

Laurel Watershed Improvement District

Minutes – Regular Meeting – June 10, 2024

Attendees

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

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

Staff and Consultants	
Name	Organization / Affiliation
Gavin Willis	Ag Water Board
Fred Likkel	Whatcom Family Farmers
Sarah Faubion (t)	AESI
Bill Clarke (t)	Clarke Law

Other Guests	
Name	Organization / Affiliation
N/A	

Proceedings

Mike called the meeting to order at 10:04 am.

1. Consent Agenda

- a. Agenda was reviewed.
- b. April 8 minutes were reviewed.
- c. Financial report and voucher in the amount of \$13,978.74 was reviewed.
- d. Rich moved to approve the consent agenda. Jon seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Administration

- a. Gavin provided an update on the proposed merger with DD#3. County staff reported that none of the DD commissioners filed for re-election, so the district is effectively defunct. The WID will likely be the best organization to take on work that was previously done by the DD.

3. Ag Water Board / Water Supply

- a. Bill provided an adjudication update.
 - i. The initial hearing scheduled for June 26th is about 3 things:
 1. A process for attorneys to provide notice of appearance.
 2. A process for how initial motions would be sent to parties of record.
 3. Claims form and approval by court of summons.
 - a. It is unclear at the moment if ECY's proposed claims form will be filed before the June 26th hearing.

- ii. Related to that, a few attorneys are talking to AG office about creating a case management committee, so that some of these procedural issues can be generally dealt with in committees so that everyone knows what is going on.
- b. Additional discussion about water rights office hours. Bill has suggested pursuing money from the state for work starting July 1, 2025. First session of water rights office hours went well. Next date is this Wednesday, June 12th.

4. Drainage / Habitat / Flood

- a. Fred provided a FLIP update. Meeting last week with a FLIP sub-group. They are making progress with new modeling techniques on understanding how sediments work through the river; should have a report out by September. Fred is pushing for inclusion of gravel removal in modeling efforts.
- b. Rich provided an update on the Cougar Creek ditch covering project. The NRCS fish biologist is on site today.
- c. Fred provided a buffer update. First draft of the riparian roundtable report recommended SPTH buffers, ostensibly due to pressure from the governor's office.
 - i. Also reported on Whatcom/Skagit Riparian Workshop in May attended by Gavin and Fred. Discussion between different partners and practitioners revealed that folks doing on the ground work aren't pushing for SPTH.
- d. Gavin suggested potential idea of grant program for landowner projects in WID, such as culvert replacements. That type of program could provide local match for landowners pursuing funding from NRCS or other federal or state sources for culvert replacement on private land.

5. Water Quality

- a. Cynthia provided a water quality update by email. March, April, and May testing all came back with very good numbers – only one test (out of 30) came back higher than 120 fcu.
- b. Portage Bay numbers have been looking good as well.

6. Communications / Education

- a. Next water rights info evening on October 22. WFF is looking for additional funding in order to provide these events to the community.
 - i. Jon moved to provide a \$1000 sponsorship for the October 22 Water Rights Info event. Leroy seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- b. WFF Annual Farmer Rally scheduled for November 20.
- c. Fred provided an update on Ag Advisory Committee work. Sounds like county staff is reconsidering their downzoning proposal. Committee is also looking at the Voluntary Stewardship Program. Would be good to get one or two more farmers to serve on that committee.

7. Next Meeting

- a. Next scheduled meeting dates are July 8, August 12, and September 9. July and August meetings may be cancelled if there are no agenda items.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:13 am

Submitted by Gavin Willis, Ag Water Board

Approved by _____