



COWLITZ-WAHKIAKUM COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (CWCOG)
Board of Directors ~ Regular Meeting / Hybrid
Cowlitz Public Utility District Auditorium / 961 12th Ave, Longview, Washington
Video Conferencing - Zoom
Thursday - September 28, 2023, - 12:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Attendance:

General/Alternate Member Representatives

Dennis Weber, Cowlitz County
Lee Tischer, Wahkiakum County
Mike Karnofski, City of Kelso
Andrew Hamilton, City of Kelso

Steve Kallio, City of Kalama
Adam Smee, City of Kalama
MaryAlice Wallis, City of Longview
David Olson, Town of Cathlamet (Chair)

Special/Alternate Member Representatives

Troy Stariha, Port of Kalama
Doug Averett, Port of Longview
Jennifer Wray-Keene, Port of Woodland
Debbie Stanley, Three Rivers Reg. Wastewater Authority

Scott Westlund, Kelso School District
Patti Bowen, Longview School District
Gene Healy, Wahkiakum PUD 1
Bill Hallanger, Cowlitz 2 Fire and Rescue

Associate/Alternate Member Representatives

Karen Sisson, Kelso-Longview Chamber of Commerce
Chris Bailey, Lower Columbia College

Ilona Kerby, Lower Columbia CAP

Affiliate/Alternate Member Representatives

Teresa Stedman, City of Washougal

Legislative Representatives

John Anderson, Governor Inslee's Office
Tanisha Harris, Senator Cantwell's office

Jeff Wilson, Washington Senate 19th District

Other

Ryan Clemens, WSDOT Regional Representative

Visitors

Lynn Hughes, City of Kalama Civil Service Committee/Planning Commission

Staff

Bill Fashing, Executive Director
Anisa Kisamore, Administrative Director
Rachelle Nugent, Business Administrator
Sean Nugent, Planning Technician

Gabriel Reese, Transportation Planning Technician
Monica Seidl, Project Specialist
Penny Newton, Project Assistant

1. Call to Order

Chair, David Olson, called the meeting to order at 12:07 p.m.

2. Public Comment

No public comments were received.

Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments (CWCOG) ensures all compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 by prohibiting discrimination against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or disabilities in the provisions of benefits and services results in from its federally assisted programs and activities. For questions regarding CWCOG's Title VI Program, you may contact the Department's Title VI Coordinator at 360-577-3041. If you need special accommodations to participate in this meeting, please call us at 360-577-3041 by 10:00 a.m. three days prior to the meeting.

3. Roll Call

4. Consent Agenda

A. August 24, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes

B. August 2023 Expenditures Ratified

Both Consent Agenda items, August 24, 2023, regular Board of Directors' meeting minutes and the August expenditures in the amount of \$107,677.34 were considered as a single action item.

Motion: Troy Stariha moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion was seconded and approved.

5. Action Items

A. Resolution 23-19: Regional Transportation Improvement Program

Bill Fashing presented background on Resolution 23-19 adopting the new 2024-2027 Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Improvement Program (M/RTIP) for the Longview-Kelso-Rainier Metropolitan Planning Area. Before projects can be eligible to receive the federal funds, the project must be included in the M/RTIP and State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP).

Motion: MaryAlice Wallis moved to approve Resolution 23-19: Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Improvement Program for the MPO as presented. Motion was seconded and approved.

B. Resolution 23-20: Employer Health Benefit Premium Contribution

Bill Fashing requested approval for maintaining the \$1900 per month per employee Employer Health Benefit Premium Contribution currently being applied to qualifying positions. The benefit package was reviewed and recommended by the Executive Committee at their September 5, 2023, Special Meeting.

Motion: Lee Tischer moved to approve Resolution 23-20: Employer Health Benefit Premium Contribution as presented. Motion was seconded and approved.

C. Resolution 23-21: Four-day Work Week

Bill Fashing presented a proposed four-day work week agency policy change. Staff would maintain the current 37.5-hour work week and paid time off accrual schedule but apply those hours to Monday through Thursday. Additionally, in that the Friday after Thanksgiving would no longer be considered a workday, the CWCOG recommended reintroducing the floating holiday to maintain the 11 paid holidays as part of the employee compensation package. The four-day workweek proposal was reviewed and recommended by the Executive Committee at their September 5, 2023, Special meeting with a request to review the policy after a few months of implementation.

Motion: Mike Karnofski moved to approve Resolution 23-21, approving the agency to redefine the work week as Monday through Thursday and make applicable changes to policy to reflect the same. Motion was seconded and approved.

D. Resolution 23-22: Revolving Loan Fund Re-Certification

Bill Fashing provided information on the Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) plan that requires annual certification by the governing board. The purpose of the fund is to assist existing and start-up businesses, especially those that will help diversify and strengthen the area's economy.

Bill noted a slight change in the motion from the original packet. The portion "is consistent with the area's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy" was added.

Motion: MaryAlice Wallis moved to approve Resolution 23-22, certifying that the Legacy Longview Revolving Loan Fund is consistent with the area's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and

is being operated in compliance with the current Revolving Loan Fund Plan. Motion was seconded and approved.

6. Information Items

A. Financial Report – Quarter 2

Bill Fashing went over the Financial Report for the fiscal year's second quarter. All expenditures and revenues were as expected.

B. Metropolitan Planning Organization Boundary Revision

Bill Fashing explained that every ten years the COG Board must re-evaluate the boundaries for the Metropolitan Planning Organization area based on revised population sizes in the Longview urban area put out by the Census Bureau. The boundaries are to include areas deemed to be potentially urbanized in the next 20 years. The new urban area now includes Castle Rock and areas between there and Longview. Kalama may be included by 2030.

After discussions it was decided to lean toward a countywide MPO which can provide more funding for the region as a whole.

The plan is for Bill visit those city councils and the Port Commissions involved to discuss the process and potential.

C. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Approval

BOD approved the CEDS at the last meeting. A letter was received from EDA approving and accepting the strategy document included in the agenda packet.

C. Letters of Support: Wahkiakum PUD #1 – Puget Island Water Source Project

Letters of Support are authored and submitted in support of area projects prior to board review if the projects are listed in or fall under strategic policy within one of the various transportation or economic development plans or programs previously reviewed and approved by the Board. All projects listed qualify as such.

7. Executive Director's Report

Gabe Reese was introduced as the new Transportation Planning Technician, and Rachele Nugent's acceptance of a new position as the Target Zero Manager.

CWCOG did not receive the digital equity funding that was discussed at the last board meeting but will continue to seek other funding options.

The 2023 Aliceanne Wholbruck Impact Award for resilience was awarded to the CWCOG and Collaborative members engaged in the Spirit Lake Toutle/Cowlitz River Collaborative (SLTCRC). The award was received from the National Association of Development Organization (NADO).

Mt. St. Helens field event will be held October 12, 2023, from 10:00AM to 4:00PM.

A grant writing readiness course will be held October 10, 2023, from 9:00 to 11:00AM at the Lower Columbia College Applied Arts Building.

The annual report for Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) was submitted as required. The report is available to read on the CWCOG website.

The CWCOG will be considering a guidance document for the State Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP). More information will be available at the next board meeting.

Bill attended a meeting on Rails to Trails Monday September 25th where he gave a presentation and answered questions. Thought no consensus came out of the meeting, input was given regarding concerns on cost and maintenance of the facility and thoughts were shared on how to help move the project forward. The City of Longview and Beacon Hill Water and Sewer District will consider whether to accept the land donation from Patriot Rail and move forward with the project.

The November Board of Directors meeting will be moved to fifth Thursday (November 30) instead of the usual third Thursday (November 16) to accommodate the Thanksgiving holiday. A reminder will be sent out in advance of the holiday.

8. Executive Committee Report

No report available for this meeting.

9. Other Business

No other business.

10. Adjourned

David Olson adjourned the meeting at 1:10 p.m.



William A. Fashing, Executive Director



David Olson, Chair



Anisa Kisamore, Administrative Director