

Laurel Watershed Improvement District

Minutes – March 11, 2024

Attendees

“(t)” indicates presence via tele-conference, “(p)” indicates proxy vote.

Board – Present	Board – Absent with Notice
Jon Maberry Rich Appel Eric Sundstrom	Mike Boxx Leroy Plagerman

Staff and Consultants	
Name	Organization / Affiliation
Gavin Willis	Ag Water Board
Frank Corey	Whatcom Conservation District
Cynthia May (t)	Whatcom Conservation District
Fred Likkel	Whatcom Family Farmers
Sarah Faubion (t)	AESI

Other Guests	
Name	Organization / Affiliation
Shelley Macy	Laurel Grange
Alan Chapman (t)	Whatcom Conservation District

Proceedings

Rich called the meeting to order at 10:02 am.

1. Consent Agenda

- a. Agenda was reviewed.
- b. January 8 minutes were reviewed.
- c. Financial reports and voucher were reviewed.
 - i. A board member asked about the ability for district funds to earn interest. Gavin will further pursue participation in the Local Government Investment Pool
- d. Jon moved to approve the consent agenda. Eric seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Administration

- a. Rich and Mike signed the oath of office and per diem waiver.
- b. Jon moved to adopt Resolution 2024-02 – Appointment of Agent to Receive Claims for Damages. Eric seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- c. Discussion about consolidation with Drainage District #3. Board supports moving forward with consolidation. Gavin will coordinate with Travis Bouma at Whatcom County Public Works about how to best proceed; most likely people will have the option to either join the WID or leave the DD.

3. Ag Water Board / Water Supply

- a. Gavin noted that a comment letter was submitted to ECY about the draft claims filing form for adjudication.
- b. Gavin provided an update on comments submitted to the Whatcom County Planning Department on the 2025 Comprehensive Plan Update. The comment letter will be sent to board members via email.

4. Drainage / Habitat / Flood

- a. Ditch maintenance was discussed. The county is beginning to put together a work plan for the summer. Board members are asked to reach out to Gavin or Fred if they are aware of any areas that need to be addressed.
- b. Buffer program was discussed. New SCC program was approved on Feb 28th, with first round of applications due at the end of the week and review to follow. Should have a flyer available soon.
 - i. Board approved of sending another letter to key landowners in the district. Gavin will work with Frank to draft the letter and send it to the board for final approval before sending out.
- c. Discussion about FLIP work. Fred noted it is becoming clear that not a lot is likely to actually get done as a result of the FLIP team work. Next 5 years is looking like only buyouts. Any work related to flood control, berms, levee setbacks, etc is a minimum of 15 years out.
 - i. Now might be a good time to let farmers know that the county is not going to provide the help that they need, and provide farmers with resources to help plan and prepare (eg evacuation routes and planning, critter pads, etc).
 - ii. Board members noted that it is better to be involved in the FLIP process than not.
 - iii. A board member asked whether it might be beneficial to publicly state displeasure with the process.
 - iv. Fred noted that the loss of capacity in the river bed is increasing the frequency of flooding (or the severity of high-frequency floods).
- d. Brief discussion about purchase of development rights programs

5. Water Quality

- a. Cynthia provided a WQ update. Numbers have been looking good, except for a few moderate counts in the far downstream levels of the watershed associated with rainfall events.
 - i. One specific location on Everson Goshen Rd is being worked on. ECY and WSDA have identified BMPs that the facility can implement to improve that WQ issue.
- b. Portage Bay update – Dept of Health is in the process of putting together their annual shellfish report. Should have an update next month on whether or not they recommend increasing the year-round harvest areas.

6. Communications / Education

- a. Water rights information evening will be hosted on March 27th at 6:30pm at the Northwest Washington Fairgrounds.
- b. Whatcom Conservation District native plant sale is March 16th in Ferndale.

7. Next Meeting

- a. Next meeting is scheduled for April 8th at 10:00 am.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:14 am.

Submitted by Gavin Willis, Ag Water Board

Approved by 