



COWLITZ-WAHKIAKUM COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (CWCOG)

Board of Directors ~ Regular Meeting / Hybrid

Cowlitz Public Utility District Auditorium ~ 961 12th Ave, Longview, WA 98632

Video Conferencing - Zoom

Thursday – March 28, 2024 - 12:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Attendance:

General/Alternate Member Representatives

Dennis Weber, Cowlitz County

Lee Tischer, Wahkiakum County

Wendy Conradi, City of Kalama

Adam Smee, City of Kalama

Mike Karnofski, City of Kelso

Andrew Hamilton, City of Kelso

MaryAlice Wallis, City of Longview

Kalei LaFave, City of Longview

David Olson, Town of Cathlamet

Special/Alternate Member Representatives

Troy Stariha, Port of Kalama

Evan Jones, Port of Longview

Scott Anderson, Port of Wahkiakum District 1

Sam Shogren, Port of Wahkiakum District 2

Jennifer Wray-Keene, Port of Woodland

Robert Wile, Port of Woodland

Bill Hallanger, Cowlitz 2 Fire and Rescue

Steve Taylor, Cowlitz County PUD

Gene Healy, Wahkiakum PUD 1

Scott Westlund, Kelso School District

Stephanie Helem, Three Rivers Regional

Wastewater Authority

Associate/Alternate Member Representatives

Paul Langner, City of Rainier

Scott Jorgensen, City of Rainier

Mike Karnofski, Cowlitz Economic Development Council

Karen Sisson, Kelso-Longview Chamber

Ilona Kerby, Lower Columbia CAP

Affiliate/Alternate Member Representatives

Teresa Stedman, City of Washougal

Legislative Representatives

Jeff Wilson, 19th District

Tanisha Harris, Senator Cantwell’s Office

Other

Ryan Clemens, WSDOT

Visitors

None

Staff

Bill Fashing, Executive Director

Anisa Kisamore, Administrative Director

Rachelle Nugent, Target Zero Manager

Monica Seidl, Project Specialist

Robert Stevens, Transportation Planner

Sean Nugent, Finance Assistant

Penny Newton, Project Assistant

Gabe Reese, Transportation Planning Technician

Lauren Read, Mobility Coordinator

1. Call to Order

Chair, David Olson, called the meeting to order at 12:04 p.m.

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.

2. Public Comment

3. None

4. Roll Call

A quorum was present.

5. Consent Agenda

A. February 22, 2024, Minutes

B. February 2024 Expenditures

Both Consent Agenda items, February 22, 2024, regular Board of Directors' meeting minutes and the February 2024 expenditures in the amount of \$121,990.04 were considered as a single action item.

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

6. Action Items

A. Resolution 24-03: Disposition of Depreciated Equipment

Bill Fashing explained that due to a formatting error the original resolution approved at last month's Board meeting did not correctly align the inventory tag numbers with the items to be disposed. Revisions have been completed and staff are presenting a corrected resolution and requesting the Board to affirm their approval of Resolution 24-03 deeming certain equipment as surplus and appropriate for disposal for accuracy of record.

Motion: Bill Hallanger moved to affirm their approval of Resolution 24-03: Disposition of Depreciated Equipment in its revised form. Motion was seconded and approved.

B. Resolution 24-05: 2017 Surface Transportation Block Grant Funding Revision, City of Woodland

Bill Fashing provided a brief overview of Resolution 24-05 which requires Board approval to rescind \$600,000 in Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funding awarded to the City of Woodland in 2017 (Resolution 17-04) for work on Exit 21's preliminary engineering phase. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) ruled the project as inactive, and the funding was returned to the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments (CWCOG) for redistribution with the next call for projects in March 2024.

Motion: MaryAlice Wallis moved to affirm action on Resolution 24-05 authorizing the rescission of the \$600,000 in STBG funds issued to the City of Woodland in 2017 and approving the funds to be made available for the next STBG call for projects considered by the CWCOG Board of Directors. Motion was seconded and approved.

C. Resolution 24-06: Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) /Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) Call for Projects

Robert provided an update regarding Resolution 24-06. The STBG is federal funding for planning/constructing projects on federal-aid highways, pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure, transit capital, EV charging, and more. CRP is intended for projects that reduce CO₂ emissions from on-road highway sources such as pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

With \$825,867 in unallocated STBG funds, and \$676,586 in unallocated CRP funds, a total of \$1,502,453 is available for qualified projects. An additional increase in STBG funds (up to \$1,000,000) may be available to close funding gaps. Projects selected with the March 2024 call for projects will replace two existing projects that have been delayed. Project funding must be obligated before July 2024 in order to meet WSDOT requirements and avoid possible sanctions.

8. Executive Committee Report

No report

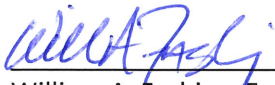
9. Other Business

Tanisha Harris provided an update from Senator Cantwell's office noting that congressional spending application deadlines are approaching with Senator Cantell's office deadline being Monday, April 1, 2024, 8 a.m. and, Senator Murray's office Monday, April 8, 2024 (no time given). Congresswoman Gluesenkamp Perez's office has not yet opened their application process. Tanisha advised that when applying, submit your application to all three offices.

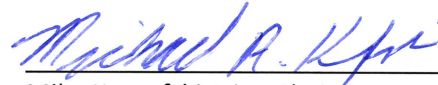
Dennis Weber announced that Cowlitz County received five requests for Economic Development funding and staff are preparing for public hearings at this time.

10. Adjourn

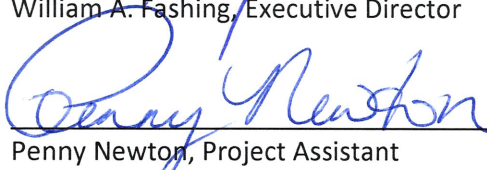
Being no further business, David Olson adjourned the meeting at 1:14 p.m.



William A. Fashing, Executive Director



Mike Karnofski, Vice-Chair



Penny Newton, Project Assistant

A list of recommended ranked projects will be brought before the Board at the April 2024 meeting.

Motion: Dennis Weber moved to adopt Resolution 24-06 Surface Transportation Block Grant and Carbon Reduction Program Call for Projects as presented. Motion was seconded and approved.

6. Information Items

A. Economic Development Program Update

Monica Seidl shared the success of the first spring symposium held March 21, 2024. The symposium attendees focused on revitalization of neighborhoods, and small-scale manufacturing. The need for childcare within the communities and other projects that fall under economic development were also discussed.

Over the next few months, Monica Seidl (CWCOG,) Sam Shogren (Port of Wahkiakum County), Teedarda Wolfe (Cowlitz Public Utility District), Mark Gaither (Lower Columbia College), and Rich Gushman (Gibson & Olson) are participating in *the Recast Your City* cohort training along with five other cities across the nation.

The CWCOG will be hosting additional symposiums in 2024 to help identify goals and gaps in the local entrepreneurial ecosystem.

B. Index of Deep Disadvantage Report

Gabe Reese presented an overview of the *Index of Deep Disadvantage – Cowlitz and Wahkiakum Counties Comparison* report. Though the main focus was on Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties, information was also included for counties in the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SWRTPO) as well as some adjacent counties. Overall, counties in our region are performing close to or exceeding the national average with the exception of the average of college graduates with all SWRTPO counties falling below the national average.

C. Letters of Support

1. City of Longview's Downtown Streetscape – Phase 4
2. City of Longview's Water Reservoir Fill Line – Phase 1
3. City of Longview's Columbia Heights Reconstruction Project
4. Lower Columbia College Rotaract Club's Tourism Project Grant

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

Monica Seidl has been nominated for a Pillars of Strength Award for *Community Leader of the Year* as part of the Kelso-Longview Chamber of Commerce awards.

Congress is considering reauthorization of the Economic Development Administration (EDA) program meaning that planning program participants may receive a funding increase for the first time in 30 years. Bill Fashing asked the Board to share the need for the EDA reauthorization if they have an opportunity when speaking with Congressional Representatives.

Washington State Transportation Commission will be holding a Transportation Plan forum Thursday, April 25, 9-11 a.m., in Vancouver, WA. The commission will be seeking information and guidance on the new Washington Transportation Plan. If you are interested in participating or submitting comments, contact Bill at the CWCOG office.