

Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority
Meeting 1:30 P.M.
Telephone Meeting

March 16, 2017 - Meeting Notes

Board Members Present: Alan Vanell, Town of Bucoda; Lonnie Willey, Town of Pe Ell; Dan Wood, City of Montesano; Frank Chestnut, City of Cosmopolis; Ron Averill, City of Centralia; Dee Anne Shaw, City of Aberdeen; Julie Balmell-Powe, City of Chehalis; Vickie Raines, Grays Harbor County Commissioner; Edna Fund, Lewis County Commissioner.

Board Members Absent: Vacant, City of Napavine; Bud Blake, Thurston County Commissioner; Richard Armstrong, City of Oakville.

Others Present: Aaron Kunkler, Chronicle Newspaper; Jill Anderson, City of Chehalis; J. Vander Stoep, Pe Ell Alternate; Gloria Rogers, WDFW; Dale Lewis, Congresswoman Herrera-Buetler's office; Tom Clingman, Anchor QEA; Kim Smith, Grays Harbor Conservation District; Kris Koski, City of Aberdeen; Henry Hu, WEST Consultants; Jerry Louthain, HDR; Rob Hill, City of Centralia; Brent Bower, National Weather Service.

Handouts/Materials Used:

- Agenda
- Meeting Notes from February 16, 2017
- Replacement Gages and Annual Maintenance Cost
- Flood Warning Spare Parts Inventory
- Amendment to Lewis County/RCO Agreement re: French and Associates
- Local Projects
- Financial Report
- See https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias_1492/34798/meetings.aspx#Mar2017

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Raines.

2. Introductions

Attendees introduced themselves as they called in.

3. Approval of Agenda

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

4. Approval of Meeting Notes

There were no corrections or additions to the meeting notes for February 2017 and were approved as presented by consensus.

5. Applications Received from Candidates for WA State Office of Chehalis Basin Board

Three positions are open for the Flood Authority for the Office of Chehalis Basin Board which will begin starting with the next biennium. Mr. Boettcher named the 13 applicants: Bob Amrine, Lewis County Conservation District; Bob Berg, former Centralia Chief of Police; Casey Kramer, NHC; Charles

Coddington, Lewis County resident; Dan Wood, City of Montesano rep to the Flood Authority; Edna Fund, Lewis County Commissioner; J. Vander Stoep, alternate to the Flood Authority for the Town of Pe Ell; Jay Gordon, dairy farmer; Julie Balmelli-Powe, City of Chehalis rep to the Flood Authority; Lonnie Willey, Mayor of Pe Ell; Ron Averill, Centralia rep to the Flood Authority; Terry Willis, citizen of Grays Harbor County; Vickie Raines, Grays Harbor Commissioner.

Mr. Kramer recommended that there not be any interviews, that the written materials submitted by the applicants be reviewed, and at the April meeting the Flood Authority nominate and elect representatives to fill the three seats consistent with legislative intent. He suggested there would be a ballot and each Flood Authority Board member would be able to vote for three candidates. Balloting will commence through multiple rounds as necessary until it is clear who has been selected by majority.

Mr. Kramer asked for other suggestions. There were none. He stated ballots would be prepared for the April meeting.

6. Replacement of Gages and Annual Maintenance Cost Increase

Mr. Boettcher stated there are two links regarding this item in the staff report. Two gages in Centralia are operated by the National Weather Service; they are old and the reliability of those gages has been questionable for several years, as well as the ability to keep them well maintained. In the last high water event, the gage in the Chehalis River was reading erroneously (attachment A). Because a lot of people are signed up for these particular gages, and knowing there are some unobligated local projects money, WEST Consultants was asked to prepare a proposal to replace these gages. The NWS uses them for forecasting, also. Mr. Boettcher was clear that once the Flood Authority buys them they become ours to maintain. We are maintaining 10 gages and we pay about \$60,000 for that maintenance. If we bring in two more gages there will be an additional cost for those gages. The Projects Committee wanted this brought to the full Flood Authority. The two new replacement gages could be purchased with state capital funding but maintenance costs would have to be paid by the Flood Authority jurisdictions as is done now for the 10 existing gages the Flood Authority purchased and installed some time ago. It will take about 3 years to get the new gages installed and calibrated and up to speed with the NWS. If we do buy them, we would have to start maintaining them in 2020. The last page of the briefing memo explains what the additional costs might look like.

Ms. Balmelli-Powe stated NWS uses these gages and asked if they will contribute to the maintenance. Mr. Bower, NWS, stated he did not know the history as to how the gages got put into NWS, but NWS does not have stream gage maintenance people, etc. NWS is not in the stream gaging business; we have kept the gages because we need the gages to forecast.

Mr. Boettcher added that these gages have been periodically maintained by Lewis County Emergency Management or the City of Centralia Police Department. Mr. Bower stated there is an agreement with Centralia to keep sediment blown out and phone lines running.

Ms. Shaw asked what kind of time is involved to cost \$12,000 a year for maintenance. Mr. Boettcher stated the maintenance consists of technicians associated with WEST Consultants going out four times a year to check instrumentation, make sure there are no trees or vegetation to impede communications to the satellite systems. It takes about one hour at each site; they have cut that down as best they can to keep the cost down. He added that USGS charges more.

Mr. Boettcher explained that in 2007 there were a lot of surprises with the weather regarding forecasting, river rising, rainfall and more. In 2008 WEST was hired to look around the Basin to see where more gages might be needed. The Flood Authority funded installation of 10 more gages, which were subsequently tied together with a radio telemetry system and the information goes to a satellite that then goes to NWS. It has proven to be a system that people are coming to in order to be better prepared for flooding. The Flood Authority has taken upon itself to fully maintain 10 of the gages because they are important to people in the Basin. These gages would be replaced with a gage that is installed on the underside of a bridge. It uses radar to shoot information out; they are much easier to maintain. The installation and calibration would be done with state capital budget dollars that are available, but in 2020 there will be maintenance dollars required that are not capital dollars.

Mr. Kramer asked if there were any objections to replacing these gages with the understanding that in 2020 there will be maintenance dollars required from Flood Authority members. There were no objections and so approved by consensus.

7. Use of Flood Warning System Spare Parts Inventory

Mr. Boettcher stated that the Haywire Gage rain gage at the headwaters had a misreading in December 2016 and the maintenance staff pulled the radio antenna out and sent it back to the manufacturer. WEST wanted to alert us that by 2022 the type of antenna that is in that gage will become obsolete. This affects USGS, Ecology or anyone that is participating in the radio-to-satellite transmission for these gages. The antenna replacement costs about \$1800. Flood Authority projects collect enough money to have a spare parts budget to purchase whatever might be needed. Funding in that budget now is about \$2000 and we could replace the antenna with a new one. The recommendation is that we explore options to replace them (either incrementally or as a single purchase). It is unknown if the replacement and upgrading is a maintenance cost or a capital budget cost. We could develop a schedule with WEST for replacement of these gages and bring it to the Flood Authority in April.

Mr. Kramer recommended holding off until we find out if they are eligible for state capital funding. This item will go on the April agenda.

8. Amendment to Lewis County/RCO agreement re: French and Associates

Jerry Louthain stated French and Associates are continuing to do things at the request of local governments and activities were completed to get ordinances amended to adopt the new flood plain map for the lower Chehalis Basin. These are done so the jurisdictions are eligible for flood insurance. There will be a workshop coming up to talk about implementing new regulations.

Mr. Boettcher stated that Ms. Napier asked him to read her recommendation that: "The Flood Authority recommends authorizing the additional local flood proofing work as described at a cost of \$60,000 as follows: 1. Lewis County first approve the attached RCO prepared \$60,000 cost increase to Lewis County's overall budget. 2. Lewis County prepare and then execute a \$60,000 cost increase with French and associates to accomplish the above described work."

Ms. Balmelli-Powe asked if there is a specific item that caused them to go over budget. Mr. Kramer explained that there is more demand on local government. The Flood Authority approved this idea at the last biennium and French has been working on various elements. The Flood Authority wanted to offer these to other local jurisdictions and they have taken it to heart, especially jurisdictions that are strapped with staffing and an understanding of everything involved.

Mr. Kramer asked if there were any objections to the amendment to Lewis County/RCO agreement. There were none and so approved by consensus.

9. Update: New Flood Authority Interlocal Agreement

Mr. Boettcher stated signatures have been collected from Grays Harbor County, Centralia, Pe Ell, and Montesano. He will have the rest by the next meeting. It was agreed upon to have all signatures on one page and Mr. Boettcher will find the time to coordinate with the other jurisdictions.

10. Update: Local Projects

Mr. Boettcher stated he is working with all jurisdictions to determine how much project money can be carried forward, and to understand what the correct end date will be. Approximately \$4-5million will be carried forward to the fall and winter of 2017. There is about \$155,000 unspent and there are three projects where the Projects Committee is looking to put the money. One is Grays Harbor Conservation District to coordinate collection and access for LIDAR data that includes working with DNR to get that data into their LiDAR data portal. The other is the two approved new gages which leaves about \$90,000 that the Projects Committee wants to use to work with Lewis County to remove a derelict structure out of the flood plain. Mr. Averill stated a septic service at that derelict building needs to be cleaned up as well.

Ms. Balmelli-Powe stated the wastewater treatment plant project in Chehalis is similar and she asked the difference between the two. Mr. Boettcher stated it is a matter of size and scale and the WWTP was on a very deliberative process. The meat packing plant came on suddenly and can be completed sooner with a smaller amount of money. Mr. Averill stated the WWTP project is still on the Project Committee's radar but there is not enough money to do that project in this biennium unless another project funding falls out.

11. Financial Report

In Ms. Napier's absence, Mr. Boettcher reported that the February expenditures were \$11,610.48. The detail sheet explains how that amount is divided between Lewis County and consulting services.

12. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

13. Reports

a. Chair Report

There was no Chair report.

b. Member Reports

Mr. Vanell spoke to the telephone meetings and asked if there was a way to have an on-line presence so everyone knows who is on the line. Mr. Kramer stated that is possible and he would explore it and it would be discussed in April.

14. Confirm Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on April 20 in Thurston County at the Public Works facility (9605 Tilley Road South; Olympia, WA; 98512)