

Sumas Watershed Improvement District

Minutes – Regular Meeting – September 10, 2024

Attendees

"(t)" indicates presence via tele-conference. "(p)" indicates proxy vote.

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

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

Other Guests	
Name	Organization / Affiliation
Sunny Aulakh	City of Sumas Public Works
Jessica Koehler (t)	City of Sumas

Proceedings

Terry called the meeting to order at 1:02pm.

1. Consent Agenda

- a. Agenda was reviewed.
- b. June 11 meeting minutes were reviewed.
- c. Financial reports were reviewed.
- d. Voucher S.Gen.0724a in the amount of \$1,087.00 was reviewed.
- e. Voucher S.Gen.0724b in the amount of \$3,440.00 was reviewed.
- f. Voucher S.Gen.0724c in the amount of \$16,437.12 was reviewed.
- g. Voucher S.Gen.0824 in the amount of \$12,050.37 was reviewed.
- h. Voucher S.LS.0824 in the amount of \$34,088.75 was reviewed.
- i. AI moved to approve the consent agenda. Keith seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Ag Water Board / Water Supply

- a. Bill provided an update on the adjudication.
 - i. Likely won't see summons go out until end of 2024 or beginning of 2025. As a result, filing deadline will likely be early 2026.
 - ii. Applications have been submitted for the case management committee. Ramsey applied to the committee on behalf of Ag Water Board.

- iii. ECY has filed their proposed claims form. Now down to a single form (rather than 2 as previously submitted). Objectionable statements about stockwater definition have been removed from the latest version. Any party that wants to object to the claims form would first need the court's permission before they file that objection.
- iv. State legislative issues
 - 1. Firstly, discussions with ECY and Whatcom County for additional funding for technical support in the adjudication. Last budget cycle had \$300k appropriated, this one will likely be asking for closer to \$500k.
 - 2. Second would be funding for the WMB to hire a consultant to investigate what a settlement process might look like, how it might be structured, and what barriers might exist.
- b. Gavin shared AWB board's interest in contracting with a federal lobbyist firm and solicited feedback from the WID board on resulting budget impacts.
 - i. Board strongly supported the idea as a worthwhile use of WID funds.

3. FEMA Projects

- a. Gavin provided an update on FEMA projects.
 - i. Lower Sumas survey field work should be completed, now on to mapping before getting to engineering.
 - ii. Kneuman Ditch RFQ is awaiting approval from EMD.
 - iii. Changes in FEMA regional leadership have led to increased difficulty in getting final projects to obligation status.

4. Drainage / Habitat / Flood

- a. Drainage issues discussed.
 - i. DD#31 is working on dealing with Paatstel Creek issues. Gavin will reach out to see if the WID can provide support.
 - ii. Lindsay Rd – Al shared that landowners have completed some work in jetting out blocked culverts.
 - iii. Gavin will deal with Sumas River issues @ Telegraph after a local landowner requested assistance.
- b. Fred provided a FLIP update.
 - i. Pushing for a faster modeling process for ring berms so that we can get construction happening in the next 5 years.
 - ii. TFI processes have been significantly delayed by issues on the Canadian side.

5. Water Quality

- a. No updates on WQ in the district.
- b. Positive news on the Portage Bay shellfish beds – an additional approx. 360 acres open to year-round harvest, and conditional closures reduced from 4 months to 3 months.
- c. Gavin noted that if farmers see significant waterfowl activity on their land, they can take a picture and text it to him, and he can get report it on the Whatcom Wildlife Tracker so that WQ monitoring staff are aware.

6. Communications / Education

- a. WFF will be hosting another water rights info evening on October 22nd at the NWWF.
- b. WFF annual farmer rally is scheduled for November 20th at NWWF.

7. Other

- a. Fred noted that the closure of the Cargill mill in Ferndale makes the EPL mill in Sumas more critical. They would like to add more grain storage, but are running into permitting issues. May be a place for the WID to put pressure on the county to allow that as a flood prevention measure.

8. Next Meeting

- a. Next meeting is scheduled for October 8.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:15pm.

Submitted by Gavin Willis, Ag Water Board

Approved by


