8-0.

Orrin Feril discussed staff activities for the past few weeks and upcoming months. The District received word recently that the District's primary accountant, Aaron Koehn, passed away. The District board expresses deepest condolences to Aaron's family during this time. The District assessments are nearing completion and should be completed before the internal deadline of August 15, 2025. The water planning task force requested an update from the District on the implementation of K.S.A. 82a-1044. This presentation was provided on Monday August 11.

Jeff Lanterman, KDA-DWR, reported on the pilot augmentation project, noting they pumped 222 acre-feet in the spring and plan to pump 384 acre feet starting in September, with additional rights of 177.3 acre feet pending. Questions were raised about water flow measurements at Rattlesnake Creek and expressed concerns about the accuracy of current monitoring methods.

Registration for the upcoming Governor's Conference will open soon. Board members are encouraged to attend, and those interested may contact the District office for assistance with registration

The next District board meeting is tentatively set for September 11, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

With no further items to discuss, the board adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Attest by:  Dated: 9-10-25