

# COWLITZ-WAHKIAKUM COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS BOARD MEETING

General Meeting Room, Cowlitz County Administration Building, Kelso  
Thursday, August 25, 2011 - 12:00 p.m.

## MINUTES

### Present:

#### Representatives:

Lisa Marsyla, Wahkiakum County  
Susan Humbyrd, City of Woodland  
Pete Poulsen, City of Kalama  
Dave Andrew, Cowlitz PUD  
Bill Hallanger, Cowlitz 2 Fire & Rescue  
Dan Buell, Port of Longview  
Troy Stariha, Port of Kalama  
Nelson Holmberg, Port of Woodland  
Carleton Appelo, Wahkiakum Port District #2  
Kim Adamson, Beacon Hill Water & Sewer District  
Larry Mayfield, Longview School District  
Jim Biver, Kelso School District  
James Sutton, Kalama School District  
Michael Green, Woodland School District  
Sue Groth, Lower Columbia College  
Rick Winsman, Kelso-Longview Chamber of Commerce  
George Raiter, Cowlitz County

#### Alternates:

Al Swindell, City of Woodland  
Mary Jane Melink, City of Longview

#### Others:

Kimberly Pincheira, Senator Cantwell's Office  
Schuyler Hoss, Governor Gregoire's Office  
Pam Peiper, Congresswoman Herrera-Beutler's Office  
Corey Balkan, Interwest Benefits  
Sasha Hinnners, City of Longview

#### Staff:

Steve Harvey  
Katie Wells  
Anisa Kisamore  
Rosemary Siipola  
Jennifer Keene

The monthly meeting of the COG board in the General Meeting Room, Cowlitz County Administration Building, Kelso, Washington, was called to order at 12:07 pm by Chair Pete Poulsen. Introductions were made around the room.

#### 1. Minutes of the June 23, 2011 COG Board Meeting

A motion was made by Susan Humbyrd and seconded by Bill Hallanger to approve the minutes of the June 23, 2011 COG Board meeting. **Motion passed.**

2. Minutes of the July 28, 2011 Executive Committee Meeting

A motion was made by Nelson Holmberg and seconded by Susan Humbyrd to approve the minutes of the July 28, 2011 Executive Committee meeting. **Motion passed.**

3. Monthly Expenditures for July 2011

Jim Biwer has reviewed them and all is in order. A motion was made by Jim Biwer and seconded by Carleton Appelo for approval of the expenditure list for July 2011. **Motion passed.**

4. RTIP Amendment

Director Harvey indicated that this item will be discussed under Director and Staff Reports later on the agenda and that no action was required. The Wahkiakum Ferry and the Fire and Ice Scenic Byway program will be discussed. Lisa Marsyla commented that they are excited about the new 23-car ferry that is coming. The cost of the ferry is \$3.9 million with \$2.8 coming from the federal government. The county will only pay about \$200,000 - \$300,000.

### **Information Items**

5. Thrive Across America Report – Corey Balkan and Sasha Hanners

Steve introduced Corey and Sasha and the decision to seek wellness initiatives through the Medical Insurance Rate Stabilization committee.

Corey indicated we are beginning year three of this program. He identified what the group has accomplished to date: lowered the administrative costs for the members; increased reporting transparency as it relates to experience data; established greater influence over the carrier; created sustainable funding measures for the program; developed a sub-committee comprised of members' staff (Sasha is the coordinator of that sub-committee); and implemented campaigns and funded grants for members targeted at specific risks. Emphasis has been given to wellness – future rating is based on claim experience – we need a healthy workforce. It is a proactive program rather than a reactive one.

Sasha gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Thrive Across America campaign (copies were also distributed to the board). This was an eight-week, online campaign focused on increasing physical activity. Participants could “walk across America” logging in their number of minutes of physical activity daily. There were incentives and prizes, and teams were formed for competitiveness. There were 336 participants, a substantial increase over the first two years. The campaign ran from April 15 through June 16. There were 26 teams formed; and the top three teams were rewarded. Participants were asked to complete an evaluation at the end of the program. Almost 97% of the folks completing the evaluation indicated they would participate again.

Trends are moving in the right direction. Forty three percent of participants increased their activity levels. Sasha thanked the members for allowing their staff to participate on the wellness committee and the activity. The fall campaign is the Total Health Assessment (available only to Kaiser members and covered spouses); it's an online assessment where folks answer questions about their health and receive an overall health status. The program also makes recommendations for becoming healthier. The rewards piece is a \$25 gift card for any Kaiser member/covered spouse who completes the assessment.

Corey talked about the mini-grants that the wellness committee has funded, all with a focus on wellness and health. There's good momentum and good progress to improve wellness. Members not currently participating in the program can call Steve or Corey to receive more information on becoming a participant.

6. HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant

Steve asked Jennifer Keene to update the members on the HUD grant. Jennifer indicated we had submitted a grant last year partnering with Columbia-Pacific EDD, but were not successful. This year we are submitting a pre-application which is due today, for Cowlitz and Lewis Economic Development District. The pre-application is basically to make sure we don't have federal issues or flags and that we are applying for the right category – ours is the planning grant. The other is implementation. In order to apply for the implementation grant, there has to be a sustainable 20-year plan in place. The HUD grant deals with many levels of projects. Included this year is education, infrastructure, broad-band, and workforce development. Staff decided on three issues to focus on in Cowlitz and Lewis counties – infrastructure (rail, transit, airport, other concerns beyond roads); education (K-12 as well as college); and housing (all housing options we have available – a full assessment of our housing throughout the region; not just low income). In both counties, we don't have enough housing for executives or upper-end housing. There needs to be a balance of housing – both for low income and for upper end executives. We will be linking those areas with transportation, and the existing plans in the cities, school districts, and the county. We will be taking all of the individual entity plans and looking for gaps and making sure everything is linking to make sure we have a sustainable future path and the needs we should focus on. The desire is to work collaboratively when applying for grants, rather than having each entity compete against each other for the same grant. More information is provided on the green handout. This is a \$1.5 million grant over a three-year period. If anyone is interested in being part of the application process, please contact Steve, Jennifer or any of the planners. All will be involved in the process, if successful.

7. Director's and Staff Reports

Jennifer gave an update on the Stronger Economies Today (SET) program application we submitted earlier this year to the federal Department of Agriculture, Rural Development (based in Olympia). Washington state received two awards but we were not one of them. The Rural Development will be providing some technical assistance through the SET training program. Some module trainings will be coming.

Jennifer also gave a short report on the Fire and Ice Scenic Byway grant. The federal government felt our application was strong and awarded us this grant. The focus will be on economic development and tourism within Clark, Skamania, Cowlitz and Lewis counties. We will be starting the process fairly soon. The process will take about two years and staff will be looking at cultural, GIS mapping, way-finding, recreational opportunities, and connecting other highways/forest service roads.

Steve indicated that he will be asking the Budget Committee (same as Executive Committee) to meet soon to discuss the 2012 budget. He and COG staff are also working with city and county staffs on Shoreline Management Plans and will be doing some contracts with jurisdictions.

Rosemary gave a quick SR 432 update. The COG has hired a project manager, Darlene Sharar. She has done a lot of work with the State Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and local jurisdictions. The project is moving along well. Rosemary has met with 14

consultant groups. She is asking those firms competing for the NEPA/SEPA project to come in September with their project managers to meet with her and Darlene. We will be going through the request for proposal process and hope to choose a consultant team by the end of the year. The Executive Committee set up for the project will interview consultants. The committee includes Cowlitz County, City of Longview, Port of Longview, Washington State Department of Transportation and the Cowlitz Economic Development Council.

We have a two-year work program, which should be completed by 2013 and ready for state and federal funding packages. More than likely we'll be looking at some sort of a transportation benefit district for the corridor to have a local revenue stream. We have been asked by the state to expedite our federal STP funds and will make a proposal to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to commit \$2 million in urban funds to complete the funding for the NEPA. The cost of the NEPA is \$4 million and we only have \$2 million in hand. We're also going to discuss regional contribution of STP rural funds to kick-start the Scott Avenue reconnection project in Woodland. These are the two biggest projects we'll be forwarding to the state and feds for funding for Cowlitz County.

Steve informed the members that the COG has received a public records request relating to Millennium Bulk from Columba Riverkeeper. We'll be getting those materials together for them.

The Drug-Free Communities Grant ends at the end of September and we will be losing a full FTE this fall. We will possibly have less than a full FTE for the new year. Follow-up meetings with the folks who attended the Brainworks Cafés last June will take place, and then with input from additional groups, determine how to proceed with our Community Mobilization efforts.

Also will be re-visiting the issues from the board and staff workshops held over a year ago and where the COG can help address potential issues on the horizon. Be on the lookout for those announcements.

Since the July 28 meeting with the Governor was cancelled, Steve asked if members would like it to be rescheduled. Consensus was yes and the preference would be to have the meeting here. Originally, the meeting was to ask what we would like to see in the next legislative session.

8. Roundtable

Due to time constraints, it was decided to forego the roundtable discussion.

**Other Business** – there was none.

Meeting adjourned at 1:14 pm.

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Stephen H. Harvey, Director

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Pete Poulsen, Chair

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Katie Wells, Administrative Assistant