

Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority
Meeting 9:00 A.M.
Willapa Hills Creamery
4680 State Route 6, Chehalis, WA 98532

May 19, 2016 - Meeting Notes

Board Members Present: Frank Chestnut, City of Cosmopolis; Julie Balmelli-Powe, City of Chehalis; Edna Fund, Lewis County Commissioner; Lonnie Willey, Town of Pe Ell; Alan Vanell, Town of Bucoda; Rob Hill, City of Centralia; Dan Wood, City of Montesano; Vickie Raines, Grays Harbor County Commissioner; Bud Blake, Thurston County Commissioner

Board Members Absent: Dan Thompson, City of Oakville; Kathi Hoder, City of Aberdeen; Jenifer Slemm, City of Napavine

Others Present: Chris Vandenberg; Jessica Hausman, DOE; Tom Clingman, DOE; Kris Koski, City of Aberdeen; Merlin MacReynold, City of Chehalis; Gloria Rogers, WDFW; Kim Smith, GHCD; Mike Nordin, PCD & GHCD; Jesse Adams, PCD; Dale Lewis, Congresswoman Herrera-Beutler; Scott Boettcher, Staff to Flood Authority; Jim Kramer, Facilitator; Pat Anderson, Lewis County

Handouts/Materials Used:

- Agenda
- Meeting Notes from April 21, 2016
- House Bill 2856
- Local Projects
- Ordinance from City of Chehalis
- Financial Report
- See https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias_1492/34798/meetings.aspx#May2016

1. Call to Order

Commissioner and Vice Chair Fund called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m.

2. Introductions

Self-introductions were made by all attending.

3. Basin Reflection by Stephen Hueffed

This item was postponed to later in the agenda.

4. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved by consensus as presented.

5. Approval of April Meeting Notes

The meeting notes were approved by consensus as presented.

6. Update: Office of Chehalis Basin

Mr. Tom Clingman, Department of Ecology, briefed the group on HB 2856 (see here <http://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2015-16/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/2856.SL.pdf>) the creation of the Office of Chehalis Basin. The purpose is to set up a single state office for a more uniform structure for policies. There are three elements of the bill: 1 - The Office of Chehalis Basin is established in Department of Ecology and it is based on the model of Office of Columbia River. 2 – A new Chehalis Board is created with seven members including the two Tribes. 3 – An integrated Chehalis Basin Strategy will be established.

Mr. Clingman mentioned that this is a year of transition so the 2017-2019 biennium work for the Chehalis Basin will be managed by this office, working with the Governor's office and the Governor's work group through the legislative process. DOE is excited about the new office and is looking forward to working with the Flood Authority. He stressed that people need to be assured that this is a new phase with a continuation of the effort and not a brand new effort.

Mr. Wood stated there are partnerships, the Flood Authority, the work group, and many jurisdictions. He asked what happens to the three organizations when this Office launches, and what the assurance is that everyone's voice will continue to be heard.

Mr. Vander Stoep stated it is his opinion that the Board will replace the work group but not the Flood Authority or the Partnership. Statute calls out the Flood Authority role on this Board. He expects local representation on the board will remain strong and represent local interests. The QIN and Chehalis Tribe are called out. The local projects will continue.

Mr. Vanell asked if the Project Committee, the Public Outreach Committee and the Executive Committee will continue. Mr. Clingman stated that Ecology's way of working is very closely linked to the local community. When it comes to local projects, it is not unusual to additionally engage other groups to help define the project list. Ecology anticipates the same type of process will continue. Ecology is ultimately responsible for managing the local projects.

Mr. Kramer stated that one great value the Flood Authority provides is all local governments working together – not only for projects but for strategies. The role is not just local projects but a voice for local governments.

Ms. Balmelli-Powe asked if the funding will flow from that office. Mr. Clingman stated it will go through the Office.

Mr. Boettcher stated DOE has already reached out to the Project Committee to participate in developing projects for the 2017-2019 biennium. That process will kick off in July and DOE will participate.

Mr. Hill stated state agencies charge an administrative overhead. He asked if once this is established if the operations and administration will go through the Office. Mr. Clingman stated a piece of every dollar goes to overhead. Mr. Kramer stated it is about 30%. Ms. Balmelli-Powe asked what the percentage is for administrative costs. Mr. Kramer stated it depends on what is meant by administration. Project money does not come through the Flood Authority. There is \$15 million for local projects and RCO is billing 1% (see Section 1074 here <http://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2015-16/Pdf/Bills/House%20Passed%20Legislature/1115.PL.pdf>).

Mr. Wood stated there is no money appropriated and asked who is staffing the Office. He is concerned about the process between now and the 2017 session. Mr. Clingman stated he is lead on the launch of the Office. DOE is already engaging in the budget process and has a placeholder budget request. The next several months will include engaging with the Governor's work group. Mr. Kramer will develop an overall approach of what the work group wants accomplished, and then the agencies will come up with specific projects and costs of those projects. Those then go to the Governor and moves through the legislative process. The Office will be inheriting the work of this group and the approach is based on the budget that starts in July 2017. Mr. Kramer stated the work program and the work group is to have their recommendations to the Governor by mid-November, including a long-term strategy. The work group's draft recommendations will be reviewed by the Flood Authority in the October timeframe.

Mr. Clingman stated that staffing will go through general funds and that OFM lays out clear guidance about what types of activities are funded from capital investments. Ecology hopes to have a small appropriation fund for staffing. Mr. Clingman further stated that Tribal designees on the new board need to be confirmed by the Senate, that Tribes did not agree with that, and that there will be an amendment to the Bill about those two positions. The Governor's office has asked DOE to prepare the requested legislation.

Mr. Vander Stoep stated Mr. Wood's process concern will need to be addressed if there are supplemental budget needs from the 2018 legislature. If this new Office does not function until after July 2017 there may be supplemental appropriations and they will be behind the curve. This year, heading into this biennium, will budget recommendations will be developed under the current effort and the passage of this bill will not interfere with that the current process.

Commissioner Fund asked if the new Board will be involved in the interviewing of a director. Mr. Clingman stated it will be involved in the final selection. Ms. Balmelli-Powe asked if the recommendation does not go forward will we not do anything. . Mr. Kramer stated that creation of the new Office is a significant statement by the legislature that they see this as a significant program that needs to be carried into the future. If there is a lot of negative discourse like a few years ago then that could affect legislative support. The broader stronger the agreement locally the greater potential is for funding in the future.

Mr. Nordin stated his organization has gone into some funding contracts with DOE and that DOE requires certain things for some projects. If a land owner does not want to do a project that is okay because it's voluntary. The Conservation District's relationship with landowners is everything. RCO seems to be on the same page with his group and he is concerned that a regulatory office (like DOE) will not always understand this. This needs to be addressed to reflect the voluntary nature of local projects.

Mr. Clingman stated he did not anticipate that DOE will require additional land use regulation as part of construction projects.

Mr. Wood suggested inviting the Director of Agriculture to the next meeting. Mr. Kramer stated the next in-person meeting would be in July and that should be enough time to do that.

See handout provided by Ecology

here <https://www.ezview.wa.gov/Portals/1492/images/Office%20of%20Chehalis%20summary%20for%20Flood%20Authority%205%2019%2016.pdf>.

7. Update on Local Projects

Last month the Flood Authority approved amendments to three projects: Centralia China Creek (Phase II) for \$200,000; the airport pump project for \$80,000; and Cosmopolis project for \$350,000. The Flood Authority also approved three new projects: Aberdeen Fry Creek; Chehalis Dillenbaugh Creek project; and Oakville Flood reduction Study project. Funding contracts and amendments with RCO are done (or very nearly done), websites are established, and signs have been ordered.

Other projects: Bucoda Main Street Regrade Project has grown in size and scale. Mr. Vanell stated there may be an increase in the dollar amount but he does not know how much. Culverts need to be moved and that will impact a lot of people. Mr. Boettcher stated that project is at 30% design so it may be a while before we know the full cost. The Grays Harbor Conservation Commission has three landowners who want farm pads.

Mr. Boettcher stated RCO data allows us to easily track expenditures. Billing from jurisdictions on a monthly basis is important to see how the money is being spent. The Outreach Committee will be looking at this for the fairs in July and August.

Mr. Boettcher stated he has been in contact with GIS and they are able to put much more on the map. He will be asking project sponsors to provide accurate information on projects.

See project:

- Expenditures here -- <https://data.wa.gov/dataset/Small-Projects-Funding-Program/bt94-6bm8>
- Listings here -- www.ezview.wa.gov/chehalisbasinlocalfloodreliefprojects
- Map here -- <http://arcg.is/1V7FZ8I>
- Tracking here -- [https://www.ezview.wa.gov/Portals/_1492/images/NEW%20-%20Master%20Tracking%20Table%2005172016\(1\).pdf](https://www.ezview.wa.gov/Portals/_1492/images/NEW%20-%20Master%20Tracking%20Table%2005172016(1).pdf)

8. Basin Reflection by Stephen Hueffed

Mr. Hueffed stated he and his family have been on the farm since 2005. He talked about the 2007 flood and stated the water went to the high bank but did not get into his barn. They had 3' of water in the basement, and although the water was 9' higher than the 1996 flood they had relatively little damage. He lost no equipment or animals and stated that the railroad grade kept a lot of the water from coming onto his property. He spoke about the USGS weather station and issues with it during the flood.

9. Update: Public Outreach for Chehalis Basin Strategy

Mr. Boettcher attempted to show a shorter version of the slideshow that was presented in Montesano but there were technical difficulties. A handout was distributed with the information. Mr. Kramer spoke about the photo contest. Anchor QEA donated \$500 to the winner whose photograph was of children walking past a barn in the rain. 18 photos will be displayed in June for shows in Chehalis and Grays Harbor County. The photo participants will be invited. Mr. Kramer stated that prior to the contest there were fewer hits on the website than after the contest. Events create awareness. The Flood Authority will be getting on the calendar for local jurisdictions' council and board meetings, as well as meeting with various groups and attending the county fairs.

See <http://chehalisbasinstrategy.com/photo-contest/>.

10. Update: Recommended Improvements to Land Use Management

Mr. Kramer distributed an ordinance passed by the City of Chehalis. He stated that French and Associates did an assessment of local land use ordinances and recommended a number of improvements. Two important aspects were to use the flood of record and to make sure there are restrictions in filling in the floodplain. This ordinance is one of the more progressive in the state of Washington as it prohibits filling in the floodplain or requires compensation for any increases in flooding. It is based on the HEC-RES model developed for the Chehalis Basin. Mr. Kramer reminded members they have recommended that new developments are not increasing the flooding problem and this document proves that there is a commitment.

Mr. MacReynold stated adoption of the ordinance was a cooperative effort. He thanked Mr. Vander Stoep for speaking with the City Council and the administration so they could come up with something that will protect downstream neighbors. That was the direction Council took and there were many people involved. He stated it is important that we are all partners in this Basin. He thanked everyone for their help and stated the City is committed to this effort.

Mr. Vander Stoep stated there are a lot of people who think development in Chehalis is creating the flooding problem. The War Department built the airport levee in 1943 – it was not a local land use decision. Inside that levee is 380 acres, 70 of those acres are fill. We now know the impact if the entire 380 acres was filled: it would be 12% of a foot, which is 1.2 inches. The impact at Grays Harbor would be 18% of 1.2 inches.

Mr. Kramer asked if the Flood Authority would like to send a letter to the city of Chehalis acknowledging the work that was done. There was consensus that a letter be drafted and signed by the Chair.

Ms. Balmelli-Powe asked the members of the Flood Authority to stress to people that science shows that the impact is not as big as it appears. She suggested that the slide show includes a percentage of the county that is developed. That might help people understand.

Mr. Vanell asked who will enforce Chehalis' ordinance. Mr. MacReynold stated the ordinance will affect someone is seeking a fill permit of 500 cubic yards or more at the Community Development Department. The ordinance outlines what they need to do should they meet that threshold. It is all handled through the permitting process. How any impact is mitigated, other than excavation, will be outlined in a follow up resolution that will be considered by the City Council at their June 13th meeting.

See ordinance here <https://www.ezview.wa.gov/Portals/1492/images/City%20of%20Chehalis%20-%20Ord%20958-B%20-%20Zero%20Rise%20Policy.pdf>

11. Financial Report

Mr. Kramer gave the financial report in Ms. Napier's absence. There were no questions.

12. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

13. Reports

a. Chair Report

The Chair had nothing to report.

b. Member Reports

There were no member reports.

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 a conference call on June 16 (9 to 10 a.m.). In July the meeting will be an in-person meeting in Thurston County.

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