

Sumas Watershed Improvement District

Minutes for: November 8, 2022 Meeting, 1pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86860373394?pwd=SVZwN3FKTk5UUERiVGJYaDRhTDk3dz09>

Meeting ID: 868 6037 3394 Passcode: 779791

<u> </u> x <u> </u> Terry Lenssen	<u> </u> o <u> </u> Andy Enfield	<u> </u> <u> </u> x <u> </u> Keith Boon
<u> </u> o <u> </u> Alan Sytsma	<u> </u> <u> </u> x <u> </u> Brad Rader	
<u> </u> <u> </u> t <u> </u> David Haggith	<u> </u> <u> </u> x <u> </u> Henry Bierlink	<u> </u> <u> </u> x <u> </u> Fred Likkel
<u> </u> <u> </u> x <u> </u> Ross Widener	<u> </u> <u> </u> t <u> </u> Sunny Aulakh	<u> </u> <u> </u> t <u> </u> Jennifer Bell
<u> </u> <u> </u> t <u> </u> Jay Chennault	<u> </u> <u> </u> t <u> </u> Bruce Bosch	<u> </u> <u> </u> t <u> </u> Katie Faber
<u> </u> <u> </u> t <u> </u> Bill Clarke	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> Mike Horat	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> x <u> </u> Anna Beebe
<u> </u> <u> </u> t <u> </u> Brandy Reed	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> x <u> </u> Dave Schoonover	

x = present o = absent with notice t = teleconference

Brad called the meeting to order at 1:03.

Board of Equalization Hearing

Public has opportunity to contest Assessments. WID board must determine if petitioners provide clear evidence they would not receive value from WID actions equal to the Assessment amount. WID Board could vote to eliminate or reduce the assessment on individual parcels. Once completed the Regular Board Meeting commences.

Terry moved to open the Board of Equalization, Keith seconded, motion carried unanimously. With no one present to contest the assessments Terry moved to close the Board of Equalization, Keith seconded, motion carried unanimously.

I. Consent Agenda

- a. Review and Approval of October 11 and October 20, 2022 minutes
- b. [Financial Report](#)

<u>Voucher #</u>	<u>Payee</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Amount</u>
S1122	AWB	Oct. - Dec. AWB	\$21,865.59
S1122	DID #15	Saar Creek gravel removal - FEMA	\$25,096.76
S1122	Widener & Assoc.	FEMA consulting - May - Sept.	\$18,999.20
TOTAL VOUCHER			\$65,961.55

Terry moved to approve the Consent Agenda, Keith seconded, motion carried unanimously. It was noted that the payment to DID #15 should be held unit it is clear if the City may be paying this initially and invoicing us for this project along with the others.

II. Administrative

- a. Board nominations – Terry and Alan are elected to 3 year terms. Congratulations and Thanks!

III. Drainage/Habitat/Flood

- a. FEMA update - Ross reviewed the current status and upcoming issues
 - Kneuman Ditch – work is partially complete. Dropped water level 21”. Stremler has approximately \$50k into this project. Sumas has \$30k in surveying and brush clearing costs.
 - Bone Creek – Stremler has \$3k into this small area just east of the highway. Work west is likely in 2024.
 - Saar Creek – contracting is nearly in place, Sumas is processing the invoices and plans to pay these costs and invoice the SWID. We need to establish a clear policy outlining the relationship between the WID and the DIDs. Formalizing the agreements made in the early meetings between the parties is needed.

- Johnson Creek – issues surrounding past work in the upper reaches of Johnson Creek around Everson were discussed. We need to clear these up before work can proceed. A Mutual Aid agreement between the WID and Everson also needs to be in place.
 - Easements – Bill is preparing a template for easements for parcels where work will be done. The Right of Entry template should suffice for brush clearing and survey work on the Sumas River from the border to Morgan Road which we hope to have done by spring.
 - Funding – a meeting with the County Treasurer and Gary Urbas at the State should be set up. Ross will assist. Gary should be able to provide the assurances of repayment for a loan to the WID to address cash flow issues as FEMA payments may take some months to process. The 5% match issue remains unresolved but is being pursued at the State and County level.
 - Board involvement – there are too many loose ends in the process to not have more active board involvement. A special board meeting with a sole focus on the FEMA process was suggested for later November.
- b. Ditch maintenance – no new updates on project at Osgood Road, Jay De Jong, and Trapline.
- c. Buffer requirements – Fred noted a more realistic attitude among fisheries advocates about the size of buffers. Nevertheless, there remain political pressures to mandate 200’ buffers on all streams.

IV. Ag Water Board/Water Supply

- a. Water supply update
- Somach Law – alternate to adjudication – federal settlement – we continue to build support for this type of an approach as the major focus area with the state adjudication either replaced or incorporated in the settlement as only an element of the larger picture.
 - Ecology floating “Solutions Showcase” – learning from the [Yakima example](#) - the late October presentation to the Watershed Management Board was a ringing endorsement for our approach to resolving issues and a challenge to the adjudication first perspective.
 - [Project List](#) ready for distribution to the appropriate discussion table – forming an out-of-stream water users group where proposals can be vetted.
 - Ecology adjudication budget request and AWB response – we are preparing a letter to the Legislature that will be sent before Thanksgiving that challenges Ecology’s major focus on adjudication funding and instead directs investment to broader management of issues including habitat, flooding, and water supply.
- b. Water Right acquisition candidates
- AWB establishing – [Whatcom Ag Water Exchange](#) – Bill is setting up a meeting with Ecology to advance this.
 - Draft [Mailing to all WID members](#) – will occur once the details of the Exchange are developed. Hopefully by early spring.
 - Follow-up with key acquisition candidates as identified by the WID in earlier reviews of the water right database.

V. Water Quality

- a. Monitoring Results – David presented recent data which was disappointing. Clearly more communication with farmers is needed.
- b. WCD update – Anna introduced herself as a new farm planner at the WCD. She is one of two new hires for this area. She will be assigned to participate in future Sumas and S Lynden WID meetings. She remind the board that Disaster assistance funding is still available for flood damage costs and she expects this may be an ongoing opportunity for future disaster relief for farmers. It was also noted that the WCD request for a parcel assessment to provide a financial base for their programs passed County Council. This will be \$5/parcel on all ag parcels. Cities will also be assessed.

VI. Education/Communications

- a. Website – www.sumaswid.com
- b. Meeting in Sumas? The need to keep the water quality information in front of farmers and an update on the FEMA flood projects seemed to indicate a need for a local meeting. We will explore a good date around the December 13th planned Board meeting

VII. Adjournment/Next Meetings

Brad adjourned the meeting at 2:58. Next meetings are December 13, January 10. The December meeting will likely be cancelled with a focus on the meeting with farmers in December instead.

Respectfully submitted by Henry Bierlink, Ag Water Board

Approved by _____