

Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority  
**10:00 A.M. Via Zoom**  
**March 18, 2021 - Meeting Notes**

**Board Members Present:** Edna Fund, Lewis County; Steve Lyle, Town of Bucoda; Darrin Raines, City of Aberdeen; Frank Gordon, City of Aberdeen; Vickie Raines, Grays Harbor County Commissioner; Don Webster, City of Napavine; Ron Averill; City of Centralia; Brian Shay, City of Hoquiam; Lonnie Willey, Town of Bucoda; Richard Armstrong, City of Oakville; Thomasina Cooper, Thurston County; Trent Loughheed, City of Chehalis.

**Board Members Absent:** Dan Wood, City of Montesano.

**Others Present:** Pete Krabbe, Pinchot Partners; Andrea Doyle, OCB; Pete Schave and Kris Koski, City of Aberdeen; Brandon Rakes, Chehalis/Centralia Airport; Lee Napier, Lewis County.

**Handouts/Materials Used:**

- Agenda
- Meeting Notes from January 21, 2021
- See [https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias\\_1492/34798/meetings.aspx#Mar2021](https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias_1492/34798/meetings.aspx#Mar2021)

**1. Call to order**

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 by Chair Raines.

**2. Introductions**

Edna introduced Don Webster, City Councilor, and the new representative for the city of Napavine. Don stated he is looking forward to working with the Flood Authority; he has been on the city council for two years.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

The agenda was approved by consensus.

**4. Approval of Meeting Notes**

Chair Raines asked if there were additions or changes to the meeting notes. There were none and so approved by consensus.

**5. Update: Approval of Executive Committee**

Scott stated there is a request from the Executive Committee to borrow \$425,000 from two projects: China Creek and Port of Chehalis Berwick Creek project in order to jumpstart the Lower Satsop Phase II project and the excessive erosion issues the reach faces. There are engineers who are studying this to see if they can do anything with the \$425,000. There would still be a request for \$9.8 million for the new biennium to go towards this project.

Chair Raines stated she appreciated Scott's work on this. Ron stated it is obvious there is a concern, and he wondered if it was enough money, but it is important to do whatever we can and find out what it is going to take.

Chair Raines asked if there was consensus to ratify the Executive Committee's proposal. There was consensus.

## **6. Update: Office of Chehalis Basin – Andrea Doyle**

Andrea presented a PowerPoint to update the Flood Authority on the status of strategy after the March 4th board meeting. The governor asked the Board to look again at basin-wide projects and projects that could be done in tandem with the dam project and to look at potential mitigation. There has been a lot of progress regarding shared goals and developing better understanding of future flooding conditions. The Board is not at a point yet to make specific decisions about projects during the next biennium.

Andrea reported there was unanimous agreement for support of \$70 million for the next 2 years of projects and planning. Six of the seven board members must agree before allocating new funding; and the Board will continue deliberating on the next phase of projects from March until June. There is a board meeting scheduled in early June.

The Board is still looking at a range of options, such as which projects are ready to be implemented, which need more evaluation, and which should not move forward.

Andrea stated that the Aquatic Species restoration plan includes two levels. Full restoration level: \$600 million to \$1.3 billion (over 30 years) that will add new habitat and increase resiliency. Midlevel plan: \$300-600 million which will maintain existing habitat and halt declines.

A slide showed near-term priorities (geographic areas of focus for first 10-year phase).

Flood Damage Reduction Strategy elements:

- Flood Retention Facility – The Board is looking at their role in funding next steps. There needs to be more understanding from the flood control zone district, and they are waiting for Ecology and USACE to see how much funding ultimately will be needed.
- Aberdeen-Hoquiam levee.
- Flood Authority 9 local project proposals.
- Other structural flood protection options, including CFAR.
- Focus on hot spot areas/consider numbers and types of existing structures and critical infrastructure; consider long range land use zoning, buildout, economic development.

Crosscutting/integrated work – projects that can blend habitat and flood damage:

- Bank erosion management (about 100 miles) (focusing on unnatural rate of erosion)
- Floodplain acquisition program design
- Land Use Management
- Skookumchuck Dam
- Floodplain modeling
- Community Outreach and Engagement

Community Flood Assistance and Resilience (CFAR): Options to scale up program by expanding technical assistance; increasing financial support; helping local governments with federal requirements.

Relationship between Board and Flood Authority for opportunities to clarify relationship by:

- Strategy elements
- Scale of planning projects
- Authorities and capacities

- Subject matter expertise

Chair Raines asked for questions. Trent stated the airport had its annual inspection on the levee and there could be a large section that is compromised. There is sloughing on the north part. It is not known yet if it can be easily repaired or if it should be replaced. If reconstruction is necessary, how do we best proceed. The airport is still waiting for report.

Brian stated that Hoquiam asked for \$10 million. He asked of the totals available from CFAR, and if there is an itemized list from ASRP. Andrea stated CFAR is \$3 million and ASRP is at \$30 million. [The Board] will be reviewing the breakdowns at future meetings; currently they are in general categories. As to retention, the Board is still putting together the range of possibilities.

Ron stated the governor's budget was split - \$33 million for ASRP and \$33 million for flood mitigation. That should answer part of Brian's question. Regarding the Skookumchuck Dam – it does provide some flood mitigation for [the City of Centralia]. The city is concerned about the impact to flood protections if the dam is modified. Steve Lyle stated Bucoda is also concerned. Having that structure there offers opportunity too for fisheries.

Andrea stated that the Board was clear that evaluation is to look for ways to maximize the dual benefit for both flood protection and habitat/fisheries improvements, and looking for ways to not just maintain, but also improve, incidental flood measures, and if there are ways that operations could be modified to increase downstream habitat.

Scott stated we are losing farmland, and structures are at risk. Currently we do not have a good method to determine the loss of farmland. Sediment goes down to the port which costs to dredge it and take it away. We could use tools to have a total economic picture of what we are facing, and we need to understand the economic impact of erosion. Andrea stated the technical advisory group talked about an erosion management approach in the basin strategy. Using taxpayer dollars we need to be careful about when we invest in an individual's land compared to a broader public purpose. We need to make sure erosion issues are in a reach scale action. They reinforced that we need to look at the river system more broadly. The program needs to think about cost and benefit of the effect on an individual area with a broader perspective, and also the interrelationship with public infrastructure issues that are contributing to damages downstream to private property.

## **7. Update on Local Projects**

Scott said he updated costs relative to the Executive Committee decision (PowerPoint on EZview).

## **8. Update: Local Resolutions**

At the last meeting, the Flood Authority passed a resolution, and it was signed by the Chair and Vice Chair, and several jurisdictions followed with their support of a basin-wide solution to flood damage reduction and aquatic species restoration.

## **9. Update: Flood Warning System**

Scott stated the gage on the Wishkah River will be brought online soon; WEST is relocating 5 rain gages that are now in areas where the trees are affecting their effectiveness. This includes working on access permits from Weyerhaeuser and Green Diamond land. There is an agreement with NOAA's satellite system which has been approved. Scott commended WEST on always being on top of issues that need to be addressed.

## **12. Financial Reports**

Lee stated expenses for January were \$8,836.17 which included salaries/wages and consulting services. Expenses for February were \$8,162.76 for the same categories.

## **11. Public Comment**

Pete Krabbe was concerned about the lack of riparian management on the Upper Chehalis and wondered why there is building in the flood zone in the hills. He did not believe that WDFW will allow us to do anything that is being talked about on the Chehalis River.

## **13. Reports**

### **a. Chair's Report**

The Chair had no report.

### **b. Member Reports –**

*Centralia* - Ron stated that during the rainstorms earlier this year, Phase I of China Creek helped but there was still some minor flooding in the city. This demonstrated that Phase II is needed, and while we have slowed down, we are still working on it.

*Lewis County* - Edna stated she had to leave the meeting temporarily as there was an issue regarding COVID-19 vaccinations. She reported that all vaccinations have been distributed for today. Chair Raines stated that by the end of day tomorrow 29,000 vaccines have been administered; both the first and second doses.

**14. Next meeting:** May 20, 2021. Chair Raines stated she has a conflict on Flood Authority meeting days and asked if there was an issue with moving the time to 10 a.m. until further notice. No one objected. The Chair asked Pat to send out an email to the distribution list with the new start time.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45.