

## Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority

**Meeting 9:00 A.M.**

**Oakville City Hall**

**204 W Main St, Oakville**

**September 15, 2016 - Meeting Notes**

**Board Members Present:** Edna Fund, Lewis County Commissioner; Lonnie Willey, Town of Pe Ell; Ron Averill; City of Centralia; Julie Balmelli-Powe, City of Chehalis; Frank Chestnut, City of Cosmopolis; Jenifer Slem, City of Napavine; Rocky Howard, City of Montesano; Alan Vanell, Town of Bucoda; Vickie Raines, Grays Harbor County Commissioner; Cindy Wilson, Thurston County; Dan Thompson, City of Oakville

**Board Members Excused:** Kathi Hoder City of Aberdeen

**Others Present:** John Penberth; Jessica Hausman, Ecology; Kim Smith, Grays Harbor Community Development; Kathleen Berger, Thurston County Community Development; Bob Burkle, WDFW; Julie Sackett, WADNR; Rich Osborne, UW Olympia Natural Resources Center; Deanna Zieske; J Vander Stoep; Dale Lewis; Congresswoman Herrera-Beutler's office; Stu Trefry, WA Conservation Commission; Richard Armstrong, City of Oakville; Trent Loughed, City of Chehalis

### **Handouts/Materials Used:**

- Agenda
- Meeting Notes from July 21, 2016
- 2015-2017 Project List
- Proposed 2017-2019 Projects
- Basin Strategy PowerPoint
- Financial Report
- See [https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias\\_1492/34798/meetings.aspx#Sept2016](https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias_1492/34798/meetings.aspx#Sept2016)

### **1. Call to Order**

Chair Raines called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

### **2. Introductions**

Self-introductions were made by all attending.

### **3. Approval of Agenda**

Mr. Boettcher added two items to the agenda: Kathleen Berger and Kim Smith are to give updates regarding the Conservation Districts (to be added to Item 14 (d) State Team Report), and an expense item regarding the Town of Bucoda (added to Item 6, Bucoda Main Street Project). The agenda was approved by consensus with these additions.

### **4. Approval of Meeting Notes from July 21, 2016**

There were no corrections to the meeting notes and were approved by consensus as presented.

### **5. Update on Existing 2015-17 Projects**

Mr. Boettcher stated the tracking sheet for these projects has been updated in EZview. In Bucoda, one more flood vent still needs to be installed; one resident declined to have the vent installed. China Creek, the Airport Pump Project and Elma Wastewater Treatment Plant projects will likely be needing to carry

2015-17 funds forward to the next biennium. For China Creek, the Corps has taken longer than expected. For the Airport Pump Project geotechnical and design complexities have slowed down the project as well there have been funding issues. The proposed Elma Wastewater Treatment Plant will not be permitted by the Corps without substantial mitigation so the City is proposing alternatively to tunnel under the river bank with construction slated for 2017.

Mr. Boettcher stated the studies for Wishkah Rd, Montesano treatment plant, Kirkland Rd (Napavine) and Oakville are generally on track and should conclude this biennium. There is enough information from these studies to offer proposals as placeholders for the 2017-2019 biennium.

The study for Kirkland Rd is to explore solutions to route the water from under I-5 more directly to the Chehalis River. This proposal has a placeholder for 2017-2019.

The Montesano study is to learn how to reduce the velocity of the water from the Wynoochee. The final report is due next week.

In Bucoda, one of the contractors for the flood venting project did not work out; they did not get a building permit. A permit and inspection is still required for that home and someone has to pay the \$254.89 cost. Mr. Boettcher stated it could be paid as an expense item or it could be used from the 2015-2017 funds. There were thumbs up to pay out of the 2015-2017 funds. Mr. Boettcher stated he is finding that on the average there is a 50% reduction for flood insurance on the homes that have the flood vents, elevation certificates and the certification from the contractor. These homes are also much more saleable.

#### **6. Bucoda Main Street Project**

Mr. Boettcher continued with a discussion on the Bucoda Main Street project. The project is increasing in size and intensity to about \$8 million, growing from \$3 million at 30% design. At the last meeting a decision was made to put the project on hold and to look at alternatives. There are two alternatives: water rescue training for fire department personnel which would cost virtually nothing. Another alternative is to use an abandoned roadway. Mayor Carr would like to secure a grant through Thurston Regional Planning for \$7,500 to research whether the county or town retained the right of way of that road. The proposal would be to use it for emergencies and for recreational purposes, such as the Seattle to Portland Bike Run (STP). Mr. Boettcher proposed to keep the project on hold until there is word from Mayor Carr on these two options.

There was consensus to take no further action until hearing from Mayor Carr.

#### **7. Update on Proposed 2017-2019 Projects**

Mr. Boettcher stated 10 proposals came in earlier; Wishkah Rd and Kirkland Rd came in last night. There are placeholders for those two. Phase II for China Creek – Agnew Mill Ponds – is anticipated. Thurston Conservation District and Emergency Management will be putting together a proposal for a modern farm pad that allows for flow-through waters. That proposal is expected next week.

Mr. Boettcher summarized the ten projects that came in, stating that the Projects Committee would prioritize the list with funding amounts. After approval from the Flood Authority, the Governor's Work Group will take it to the Legislature (in whole or as modified by the Work Group). Few items of note:

- Item 4 -- The new Chehalis Wastewater Treatment Plant is being studied, partly to determine if it is a flood project. Ms. Balmelli-Powe asked, with the transition to Office of Chehalis, if the Flood Authority projects should be strictly for flood mitigation or should restoration projects be considered as well. Mr. Kramer stated that discussion is needed but it will not happen in the next biennium.
- Item 8 -- This culvert replacement project may also be better suited to a habitat project.
- Item 11 – WSE, WEST, the agencies, and others need to reconvene to talk about gage needs. For example, two gages are close to one another in Pe Ell. We need to find out why there are two gages so close to each other. Without technical experts we cannot understand the pros and cons of such placement as well the placement of other gages in the Basin.. In addition, the National Weather Service does not maintain their gages and the Flood Authority should try to assist in resolving that issue. Ms. Balmelli-Powe suggested that the two gages may be reading different things and may need to stay in place. Mr. Vanell stated people are used to looking at the gages. If there is a change there must be some educational component. Mr. Boettcher stated there have been a lot of people signing up for gage alerts so it must be an accurate and modern system.
- Item 12 – Chehalis Basin Habitat Work Schedule Pilot – Mr. Averill stated he supports this project but it probably belongs in a different funding bucket. There is a need to get an early look at projects so proponents understand projects and mitigation needs and opportunities. Mr. Boettcher stated the capital budget cannot be used for operations and maintenance. It can be used to set up habitat work schedule as a pilot for broader project planning purposes, however not for long-term operation of the work schedule itself.

Mr. Boettcher stated the total so far is \$7,486 204 and will likely reach \$10 to \$12 million when additional project proposals come in.

Flood Authority concluded agenda item with a discussion on role of the Flood Authority and local projects. Mr. Kramer stated the Hoquiam project is about drainage issues and will open a significant level of effort that has not been a purview of this group. A conscious effort must be made to look at these types of projects. Chair Raines stated Hoquiam asked about becoming a Flood Authority member about a year ago when she explained the process to add Cosmopolis and Napavine. Hoquiam is in the Basin and if they have projects to submit the Project Committee can vet them. Are we only going to do projects on the Chehalis or are we going to look at tributaries? We need to determine what is allowed and what is not. Mr. Kramer stated it might be helpful for Hoquiam public works people to come to the next meeting to understand the involvement. Chair Raines stated she would follow up.

#### **8. 2017 Flood Warning System Budget and County Shares**

Mr. Boettcher stated the cost for 2017 is the same as for 2016. He suggested the same division of funds. There was thumbs up for this proposal. Ms. Balmelli-Powe asked if division of funds will need to be reconsidered as protection is improved in some areas. Mr. Boettcher stated that division of funds has been calculated on basis of historic FEMA payouts and that until there is another major flood with new (additional) FEMA payouts we won't have the basis to recalculate division of funds. In other words without new FEMA payout information, the analysis today on dividing flood warning system costs would be the same (as previous years).

There was discussion about where the Chehalis River ends and where other rivers or tributaries begin. Mr. Kramer stated the EIS focuses on the Chehalis Basin, Grays Harbor and its tributaries. The Flood Authority is the Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority. At some point that needs to be reconciled. Mr. Chestnut stated that wherever the water comes from, a river is a river and it's all in the Basin. Mr. Kramer will get some background information on this for later in the biennium.

### **9. Update on Fairs**

Mr. Thompson stated this is the third year that the Flood Authority has been represented at the Grays Harbor County Fair and Southwest Washington Fair. The Flood Authority is getting the word out to people and they are interested in what the Flood Authority is doing. A retention structure is starting to become more acceptable and a lot of people are in favor of the habitat restoration projects. The booth needs to have something that will attract attention and bring people in to have discussions.

### **10. Update on Basin Strategy**

Mr. Kramer presented a Power Point on a restorative flood protection goal not seen before in the other presentations. New information will be coming out on September 27; postcards will be sent to all landowners in the floodplain and the EIS will be advertised in the newspapers.

#### **Key Dates:**

- September 29 – Draft EIS
- October 11 – Policy Workshop
- October 17-18 – Public Hearings
- October 20 – Flood Authority Meeting

After the Power Point, Ms. Balmelli-Powe asked if Lewis County has 9,000 acres of hill ground to use for moving farms. Also, there is not as much farming acreage available on hillsides as is available on flat ground. Mr. Thompson stated there may be negative response to this proposal now and suggested that an inter-generational aspect needs to be considered. Younger people are more open to new ideas.

### **11. Update on Current Organizational Structure for Chehalis Basin**

Mr. Boettcher shared the chart he drafted and stated as things progress it will be taken to a deeper level, showing other collaborative efforts. He will send the chart to the members for doodling and other suggestions. A couple of the members suggested showing arrows between the Governor's Work Group and the Flood Authority.

### **12. Financial Report**

There were no questions on the Report.

### **13. Public Comment**

Deanna Zieske asked if there are examples of relocating farms from flatlands to hillsides that have been successful. Mr. Kramer stated he did not know of any and he could ask the consulting firms. Mr. Vander Stoep stated when an EIS is drafted, a range of options is looked at. This is an alternative that is on the table to be evaluated; it is not a recommendation.

Mr. Burkle, WDFW, stated prime farm land is consumed every year by development. There are opportunities to save farmland that would otherwise be converted. Look at farmers who no longer want to farm and whose children are not interested in farming. This land needs to be saved and used to mitigate the loss of farmland for other reasons.

John Penberth stated the lack of water is already identified during the summer and not enough attention is being paid to that. Dikes are breaking on the Mississippi – put them on barrels so they float.

Julie Sackett, WADNR, stated DNR has received a grant to target small forest land owners in the Basin. Outreach is needed to understand their resources and how to maximize those resources and focus on fish habitat restoration. She welcomes an opportunity to work with the Flood Authority.

#### **14. Reports**

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

The Chair had nothing to report.

##### **b. Member Reports**

*Lewis County* – Commissioner Fund stated the IT department is revising river and road apps for mobile devices and is hoping to put on historical data for USGS.

*Chehalis* – The Dillenbaugh project should be wrapped up in a week.

*Centralia* – The Mellen Street project had a ribbon cutting a week ago and it is almost wrapped up. Part of that project was to ensure that hospital access was available at all times.

*Cosmopolis* – The Corps' permit is expected next month for that project.

*Montesano* – There is a meeting in October to consult on the Wishkah protection plan and there should be some alternatives.

*Bucoda* – There will be two haunted houses throughout all of October. He encouraged everyone to attend.

*Grays Harbor County* – Chair Raines stated the Wishkah Rd project is moving forward and property was secured for that project. WSE is working on the study upstream at 5 other points on the river.

*Oakville* – The study has been moved to the phase of where to put the water after it is drained. Mr. Boettcher stated a placeholder for that project is needed within two weeks.

##### **c. Correspondence**

There was no correspondence.

##### **d. State Team Report**

Kathleen Berger, Thurston Community Development, and Kim Smith, Grays Harbor Community Development, have been working together to collect land owner needs and how the Conservation District can help. They distributed a summary sheet from the public meetings that were held in July in August. Some concerns included bank erosion; lack of public funding; logging practices; declines in fish populations; and why traditional methods of riprap, gravel mining, etc. are no longer allowed.

Ms. Hausman, Ecology, reiterated Mr. Kramer's comments about Flood Authority members attending the Technical Workshops in preparation for the draft PEIS. She also mentioned that there will be future

meetings and discussions about the development of the Office of Chehalis Basin with the Flood Authority.

**15. Next Regular Meeting**

The next meeting will be on October 20 in Lewis County. Location will be determined at a later date.

The meeting adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

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