

Chehalis River Basin Flood Authority

Meeting 9:00 A.M.

Montesano City Hall

March 20, 2014 - Meeting Notes

Board Members Present: Vickie Raines, City of Cosmopolis; Ken Estes, City of Montesano; Karen Valenzuela, Thurston County Commissioner; Ron Averill, City of Centralia; Cindy Wilson, Town of Bucoda; Arnold Haberstroh, City of Chehalis; John Penberth, Town of Pe Ell; Kathi Hoder, City of Aberdeen; Edna Fund, Lewis County Commissioner; Wes Cormier, Grays Harbor Commissioner

Board Members Excused: Lionel Pinn, City of Napavine; Dan Thompson, City of Oakville

Others Present: Please see sign in sheet

Handouts/Materials Used:

- Agenda
- Meeting Notes from February 20, 2014
- Process for Endorsing Individual Capital Projects
- Hydraulic Impact Analysis
- Flood Authority Annual Work Focus and Roles
- Financial Report
- See https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias_1492/34798/meetings_2013-15.aspx#Mar2014

1. Call to Order

Chair Raines called the meeting to order at 9:15. She welcomed John Penberth, the new representative of the Town of Pe Ell.

2. Introductions

Self-introductions were made by all attending.

3. Approval of Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda and it was approved.

4. Approval of Meeting Notes

There were no changes to the meeting notes from February 20, 2014 and they were approved.

5. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

A temporary election was held at the January meeting and Vickie Raines was elected Chair; Karen Valenzuela was elected Vice Chair at that time. There were no new nominations and Commissioner Fund moved to retain the current officers. The motion was approved by consensus.

6. Update: Results from Gage Meeting

At the January meeting Mr. Boettcher was assigned the task to meet with appropriate agencies regarding rain and river gages to create an opportunity to see what information was available. That meeting was held on March 14. Dave Curtis had talked about the challenges with the maps at the

meeting at Lucky Eagle Casino and he is working with USGS so that the public can anticipate a level of certainty. Work is continuing on the Early Warning System to increase the confidence in forecasting.

There is also a need for a comprehensive documentation of the gages in the Basin. Some gages are continuous; some are seasonal; some measure stage levels and others measure velocity. It is important to have all the gages in the Basin documented, as well as the maintenance schedule for each gage and the procedures for that maintenance. The NWS has two gages – one on the Chehalis and one on the Skookumchuck – which they do not maintain. It was discovered that there was an error being reported in those gages. The gage group is looking to develop new rating curves which correlate velocity and stage height. WSDOT will take the lead on this. These gages need to be accurate so that if closure of I-5 is necessary it happens at the correct time – not too early and not too late.

When the inundation maps were created by WEST the Newaukum River gage was in error and it will be re-surveyed. USGS is asking about the accuracy of other gages.

All gages mapped by Mr. Boettcher. The gage group is also developing recommendations for new potential gages. About 33% of the area above Adna is not gaged and the South Fork is not gaged. They will come back with informed options for new gages that can be considered by the Flood Authority.

WEST stated that there are programs in other parts of the country where citizens are trained and given instrumentation to note where high water is and can text it in with their phone. The Flood Authority could work with EMS to engage citizens to put probes in their back yards. They are a simple device: a stick with measurement float. When the water comes up it pushes the float up and when the water recedes the float stays in place, indicating the water level. This is a low-cost approach for river forecasting and validation and perhaps should be pursued. Mr. Boettcher thought the CRS could possibly be lowered with this kind of system in place.

Mr. Boettcher stated that Mr. Curtis is chair of the National Hydrologic Warning Council and wants to hold a workshop in the Pacific Northwest in the fall. He wants to look at work that is being done here and in other areas. It will bring federal agencies together.

Mr. Averill stated that Centralia is maintaining two gages and asked if WSDOT will take those over.

Mr. Boettcher stated WSDOT is not looking to take over those gages; they want to work with USGS and NWS and the County to come up with rating curves. Currently, the forecast from these gages is theoretically derived. Their predictions would be more accurate if they were based on rating curves from existing cross sections.

USGS has extra funds that can be used to offset the expense that counties are now paying for maintenance. The Flood Authority could send them a letter desiring to partner in this. Mr. Boettcher can draft the letter for Chair Raines to sign. Lewis County is the largest payer to USGS and the money saved could be put into additional gages.

Mr. Penberth stated educational seminars are needed for responders to get the word out to communities. The people in Pe Ell could let others down river know that the water is coming. Responders down river are slow because they can't see the water coming.

Mr. Haberstroh stated the emails that WEST sent out about high water were very beneficial. He suggested Centralia College for the meeting Mr. Curtis would like to host.

Mr. Averill stated that Ross McDowell is using river watchers in Lewis County.

Mr. Kramer asked if WSDOT has to wait for a flood for the curve rating. Mr. Boettcher stated they can do it now if those agencies (USGS, NWS, WEST, WSDOT and WSE) can sit down and look at the data.

A question was asked about using Public Works or other staff to maintain gages and reduce the cost. Mr. Boettcher stated he is first trying to get on paper where all the gages are located. Accessing the NFIP fund could help with funding, also.

There was discussion about who should maintain the gages: USGS maintain all of them; A Public Works employee could be hired for just that purpose; the Flood Authority could take over all the gages; having river watchers pass on information which would eliminate the need for some gages.

Mr. Kramer stated the Flood Authority needs to know the cost of gage maintenance before the jurisdictions get into their budget cycle. That should occur before September.

7. Discussion: Process for Addressing Requests for Endorsement of Projects

Mr. Kramer stated that the Flood Authority has largely supported a suite of projects and there is no process for projects outside of that. The Flood Authority does not have a process for reviewing and endorsing independent project proposals. Mr. Kramer presented a draft proposal with two options. The Authority might want to wait until the long term strategy is in place, or it may choose go to with Option B that provided conditions for when and how the Flood Authority would review and endorse individual projects.

Mr. Penberth stated that the 2007 flood brought flooding to everyone's attention. Is this going to be another funding agency? If the Flood Authority focuses on the issues at hand and not bring in any more it can wrap this up in a year or two and have it all taken care of. It's being paid for by the tax payers. Are jurisdictions paying for maintenance? Pe Ell will say no. There must be a new source of funding. We can't keep going to the state. Keep it as simple as we can – address the issue of flooding on the Chehalis, or reduce it, and work on that. He supported Option A.

Commissioner Valenzuela stated she supported Option B. It is to the Flood Authority's benefit to have a point of view both positive and negative on projects. The Project Subcommittee should review the projects first and get back to the Flood Authority.

Mr. Averill stated that if the Flood Authority chose Option A we will not entertain other projects and he thought that was wrong. Those that have already been approved have had changes because of money. We are operating in a finite budget. Option B was his choice.

Mr. Haberstroh thought Option B was the most consistent with the Flood Authority's mission.

Mr. Kramer stated the implication of Option B is a demand on the Project Committee and staff. The concern is: if you take Mr. Ogden's example it is a significant project that reduced flood damage on one property. There is not a comprehensive approach to enhancing aquatic species. Some practices may

not be good; some may be good. The Flood Authority will be making decisions this year on things that may ultimately be inconsistent with the long-term strategy.

Mr. Averill stated it is not like we haven't looked at restoration for a long time. We have the Chehalis Basin Partnership that looks specifically at that.

Mr. Kramer asked Mr. Penberth if there was some modification that could be made to have him support Option B. Mr. Penberth stated the money is running out. After the plan was drawn up it should have been sunset.

Mr. Haberstroh stated that if Option B was tying the Flood Authority to financial funding he would not agree, either, but it is not.

Mr. Boettcher stated two projects came to the Flood Authority. He did not anticipate that there would be a groundswell of project requests.

Commissioner Valenzuela stated that sometimes the impact of a project is unknown. If someone comes to us with a project the Committee can't come to the conclusion of what the impact would be. We need to think about those impacts. If we support a project that has a negative impact we have not done what we want to do.

Mr. Kramer offered modified language to Option B: "there are no unmitigated adverse environmental impacts or significant uncertainty regarding potential environmental impacts". There was consensus for Option B with that language change. "The Flood Authority will consider endorsing an individual project at the request of a project sponsor if it has: (1) been reviewed by the Project Subcommittee, (2) there is a clear flood hazard/flood damage reduction benefit, (3) there is no increase in the potential for flood damage upstream or downstream, and (4) there are no unmitigated adverse environmental impacts or significant uncertainty regarding potential environmental impacts."

8. Update: Centralia Station Project Status

Mr. Kramer stated the question regarding this project is if there a significant effect on flooding in the project area or in the Basin. Commissioner Fund had asked someone from the Port of Centralia to brief the Flood Authority but no one was available. They sent their Hydraulic Impact Analysis, which was included in the packet. Mr. Kramer's take on the report was it did not identify any significant flood elevation either on the property or off site of the property.

Mr. Averill stated that the area is mostly residential; however it has been marked by the city planners as commercial property. The city was already looking at that area for development before the Port came in. This is an area that has suffered flooding in the past. The community got together and formed a diking district for flood protection. In the current plan for the Mellen Street interchange the levee will be connected to the road. That is being taken into consideration in this hydraulic report.

Commissioner Fund stated a hydrologist could attend the next meeting. Mr. Kramer asked if there was more interest in this project.

Commissioner Valenzuela stated she is interested in this project. The information that is lacking is the relationship between this work and the flood plain assessment of local government programs, and this project will be in the flood plain.

Mr. Haberstroh stated the Authority needs to be clear on this project. Olympia is giving the Authority money for flood projects and now we are filling the flood plain. Commissioner Fund suggested holding the July meeting in Lewis County.

Mr. Kramer asked where this project is in the development process. Mr. Hill stated it is still in the SEPA process and July would not be too late to get more information.

Mr. Penberth stated the local people created its own diking district but it is not a prevention of what might happen, only small floods. He is concerned about flooding.

Mr. Averill stated that the Port would take over the diking district. Originally WSDOT would not allow the dike to be at the height it should have been for a major flood. With the new interchange that will change. The Salzer Creek water will not come up. Plus, the interchange is 40' high so there is more protection being provided just by the freeway. With Centralia Station's visibility he is concerned that people will not understand what the project is doing.

Mr. Kramer suggested that WSDOT also attend to explain its additional work.

Chair Raines asked if the Flood Authority could use the Centralia Police Department training center again for the July meeting.

Brenda Novotny, Pe Ell resident, stated residents of Pe Ell need more information on what the Flood Authority is doing regarding the fish study, etc.

9. Discussion: Small Project Prioritization

Mr. Boettcher stated staff is collecting ideas for small projects to consider with major projects, such as a dam and I-5, for reducing flood damage in the Basin. The list will serve two purposes: 1- Under the Governor's work group it will look at alternatives to large projects, or something to compliment large projects. 2- The list will serve as to what to recommend to the legislature for funding for design and construction. We are not asking the Flood Authority what projects should be funded, but what projects need more analyses that serve those two purposes.

Mr. Boettcher continued to say that Beth Peterson had been to the jurisdictions to capture a list of projects for flood hazard reduction and multi-purpose projects. The map shows projects that have been identified. There are more projects that could reasonably be funded; it is not known yet if they will have beneficial flood relief benefits.

All of the projects are on the list. There is a list of criteria from the state agency team and consultants, both primary and tie-breaker criteria. Three are used to evaluate each project: 1 - The ability to affect a broader area; how far downstream does a project continue to have an effect? 2 – What is the value and size of infrastructure that the project is intended to protect? 3 – What is the size of human population that would be at risk?

Secondary criteria (tie breakers for scored projects) include: 1 – Permitting and implementation – how readily could this happen and be on the ground? 2 – The need and complexity of the project for beyond construction costs (post construction costs, O & M, etc.) 3 – Environmental benefits – are there benefits to habitat, water quality, functions? 4 – Adaptability – Was the project intended to solve a problem today and could that solution still work under different circumstances?

- 0 = Project does not strongly meet the criteria
- 1 = Project does not meet the criteria
- 2 = Don't know if project meets the criteria
- 3 = Project meets the criteria
- 4 = Project strongly meets the criteria

Mr. Boettcher stated the Anchor consultant team with Mr. Boettcher did the initial scoring and then the list went to the Project Committee. The Project Committee talked about permitting and implementation and thought those should be considered as a primary criterion. The Project Committee does not have the costs of the projects. The consultants are trying to get to a statement of cost.

Mr. Penberth stated he is opposed to a dam. He asked his council how to represent the town and they said they need more information. Culvert projects are being appealed in court. The Chehalis River bridge on Highway 6 was designed so a lot of water could go under that bridge. You may hear from the Quinault Tribe and we cannot create future animosity with the tribes. The ecosystem restoration that we will be looking at will be five times the cost of whatever we are going to do. If you run the water under Hwy 6 what is the cost benefit ratio? It is a rich archaeological area from Hwy 6 to Mellen St.

Mr. Averill stated that the recent legislative discussion for \$1.5 billion in funding statewide was not intended for small projects but for major projects, such as a dam and I-5. These are small projects that we started working on after the 2012 legislative budget. Some on this list have design work done already. There was no capital budget and the money to help in Cosmopolis is not there. Projects that are already started should continue; look at the others after those.

Mr. Kramer stated there are two purposes to this list. One is what Mr. Averill is speaking to and what the long term interest is. We are not asking which projects should be funded. Should we do more analysis on a specific project so we have information for the next legislative session? On projects that we have a lot of analysis there is not a need for more engineering analysis by the Anchor consultant team.

Ms. Hoder stated projects that have already started should continue. If we show the legislature that we have studied these projects and that we want them done we will get the funding. She thought Mill Creek and Wishkah Rd should continue.

Mr. Estes asked how the categories could be changed. What about a project that doesn't meet the criteria? Mr. Boettcher stated the purpose today is what should the criteria be and which of these projects should go to the next level of analysis.

Mr. Averill stated we are looking at the current list to bring it down to ten projects for further study. In that list are projects that are already moving along for funding. Mr. Kramer stated we have limited dollars for analysis of projects on this list so they can be compared to each other. Projects that have no cost analysis and may provide flood damage reduction should have more work done.

Mr. Boettcher stated he could separate the list of projects with analysis and without analysis.

Mr. Kramer stated as an example that China Creek affects a huge part of Centralia and could cost upwards of \$20 million. In the long term strategy that is a project that should be considered but

whether it should be considered in the next biennium is the question. We would not study that more because the City of Centralia already has some design information for the project.

Mr. Haberstroh thought it would be helpful to identify those that have analysis. When we have limited funds we need to look at those than can be done with the least cost and the most benefit. Huge projects probably will not get funded.

Mr. Penberth stated a berm is being put in at the Pe Ell wastewater treatment plant. He was told the berm won't protect the plant because the river is eroding into it. Whoever designed that should have done a wall protection. He would recommend that project be stopped. It will cost about half a million dollars and should be reconsidered.

Mr. Boettcher stated he would look at the list to see which projects have cost estimates and there will be no additional feasibility done. He will see how the scoring would provide guidance for projects that need additional analysis and bring those back to the Project Committee.

10. Updated Flood Authority Work Tasks and Roles

Mr. Kramer stated the first page of the handout shows the primary tasks that the Flood Authority is focused on this year. Aberdeen has been added to the Outreach and Education Committee; Pe Ell has been added to the Projects Committee. Staff responsibilities are about the same; roles of the Chair and Facilitator are the same; the consensus process is the same. He asked for corrections or additions.

Mr. Averill asked that the chair, as head of "state" be changed.

John Penberth stated the Pe Ell council wanted to know if citizens will be able to vote on what is being done in the basin, such as the wastewater treatment plant and dam. If Flood Authority voting is still by consensus, Pe Ell could use that to block.

Chair Raines stated that small projects are brought to the table by the jurisdiction. The Flood Authority would not vote on a project that isn't brought to the table by a jurisdiction.

Mr. Penberth stated you can negotiate, but if we don't rule by consensus with one person being able to block it causes a problem because the big people can walk over the little people. Pe Ell is a member of this committee. To be able to negotiate on an equal basis, my vote has to count as much as anyone else's.

Mr. Kramer stated this body has a two-prong decision making approach. Consensus first, then the option for a vote. There is also the option to go back to the table for further discussion. A vote is not necessarily the end of the negotiations. Everyone has the same weight in terms of vote.

Mr. Penberth stated the interlocal agreement must be changed for the voting issue. He will take the ILA to his council.

Commissioner Fund stated we want all of the information before we get to yay or nay. People in your area don't think we are at that point. The Education/Outreach Committee would go to your community and give the most up-to-date information to your council and public.

Mr. Haberstroh stated outreach would give council an overview and a chance to quiz the committee.

Commissioner Valenzuela stated if Mr. Penberth reads page 3 and 4 [FA Annual Work Focus and Roles document] could they live with the existing process, or is that what they want to change? Can the council continue to live with this as they have agreed to?

Mr. Penberth stated he would get a copy and give it to each council member. The word consensus is what needs interpretation.

Chair Raines asked Commissioner Fund to contact Mayor Nichols.

Mr. Kramer asked if there was support for the changes to the document. It was approved by consensus.

11. Update: Legislative Results

Mr. Kramer stated there was considerable discussion regarding more funds for Flood Authority work. There were \$5 million in the governor's budget for Wishkah Rd, Mill Creek and Satsop but no budget passed. Those three projects cannot be constructed with the money that is available.

Mr. Kramer stated SB6516 which would have set up a legislative task force to look at funding options for flood damage reduction, storm water and irrigation projects but did not pass out of the senate. There is some interest from supporters to work with the legislature to look at options for funding those interests, including long term needs for the Chehalis Basin, and to do some of the same work that would have occurred with the passage of SB 6516 so when the next legislative session occurs there is an awareness of the need and potential of funding for capital dollars. There is a lot of interest and support in the legislature; the budget did not pass for other reasons.

12. Update: Governor's Work Group Process; Work Group Members

The Governor's work group is now in the process of taking an intensive look at water retention above Pe Ell and protecting I-5 with or without water retention. A consulting team hired by the governor's office is developing configurations for the dam, looking at cost, operation, flood reduction, aquatic species, as well as I-5 improvements. WSDOT is looking at several alternatives but is not doing any more work on the bypass alternative (express lane). They will look at walls and levees and the elevation of I-5. Significant technical work is also occurring to enhance aquatic species in the Basin. That initial conclusions are expected in May. There will be a series of policy workshops in May and the public is welcome. One of those workshops will be in Montesano; one at the Veterans Museum.

13. Public Comment

Jay Gordon stated when the Senate and House started giving money the Flood Authority had a list of projects ready. Having those available and how the money could be used was very beneficial. We did not get the capital budget this year but this group needs to do its work and line up the projects for the next session. The Flood Authority is doing good work and is being recognized. The Chehalis Tribe and the Flood Authority are working together.

Al Smith thanked the Flood Authority for its work. He would rather not see a sunset on the Flood Authority. This group is necessary because it includes various city councils. He liked Mr. Boettcher's idea of having a point person for the gages; he likes the idea of citizens watching the rivers. He was disturbed about the project list. He was sure the Wishkah project would get done but whose idea was the new list?

Mr. Kramer stated the list is in addition to what we already have funded and want to look at. We will study the projects we have not yet studied.

Chair Raines stated the list shows all of the projects. Mr. Boettcher will separate them out and have only projects that have not had analysis and studies done. From that list and criteria we will decide where to spend the funding.

Mr. Gordon stated he has watched the Flood Authority become very functional. For the folks that have been on the board for a while, for your time and dedication, you deserve a pat on the back. He is proud of what the Flood Authority has done and what it gives. Also, the Sickman Ford project got done and we saw the benefits up to the county line. For those results after recent flooding – congratulations.

Brenda Novoltny, Pe Ell resident, stated this meeting has helped to see what is going on and how it all works together for the environment. She would like to have the Outreach committee go to the Pe Ell council, especially after the hard facts come in May.

14. Reports

a. Chair's Report

There was no report from the Chair.

b. Member Reports

Cosmopolis – Chair Raines stated the Mill Creek engineering and design scope is continuing. Construction is expected about this time next year. Funds are available for design and permitting.

Montesano – Mr. Estes stated the group would see what has been done around the wastewater treatment plant today. The recent flooding was 6" below the 2007 flood. The new wall will keep water from getting into the wastewater treatment plant. The steel plate wall for Mary's River will be coming from Luxembourg. That project may be done in June. About \$400,000 will be returned from the Mary's River project.

Centralia – The Mellen St. interchange and high berm to get across the bridge are still progressing. He reminded everyone that that is not a Flood Authority project but it will provide access to the hospital.

Bucoda – Ms. Wilson stated the levee has been approved.

Chehalis – Mr. Haberstroh stated Chehalis is talking to WSDOT for additional funding.

Pe Ell – Mr. Penberth stated he would like to learn more about the relationship with the Quinault Indian Nation, the Corps' dam project and FERC.

Chair Raines stated there was more than a year of reaching out to the Quinault Tribe requesting meetings and telephone conversations. It was their choice not to reply. They seem to be interested in only direct communication with the Governor Office. The Flood Authority was asked by former Governor Gregoire to allow that process to take place. The Quinault are aware of the meetings at Great Wolf Lodge and they have attended. They are welcome to come to any open meeting and to comment. It is their choice not to come.

Aberdeen – Ms. Hoder stated she is thankful for the money that has been given to the Flood Authority.

Lewis County – Commissioner Fund stated the levee project is short about \$200,000. In previous discussions WSDOT thought they could help but they cannot. They are willing to take over the project.

c. Correspondence

There was a letter sent from Mayor Nichols of Pe Ell stating John Penberth is the new representative for the Flood Authority.

d. State Team Report

Mr. Ogden reported that the Conservation Commission has a signed contract for critter pads from OFM. He has had 15 people in Lewis County sign up for critter pads; one is an evacuation route. Three people in Grays Harbor County have signed up. If nothing changes preliminary engineering will start in Grays Harbor County. Most properties in Lewis County have been surveyed, going to permitting within the next month. Mr. Ogden spoke with Mark White and he may be able to provide some dirt for one of the Grays Harbor County critter pads (heretofore called “livestock/equipment pads”).

Mr. Haberstroh asked if someone could build his own livestock pad. Mr. Ogden stated his organization can help with permitting.

Ms. Jessica Hausman, Department of Ecology, thanked the Flood Authority for the invitation to the meeting. She and Ecology appreciate hearing from local governments and their perspectives.

15. Financial Report

Mr. Kramer explained the expenditures for the last 30 days for himself, Mr. Boettcher and Ms. Anderson. Mr. Averill suggested putting a “zero” in the column for travel from Lewis County.

16. Meeting Conclusions

Mr. Kramer concluded with the Chair and Vice Chair positions being approved; the meeting on gages regarding maintenance cost; the process of endorsing projects to the Flood Authority; talk with the Port of Centralia to attend the July meeting regarding Centralia Station and WSDOT alternatives; approach for prioritization of projects – first projects that are already funded; and major information coming from the Governor’s work group in May.

17. Confirm Next Regular Meeting

The next meeting will be a conference call on April 17. The May meeting has been canceled; June will be another conference call and in July the meeting will be in Centralia at the Police Department training facility on Mellen St.

Commissioner Fund asked if there was any objection to moving all the names in the Flood Authority contact list to BCC to eliminate a long print-out when printing is necessary. There was no objection.

The meeting adjourned at 12:21.