

Budget and Priorities (B&P) Subcommittee of the Galveston Bay Council (GBC)

Date: Wednesday, January 8, 2025, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Location: Galveston Bay Estuary Program (GBEP), Virtual Teams

Minutes

Attendees

Members attended: Scott Alford, Vance Darr (v), Albert Gonzales (v), Kendall Guidroz, Brian Koch, Mike Lee, Linda Shead (v), Philip Smith, Bob Stokes, Cindy Wilems

GBEP Staff attended: Matthew Abernathy, Jenelle Estrada, Zoe Gapayao, Lindsey Lippert, Lisa Marshall, Christian Rines, Morgen Zander

Welcome

Lisa Marshall welcomed the members to the meeting.

Action: The members reviewed the minutes. A motion to approve the minutes from October 2, 2024 was made by Brian Koch and a second was made by Bob Stokes. The minutes were approved.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Funding Planning

Ms. Marshall reminded the members that in the past, at the March meetings, the subcommittees develop their priorities for the BIL funds. At the April B&P Subcommittee meeting, the subcommittee coordinators present the priorities that were developed by the subcommittees for the BIL funding. The B&P Subcommittee would discuss these priorities and come up with a suite of priorities. Ms. Marshall confirmed with the members that they are good with this timing. Ms. Marshall also reminded the members of the process for selecting the BIL projects – in September, the B&P Subcommittee will hear the BIL proposal presentations and then, through consensus, select the projects that will be presented to the GBC for approval in October.

Subcommittee Bylaws Update

Ms. Marshall explained that the other subcommittees decided to update their bylaws. There was a need to reference the 2nd Edition of the Galveston Bay Plan and they needed to address voting issues by revising the membership and attendance language. Christian Rines presented the changes made generally to subcommittees' bylaws. Ms. Marshall mentioned that she thought it would be good to look over the B&P Subcommittee bylaws to determine if any updates are needed. The members agreed. Ms. Marshall will review, make suggestions, and send them out for the members to review before the next meeting. The changes can then be discussed at the next meeting.

Planning for January GBC Meeting

There will be three presentations and an update by two of the subcommittee coordinators:

89th Legislative Update – Amanda Schar, Statehouse Group

Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan Update: ERAP and Equity Strategy – Moriah Brewer, Equity Consultant; Stephanie Glenn, Ph.D. and Erin Kinney, Ph.D., Houston Advanced Research Center

San Jacinto River Authority - Lake Conroe Operations – Shane Simpson, San Jacinto River Authority

Subcommittee Updates

- Natural Resource Uses – Lindsey Lippert
- Water and Sediment Quality – Christian Rines

Ms. Marshall asked if the members have any ideas about how to change up the GBC meetings, do something a little different. She mentioned that GBEP did a survey a few years ago and the GBC members liked the idea of having panels occasionally, although Ms. Marshall does not have ideas for a good panel at this time. Mike Lee suggested having more updates about projects that GBEP has funded. Ms. Marshall stated that we schedule updates once the project has closed. The members said they like the idea of having 10-15-minute updates about current projects. They also mentioned adding subcommittee updates occasionally. Lindsey Lippert and Ms. Rines will give a brief update about the work their subcommittees are currently doing at the next GBC meeting.

Mr. Stokes asked how many GBC members participate in the subcommittees. There are only a few that attend the subcommittee meetings so it is good for them to hear about the projects that they have approved. Ms. Marshall mentioned that staff of the GBC members have mentioned to her that the council member does not bring the information back to the agency or organization. Linda Shead suggested that we could mention how these projects affect their individual organization or agency and that may spark more interest for the members. She also mentioned that she likes the idea of a quick update of some projects in the middle of the project, not just when it is completed.

Ms. Marshall and staff will try to incorporate these ideas for upcoming meetings.

Announcements and Program Updates

- Texas Plastic Pollution Symposium – call for abstracts is open.
- Armand Bayou Nature Center – closed, 1,100 additional acres, controlled access, largest urban nature preserve in Texas.
- Salt Bayou – closed in December, underserved area in San Leon, this was a project with GBF.
- State of the Bay Symposium will likely be held February 24 and 25, 2026 at Moody Gardens.
- New Chairwoman at TCEQ – Brooke Paup from Texas Water Development Board

Upcoming meetings:

- Galveston Bay Council Meeting: April 16, 2025

Meeting adjourned