

# Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority

**Meeting 9:00 A.M.  
Montesano Fire Department**

## **March 17, 2016 - Meeting Notes**

**Board Members Present:** Alan Vanell, Town of Bucoda; Kathi Hoder, City of Aberdeen; Frank Chestnut, City of Cosmopolis; Vini Samuel, City of Montesano; Vickie Raines, Grays Harbor County Commissioner; Ron Averill, City of Centralia; Edna Fund, Lewis County Commissioner; Julie Balmelli-Powe, City of Chehalis; Jenifer Slempt, City of Napavine; Lonnie Willey, Town of Pe Ell; Dan Thompson, City of Oakville; Bud Blake, Thurston County Commissioner

**Others Present:** Rocky Howard, City of Montesano; Lee Napier, Lewis County; Jessica Hausman, DOE; Frank Kersh; Dennis Osborn, City of Chehalis; Stu Trefry, Washington Conservation Commission; Mark Mobbs Quinault Indian Nation; Jim Walsh, Jamie Walsh

### **Handouts/Materials Used:**

- Agenda
- Meeting Notes from February 18, 2016
- Current Projects
- PowerPoint on Public Outreach for Chehalis Basin Strategy
- Financial Report
- PowerPoint on Coastal Resiliency Planning in Lower Basin
- See [https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias\\_1492/34798/meetings.aspx#Mar2016](https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias_1492/34798/meetings.aspx#Mar2016)

### **1. Call to Order**

Chair Raines called the meeting to order at 9:11 a.m. She thanked Mayor Samuel for the use of the facility and for the refreshments.

### **2. Introductions**

Self-introductions were made by all attending.

### **3. Approval of Agenda**

There were no changes to the agenda; it was approved unanimously.

### **4. Approval of Meeting Notes from February 18, 2016**

There were no corrections and the meeting notes were approved as presented.

### **5. Update: Current Projects**

Mr. Boettcher stated the Flood Authority has 12 projects that are all funded with the exception of the Boistfort Valley Water project, which will be funded on March 24. Mr. Boettcher explained the benefits of the RCO system, using the Mill Creek Dam project as an example. The RCO website shows exactly what has been spent. Paid invoices are automatically updated here. He asked that all jurisdictions submit their bills quickly so they will be reflected on the website and also on the chart he created for this purpose.

Mr. Boettcher summarized the status of the projects. They are:

- Aberdeen – Agreements have been approved and aerial surveys are being conducted. DOE, WDFW and the US Army Corps of Engineers will be meeting at DOE on March 29 at 11:30. Discussion will include what is going on in the lower Basin.
- Bucoda – The project is moving along with easement and alignment work being done. Mr. Vanell reported that there were concerns with the citizens about elevation changes and the plans will be revised.
- Centralia – China Creek process is being completed.
- Airport levee – Surveys and design work has been completed.
- Mill Creek Dam – Still moving along.
- Elma Wastewater Treatment Plant – Still moving along.
- Wishkah Rd Projects – The time period for contractor bids has closed. Chair Raines stated that staff is going through an additional study and a recommendation will be given regarding the hiring of a contractor. There are on-going negotiations about the purchase of one of the parcels.
- Boistfort Water Project – The Lewis County Conservation District is the agent for this project. An agreement will go before the Conservation Board on March 23 for signature and the agreement with Boistfort Valley Water District will occur in early April. At that time funding will open up, engineering plans will be approved. The Conservation District will provide construction oversight.
- Riverbank Protection Study – This project in Montesano is under way.
- Kirkland Rd Flooding – Design study is under way; the sign has been posted.

Mr. Boettcher reported that signs are going up as each project progresses. Regarding the signs, Ms. Balmelli-Powe asked that the word “another” not be in bold text. It could be misleading that there is another Flood Authority.

#### **6. Update: Early Action Habitat Projects**

Mr. Kramer stated that part of the \$50 million for this biennium is for early action habitat projects, aquatic species. ~~Salmon Habitat~~ **Chehalis Lead Entity Habitat Work Group** and WDFW requested solicitations for projects, ranked the projects, and issued awards for 19 projects at \$6.3 million. All but two of those projects are fish passage projects and it is hoped that they can be constructed during the fish window in 2017.

#### **7. Update: Discussion of Solicitation for New Projects**

Mr. Boettcher stated the Project Committee met and determined there is \$1 million of unspent funds that can be used on other projects. Some ideas for new projects include a new pump at the Centralia-Chehalis airport; Phase II of the China Creek Project; Dillenbaugh Creek is a project that comes up frequently. There was a suggestion that a study be conducted to identify culverts and the status of those culverts and come up with a plan to clean them to see how efficient they can be. Dan Thompson would like to do a flood study in the Oakville area, and Thurston County is interested in doing some flood proofing and flood vents.

Mr. Boettcher stated the Project Committee had been approached about doing a repair project: flood damage to infrastructure. The Project Committee stated repair projects are not in the scope of projects.

Mr. Boettcher stated the Project Committee will meet on April 12 to rank the proposals and the Flood Authority will consider the projects at the meeting on April 21. Mr. Averill stated the Dillenbaugh Creek

project could potentially become part of a future DOT project. Benefits include long-term advantage to DOT if I-5 is ever widened in that area.

#### **8. Update: Public Outreach for Chehalis Basin Strategy**

Mr. Kramer stated this presentation would be used to talk to citizens about the Chehalis Basin Strategy. Consultants for the state and Governor's Chehalis Basin Work Group are working on a more effective way to inform and engage the public. The Outreach Committee would like to combine the outreach of the Work Group with the outreach of the Flood Authority. A long and short version of the public presentation can go on a video loop to libraries and other public places so it can be viewed by the public. There will be a photo contest to get people involved, with prizes for top photos and public exhibit with the top 40-50 photos.

After reading the presentation, Mr. Kramer stated he would like it to go to jurisdiction council meetings as well as a number of groups that meet in the basin. He asked for input.

Mr. Averill stated it was a good presentation and that Centralia has a public outreach TV channel that could be used for the presentation. Ms. Hoder also liked the presentation and suggested showing it at Rotary meetings and putting something in with water bills that are mailed out. She would like to see the focus on the human species.

Chair Raines asked if there could be a video link to the website. Ms. Samuel asked if the information could be encapsulated into 10-15 minutes, specifically for councils. Mr. Vanell suggested putting it on YouTube and also including photos and information that link to specific projects. Commissioner Blake stated Olympia, Lacey and Tumwater have their own TV stations.

Chair Raines asked that while the Flood Authority is working on projects to be supportive of all projects, not just the project in your own jurisdiction. The Governor's work group states it will do all it can to mitigate and reduce flooding, while protecting fish and people. One is not more important than another culturally.

Mr. Boettcher summarized the discussion of the Outreach Committee. It talked about the focus this year and the major theme is to reach the general public so they understand what is happening in the Basin. The Committee would like to increase the use of social media and the Flood Authority should partner with the Department of Emergency Management (local level) and share resources. Mr. Boettcher stated that we have emails of people who signed up for gage alerts.

Ms. Balmelli-Powe stated there were presentations at the Chehalis Basin Partnership meeting. When the Flood Authority spoke the focus seemed to be on flooding. When other agencies spoke, such as Ecology, it added a new aspect to a restoration project. Each entity adds validity when all aspects of the project are there. Mr. Thompson suggested changing the Chehalis Basin Flood Authority's name to include the aquatic portion.

Discussion followed about the photo contest – where, when, etc. Ms. Hoder stated Aberdeen has Art Walk in July and she volunteered her office for the photo display and refreshments. Commissioner Fund mentioned farm tours and the Fat Tire bike ride along the river.

#### **9. Update: Legislative Action**

Mr. Kramer stated that House Bill 2856 creates the Office of the Chehalis Basin in the Department of Ecology. Its mission as created by the legislature is “to aggressively pursue implementation of strategies for long-term flood damage reduction and aquatic species restoration in the Chehalis river basin”. A seven member Board will oversee the long-term approach of reducing damage in the Basin. The Office of Chehalis Basin will begin in July of 2017. The Governor’s Work Group will run until the end of this biennium and then be replaced by the Board for Office of Chehalis Basin. Mr. Kramer stated he will keep the Flood Authority as plans for the Office are developed by the Department of Ecology.

#### **10. Update: Coordinated Coastal Resiliency Planning in Lower Basin**

Jordan Rash with Forterra presented a PowerPoint and talked about the Aberdeen/Hoquiam planning process for reducing flood risks, improving habitat, what is being done and where the project is so far.

Mr. Rash stated that Forterra came into this project in August and that there had been many discussions previously. A levee is a major piece of this planning. There will be a master plan and a cost estimate at the end of October, 2016. Mr. Kramer stated Ecology’s EIS will include mention of this levee so we need to make sure that the EIS writers check with the right people to include it.

Chair Raines stated Grays Harbor County is a partner in providing revenue for the Master Plan. There has been great collaboration between all of the entities.

Mr. Boettcher stated the levee is essential to the planning process. The Flood Authority has requests in to FEMA for flood insurance payments over the last 35 years. In the last 25 years about \$1.5 million has been paid to FEMA and the payback is only at \$900,000. This is a major driver to this project.

#### **11. Financial Report**

Ms. Napier, Lewis County Community Development Director, gave the financial report. There were no questions.

#### **12. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

#### **13. Reports**

##### **a. Chair’s Report**

The Chair had no report.

##### **b. Member Reports**

*Oakville* – Mr. Thompson stated he had submitted a project for a flooding issue in Oakville. For years this road has been fixed piece meal but with a study the whole road can be fixed and it will benefit not only the city but the County as well.

*Chehalis* – Ms. Balmelli-Powe stated the Dillenbaugh Creek wasn’t worth pursuing until we looked at why areas around the creek are flooding, which brought attention to the culverts. Cleaning them will improve the main stem because the water will get there more efficiently.

*Centralia* – Mr. Averill stated the culvert project is a long-term project. The Conservation District has been able to provide some support. If the water bill passes we can look at the Basin where these dollars have been deprived in the past.

*Bucoda* – Mr. Vanell stated that the ~~Water Advisory~~ **Storm and Surface Water Advisory** Board has three new members. If that group does outreach in an area it might be time for the Flood Authority to do outreach at the same time. There is a new program to map out 98% of all culverts, drainage systems and ways of capturing storm water through ground filtering systems. This will benefit South County and the Scatter Creek area.

*Cosmopolis* – Mr. Chestnut stated the sign is up at Mill Creek. The Public Works Director is meeting with WDFW and all is going well. This project should turn dirt in June of 2017.

*Montesano* – Ms. Samuel reported that Mary's River Lumber closed on Monday. She stated the city is going to show any prospective buyer that flooding is not an issue at Mary's River Lumber because of the work done there.

c. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

d. State Team Report

Ms. Hausman reminded everyone of the brown bag lunch at DOE on March 29. DOE continues its work on the Programmatic EIS.

Mr. Trefrey stated the Conservation District received the contract from RCO for additional building and it should be signed next week. Grays Harbor District is moving forward on hiring someone. The Districts are working to identify projects that will be useful. He thanked Mr. Kramer for his help with this process.

**14. Confirm Next Regular Meeting**

The next meeting will be a phone conference on April 21. The May meeting will be in Lewis County, location to be announced.