

Sumas Watershed Improvement District

Minutes – March 12, 2024

Attendees

“(t)” indicates presence via tele-conference, “(p)” indicates proxy vote.

Board – Present	Board – Absent with Notice
Andy Enfield (t) Keith Boon (t) Al Sytsma Brad Rader	Terry Lenssen

Staff and Consultants	
Name	Organization / Affiliation
Gavin Willis	Ag Water Board
Jay Chennault (t)	AESI
Elizabeth Hayes	Whatcom Conservation District
Frank Corey	Whatcom Conservation District
Bill Clarke (t)	Clarke Law
Katie Faber (t)	AESI
David Haggith (t)	N3 Consulting
Fred Likkel	Whatcom Family Farmers

Other Guests	
Name	Organization / Affiliation
none	

Proceedings

Andy called the meeting to order at 1:07 pm.

1. Consent Agenda

- a. Agenda was reviewed.
- b. Feb 13 minutes were reviewed.
- c. Financial reports and voucher in the amount of \$39,474.99 were reviewed.
- d. Keith moved to approve the consent agenda. Al seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Administration

- a. Al moved to approve Resolution 2024-02 – Appointment of Agent to Receive Claims for Damage. Keith seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

3. FEMA Projects

- a. Reichhardt & Ebe contract has been approved by EMD and is awaiting final signatures. Next step for other projects will be to draft new procurement policy and get EMD approval.

4. Ag Water Board / Water Supply

- a. Bill provided an adjudication update. 26 comment letters were submitted on the draft claims form. The entire review process is new, and showed the value of public review of the document.

ECY is turning comment review and finalizing of the form over to AG office, but ultimately the form and summons are a decision of the court, not ECY or AG.

- i. Question remains when and how the form will be finalized. Likely a draft final form in a few months that ECY will propose to the court, could still be another round of comments and legal challenges to that form – will be a question of ripeness there.
- b. Comments for 2025 Comp Plan update were sent to the county. Gavin will share a copy of the comments to the WID board via email.

5. Drainage / Habitat / Flood

- a. No known issues with county roadside ditches in the district.
 - i. Question from board member about clearing ditches on private property. Landowners may request WID assistance, or utilize WID programmatic permit to complete the work on their own.
- b. Frank provided an update on buffers.
 - i. New SCC buffer program went live on March 1. Eventual goal is to permanently protect buffers in the program by purchasing an easement, and the 10-year contracts give time to get that figured out. WID holding those easements would allow proactive management, but it will take some time to implement a program that includes purchasing easements at fair market value.
- c. Discussion of drainage issues on Lindsay Rd. Gavin will approach local landowners and try to find a resolution.
- d. Drainage issues in Nims Rd. area were noted.
- e. Fred provided an update on FLIP work. Seems like any action will be 15+ years in the future. Some concern with implicit ag approval via participation in a process that doesn't appear to be moving. Question of whether the WID should be warning landowners that action is not imminent.
 - i. City of Abbotsford is moving forward on increasing capacity at Barrowtown Pump Station.
 - ii. Discussion of if the WID should draft a letter pushing for the county to take action in the short term. Fred will try and coordinate a meeting with the small cities so that we can have a joint effort to provoke action.

6. Water Quality

- a. WQ data from N3 was reviewed. Numbers did not look good at the end of February; David has had discussions with a few landowners. There may also be some residential/septic contributions on Bone Creek in Sumas city limits. Johnson Creek had a few high numbers as well. Saar Creek and Sumas mainstem both looked good.
 - i. Discussion about outreach in the area. General consensus from board was that it wouldn't be impactful at this moment.

7. Communications / Education

- a. Water rights info evening will be hosted on March 27th at 6:30pm at the Northwest Washington Fairgrounds.

8. Next Meeting

- a. Next meeting is scheduled for April 9th at 1:00 pm.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:23 pm.

Submitted by Gavin Willis, Ag Water Board

Approved by

