

Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority

9:00 A.M.

April 18, 2019 - Meeting Notes

Board Members Present: Frank Chestnut, City of Cosmopolis; Alan Vanell, Town of Bucoda; Ron Averill, City of Centralia; Dan Wood, City of Montesano; Brian Shay, City of Hoquiam; De Anne Shaw and Kris Koski, City of Aberdeen; Trent Lougheed, City of Chehalis; Richard Armstrong, City of Oakville; Tye Menser, Thurston County Commissioner; Edna Fund, Lewis County Commissioner

Board Members Absent: Vickie Raines, Grays Harbor County Commissioner; Jim Haslett, City of Napavine; Lonnie Willey, Town of Pe Ell

Others Present: Lee Napier, Lewis County Community Development Director; Jim Kramer, Ruckelshaus Center; Andrea McNamara-Doyle, Director, Office of Chehalis Basin

Handouts/Materials Used:

- Agenda
- Meeting Notes
- Office of Chehalis Basin PowerPoint
- Financial Reports
- Memo: Lewis County as Fiscal Agent (EZview)
- Memo: Local Projects
- See https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias_1492/34798/meetings.aspx#April2019

1. Call to Order

Vice-Chair Fund called the meeting to order at 9:09 a.m. She asked Mayor Carr to tell a little about the Town of Bucoda.

2. Introductions

Self-introductions were made by all attending.

3. Approval of Agenda

Scott asked to add an awards item to the agenda. Vice-Chair Fund suggested adding it to Reports. The agenda was approved by consensus.

4. Approval of January 17, 2019 meeting notes

Frank stated on page 2, item C: Local Projects: "stepped" should be "stopped." The meeting notes were approved by consensus with that correction.

5. Update/Discussion: Office of Chehalis Basin

Andrea explained her background and then presented a PowerPoint on the Office of Chehalis Basin (OCB). The three main topics included office and staffing, update on the Office, and funding.

The OCB's legislative directive is to aggressively pursue an integrated strategy and funding for long-term flood damage reduction, and aquatic species habitat restoration.

The PowerPoint showed proposed budgets for the 2019-2021 biennium, the previous budget request process, and the current budget request process. Also shown was the evolution of funding process and fiscal oversight.

Andrea showed where more work is needed in the future and the accomplishments achieved so far.

6. Local Projects

Scott stated the budget for local projects was overspent by \$408,000. (Please see "Executive Action 3-21-2019 re Obligations/Deobligations" memo). The overspent circumstance occurred as a result of reconciling and closing out an old OFM budget in favor of a new Ecology budget. Local projects originally operated out of an OFM budget. When China Creek funds were de-obligated to address the year without a capital budget, they were deobligated from OFM budget and then ultimately return the following year to Ecology budget. This created a shortfall in local projects funds that meant no additional local projects could move forward this biennium. The issue was resolved with the Projects Committee, Executive Committee, RCO, and OCB because Flood Authority local governments were again willing to rally and share resources. Montesano de-obligated \$238,000 (WWTP protection project) and Grays Harbor County did the same (Wishkah Road project). We applied those monies to the budget hole and moved forward with local projects to finish-up for this biennium. That deficit will not occur again because we will be under one budget (the Ecology budget). There was consensus for the reconciliation of funds.

7. Update: Early Warning System

Lee stated Lewis County is responsible for the Early Warning System. The Flood Authority hired WEST but Lewis County is managing the assets. It is appropriate to know if Lewis County should continue to manage this asset. Ongoing maintenance is reimbursed through membership, not the RCO. Each county is billed for its share, which is determined by the Flood Authority Executive Committee. Improvement, enhancements and major repairs are some of the things to which RCO has contributed. The next steps will be discussed at the July 18 meeting.

8. Looking Ahead (2019-2021)

Some of the board members needed to leave early and Vice-Chair Fund moved ahead in the agenda and asked for thoughts on what the Flood Authority would look like in the future as well as its relationship with OCB.

Alan stated local projects are being proposed and implemented and outreach shows that this group is working together and hearing what is being said and accomplishing its goals. It is ensuring that when this body is gone the work will carry-on and benefit those to come.

Dan thought the relationship between the Flood Authority and the OCB is murky. He asked if the Flood Authority is an advisory committee. He understood that for the last local projects recruitment cycle potential local projects went to OCB for review before the Flood Authority had finalized them. Structurally the Flood Authority's work should be completed before the next level of review. He did not think the OCB wanted to handle details such as small projects. The Flood Authority is more local and connected to [the Basin's] communities.

Frank thought it was premature to tell what this group would look like in five years. He also thought that when the OCB was implemented that the Flood Authority would be excused. The Flood Authority is going to be needed and it sees the value of the investment. We are only about two years out for fixing

something. He is afraid the levels of bureaucracy will be hung-up and we will not see the results we are seeing now. He stressed we should keep talking.

Ron stated that when looking back on flood mitigation over the years, there have been many plans and virtually all of them have failed. In 2007, it occurred to us that whatever was done in the upper basin would affect the lower basin. The Flood Authority brought many jurisdictions together. The levee in Aberdeen occurred before Hoquiam was a member and then Hoquiam needed help. The Flood Authority played a huge role in that and we need to continue to do those types of things. A big challenge will be in finding a funding source for the operations and maintenance of the dam and the levee.

Dan stated the future of the Flood Authority depends on the stewardship and on the money we can get. It is important that the new folks [coming to the Flood Authority] know what happened to this body in the beginning. Folks are looking out for each other in this group; projects are getting done and people are seeing the benefits.

Frank stated the Projects Committee brought different projects to the table and everyone's hat was left in the hallway. If that continues, and we continue to display that kind of cohesiveness, we will do well.

Brian thought it was important for the OCB members to protect the Flood Authority's interests. He suggested that the Flood Authority should be on the committee with the tribes and DFW. There is a huge part of the OCB budget. The Flood Authority should be on all OCB subcommittees.

Dee Anne stated early-on, Aberdeen was on its own for the levee. The Flood Authority was pooling resources and it had energy, excitement and cohesiveness. There is a fear that this group might be marginalized with OCB and that we will have to lobby Ecology and OCB. These projects should be coming from the local people and there should be a commitment from OCB with representatives at our meetings.

Richard sees the Flood Authority as a tremendous asset. There is collaboration in this group and a passion for the entire region and would like to see it continue.

Commissioner Fund stated she is on both the Flood Authority Board and the OCB Board and she wants to hold on to the cohesiveness.

Andrea stated there would be a joint meeting with the Flood Authority and OCB Boards and Jim to have this conversation.

Scott stated another item to consider in looking forward is Lewis County acting as fiscal agent for the Flood Authority, which it has done since 2008. Lee stated there may be expectations (assumptions) for what the Flood Authority wanted, needed Lewis County to do in this regard. These expectations need to be clearly stated, directed by the Flood Authority so Lewis County can act to implement (via BOCC, RCO, contractors, etc.) and to stay clear, transparent from perspective of State Auditor. See "Lewis County Acting as Fiscal Agent for Flood Authority" memo on EZview. These matters will be discussed again at the May meeting.

Scott stated that a 2-year term on the OCB will expire in June and will be replaced with a 4-year staggered term. He would like to think about a process to appoint representatives to a 4-year term.

Currently Jay Gordon is in that position. We need to start the process to end in May or run a longer process and meet in June. There was consensus to go with May.

Dee Ann asked that the memo include that the appointee attend the Flood Authority meetings. There was consensus.

9. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

10. Financial Report

Lee reported that the expenditures for January were \$13,849.42; for February \$18,258.13; and for March \$8,005.21. In April, we will execute the Early Warning System contract and the counties will be notified about their costs.

11. Goodbye and Thank you to Alan

Today was Alan's last meeting. He stated he has enjoyed the Flood Authority meetings and has learned a lot about the basin. He has enjoyed giving back to the community. People came together during the flood events to help each other. He felt there was a need for the Flood Authority to not rely on FEMA or anyone else.

Ron stated that Alan was invaluable on the Projects Committee and he looked at things from everyone's point of view, not just Bucoda's. Jim stated Alan's participation reflects democracy as our founders intended it to be, and he thanked Alan for his contribution. Scott stated Alan is calm and thoughtful and he has participated and led the projects process that has benefited many people.

12. Member Reports

There were no Member Reports.

Scott stated that Dave Curtis, French Wetmore and Scott nominated the Flood Authority for the James Lee Witt Local Award for Excellence in Floodplain Management and that the Flood Authority won for 2019! The award will be presented in Cleveland the week of May 19-23.

13. Confirm Next Regular Meeting

The next meeting will be on May 16, 9 to 12 noon, in Grays Harbor County (location to be determined).

The meeting adjourned at 12:23 p.m.