

# Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority

**Riverside Fire Authority**  
**1818 Harrison Avenue, Centralia**  
**9:00 A.M.**  
**March 22, 2018 - Meeting Notes**

**Board Members Present:** Edna Fund, Lewis County Commissioner; Ron Averill, City of Centralia; Dan Wood, City of Montesano; Alan Vanell, Town of Bucoda; Lonnie Willey, Town of Pe Ell; Brian Shay, City of Hoquiam; Trent Loughheed, City of Chehalis; Frank Chestnut, City of Cosmopolis; Bud Blake, Thurston County Commissioner (via phone); Kris Koski, City of Aberdeen

**Board Members Absent:** Vickie Raines, Grays Harbor County Commissioner; Richard Armstrong, City of Oakville; Jim Haslett, City of Napavine

**Others Present:** J. Vander Stoep, Town of Pe Ell Alternate; Tom Kollasch and Anthony Waldrop, Grays Harbor Conservation District; Lee Napier, Lewis County Community Development Director; Betsy Dillin, Lewis County

## **Handouts/Materials Used:**

- Agenda
- Meeting Notes from February 15, 2018
- Local Projects List
- Local Flood Proofing Staff Report and Attachments
- Financial Report
- See [https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias\\_1492/34798/meetings.aspx#Mar2018](https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias_1492/34798/meetings.aspx#Mar2018)

## **1. Call to Order**

Commissioner Fund called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

## **2. Introductions**

Self-introductions were made.

Commissioner Fund introduced Mike Kytta, Riverside Fire Authority Chief. Mike stated he has been involved with the fire district since 1975 and he has seen quite a few floods. He told the Flood Authority that if they ever had a doubt that its work was not important, don't. Its impact has been huge, including long-term economic impacts. Flooding has gotten worse and if the Flood Authority does not continue its work the flooding won't get better on its own. He stated he is personally grateful to the Flood Authority and that its pursuit is a noble one. He thanked the Flood Authority for everything it has done.

## **3. Approval of Agenda**

There were no changes to the agenda and it was approved by consensus.

## **4. Approval of Meeting Notes**

There were no corrections or additions to the meeting notes and they were approved by consensus.

## **5. Local Projects**

Scott explained that the projects on the chart to the left of the red vertical line are projects that are closed out; those to the right of the line are still under way. The projects highlighted in green are what he calls functionally complete; the orange have incomplete construction; the blue are plans and studies that are nearly complete; and the red are not complete.

Scott noted that the North Shore levee project was awarded \$2.5 million from the Capital Budget; Pe Ell received \$340,000 from Commerce for an infrastructure project.

The Project Committee has plans to propose projects to the Office of Chehalis Basin (OCB) for the 2019-2021 biennium. In the past the Projects Committee would receive a list of projects and prioritize them. This will continue with the OCB board, and the list will go to them for their review. The schedule for this year: March/April: secure technical reviewers from agencies; May/June: finalize that instrument and seek board approval; Jul/Aug: Projects Committee receives the list. In the fall it will give its recommendations to the Board for funding request.

Scott stated there would be a tour of the pump project at the Chehalis-Centralia airport following the meeting. Trent stated the old pump had not been maintained regularly and now there are redundancy pumps and the new ones are elevated. The propane tank is anchored and at the current high flood level. This project began in 2016 and went through very quickly.

Kris stated the original estimate for final design and permitting for the North Shore Levee project was too low (i.e., \$1,500,000). Now, with additional money being forwarded from other projects through the Flood Authority and a \$2.5 million appropriation to the WA State Department of Commerce for the project, the City has the full amount needed to finish the design. The timeframe is to complete final design and permitting in time for consideration for 2019-2021 construction funding.

## **6. Outreach Discussion**

Scott spoke about the local fairs. While he thought they are valuable, they are difficult to staff. Last year the Flood Authority was represented only at the Southwest Washington Fair. This year we have the Office of Chehalis Basin and they are working on a communications strategy; we may have staff sharing available. He asked for thoughts.

Commissioner Fund stated there is not a lot of clarity between all of the flood mitigation agencies as far as the public is concerned. She thought having a presence at the fair was a good thing and she is in favor of being at the SWWA Fair. Thursday, Friday and Saturday were the best days last year.

Ron stated there was a problem keeping the booth manned but there was a lot of material for people who were walking through. He suggested putting the Flood Authority booth next to another type of county booth to share workers.

Frank stated people asked questions when they stopped at the Grays Harbor County booth but there was very little traffic.

Alan suggested including Rotary, Chambers of Commerce, real estate agents, etc. He thought there must be organizations that would be useful. Also farmer's markets might be a good place for a booth.

Kris stated Rotarians and Lions' spread the word and they are being used in that regard for the North Shore Levee project. Press releases to radio stations and newspapers are also helpful.

Dan thought the focus should not be on fairs but on creating a speakers' group to create presentations. A power point could be used in conjunction with other local items of interest. Perhaps the Outreach Committee can brainstorm a plan.

Jim stated there is quite a bit for the Outreach Committee to consider. The OCB has an outreach plan, and Jim liked the idea of a speakers' bureau, and meeting where other people are gathering rather than have the public come to us.

Scott stated he has two applications for the fairs on his desk and would like a decision fairly soon since a good location at the fair is important.

All of the members decided to not have a booth at both the Southwest Washington Fair and the Grays Harbor County Fair.

Scott stated he, Larry Karpack and Dave Curtis have discussed a second webinar. They thought 'Hydrology of the Basin 101' would be a good topic. It would orient people as to how water flows in the basin, what a 100-year flood means, and more.

#### **7. Local Flood Proofing**

Scott started this conversation with flood insurance, which he said is very complicated and expensive. People are leaving this program if they can because of the expense. People are paying for flood insurance but there is not a lot of consumer awareness of how the insurance is calculated, and FEMA is raising its rates.

Trent stated the CRS is changing. Some people who have dropped out are located in the new flood maps and are not required to have flood insurance. There needs to be training for surveyors so the Elevation Certificates are filled out properly.

Kris stated home values are dropping and there are cash buyers who can buy these reduced-value homes for cash and don't need to carry a mortgage and therefore don't need flood insurance.

Scott stated French wants to help people look at what they are paying and how they are rated to find out if there is something they can do – find tools to help people pay less insurance.

Brian stated there are 3100 properties impacted by the North Shore levee project. Their insurance could be reduced or perhaps some not pay flood insurance at all after completion of the project.

Scott stated there is no action required from the Flood Authority; this is just informational. Kris stated French and Associates has been extremely helpful to the people in Aberdeen – including assisting in writing ordinances.

#### **8. Office of Chehalis Basin**

J. presented a power point. He stated the OCB has two goals: to mitigate flooding and to protect habitat. He shared data from 1928 to the present. He explained the No Action Results and what that means for Basin damage and loss of aquatic species.

A flow chart showed the 2017-2019 Organizational Structure under the Office of Chehalis Basin and what to expect in the near future.

Several board members thanked Jim for his important role in the Flood Authority, for his leadership and keeping on task with the Authority's goals.

Jim stated Ecology has closed the applications for Director of OCB. Hopefully that office will be filled by the end of April or the first of May. The US Army Corps of Engineers is ready to approve a process to allow the state to pay for dedicated staff for environmental review of the dam.

### **9. Staff Roles**

Jim appreciated all of the kind comments. He stated Scott has been doing most of the work and he is the big reason for projects moving ahead, and he has enjoyed working with Scott. Jim stated if by his own role ending will free up funds then that is a good thing. He is still facilitating the Chehalis Basin Strategy and will continue to attend the Flood Authority meetings. He stated there has been incredible progress in the 6 years he has been with the Flood Authority. As the OCB moves forward it will be essential that the jurisdictions are spokespeople in the community to keep the community engaged. He advocates that the members not only see their mission as local projects but to keep the community involved. The Board has been successful in conducting its meetings and achieving its goals.

Commissioner Fund presented Jim with a Certificate of Appreciation and a card, and stated she appreciates him getting to know the local communities and his appreciation of the Chehalis Basin.

### **10. Flood Authority Meeting Frequency**

Scott stated that Chair Raines had suggested moving to quarterly meetings and the Executive Committee discussed this idea. The Flood Authority's routine is structured and predictable so quarterly meetings might be okay and may be easier for some people to attend. There is nothing to preclude us from calling a special meeting if necessary. Staff resources could be used elsewhere without 12 meetings a year.

Discussion followed. For a variety of reasons, the board members felt that bi-monthly meetings were the best. Jim confirmed that the meetings would be every two months, in person, and no more conference calls. There was consensus for this recommendation.

### **11. Public Comment**

Tom Kollasch stated there are many small projects that can be addressed through restoration funding. He stated his organization will attend as many Flood Authority meetings as it can and that he enjoyed attending this meeting. He stated there are many similarities between what the Conservation District does and what the Flood Authority is doing.

### **12. Financial Report**

Lee explained a new budget has been passed since the last meeting. This report shows the performance for the current period. New agreements have been executed, including Amendment #9 with RCO, increasing Scott's budget and extending French's contract through the biennium.

### **13. Reports**

#### **a. Chair's Report**

There was no report from the Chair.

b. Member Reports

*Aberdeen* – Kris stated that Aberdeen will be joining the Grays Harbor Conservation District which will allow a lot of potential with the work they do with the city, including contracting with them for the watershed plan. Aberdeen is looking at a new elementary school; Aberdeen, Hoquiam, Cosmopolis and Grays Harbor County will be working on the multijurisdictional hazardous plan update.

*Centralia* – Ron stated all three counties are involved in how farmers cooperate with the Critical Areas Ordinance in the Basin, and this is done through the conservation districts. The Flood Authority and the OCB are doing restorative projects so there is a close connection.

*Cosmopolis* – Frank met with the Regional Director of the DNR who was very impressed with the Mill Creek Dam project. He stated it was a pleasure working with Jim, and he is pleased with the improvement between Board members.

*Montesano* – Dan reported that part of the wastewater treatment plant is now in the river. He appreciates the support from the Flood Authority on 50% of the financing. Montesano is currently working on a grant from WDFW. If the relic channel can be reopened the river may go back to where it was. Dan also attends the Chehalis Basin Partnership meetings and stated they are still searching for their purpose. The Flood Authority knows why it exists and is getting things done. He thanked Jim, Scott and Lee for their work behind the scenes.

c. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

d. State Team Report

There was no State Team Report.

**14. Confirm Next Regular Meeting**

The next meeting will be on May 17 in Hoquiam starting at 9 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.