

COWLITZ-WAHKIAKUM COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS BOARD MEETING

General Meeting Room, Cowlitz County Administration Building, Kelso
Thursday, February 24, 2011 - 12:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Present:

Representatives:

Sue Groth, LCC
Jim Biwer, Kelso School District
Bill Hallanger, Cowlitz 2 Fire & Rescue
Dan Buell, Port of Longview
Henry Karnofski, Castle Rock School District
Troy Stariha, Port of Kalama
Susan Humbyrd, City of Woodland
Pete Poulsen, Chair; City of Kalama
Kim Adamson, Beacon Hill Water & Sewer District
Nelson Holmberg, Port of Woodland
Dave Andrew, Cowlitz PUD
James Sutton, Kalama School District

Alternates:

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

Others:

Schuyler Hoss, Governor's Office

Staff:

Matt Hermen
Jennifer Keene
Steve Harvey
Katie Wells
Bonnie Kelley
Anisa Kisamore

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 January 27, 2011 COG Board Meeting

A motion was made by Susan Humbyrd and seconded by Jim Sutton to approve the minutes of the January 27, 2011 COG Board meeting. **Motion passed.**

2. Monthly Expenditures for January 2011

A motion was made by Bill Hallanger and seconded by Jim Biwer for approval of the expenditure list for January 2011. **Motion passed.**

3. Resolution No. 11-02 & WSDOT Resolution No. 11-03: Amending the 2011-2014 Regional Transportation Improvement Program for the MPO and the SWRTPO

Matt Hermen reported that we have a request from the City of Longview and the CWCOG staff to amend our RTIP which is a document that was approved by the Board back in

November. Mr. Hermen also reported that the COG is the lead agency for the Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization which is made up of five counties (Cowlitz, Wahkiakum, Pacific, Lewis and Grays Harbor). As the lead agency, the COG is responsible for adopting and amending the Regional Transportation Improvements Program. Any amendments must come before this board for approval and then are forwarded to the state.

This amendment will add an additional \$2,672,000 in new funds to the MPO/SWRTPO RTIP for the City of Longview's Highlands Trail and transit capital purchases and operating assistance, and the transfer of funds for the Washington State Department of Transportation.

A motion was made by Nelson Holmberg and seconded by Henry Karnofski for approval of Resolution No.11-02 and WSDOT Resolution No. 11-03 amending the 2011-2014 Regional Transportation Improvement Program for the MPO and the SWRTPO. **Motion passed.**

4. Annual Report

This item was postponed until the March meeting.

Information Items

5. 2010 4th Quarter Report

The 4th Quarter Report for 2010 was distributed to the Board for informational purposes. Revenues were at 76% of the budget; expenditures were at 75% of the budget for 2010.

6. Smart Growth Conference Report – Matt Hermen

Matt Hermen gave a short presentation and touched on the high points of the conference hosted by Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the federal Department of Transportation and other federal agencies. The staff's goal was to learn about the ten principles of smart growth and how they can be applied to planning decisions made in this region. COG staff, Amy Asher and Barb Kincaid, also attended the conference but are not here today due to illness and weather. Matt indicated that all of them believed the conference was very worthwhile and thanked the Board for approving the request to attend.

Mike Karnofski also attended as a representative of Pathways 2020. They all met with commissioner Karnofski upon their return, and discussed the need to talk about the Smart Growth principles and how to match them with the Cowlitz EDC's TIP strategies.

It was learned that 80% of the U.S. population lives in metropolitan areas. There are approximately 450 metropolitan areas, and Kelso/Longview is 378th in size. Competition for federal funds is becoming more stringent than in the past, making it more competitive to get the funds. It was apparent that we need to collaborate with other disciplines and agencies in the region to be more competitive for limited funds.

Each of the planners attended sessions that focused on their areas of expertise. This item will be placed on next month's agenda so we can hear from Ms. Asher and Ms. Kincaid.

7. Director's Report

Mr. Harvey indicated that the board received a survey regarding the annual banquet which had been planned for March 30th. Because that is the week of spring break for most of the local school districts which showed to affect attendance, the date of the annual meeting/banquet will be changed. In order to reach the majority of members, both past and present, we are looking at late April for the meeting. Steve asked if a dinner or lunch meeting would be best. The regular scheduled Board meeting is April 28th at noon, and the annual meeting could be held that evening, or on Wednesday evening, the 27th. Steve asked what the preference would be regarding a lunch meeting, which would be shorter, or a dinner meeting, which would be longer and more social. The majority of those present indicated by show of hands that they would prefer a dinner meeting. Steve will check on the possibility of April 27th to see if it will conflict with any other meetings. The location will still be the Monticello Hotel. If there are any conflicts, another date may have to be selected. Steve will get back to the board as soon as possible.

Mr. Harvey indicated that the Budget Work Program will soon be mailed to member entities which describe in more detail the work to be done in 2011.

Mr. Harvey indicated that the COG is in the process of finalizing the SR 432/433 highway rail project brochure and also the Woodland transportation improvements brochure for the benefit of continuing the work with our state and federal representatives for funding to do the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) work and preliminary engineering.

The COG held a State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) training last week which was attended by 75 folks from Olympia to Vancouver. Today and tomorrow a workshop is being held for GIS "techies" in our offices in the Annex building. We were able to get a good rate from a certified instructor.

Steve was one of many who attempted to attend the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee hearing at the Clark Utility building in Vancouver. A large contingent from the pro/anti-river crossing folks was present as well as a contingent from Spokane on the 395 project. Schuyler Hoss from the Governor's office, Congresswoman Herrera Beutler, and Chairman Mica were in attendance. Mr. Hoss gave a brief report indicating that Chairman Mica, who is very influential now that the Republicans are in control, was interested in feedback on the national level on transportation policy. Steve shared a letter with the Board that was handed in at the door before he left. Al Swindell indicated that a pre-meeting was held prior to the hearing with the county commissioners and mayors from the cities in Clark County where they were able to share their transportation issues and projects.

7. Roundtable

Al Swindell – Three city representatives went to the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) legislative meeting last week in Olympia and turned in a packet of information on the freeway crossing project. Woodland is on the state funding list as is the SR 432 rail corridor. The city is asking for \$1 million for planning and environmental impact statement and is asking for support from the federal legislators.

Mary Jane Melink – The city council is meeting tonight to hear for the first time about the industrial zoning code. At the last council meeting, they awarded the contract for the Mint Farm water project.

They held a *Citizen's Summit* at the PUD building – the topic was economic development and jobs; they broke into eight groups and brainstormed about their vision/ideas for improving the economy and job creation in Longview; they will use that information to go into the annual retreat with the council members. Also at tonight's meeting, they will finalize the plans for the city circle (RA Long Park) to make the park more user friendly, and make it safer for driving.

Dave Andrew – The PUD auditorium is now officially named the “John Searing Auditorium at Cowlitz PUD.” Lots of things are going on in the legislature. Working on the language of HB1642 – Kim Adamson has assisted with the language. They are keeping watch on the EPA. Dennis Weber gave a report on Lower Columbia CAP that might be a good presentation to the COG board.

Nelson Holmberg – He is following up on city's visits to the legislature with interest to the ports. March 14th is Washington Public Ports Association Port Day – the kick-off day for the centennial of the Washington Public Ports Act. They are collaborating with the City of Woodland on their projects. He distributed a “Land in Woodland, Live in Woodland” fact sheet about the community. This was a collaborative effort between the Port and City of Woodland.

Bill Hallanger – He is wearing his “diking district” hat – received notice from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) indicating that one dike in Cowlitz County – Lexington – meets the Corps of Engineers' standard; anyone with a loan or mortgage will have to buy flood insurance if you are “mapped wet” – which means premiums will be about 3-5 times more than what is quoted today. A concern is that we are forced to spend money on doing paperwork to document what we are doing, rather than spending money on flood prevention.

Kim Adamson – The district implemented a water rate increase due to the Mint Farm water project. They rebuilt one water pump station and two sewer pump stations. Involved – involuntarily – in the Columbia Crest Project as a temporary receivership. They will be looking at county for putting water and sewer under one operator. Watching the county utility tax legislative bill.

Jim Sutton – Received word from OSPI Superintendent, Randy Dorn, that Kalama Middle/High School is in top 5% of schools using the new middle/high school testing program. He and a board member are going to Olympia to talk with lawmakers about school issues, one of those being shaving days off the school year to save costs.

Larry Mayfield – Watching the legislature to see what kind of funding will be received next year. They have already been through the tough cuts. Both levies were approved last month by the voters. Experiencing decline in enrollment for next year; hard to plan without knowing the funds that will be coming from the state.

Sue Groth – College received notice that they were re-accredited. The accreditation system has moved to a new model - from ten to seven years with a progress report due every other year. The college received some great commendations with their work with the local community. A new partnership has been created with LCC, Centralia College, Clark College in Vancouver and Concordia University in Portland to launch a Bachelor of Arts degree program; students will complete their first two years at the local college and the remaining two years on-line with a couple of Saturdays each term at the local school. Maple Terrace Apartments were purchased back in 2005 by the college and they hope that demolition will take place this spring, with construction beginning this summer on a new Science building, to be completed within 18 months.

Troy Stariha – Port of Kalama hired a data analytical company to review their systems; decreased their rate on rented buildings; different techniques in advertising were also recommended – word of mouth seems to be the best. North Port - drilling for water is taking place to provide water to Energy Northwest; the Department of Ecology is holding them up right now; and completion is about six years away – 2017. Interpretive Center – passed a motion to implement phase 2 – received grant

money over the past year or so for museum exhibits, etc.; have accumulated about \$450,000. Exhibits can be seen at the Cowlitz County Historical Museum right now.

Jim Biwer – Teacher contracts have to be renewed by May 15; when the legislature is late, it makes it tough for the district to finish staffing.

Dan Buell – Port of Longview is cruising along. Look forward to the grain terminal opening. They are working on the SR432 rail bridge project.

Schuylar Hoss – Theme last year was “doing more with less” and theme this year is “doing less with less”; supplemental budget was approved; the next revenue forecast comes out March 17.

Matt Hermen – Working with Pete Poulsen and City of Kalama on design standards for the downtown area. Currently an annexation is underway to be heard by the BRB on April 7 having to do with the proposed annexation of Debbie Place and 48th Avenue in Longview.

Jennifer Keene – Cowlitz EDC submitted the grant for the Business & Technology Center yesterday; waiting on HUD’s second round of sustainable communities grants to come out; EDA was handed \$8 million from the census bureau and hoping to get some projects through; waiting for a presidential declaration about Cowlitz County and the storms in December.

Other Business – there was none.

Meeting adjourned at 1:15 pm.

Stephen H. Harvey, Director

Pete Poulsen, Chair

Katie Wells, Administrative Assistant