

Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority
9:00 A.M. – Virtual Meeting
September 17, 2020 - Meeting Notes

Board Members Present: Edna Fund, Lewis County Commissioner; Vickie Raines, Grays Harbor County Commissioner; Tye Menser, Thurston County Commissioner; Trent Lougheed, City of Chehalis; Ron Averill, City of Centralia; Brian Shay, City of Hoquiam; Frank Gordon, City of Aberdeen; Lonnie Willey, Town of Pe Ell

Board Members Absent: Richard Armstrong, City of Oakville; Dan Wood, City of Montesano; Darrin Raines, City of Cosmopolis; Steve Lyle, Town of Bucoda; Shawn O’Neill, City of Napavine.

Others Present: Ken Ghalambor; Jay Gordon; Lee Napier; Dave Curtis; Jeff Budnick.

Handouts/Materials Used:

- Agenda
- Meeting notes from July 16, 2020
- See https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias_1492/34798/meetings.aspx#Sept2020

1. Call to Order

Chair Raines called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

2. Introductions

Scott read off the names of attendees. There was a quorum.

3. Approval of September 17 Meeting Agenda

The Chair asked if there were changes to the agenda. There were none and the agenda was approved by consensus.

3. Approval of July 16, 2020 meeting notes

The Chair asked if there were changes or corrections to the meeting notes. There were none – approval by consensus.

5. Update 2021-2023 Local Projects

Scott stated we are in the middle of the review of local projects - 8 projects were submitted. The Projects Committee has met twice and met on September 15 for the scoring exercise to look at how people scored and ranked the projects. There were several considerations factored into the reviews. There is a break point between storm water control vs a capital improvement project. Several projects need to have that question addressed. There is no clear line on that, so the discussion will continue. Another topic is the question of maintenance. The capital budget does not cover maintenance. We are asking if a project is requiring maintenance. Again, no clear line on that, either. Some application reviewers felt they were not sufficiently completed, and there is an awareness that some jurisdictions do not have the staffing capacities to fill out the application adequately. We are trying to be considerate of that. Another consideration: pumps proposed – do they have standalone benefit if they were funded by the capital budget; could they exist on their own as a flood reduction benefit, or is their benefit tied to the completion of another project. We look for distribution around the basin – are they clustered? Lastly, regarding funding – we do not know what the capital budget will be, nor do we know what the Chehalis Basin Board (Board) is thinking of for this biennium. In the past, we have been awarded

between \$5 million and \$17 million but we cannot anticipate that a submittal that tallies \$10.5 million will make it. We need to know what is defensible.

The table that Scott projected gave an update of where the Projects Committee is following the Tuesday meeting. Projects shown in green are construction projects; pink are planning projects. The left column is initial ranking based on scores – the Grays Harbor County Lower Satsop Restoration project is at the top.

We are working on the projects to be more specific to get a well-rounded set of considerations for the Flood Authority and the Board. Planning projects can be a small dollar amount for gaining good knowledge, either for future projects, or to ensure that expenditures are not incurred for problems that do not exist.

Ron reiterated the costs at the bottom of the chart. Plan study is not a large amount and this aspect is important element to consider.

Brian stated that these are awesome projects and they all address flooding in his opinion - planning projects are needed, too. He thinks we should try to fund the whole list.

Trent spoke to the Boistfort Rd project. Since it is a large area, is \$50,000 going to be enough, or do we need to provide more money for planning? It will need a lot of analysis.

Scott stated that we are trying to bring as many of these to fruition – all have flood hazard reduction benefits. In November, the Committee will bring recommendations to the Flood Authority.

Commissioner Fund stated she appreciates the questions being asked and encouraged going back to sponsors to get answers.

Ron stated the Committee will also be looking at the Chehalis Industrial Park. The questions raised should have gone through the public works department. Commissioner Fund stated they requested .09 funds, too.

Scott shared maps of projects that were proposed. The green dots are pump projects; yellow dots are planning projects. The pumps provide a fortification to get all of the floodwater out of the basin. Visually they stand at a good location for the volume of water that comes down the basin.

6 – Flood Warning System

Dave asked Jeff to do the bulk of the presentation. He stated that Jeff drove through our basin in 2007 and saw all of the damage and he is keeping the system in top shape.

Jeff presented a PowerPoint and showed some videos of the river over a period of time during a high-water event.

Jeff stated that maintenance on gages is done every 3 months. He showed a map of precipitation gages – 40 in total. He talked about the relocation of precipitation gages. There are six gages on private timber land which need to be moved because of timber growth. Haywire, Rock, Chehalis Thrash, Skookumchuck, Newaukum and Brooklyn gages need to be moved. The gages are ranked – Haywire and Brooklyn are on the top of the list and relocation efforts will begin in late spring 2021.

Flood warning system improvements in 2020 included webcams. There are websites to contrail cameras and the river cross section dashboard which shows the river level. He showed two videos of the Satsop that captured the river over a period of time. Costs are \$3,000 to move a webcam; a new camera is \$5,000 plus \$2,000 for labor, plus maintenance costs.

Scott stated that the Flood Authority thought about moving the Monte Elma bridge webcam. We could place a camera 20' off the ground at the Port of Grays Harbor Well. At start of project discussion, someone messed with bridge camera. It wasn't vandalized, but as expensive as these cameras are, securing them to be inaccessible makes sense and the well site is a secure site. We also do not have the budget to move these.

Dave talked about weather trends and projects. We are coming in to a weak La Nina, which usually brings a wetter winter pattern with cooler temperatures. The first half of winter is projected to be wetter than normal; temperatures indicate a little warmer than usual, which is not typical of La Nina pattern.

Brian asked if we wanted to relocate that camera, could we take action today? Commissioner Raines asked if we have extra money in current Satsop project? Scott stated he will look. Commissioner Fund requested that Scott look for money; Brian seconded. There was consensus.

Scott stated we are trying to find public lands and DNR parcels in Grays Harbor County. (DNR is helpful with people who manage Capital Forest, which could be a location, and it would be secure). It is not that Weyerhaeuser or Green Diamond are being difficult – they want trees; we don't. Scott will keep working with Lewis County, Grays Harbor County and DNR to find public locations so we do not have to do this again in 10 years.

7. Corps of Engineers NEPA

Scott informed the group that the Corps will be releasing the draft EIS September 18 which will start the 60-day comment period. There will be two public meetings which are not yet scheduled. Flood Authority members may want to consider a comment letter. Would you like to submit a comment letter as you did for the draft EIS in SEPA? There was consensus.

8. Public Comment

No comments.

9. Financial Report

Lee stated there were two reports: July had \$8,820.15 in expenditures – paid via warrants. We made another payment to WEST; Ron asked that we show the contract we have with WEST.

In August there were \$9,653.98 in expenditures paid by warrants. This report shows WEST O & M costs and how they are divided by county.

Lee added that we are working on gage relocation. The Flood Authority directed Scott to move forward and funds have been located. We are working on an amendment with RCO, and also amending the agreement with WEST. These will be available at the next meeting.

10. Reports

a. Chair's Report

The Chair had no report

b. Member Reports

Lewis County – Commissioner Fund asked that members please check out the Facebook page for the Flood Control Zone District. There is information going on there and keeping track of questions being asked. If you have suggestions for things to post, let her know.

Centralia – Ron would like this statement taken to the Board: To our Representatives on the Chehalis Basin Board of the OCB -- I have been attending the virtual meetings and the current response to the Governor's Letter has requirements for further study assisted by technical advisory groups. The Flood Authority has been left out of the advisory groups and I think we should have a role.

Chair Raines will take this to the Board; maybe not the advisory group. She stated that the Flood Authority does have three members on the Board itself.

c. Chehalis Basin Board

Jay Gordon gave a report on the Office of Chehalis Basin Board. His summary word: audacious. The Board was given the governor's letter in July, asking the Board and staff to continue to work on mitigation of a dam in the upper basin. They were also asked to explore whether we can achieve flood reductions with a non-dam objective. There are two days of meetings at the end of September and we need a response by September 30 or October 1. How do we evaluate the basin without a dam and what can be done in sub-basins to reduce flood damage? With the capital budget and timing, the goal is to have the preliminary work done by consultants; the cost and timeline information back by early December. Cities, consultants, and local knowledge is involved. This will put a heavy workload on Ecology staff and on local jurisdictions on what this might mean for their jurisdictions. We have a direct request by the governor. End of Jan - early Feb – we might know what the capital budget will look like going forward.

Brian stated the OCB send out a summary to cities so we can start preparing information we need to be engaged.

Jay stated we are looking at a short timeline; implementation folks might say that won't work. It may be rocky, and we wish staff good luck. He appreciates the input. He stressed that we make sure we have good communication.

d. correspondence

There was no correspondence.

11. Confirm next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for November 19, a Zoom meeting starting at 9 a.m.

Scott stated he just added drone footage of the Satsop to the EZview site.

Chair Raines stated she will make sure the Flood Authority is made aware of the preliminary budget figures. Commissioner Fund reminded everyone that the OCB meetings are public meetings.

Brian stated we have to think about things that we are able to implement and tie them back to local projects. He hopes the next biennium budget is for implemented projects, even things long term.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.