

Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority Telephone Meeting 11:00 A.M.

February 19, 2015 - Meeting Notes

Board Members Present: Alan Vanell, Town of Bucoda; Ron Averill, City of Centralia; Ken Estes, City of Montesano; Kathi Hoder, City of Aberdeen; Frank Chestnut, City of Cosmopolis; Edna Fund, Lewis County Commissioner; Julie Balmelli-Powe, City of Chehalis; Vickie Raines, Grays Harbor County Commissioner; Dan Thompson, City of Oakville

Board Members Absent: Lionel Pinn, City of Napavine, Bud Blake, Thurston County Commissioner, Lonnie Willey, Town of Pe Ell

Others Present: Scott Boettcher, Chris Brewer, Dale Lewis, Lee Napier, Al Smith, French Wetmore, Mark Riebau, Jessica Hausman, Deanna Zieske, Frank Kersch, Paul Johnson

Handouts/Materials Used:

- Agenda
- Meeting Notes from January 15, 2015
- Committee Membership
- Financial Report
- See meeting materials here --

https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias_1492/34798/meetings_2013-15.aspx#February2015

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Fund called the meeting to order at 11:04.

2. Introductions

Participants identified themselves as they called in.

3. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

4. Approval of Meeting Notes

The meeting notes were approved as presented.

5. Approval of 2015 Committees

Mr. Boettcher stated the document sent to Flood Authority members and posted to the website identified three committees. The Executive Committee automatically includes the Chair and Vice Chair of the Flood Authority. Ms. Balmelli-Powe and Mr. Estes were added to this committee. The Projects Committee will be chaired by Mr. Averill, with Mr. Vanell, Mr. Chestnut and Commissioner Blake being additional members. The Outreach and Education Committee will be chaired by Ms. Hoder, with Mr. Willey, Mr. Thompson and Mr. Pinn being additional members. Commissioner Fund will keep an emeritus role as she would like to participate in outreach events. Ms. Balmelli-Powe asked if someone who is not on a particular committee may still attend its meetings. Mr. Boettcher stated yes. Ms. Hoder moved to keep the new committees list. There was unanimous approval.

6. Flood Vents and Bucoda Pilot

Mr. Boettcher stated that homes in the Chehalis River Basin that were elevated without proper flood vents will now have funding available to install vents. Two contractors have been approved for the installation of these vents: McCann Properties, Centralia, and Clean Space NW, Bremerton. The next step will be for the Town of Bucoda to notify home owners that these contractors are on board and that there is state funding. A town meeting will be held in mid-March to explain how the program works. Mr. Riebau of French and Associates will be developing the necessary checklists. It is hoped that work will begin on homes in early April.

Mr. Vanell stated there are steps being taken to inform property owners with letters and a brochure showing what proper vent installation looks like. Rental properties should contact the owners so everyone knows when inspections will be made. Bucoda is protecting the town and the contractors, as well as protecting the Flood Authority's reputation. It is building confidence that the Flood Authority is active and will have future projects that will benefit people and mitigate flooding problems.

Mr. Averill stated that although 25-30 homes in Bucoda are to be repaired the Flood Authority has not heard from other jurisdictions. He suggested that each building department should look at the issue and let people know there is no cost to property owners or to the city or county.

Mr. Smith asked if anyone had looked at legal ramifications about fixing private property with public money. Mr. Boettcher stated he had talked to the Department of Ecology and they stated they had used public monies to elevate private homes and get people out of harm's way.

Mr. Boettcher stated he would send Flood Authority members an email they could send along to their Public Works departments or Building departments that would offer jurisdictions the opportunity to participate in the program.

7. Email gage alerts

Mr. Boettcher stated an email went out asking people to sign up for alerts for various gages and provided a link that takes them to a forecast graph which shows actuals. There has been some testing done and everything seems to be working fine. Alerts are also going to KELA, Live 95 and the Chronicle. Outreach will continue to other media outlets as well as brainstorming with emergency managers. Mr. Boettcher asked for suggestions for other media outlets.

Mr. Averill stated that he and Mr. Boettcher are working with the State Emergency Management Council who works mainly with USGS. They are also trying to get state managers and emergency managers together.

8. 2015 Legislature

Mr. Boettcher stated the Governor's budget is for \$30 million at his request with \$10 million for local projects. That budget is still undecided; the House and Senate have not submitted their versions. There has been some talk of local legislators raising the \$30 million to something larger.

On the Policy front, Senate Bill 5628 is to create a referendum to fund about \$3 billion for water issues across the state. There is nothing confirmed at this time.

Mr. Averill stated the intent is to gather support for multiple water projects. The problem is that the funding is going to come from a parcel tax on property and that has gotten a lot of push back from

legislators who don't have an oar in the water. Their argument is: why should everyone pay this tax when only a few will benefit?

Commissioner Fund stated there is a lot of discussion about the parcel tax. Other legislators have a concern about the tax. If people are already paying storm water fees then what does the tax mean? Some other county commissioners suggested using funds from flood control districts. Lewis County does not have enough money to do that. Legislators on our side are working on this issue.

9. Financial Report

Ms. Napier stated expenditures for this time period to February 19 are \$25,808.27, which includes consulting services, studies, salaries and benefits.

Mr. Averill stated the balance is getting down with four months left in the biennium. He asked if the Flood Authority is seeing larger expenditures and could we run out of money. Ms. Napier stated Lewis County is processing an amendment with OFM which will increase the contract with French and Associates.

Mr. Vanell stated the salaries and benefits amounts do not match on the two spreadsheets. Ms. Napier stated they should be the same; she will correct it.

10. Public Comment

Ms. Zieske asked if homes that had not been elevated would qualify to have flood vents installed. Mr. Boettcher stated technically it is a matter of risk, so possibly they could. They'd have to be evaluated to determine if they currently pose a significant risk to life and property. Ms. Zieske stated some homes are built into hills on elevated lands and may not have vents.

11. Reports

a. Chair's Report

Commissioner Raines stated some members of the Flood Authority and Governor's Work Group met with the Tribe and Congressman Derek Kilmer. They toured the Sickman Ford Bridge, Elma, the Satsop area, and talked to farmers about high water events. They visited Mary's River and the waste water treatment plant in Montesano. Congressman Kilmer then met with Malcolm Bowie about the levee project in Aberdeen. He is interested in how to partner with our communities. Mr. Thompson stated he had spoken to Congressman Kilmer at the Fair last summer and he is glad the Congressman is following up.

b. Member Reports

Centralia – Mr. Averill spoke to the flood control zone districts stating that in small districts only 45 cents can be charged and that money is always the last spending option.

Bucoda – Mr. Vanell requested that the Outreach and Education Committee have an event to inform residents about elevation retrofitting and they can also explain other things that are being done in the Basin. He stated Ms. Zieske could attend the Bucoda meeting and ask questions. Mr. Smith stated he would like to be informed of the meetings, also.

Montesano – Mr. Estes stated the Orting area has been troubled with floods and they created a new channel along the river with an earthen berm set back further from the river. It kept Orting safe and dry. He stated he has information about it if anyone is interested.

c. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

d. State Team Report

There was no State Team Report.

12. Confirm Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on March 19 in Thurston County, the meeting place to be announced. Topics for discussion will include updates on the Legislature, projects and the Bucoda vent project.

The meeting adjourned at 11:46 a.m.