

Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority

Cosmopolis Fire Department
111 D Street
Cosmopolis, WA 98537
9:00 A.M.
October 19, 2017 - Meeting Notes

Board Members Present: Vickie Raines, Grays Harbor County Commissioner; Frank Chestnut, City of Cosmopolis; Ron Averill, City of Centralia; Edna Fund, Lewis County Commissioner; J. Vander Stoep, Town of Pe Ell; Trent Loughheed, City of Chehalis; Brian Shay, City of Hoquiam; Dan Wood, City of Montesano; Kyle Fisher, City of Aberdeen; Bud Blake, Thurston County Commissioner (on telephone).

Board Members Absent: Jim Haslett, City of Napavine; Richard Armstrong, City of Oakville; Alan Vanell, Town of Bucoda.

Others Present: Steve Schmitz, KPFF; Darrin Raines, City of Cosmopolis; Gloria Rogers, WDFW; David Curtis, WEST Consultants; Stephen Willis; Bob Amrine, Lewis County Conservation District; Theresa Julius, Grays Harbor County COG; Amy Spoon, WDFW; Lee Napier, Lewis County; Stu Trefry, State Conservation Commission

Handouts/Materials Used:

- Agenda
- Meeting Notes from September 21, 2017
- Gages/Flood Warning System PowerPoint
- Local Projects
- Mill Creek Dam Project PowerPoint
- Wishkah Road Flood Levee Project PowerPoint
- Financial Report
- See https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias_1492/34798/meetings.aspx#Oct2017

1. Call to Order

Chair Raines called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

2. Introductions

Self-introductions were made by all attending.

Frank spoke a little about the City of Cosmopolis. He stated that after the report on the Mill Creek Dam project the group was invited to take a tour of the site.

3. Approval of Agenda

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

4. Approval of Meeting Notes

Ron stated on page 2 under item 6 there was a typographical error. The meeting notes were approved by consensus with the correction.

5. Update: Gages/Flood Warning System

Dave Curtis stated there has been a Basin-wide study underway to inventory the hydro meteorological gages in the system to determine what is actually out there. In Centralia, there will also be rating curves – forecast points – to tell how much is actually flowing in the river. USGS measures that. The Skookumchuck and the Chehalis Rivers are the two gages being upgraded. Also, Basin-wide (and in fact Nation-wide) an issue has been gage datum: if a gage is reading 17' what is that relative to? Reference points are different and there are three or four different systems used.

Using the PowerPoint, Dave explained that the current database has more than 139 sensors. Chehalis gage census shows 4820 sensors, and 873 precipitation gages. Dave explained radar coverage, and water vapor, and the rating curve data that has been given to NWS. They will be changing their rating curves to use WEST's.

Dave stated that technology upgrades are funded for this year. GOES is swapping out old radios one at a time so there is no loss of coverage. Datum for gages are being updated so they all match and will be more accurate.

Dave provided a list that identified organizations and counties affected by the elevation changes. There will be a new standard in 2022 and there may be another update at that time. There will be public education and outreach so the general public will be aware of the changes and what to expect.

Dan asked how people will know about datum changes. Scott stated that this is an important issue and one that will need to be figured out and broadly advertised well in advance. Some gages might not be any different; it depends on the gage and where it is located in the basin.

Bob Amrine stated it would be very helpful to be able to compare the 2007 flood with the current flood on the website so it is obvious to see the differences when people look at their own area.

Chair Raines was concerned about gages on the Wishkah. Scott stated there are plans to put gages in the Wishkah and there have been emails between Dave, Larry Karpack and Scott in this regard. The gage group is talking about recommendations, and if there should be additional sensors. The recommendation would include gages in the Wishkah. Dave stated it is difficult to keep up with all of the information from various agencies. Scott stated we want to be sure the system can be maintained (e.g., that gages will not go off-line).

The PowerPoint showed the distribution of requested flood alerts, and new for 2017-18: Dashboards have been added. These give summaries of what is happening in the basin.

What's next: Outreach, which will include emails to high water alert list, the promotion of high water alerts, and updating the FAQ handout. There will be a webinar on December 4; an emergency preparedness meeting; and a winter weather outlook.

6. Update: Flood Readiness

Scott stated 2017 is the 10 year anniversary of the 2007 flood. This is a good time to do an op-ed about what has been accomplished and how better prepared we are since 2007. A fact sheet could show how we are better prepared but maybe we need something more succinct. Chair Raines thought a fact sheet would be beneficial – compare 2007 to 2017 as to what has been done. J. Vander Stoep thought it could

show what has been done; here is what remains to be done. In a general way it can explain the flood warning system, habitat, the dam, etc. and mention groups and the roles they play. Perhaps the jurisdictions could post it on their websites. Scott stated he could have a draft next month.

Scott spoke with TVW about the documentary and they are predicting it will be ready in December.

7. Update: Pe Ell Community Meeting

Edna stated it was a good “meeting” – people had a chance to visit stations and talk to individuals. J stated that when a dam first started being talked about local people were not in favor of it. A few years later there was another discussion and some feelings had changed. He stated that federal standards require that a dam is to withstand the 10,000 year flood. There has been a lot of boring done at the site to see how stable the ground is. Edna was asked if taxes would go up or if land values would increase or decrease with a dam. Scott felt it was like the fair where if there can be a conversation, maps, handouts, etc. then the people have a different impression than what they came in with. Edna stated the boring has shown that the hillside is stable.

8. Update: Local projects

Scott reported that the airport pump is on line. It is modern, redundant and elevated 3’ above flood level. At the Elma wastewater treatment plant a pipe was buried underground and is in no danger of polluting downstream. On the projects list, he stated that the green projects are completed projects; the yellow are projects completed under budget, and the blue projects will be completed in November.

9. Update: Mill Creek Dam Project

Darrin Raines stated the new dam will have two fish passages for low and high flow. There are seven fish weirs and a fish ladder. He showed a time-lapse video on the progress of the project over the last four months. The project most likely will not be completed this year because of weather constraints. He was anxious for the group to tour the project after the meeting.

10. Update: Wishkah Road Flood Levee Project

Steve Schmitz presented a PowerPoint on the project. He stated the goal of the project is to reduce major flooding and maintain emergency vehicle access. The alternatives for the levee included an earthen levee, a concrete wall and steel sheet piling; for a number of reasons, the steel sheet piling is being used.

Benefits of the project include reduced impact to wetlands, simplified permitting, and reduced impacts to private property.

Steve was also looking forward to showing the project to the group.

11. Update: Miscellaneous

Scott passed on this update due to the time.

12. Financial Report

Lee stated the Flood Authority has a contract with RCO through November. Expended for the month of September was \$9,519.50 for salaries, wages, and consulting services, leaving a balance of \$57,965.02.

Edna stated it is still not known if there will be a capital budget. Scott asked if they pass the budget, will it be retroactive. This is not known. He stated some projects may need to get their own resources if they want to continue.

13. Reports

a. Chair's Report

There was no report from the Chair.

b. Member Reports

Centralia - Ron stated Kahle Jennings was to retire at the end of August. He extended his stay to the end of this month because of some pressing items.

Hoquiam - Brian stated with the map revision from FEMA the pump station can move ahead with final design. Scott stated that both Aberdeen and Hoquiam are getting their own financing for design work and will seek reimbursement in the future if the budget is passed.

c. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

d. State Team Report

There was no State Team Report.

15. Confirm Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled to be a phone meeting on November 15. There are several conflicts with board members so this meeting will be determined at a later date.

The meeting adjourned at 11:08.