Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments
Board Meeting

Cowlitz County Administration Building ~ General Meeting Room
Thursday, October 27, 2011 ~ 12:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Present:

Representatives: Dave Andrew, Cowlitz PUD
Troy Stariha, Port of Kalama
Dan Buell, Port of Longview
Kim Adamson, Beacon Hill Water & Sewer District
Pete Poulsen, City of Kalama
Carleton Appelo, Wahkiakum Port District 2
Larry Mayfield, Longview School District
Michael Green, Woodland School District
Ilona Kerby, Lower Columbia CAP
George Raiter, Cowlitz County
Kurt Anagnostou, City of Longview
Jim Biwer, Kelso School District

Alternates: Al Swindell, City of Woodland
Sue Groth, Lower Columbia College

Staff: Steve Harvey
Katie Wells
Bonnie Kelley
Amy Asher
Darlene Sharar

The monthly meeting of the COG board in the General Meeting Room, Cowlitz County Administration Building, Kelso, Washington, was called to order at 12:11 pm by Chair Pete Poulsen. Introductions were made around the room. Steve introduced Darlene Sharar, our NEPA/SEPA project coordinator for the SR 432/433 rail and highway improvements project. Darlene will be presenting project status reports to the board at future meetings.

Action Items

1. Minutes of the August 25, 2011 COG Board meeting
   A motion was made by Larry Mayfield and seconded by Kurt Anagnostou to approve the minutes of the August 25, 2011 COG Board meeting. **Motion carried.**

2. Minutes of the September 22, 2011 Executive Committee meeting
   A motion was made by Kurt Anagnostou and seconded by Dan Buell to approve the minutes of the September 22, 2011 Executive Committee meeting. **Motion carried.**

3. Minutes of the October 19, 2011 Executive Committee meeting
   A motion was made by Kurt Anagnostou and seconded by George Raiter to approve the minutes of the October 19, 2011 Executive Committee meeting. **Motion carried.**

4. Monthly Expenditures for September, 2011
   Bill Hallanger has reviewed them and all is in order. A motion was made by Larry Mayfield and seconded by Al Swindell for approval of the expenditure list for September 2011. **Motion carried.**

5. Resolution No. 11-08 - 2011 COG Budget Amendment
   Director Steve Harvey reviewed the budget amendments with the Board as delineated in the memorandum and list accompanying the resolution. A motion was made by Carleton Appelo and seconded by Dan Buell to approve Resolution No. 11-08, amending the 2011 budget in the net amount of $205,525. **Motion carried.**

6. Resolution No. 11-09 - Setting the Cap on Employee Medical Insurance Premiums for 2012
   Director Harvey indicated that the cap on employee medical insurance premiums has been increased for Cowlitz County employees from $1,050 to $1,100 per employee per month. He also reviewed this with the Executive Committee and explained that the COG generally follows the same practice as the county. The Executive Committee is recommending approval of Resolution No. 11-09 to increase the COG cap on medical insurance premiums from $1,050 to $1,100 per employee per month to keep in line with the county. Carleton Appelo moved and Troy Stariha seconded to approve Resolution No. 11-09. **Motion passed.**

7. Resolution No. 11-10 - Adoption of Compensation Policy
   Director Harvey reviewed the Compensation Policy (which will replace our current policy) with the Board and indicated that the Executive Committee has reviewed this policy at its recent meeting. He brought attention to the tables and the administrative guidelines and the qualifications for each position type; and how increases in pay will be determined, including any COLA increase. Any salary adjustments will be addressed by the Executive Committee during the budget process. The Executive Committee is recommending Board approval of the Compensation Policy (Resolution No. 11-10). Al Swindell moved and George Raiter seconded to approve Resolution 11-10. **Motion passed.** Director Harvey indicated this will take effect in 2012.

8. Resolution No. 11-11 - Adoption of Personnel Manual
   Director Harvey reviewed the revisions to the Personnel Manual that are being made to keep us up-to-date with current law. He further explained the manual needs to be kept current so as to lessen our risk factors with our insurance authority, Washington Cities Insurance Authority, which will keep our premium rate low. They request that the board approve these revisions by the end of October. Mr. Harvey reviewed the additional sections being added, those that have been deleted, and other revisions that have been made. We will also be updating the Personnel Manual in sections over the next several months.

   The changes have been reviewed by the Executive Committee and they are recommending Board approval of the Personnel Manual revisions (Resolution No. 11-11). Michael Green moved and Carleton Appelo seconded to approve Resolution 11-11. A question was asked under Section 5 – Domestic Violence Leave – regarding the statement that employees may take leave "with or without pay," would leave sharing be an option to keep employees in a paid status. Mr. Harvey explained that if the conditions were met in the Personnel Manual addressing donated leave, then yes, donations could be made. A comment was made that some leave donation policies require that donations can only be made under "severe or extraordinary circumstances." The COG's policy on donating leave follows Cowlitz County's, and thus is not limited to "severe or extraordinary circumstances." **Motion passed.**

Information Items

9. Director and Staff Reports
   Director Harvey briefly reviewed the one-page summary of the HUD Sustainable Communities Grant application. The COG has applied for a three-year, $1.5 million grant with match coming from in-kind services and other state and federal matches. We should hear in December whether we will receive the grant. There were about 180 applications submitted from around the country.

   Director Harvey explained we are working on the Shoreline Master Program (SMP) update process with Cowlitz County, and the cities of Castle Rock, Kalama, Kelso, and Woodland. The state has mandated that the SMP be completed by December, 2014. Staff has been meeting with these entities to determine what the work program will be like, with an agreement that the grantee would be Cowlitz County – there has to be a general purpose government. There will need to be a contract with the county to have the COG be project manager, and then inter-local agreements with the cities for the conduct of their programs. Each city has an allocation and they have all decided to pool that under the county's umbrella. We are proceeding with the DOE agreement, the inter-local agreement that will be coming to all the jurisdictions and then the contract with the county and COG on how all of it will be managed. Most of the work will be handled by consultant services with public involvement encouraged. We will also be looking at critical areas ordinances and connecting with the county comp plan process.

   Mr. Harvey gave an update on the Cowlitz Substance Abuse Coalition and Cowlitz Meth Action Team – funding is narrowing down to about .5 FTE starting in 2012. Blending these funds with other funds from other programs may help produce more meaningful work. Mr. Harvey has recently talked with other community leaders, like Pathways 20/20 executive committee and the Sheriff's office regarding the Brainworks cafés, and with the Health & Human Services Department regarding the programs they have and where we might be able to blend funding sources.

   Mr. Harvey indicated that he has visited with Toledo City Council at their request to talk about the COG and the services that we can provide. They are interested and will also be participating in the HUD grant, if successful, and the Fire and Ice Scenic Loop project, and the tourism plan. There is also potential to contract with COG for planning services, which would be under our "affiliate" membership. If they approach us, then Mr. Harvey will be coming back to the board. They may also come to us for shorelines program work.

   Mr. Harvey mentioned that invitations from DOT have been sent out regarding the ribbon cutting for the I-5/SR 432/Talley Way interchange project which will take place on Tuesday, November 1at 1:00 pm at the Park & Ride area. State and local officials will be there to make some remarks. It's been quite a project, and was completed about six months ahead of schedule and within budget. No businesses have "signed on" as of yet to build on the property located at "Kelso Village."

10. Roundtable:

   George Raiter indicated that there will be no legislative briefing in December due to the special legislative session scheduled. The county will be collecting some issues that will be forwarded to the legislature asking to provide flexibility in spending funds at the local level. They have sent comments on the Governor's budget.

Michael Green expressed concern about the cuts to school districts currently outlined in the Governor's budget.

Al Swindell – The roundabouts on Dike Road are complete as well as Schurman Way. Les Schwab will open in November. A new casino at the Oak Tree will open in November. There's a measure on the ballot to raise sales tax 1/10th of 1% for a new police station; there has not been a lot of negative reaction on the issue. A new mayor will be elected and will start the first of the year.

Dan Buell – During the Port's discovery period, he found out that having a separate email account for business on home computers is well worth the effort and easy for the IT people to copy during a litigation process.

Carleton Appelo – Wahkiakum Port 2 has asked the Coast Guard to locate the buoys that mark the edge of the ship channel so that boats don't come into shallow water.

Kurt Anagnostou – St. John Medical Center challenged a tax bill a couple of years ago that no one was aware of; the City of Longview is considering a 1% tax assessment for one year in order to recoup the refund they have to make to St. John Medical Center. George Raiter indicated that the county will put a tax measure on the ballot to recover the cost. Larry Mayfield indicated that Longview School District will be discussing this with their board whether to ask for additional taxes for one year. George Raiter also mentioned that the county will be asking the state to notify the Assessor when tax bills are being challenged so that appropriate measures can be taken to prevent the spending of those dollars during the appeal process. The Assessor would then notify the jurisdictions involved.

Other Business

Mr. Harvey said that the next Regional Information Forum will be at the Museum on November 4th. The next COG board meeting will be on November 17 (3rd Thursday). The December board meeting will most likely be the third Thursday of the month as well (December 15). More information will be coming.

Adjourn – The meeting adjourned at 1:02 pm.

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Stephen H. Harvey, Director

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Pete Poulsen, Chair

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Katie Wells, Administrative Assistant