

Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority

Meeting 8:30 A.M.

Aberdeen City Hall
200 E. Market St., Aberdeen, WA

July 18, 2013 - Meeting Notes

Board Members Present: Lionel Pinn, City of Napavine; Dan Thompson, City of Oakville; Vickie Raines, City of Cosmopolis; Jim Cook, City of Aberdeen; Dolores Lee, Town of Pe Ell; Edna Fund, Lewis County Commissioner; Alan Vanell, Town of Bucoda; Wes Cormier, Grays Harbor County Commissioner; Karen Valenzuela, Thurston County Commissioner; Arnold Haberstroh, City of Chehalis; Ron Averill, City of Centralia; Ken Estes, City of Montesano

Staff Present: Jim Kramer, Kramer Consulting; Scott Boettcher, SBGH Partners

Others Present: Please see sign in sheet

Handouts/Materials Used:

- Agenda
- Meeting Notes from June 20 Phone Meeting
- Accessing 2013 Capital Budget Funds
- Alternative Allocation Approaches Discussion Memo
- Interlocal Agreement between Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) and Lewis County
- Kramer Consulting Contract Scope of Work
- SBGH Partners Contract Scope of Work
- Handouts from Grays Harbor County Road Engineer

1. Call to Order

Chair Raines called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

2. Introductions

Introductions were made by all attending.

BUSINESS MEETING

6. Approval of Contracts for Kramer Consulting and SBGH Partners; Interlocal between OFM and Lewis County

Mr. Kramer stated proposed amendment to the agreement between Lewis County and OFM the discussion from the previous meetings. The budget is for \$534,000 which includes staff and administrative costs for Lewis County and \$250,000 for the assessment of the flood plain. Staff oversees the capital projects, provides input into the governor's work group process regarding the alternatives and strategy to reduce flood damages in the basin, and continuing to support the Flood Warning System and providing public outreach.

In response to a question from Vice Chair Valenzuela, Mr. Kramer stated that \$250,000 in the Flood Authority budget was originally proposed by the Governor's work group for the analysis of flood

management programs in each jurisdiction and to look at the Federal Emergency Management Community Rating System and the potential of elevating each jurisdiction to a comparable level.

The scopes of work for the agreement with OFM and the contracts for Kramer and SBGH were discussed in the past and the goal is to continue the arrangement that was in place this past year. Mr. Kramer's contract includes facilitation for the Flood Authority and Executive Committee, and communication with other interested parties as well as his time for the every other month face-to-face meetings and conference calls in between. Mr. Boettcher's time has increased and mirrors what he has put in over the last six months.

Mr. Averill moved to approve the contracts and the proposed amendment to the OFM agreement. There was a consensus with thumbs up.

5. Approval of Recommendation to OFM to initiate contracts for 2013-2015 Capital Projects

Mr. Kramer stated last year the Flood Authority provided input to OFM for the Jobs Now Act funding. There was a requirement that the Flood Authority sign off on projects as well as the Chehalis Tribe before OFM would issue the contract to the project sponsor. That language does not exist in the current budget that was approved but Sandy Triggs (Governor's Capital Budget Advisor) would like the Flood Authority's input before she issues the contracts with project sponsors for the projects funded in the 2013-15 capital budget. Ms. Trigg would like the Chehalis Tribe's input before she issues contracts. There is a similar process of input with OFM before they issue a contract. The recommendation before the Flood Authority at the meeting is to recommend OFM to initiate contracts for all projects that were funded under the capital budget and recommend that the project descriptions include a scope of work, schedule and benefits. It is important to make this recommendation because sponsors don't have funds at this time to initiate the projects without funds from OFM. Once the projects are in the preliminary design phase, Flood Authority will review the projects and make any further recommendations to the project sponsors and OFM to ensure the projects are consistent with the original intent.

Mr. Cook asked if there has been input from DOE. Chair Raines stated Perry Lund from DOE is at the meeting today. We are making sure the agencies are in from the beginning because of wetlands, etc. Commissioner Fund stated the agencies are being contacted.

There was consensus to move #5 forward.

7. Financial Report

Ms. Napier stated Tasks 7 Facilitation and 8 Staff Support have been closed out for the 2011-13 biennium. The proposed amendment to the OFM agreement and the contracts for Kramer and SBGH sent to the Lewis County Board of Commissioners for consideration. Mr. Averill stated there will be a new budget line with what was just passed and we will be moving some WEST money from this cycle to the next.

WORK SESSION

3. Briefing on Alternative Allocation Approaches for Continued Funding for Maintenance of Early Warning System

Mr. Kramer stated the Flood Authority member organization have been contributing annual for the maintenance of the flood warning system. The decision was to allocate across the members of the Basin based on the jurisdiction's percentage of population in the Chehalis Basin. The members agreed last

year to use this method for allocation last year with the condition that it was re-evaluated. It is time to do that. In the fall the jurisdictions will be determining their budgets for next year and it is important to decide on the allocation for next year now so each jurisdiction can include their share of the flood warning system in their local budgets. Mr. Boettcher has looked for different ways to allocate this expense and it still falls to the Basin governments. The purpose of this discussion was to provide direction to staff for the options that should be further developed and considered for approval at the next meeting.

Mr. Cook stated Aberdeen authorized this year's payment and his city is one of the largest contributors. There are a lot of other municipalities that benefit from the Early Warning System and only the members are splitting the costs. He hoped there was a more equitable way to divide the funding.

Mr. Estes agreed stating there are a lot of people who benefit besides the cities. Some small member cities are having a tough time making the payment. He asked about the news media, NOAA and others. Why aren't FEMA or Emergency Services picking up some of this cost?

Mr. Boettcher presented a PowerPoint with several options for allocation of the maintenance costs.

Currently the cost is based on population in the Basin by jurisdiction.

One option is to base the allocation on the population most at risk: people and businesses located in the flood plain. This could be done by working with GIS departments; allocate costs just for those in the flood plain. That does not account for people who use the system but don't live in the flood plain.

Another option is to allocate the costs based value of property in the floodplain. This information would be available through GIS also. That does not affect people who are out of the flood plain.

A third option is allocate based on areas in the Basin that have higher risk, higher assessed value and would benefit more from the Early Warning System than those in lower risk areas. Areas in the lower basin have more lead time to know when flood waters are coming then areas in the upper basin. A graduated system would have high risk areas pay more.

Mr. Boettcher asked for direction as to how to make a decision or determine a concept. Is it risk, exposure, population? There needs to be a system that is relatively easy to implement.

A question was asked as to why the State can't pick up this cost. Mr. Averill explained that the State Capital Budget will not fund maintenance. He stated that he and Mr. Boettcher would be going to the military department to show them the system. WEST will also be attending. He hopes there will be an interest in showcasing this across the state.

Mr. Boettcher stated the cost is for WEST to recalibrate and do tune-ups on each gage. Could local Public Works Departments be trained to do that?

Mr. Averill stated this is currently talking about the WEST contract. That is not the whole system. Lewis County and Grays Harbor County pay for USGS gages. Lewis County has ten of them and those contracts are expensive. USGS contracts bear a percentage of the cost so there are state and federal agencies making contributions. He would like to see figures on the matrix. By re-allocating who is paying for this someone will end up paying more. He stated the only equitable way to handle this is to form a Flood

Control Zone District which is a taxing district. This has been done in Lewis County and it would take the burden off of the small towns and cities. He believes that eventually everyone involved in the Flood Authority will have to consider this when a new major project comes up. A new taxing district is not popular but this type of organization is designed specifically for flood control projects. Mr. Kramer asked if Mr. Averill would like this option considered for funds next year. Mr. Averill stated it could not happen that quickly.

Mr. Pinn liked Mr. Averill's idea. He asked what would happen now if a jurisdiction withdrew from the Flood Authority. Who would pay that share?

Mr. Haberstroh stated water retention will have issues. We need to think about taxing districts and look at them sooner rather than later to build up a fund. Could there be a user fee? He also did not think that the gages are too complicated for someone other than WEST to maintain. The Public Works departments must have someone who could do that, even if training costs something up front.

Commissioner Valenzuela disagreed that the Board needed to discuss each alternative. Decide on which seems the most fair, choose that and cost it out. How each county pays is up to the county. Thurston County has a stormwater facility. There is an equity question. What is the fairest approach and cost it out from there. That would be the approach she would like to take. Mr. Boettcher has mapped it out with the pros and cons. She favors #1. Combine the population and the population in the flood plain.

Mr. Boettcher asked population in the floodplain should be a factor in the allocation. Commissioner Valenzuela stated yes.

Mr. Estes agreed with Commissioner Valenzuela. Who gets the most value? With a \$500 million loss to the State he would think they should pay the lions' share. They get the most value.

Mr. Thompson also favored #. He also thought has to be a way to reduce cost.

Ms. Lee stated Pe Ell is small – 632 population. The gage is in Pacific County, which does benefit Pe Ell but if there is high water the gage will be washed out. She suggested to her council that the money be put into the 2014 budget and did not get a good response. She needs something more to take back to her council: the actual benefit to the town.

Mr. Haberstroh stated he has nothing to flood personally but he has renters that are affected. When you look at the broad picture everyone is affected. Don't look just at those in the flood plain. He likes the approach we have now but we need to sell it to everyone.

Commissioner Fund stated there is a lot of information for the Flood Control Zone District (FCZD) and we could move forward. The study has been done and we are aware of the ups and downs. She liked the idea of Public Works employees being trained. Her preference is #1 with a combination of Mr. Haberstroh's idea.

Mr. Cook stated he learned that there are two approaches to the FCZD: 1) put it to a vote; 2) the county has the power to make it so. From a city's perspective, try to engage the public instead of saying the county will make it so. It will be time-consuming.

Mr. Kramer stated he has helped form flood districts. To do that is a major effort and there will be a funding issue regarding the future of the basin, the next level, dam or no dam. The Flood Authority does not have the resources now to have a thorough public discussion of a new district.

Ms. Lee would like to see a vote of the people if they are educated through outreach and the media. Let people know this is the reason we are asking for this. It benefits everyone. Educate the public; don't shove it down their throats.

Mr. Haberstroh stated the general public needs to know that the Flood Authority is doing something.

Mr. Vanell stated he doesn't like paying school levies – he has no kids – but he knows that it is an investment in the future. There will be maintenance fees no matter what we do. Everyone in the Basin needs to maintain whatever is done. If you are going to live in this area be prepared to maintain and invest in the future. He prefers a combination of what is being done now and #1.

Commissioner Valenzuela stated this is a \$55,000 problem that the Flood Authority should be able to solve. If we can't figure this out our chances of ever collaborating on a project like water retention are not very good. We don't need a vote of the people to figure out this problem.

Chair Raines prefers option #1. Regardless of where the gages are they affect Cosmopolis. She agreed with Commissioner Valenzuela: the Flood Authority was handed \$28 million and it needs to solve the \$555,000 problem.

Mr. Kramer recapped the comments which included exploring ways to reduce cost, include others into paying, and implementing #1. A decision is needed in August.

4. Briefing on Preferred Alternative Project Designs for the Wishkah Road, Satsop and Montesano Projects

Chair Raines acknowledged and introduced Representative Brian Blake.

Commissioner Cormier stated the Commissioners voted to discontinue the Satsop River flood plain project and approved a staged approach for the Wishkah Road project.

Satsop Flood Plain Project

Russ Esses, Grays Harbor County, spoke to the Satsop project. He stated the Watershed Science and Engineering consulting firm had been hired for a study. They recommended not removing the rip rap because it would open the channel to more migration and erosion. WSE did identify that there is a part of the rip rap that needs to be repaired or the County road could be threatened.

Ms. Terry Willis agreed that the rip rap should not be removed. Rip rap needs to be addressed. The earthen dike is WDFW property and could be removed in order to open up the flood plain to allow for water storage. There is dirt on the WDFW property that was put there for storage and it should be removed. The rock that is around the well owned by the Port is failing and needs repairs, so there are other places to spend the money. She called WDFW to see if they are interested in being the project sponsor. She also called the Port District about being the project sponsor.

Mr. Kramer asked if the County had made a recommendation regarding the hole in the dike. Mr. Esses

Ms. Willis stated if the river is allowed to erode it could hit the old channel and then it would blow that channel which is right against the road.

Mr. Esses agreed that it could blow and if it happened the County could use emergency funds to address the problem.

Key documents discussed regarding the Satsop Flood Plain Project are as follows:

- Final report --
<http://www.ezview.wa.gov/pr/DesktopModules/Documents2/View.aspx?tabID=34380&alias=1746&mid=64550&ItemID=1628&wversion=Staging>
- Grays Harbor County Commission action --
<http://www.ezview.wa.gov/pr/DesktopModules/Documents2/View.aspx?tabID=34380&alias=1746&mid=64550&ItemID=1653&wversion=Staging>

Wishkah Road Project

Mr. Esses stated there were several options for this project: do nothing; raise the road embankment (not recommended); construct a new levee on either side of the roadway (not enough room); sheet pile the road (this is the preferred alternative); or reroute the road, which would be very costly.

A four-step approach is being considered for the sheet wall alternative. If a sheet wall is built and there is an extreme event there will still be water over the roadway. The lower areas of the road need to be raised. The first step could be to raise the lower areas of the road by 6/10th of a foot. Upstream there is a dip that floods and if it was raised it would help.

Step two is to start the design for the preferred alternative. Properties needed for this project have been identified.

Step three is to acquire the property.

Step four is to construct the sheet pile.

This project has grown in cost to \$5.4 million. Until the final detailed design is completed the costs are "guestimates."

If the road is raised the number of closures to the road can be cut down. That is the shovel ready part. There is not a complete solution. This does not help the homes but the water won't be so deep that it cannot be driven through. Paving is summertime work and it takes a couple of months to get a contract together. Most likely this will be work for next spring.

Mr. Esses distributed a handout which showed alternate routes. There are five areas on the Wishkah Road that flood to varying degrees; some Wishkah Road residents will not have an alternate route. Commissioner Fund stated that the City of Centralia raised houses that were flooded and asked if it was possible to raise the nine homes that are affected. Mr. Esses stated that study was not done.

Mr. Averill asked if there is an alternative. The \$5.4 million is well above what was allocated for this project. Without some major shifting of money it cannot be done. Chair Raines asked to come back to that question later because the same question applies to the Montesano project.

Mr. Haberstroh asked why it would take two or three months for the contract. Mr. Esses stated first the Flood Authority has to approve the project, then the Tribe, and then it goes to OFM. Chair Raines stated the study has been done and there has been \$2.6 million appropriated for the project. The land purchase and raising the road are part of that project. Mr. Boettcher asked how long it would take to raise the road. Mr. Esses stated design would be about one month, advertising about three weeks, awarding the contract takes about two weeks, so a total of about two and a half months. Paving could be done in October depending on the weather, which is iffy in Grays Harbor County.

Representative Blake asked if mitigation was needed for tide gates if they exist already. Mr. Esses stated in the 1980s a tide gate could not be put in because of the fish. A hole cannot be put into a sheet wall so a tide gate is needed and there may have to be some mitigation for the current gates.

Representative Blake stated he would advocate in the legislature for additional funds to finish the projects that needed more funding. There is a lot going on in the entire basin and more money needs to be invested to solve the problems.

Frank Kersh stated the problem with Wishkah Road is safety. If the sheet wall is built nine homes are going to benefit and the road will be safe. He didn't want to lose the focus on that. The permitting process should move ahead. The next step is to do more engineering and purchase property.

Chair Raines stated there is a shortage of \$3.6 million to do this project. She asked to move the discussion on to the Montesano project. The Flood Authority can come back to discuss the Wishkah project when the full picture is available. The homes are important, the waste water treatment plant is important. All aspects must be recognized. She then recommended that the Flood Authority approve the road elevation for \$500,000 and hold off on the rest. She asked for discussion before consensus.

Mr. Kramer stated one option is to raise the road now and wait to decide on the sheet pile. The current proposal of raising the road is part of the project. The County Engineer is saying the road can be raised now without any ramifications and without jeopardizing the rest of the project.

Key documents discussed regarding the Wishkah Road Project are as follows:

- Final report --
<http://www.ezview.wa.gov/pr/DesktopModules/Documents2/View.aspx?tabID=34390&alias=1747&mid=64564&ItemID=1627&wversion=Staging>
- Grays Harbor County Commission action --
<http://www.ezview.wa.gov/pr/DesktopModules/Documents2/View.aspx?tabID=34390&alias=1747&mid=64564&ItemID=1654&wversion=Staging>

Montesano Projects

Consultant Steve Schmitz stated the goal of the Mary's River project is to protect the mill site, protect SR 107, and no negative environmental impacts. The goal of the berm around the wastewater treatment plant is to reduce the risk of damage during high flows and eliminate the risk of environmental impacts.

Mary's River Project

Mr. Schmitz stated the alternatives for this project included riprap revetment, full channel bypass, high flow bypass and sheet pile wall (preferred). He cited the reasons for not considering the other alternatives.

Preferred Alternative: Sheet Wall Pile

Mr. Schmitz stated permitting for this alternative is easier, requiring city permits such as SEPA and shorelines. This alternative will not prevent flooding to the mill site but it would prevent erosion. No existing vegetation will be removed.

Mr. Schmitz stated the benefits of this alternative included: the property is controlled by the project proponent; it is constructible within the timeframe for mill development; minimal permitting is required; provides high level of protection; opportunity for more environmental benefit.

Approval of Project Scopes

The Flood Authority agreed by consensus to recommend raising the Wishkah Road based on the County Engineers recommendation and proceeding with the ring berm around the Montesano treatment plant.

Key documents discussed regarding the Montesano Projects are as follows:

- PPT Presentation --
<http://www.ezview.wa.gov/pr/DesktopModules/Documents2/View.aspx?tabID=34430&alias=1751&mid=64620&ItemID=1646&wversion=Staging>
- Final Report (issued 8/06/2013) --
<http://www.ezview.wa.gov/pr/DesktopModules/Documents2/View.aspx?tabID=34430&alias=1751&mid=64620&ItemID=1861&wversion=Staging>

5. Updates on Outreach & Education Activities (past and upcoming)

Mr. Boettcher reported to the group the following recent and upcoming Outreach and Education presentations:

- Greater Grays Harbor Inc. outreach visit (6/25).
- WA Department of Fish and Wildlife (7/08).
- Lewis County EDC (7/11).
- WA Department of Ecology (upcoming 7/24).
- WA Department of Natural Resources (upcoming 8/26).
- Greater Grays Harbor, Inc. (Showcase Grays Harbor) (upcoming 9/20).

Mr. Boettcher also reported that the master outreach schedule is updated frequently and can be found on the EZview website at:

[http://www.ezview.wa.gov/pr/Portals/_1492/images/default/Education%20and%20Outreach%20Visits%2007162013\(1\).pdf](http://www.ezview.wa.gov/pr/Portals/_1492/images/default/Education%20and%20Outreach%20Visits%2007162013(1).pdf)