

Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority

October 16, 2014 - Meeting Notes

Board Members Present: Wes Cormier, Grays Harbor Commissioner; Ken Estes, City of Montesano; Edna Fund, Lewis County Commissioner; Vickie Raines, City of Cosmopolis; Lionel Pinn, City of Napavine; Alan Vanell, Town of Bucoda; Ron Averill, City of Centralia; Lonnie Willey, Town of Pe Ell; Julie Balmelli-Powe, City of Chehalis; Karen Valenzuela, Thurston County Commissioner; Kathi Hoder, City of Aberdeen

Board Members Absent: Dan Thompson, City of Oakville

Others Present: Jim Kramer, Scott Boettcher, Jessica Hausman, Frank Kersch, Butch Ogden; Terry Willis

Handouts/Materials Used:

- Agenda
- Meeting Notes from September 18, 2014
- 2015-2017 Local Projects List
- See https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias_1492/34798/meetings_2013-15.aspx#October2014

1. Call to Order

Chair Raines called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

2. Introductions

Members introduced themselves as they phoned in.

3. Approval of Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

4. Approval of Meeting Notes

Jerry Louthain stated on page 6, Item 11, it was the Flood Warning System Workshop that had a \$95 fee, not the policy workshops. The meeting notes were approved with that correction.

5. 2015-17 Local Projects

Mr. Vanell stated that the Project Committee has been very busy and it has been rewarding to see the new projects coming in.

Mr. Boettcher stated that all of the projects had been presented at the September meeting and they were placed in different categories; some went to the \$1.5 million left over and the others went into "buckets." What was left was about 10-14 projects. The Project Committee extended the timeline for new projects and in doing so picked up three more projects. Those are Washington State Conservation Commission, Kirkland Road, Napavine and the Boistfort Valley Water District.

The Projects Committee organized projects into six types: 1 – flood prevention; 2 – multiple benefit projects; 3 – infrastructure protection; 4 – study projects; 5 – projects linked to transportation; 6 – cost benefits. The goal of the small projects is to reduce flood damage as soon as possible while ensuring the projects are done in a manner that does not create problems elsewhere in the basin or negatively impact the environment. One of the key questions evaluated by the Project Committee is if the

communities were to get the funding, could they spend the money in the biennium. A map was provided showing the location of these projects.

The Projects Committee looked at what each project is accomplishing and what it would cost. It wasn't until it reached the WSDOT linkage that it had questions and discussions about the cost benefit and general benefits. All of the projects were put in order. What is presented is the order that made sense using the Project Committee criteria. Nothing was thrown out because it is unknown how much the Legislature will appropriate.

Mr. Averill stated for example that Salzer Creek and the lifting of Main Street in Chehalis don't make sense to do because of WSDOT projects. The WSDOT I-5 project won't get done in this biennium and that's why only the Airport Levee project is listed.

Ms. Hoder thanked the Flood Authority for having the Aberdeen levee on the list. She stated it will do more than protect 500 homes – it will protect the entire downtown core and a couple of big businesses, plus it will reduce flood insurance rates.

Chair Raines asked if the question marks by the Wishkah Rd project mean the Projects Committee is requesting funding. She is pleased to see the project on the list but would like the Projects Committee to work with staff to send a letter to the Governor's Work Group so it can explain to the legislature why it is not funded. Mr. Boettcher stated the Committee questioned whether the \$4.78 million will be expended and also the cost benefit because there is information regarding the treatment of the road and it being impassable. The Committee did not have enough information. Chair Raines asked if a cost benefit analysis had been done. Mr. Averill stated HDR completed one. One of the problems was that the hydrology report only tells about inundation for a certain period of time.

Ms. Terry Willis asked what happened to the Satsop project. Mr. Boettcher stated that project is being forwarded to the Governor's Chehalis Basin Work Group for consideration as part of the Work Group recommendations to the Governor. Chair Raines stated there will be a community meeting about Satsop at the Brady Fire Hall tonight.

Mr. Frank Kersch stated he supports the Wishkah Rd project. There was a feasibility study done at the cost of \$125,000. His group made a trip to the Governor's office and discussed safety issues and they outweigh the cost benefit. Families would be trapped and emergency vehicles cannot get in or out. There is a school at the end of the road that needs good access at all times.

Mr. Pinn asked how the WSDOT projects impact funding on projects on the priority list. Mr. Averill stated the only one affected by I-5 is in Bucket A. The others were put into Bucket E. Kirkland Rd went to Bucket A because it does not directly affect I-5. The Governor's group will be aware of the projects in Bucket E.

Mr. Boettcher stated additional recommendations include funding similar to that of the last capital budget for large capital projects, local projects, residential elevation of structures and for habitat. The DOT I-5 alternatives are moving forward with small projects and there is not a coordinator to ensure that these projects are sequenced properly with no adverse effects to another project. The Committee talked about operations and maintenance and the work group is thinking about this.

Mr. Averill stated French and Associates worked on the flood plain management plan and discovered a problem with FEMA funding for raising homes. There should be money set aside for this. Another project was using money that was left over from last year. There should be money set aside for the future so there is available funding to go to.

Mr. Kersch spoke again about Wishkah Rd. He stated if the road is made safe and passable then 9 or 10 homes could be saved rather than being bought out or raised. His group thought the Flood Authority is doing an admirable thing by taking care of two problems.

Mr. Averill made a correction. He stated there was funding for raising homes in the original proposal. The problem was with FEMA maps. The maps in the upper basin date from 1980 and they are disputed because of the treatment of levees. French and Associates asked jurisdictions to consider the maps and also the high marks that the public works departments discovered. The maps are old and smaller jurisdictions don't have the opportunity to get the information they need to include in their flood management plans. The work group could include an item in the budget to help smaller jurisdictions improve their maps.

Mr. Kramer asked if there were other questions on the Wishkah Rd project or airport levee. There were none. He asked if there was any objection to recommending the list as proposed by the Project Committee. Mr. Estes asked if the question marks needed to remain on the list. Mr. Kramer stated no. Mr. Averill stated Mr. Boettcher would prepare a draft explaining the concerns of the Project Committee on those two projects. Mr. Boettcher stated he could change the question marks to a high or low confidence. The question marks make it look like there is missing data.

Mr. Kramer asked if there was support in moving the list forward to the work group. There was support all around.

Mr. Kramer asked if there was a recommendation to move the other categories forward to the work group. There was support to move them forward.

Mr. Boettcher stated he would like a group to convene to work with DOT and local sponsors in the I-5 area to ensure that those projects are in proper sequence. Mr. Averill stated Lewis County has a Flood Control Zone District with an advisory committee of which the BOCC are superintendents. To move forward and provide administration, operations and maintenance of flood entities in the upper basin it needs a financial boost; it could then work with various DOT entities.

Mr. Kramer asked if there were objections. There were none.

Mr. Averill stated there is a need in providing flood maps for jurisdictions in the absence of FEMA flood maps. He suggested Mr. Boettcher could work on the language. Mr. Kramer asked if there was support for local governments in updating flood maps in the next biennium. There were no objections.

6. Use of Current Floodproofing Funds

Mr. Boettcher stated Thurston County has proposed raising three homes with funding out of the 2015 request. Bucoda has raised homes with improperly installed vents. There are funds available from 2013. Can that be used now? French, DOE, HDR and Mr. Boettcher conceptualized a program to raise homes with money available now. There is a 3-part recommendation. Part 1 - Reach out immediately stating there are dollars available. The group suggested outreach in the first quarter and have

communities give proposals on how many vents are needed. It estimates the cost is about \$2,500 per dwelling on average but the number of homes that need venting is unknown. When requests come in we will know how much money we have for elevations. Part two is the group will ask for communities to volunteer for a pilot program for local analysis. Relying on repetitive loss doesn't tell a lot about risk to community. The only way to know who is at risk is to have local communities get out and walk the communities with physical inspections and then make priorities of where the risks are. Mr. Boettcher stated French was on the phone and asked for input.

French stated the key is on-site inspection, not looking at records. FEMA directs its funding on who has received money in the past. You need to look at more and assessment will do that and FEMA encourages it. Under the 3rd category, many times projects can be done without elevating and the Project Committee could focus on that without spending capital funds.

Mr. Boettcher stated the recommendation is a staged approach: reach out, report at the November 13 meeting and determine how to roll out the 2nd phase of community assessment. In the meantime the community to be on the pilot project will be identified.

Commissioner Fund asked if the owner is being asked to put money into the vents. Mr. Boettcher stated at this time they will be government funded.

French stated there will be a formal process that documents it for the record. He stated many repetitive problems were caused from drainage problems. Mr. Boettcher stated a public works person might be able to tell which homes have been elevated.

Mr. Kramer asked if there were objections to this proposal. There were none.

7. Update: Next Biennium Flood Authority Work Program and Budget

Mr. Kramer stated OFM has asked for an estimate for potential costs for the Flood Authority for the next biennium. He recommended a budget similar to this biennium for staffing, facilitation, Mr. Boettcher, consultants and conveyance. It will be a placeholder at this point.

8. Financial Report

Mr. Kramer gave the report in Ms. Napier's absence. The expenses are the same as the past, including consultation, staff time and the study by French and Associates. Mr. Averill stated there was a disconnect between the detailed expense and overall cost relating to items expended. Mr. Kramer will ask Lewis County staff to address the issue.

9. Public Comment

Mr. Averill stated that the workshop on October 21 and 22 requires a \$95 registration fee. He asked if Dr. Curtis had been asked about that. Mr. Boettcher stated he would be sure to talk to Dr. Curtis.

Ms. Willis asked the intent of the Flood Authority regarding the A list and the habitat projects. Mr. Boettcher stated they would be forwarded to the Governor's work group. The habitat projects were not prioritized because the Project Committee does not have enough expertise to do so. Mr. Averill stated the amount that was recommended is similar to the last capital budget for the habitat projects.

10. Reports

a. Chair's Report

Chair Raines thanked staff and all who attended the meeting in Aberdeen. It was well attended and she thanked Ms. Hoder for hosting it.

b. Member Reports

Pe Ell – Mr. Willey thanked Mr. Kramer, Mr. Boettcher and Commissioner Fund for a very good meeting on Tuesday. A lot of information was given.

Montesano – Mr. Estes stated the Mary's River project is all but complete; they are waiting on whether to cut some of the metal flush with the ground. At the end of the project there will be a considerable amount of steel left over. At .08 to .10 cents per pound it will be surplus and sold or used in another project. Chair Raines asked if it could be used for Wishkah Rd. Mr. Estes stated it would be a start for that project.

Aberdeen – Ms. Hoder thanked everyone who came to the meeting in Aberdeen.

Bucoda -- Mr. Vanell made a request of the Outreach Committee to do a presentation. Mr. Boettcher stated he would take the information and make arrangements.

c. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

d. State Team Report

Ms. Hausman stated she appreciates being able to sit in on the meetings and that DOE is working closely with Mr. Boettcher.

Mr. Ogden thanked the Flood Authority for considering two Conservation Commission projects even though he missed the deadline.

11. Confirm Next Regular Meeting

The next meeting will be on November 13, which is the second Thursday of the month. The meeting will be at Montesano City Hall.