

Sumas Watershed Improvement District

Minutes – November 14, 2023, 1 PM

Board Attending:

<input type="checkbox"/> Terry Lenssen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brad Rader	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Andy Enfield
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Al Sytsma	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keith Boon	

Others Attending:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gavin Willis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Henry Bierlink	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fred Likkel
<input type="checkbox"/> Anna Beebe	<input type="checkbox"/> Dale Buys	<input type="checkbox"/> Frank Corey
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dave Hoffman	<input type="checkbox"/> Bill Clarke	<input type="checkbox"/> Darrell Grey
<input type="checkbox"/> Jay Chennault	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sunny Aulakh	<input type="checkbox"/> Katie Faber

x – present o – absent with notice t – teleconference p – proxy

Brad called the meeting to order at 1:04. Terry delegated chair responsibilities to Al for the meeting.

1. Board of Equalization

- Andy moved to open the board of equalization. Keith seconded. Board of equalization was opened.
- There were no comments or contests of related to assessments.
- Keith moved to close the board of equalization. Andy seconded. Board of equalization was closed.

2. Consent Agenda

- Nov 14 minutes were reviewed.
- Financial report was reviewed.
- Andy moved to approve the consent agenda and voucher. Al seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Administration

- With no other nominations, Brad and Andy are elected to new 3-year terms.
- OPMA training needs to be completed for all board members. Gavin will coordinate completion of the training at a January or February board meeting.

4. Ag Water Board / Water Supply

- ECY expects to have a draft of the filing form available for public comment by the end of the year. AWB staff are monitoring the situation.
- WMB partners are looking at coordinating a combined application to the Streamflow Restoration Grant program, including surface-to-groundwater conversions previously proposed by AWB.
- The planning unit is looking at ways to tie land use with water availability. There is general agreement in that group on the principle that you can't zone land for agricultural use without a viable water source.

5. FEMA Projects

- a. Gavin is looking into a review of internal controls by Larson Gross to ensure that we are prepared for a single audit. LG would not be eligible to perform the single audit due to appearance of conflict of interest.
- b. Continued progress on getting a contract in place with Reichhardt & Ebe to do A&E work on the Lower Sumas project. The City of Sumas is leading that process, utilizing their FEMA-approved procurement policy.

6. Drainage / Habitat / Flood

- a. Darrell Grey presented a request from the Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association.
 - i. He is managing a culvert replacement project on the VanDyken property on Pangborn Rd, funded by EQIP. The culvert on private property is failing.
 - ii. NRCS funding for these types of projects is by the linear foot of the crossing, which is typically enough to cover the project cost. In this case however, the site is peat ground to over 30' depth, so it will require a custom helical pile foundation. The project is about \$32,000 short at this point, and Darrell is looking for alternative funding sources for the shortfall.
 - iii. The WID board thanked him for his request, and will consider it further at a later date.
- b. Fred provided an update on flooding issues. The county is under pressure to begin projects now that they have made significant progress on their modeling.
 - i. Berms around the cities of Everson and Nooksack are supported by modeling, and the county is being pressured to move forward on that. Putting a berm around the city of Sumas would be more complicated.
- c. Fred provided an update on CREP issues. At this point approximately 1000 acres in Whatcom County have been disenrolled (about ¼ of total participating acres). The Washington State Conservation Commission is looking at ways that they can step in and help keep those projects running using funding appropriated for new buffers in the 2022 legislative session.

7. Water Quality

- a. Anna provided an update on water quality data – no outstanding issues at this point.
- b. Anna noted that Sustainable Farms & Fields funding might be released in January 2024 for carbon smart practices.
 - i. Examples of eligible projects are cover crops, nutrient management improvements, energy efficiency improvements, and demonstrations of practices not currently listed that may provide climate benefits.
 - ii. Payment is 75% of cost of implementing the practice, up to \$100,000 per landowner. (Research/demonstration projects can be up to 100% cost share)

8. Landowner Contacts

- a. Keith noted that property owners in the Lower Sumas project area were appreciative of the notice letters that they received.

9. Education / Communications

- a. Website – sumaswid.com
 - i. Website upgrade is tabled for now – the WID is exempt from OPMA website requirements due to having less than 10 staff members.

10. Other Items from Commissioners

- a. None.

11. Next Meetings

- a. The next meeting is December 12th.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:29 pm.

Submitted by Gavin Willis, Ag Water Board

Approved by _____