

Montgomery County Commissioners Court to host special session for LSGCD board appointment

By Catherine Dominguez, cdominguez@hcnonline.com Published 10:07 pm, Monday, February 13, 2017



Photo: Jason Fochtman, Staff Photographer

The Montgomery County Commissioners court will consider appointing a representative to the Lone Star Groundwater Conservation District board during a special meeting Tuesday. The meeting will be at 10:30 a.m. or immediately following the court's regular 9:30 a.m. meeting on the fourth floor of the Alan B. Sadler Administration Building, 501 N. Thompson St.

The term of Richard Tramm, general manager of the Porter Special Utility District, expired Jan. 31. However, the court delayed making an appointment to allow each commissioner to recommend candidates and allow the court to interview each of them. The county appoints two members to the nine-person LSGCD board. They serve staggered four-year terms. The other county appointee is Gregg Hope, whose term expires in 2019.

Those interviews will be done in open court during the special session after Precinct 3 Commissioner James Noack made the suggestion during the court's Jan. 24 meeting. "I think there are so many questions regarding water and it seems to be a very divided topic that it might be better to do it in the most open, transparent manner," Noack said in a previous Courier article.

Precinct 1 Commissioner Mike Meador disagrees. "I don't agree we need to interview them in open court; I don't think we need to interview them at all," said Meador, adding that commissioners could visit with each person individually and make a decision.

In October, officials with Conroe and Magnolia asked the court to remove Tramm and Hope as well as pursue new legislation making the position on the LSGCD board elected and not appointed. However, Doyal said he spoke with County Attorney J D Lambright, who said they could not be removed from the board before their terms expire.

While Doyal appointed Hope and reappointed Tramm, who was originally appointed by former County Judge Alan B. Sadler, he agrees with other county leaders that the board positions should be elected.

"I am hopeful the legislature works through this session and comes up with a plan for an elected board going forward," Doyal said.

Commissioners approved a resolution Jan. 24 supporting a change in legislation that would make some of the positions on the board elected and not appointed as they currently are. State Sen. Brandon Creighton, R-Conroe, and state Rep. Will Metcalf, R-Conroe, will be pushing for that legislation this session.

The LSGCD was created in 2001 through House Bill 2362, authored by the late Ruben Hope, Gregg Hope's father. The San Jacinto River Authority, city of Conroe, the Woodlands Joint Powers Agency, the boards of the municipal utility districts on the east and west side of Interstate 45, the mayors of the other incorporated cities in the county and the directors of the Montgomery County Soil and Water Conservation District also each appoint one director.

Members of the LSGCD board are Tramm, Hope, Rick Moffatt, Jim Stinson, John Bleyl, M. Scott Weisinger, Jace Houston, Roy McCoy Jr. and W. B. Wood.