

Laurel Watershed Improvement District

Minutes – Regular Meeting – September 8, 2025 10 am

Attendees

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

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

Staff and Consultants	
Name	Organization / Affiliation
Gavin Willis	Ag Water Board
Tania Grim	Ag Water Board
Trevor Gearhart (t)	Whatcom Conservation District
Nicole Fink (t)	AESI
Sarah Faubion (t)	AESI
Fred Likkell	Whatcom Family Farmers

Other Guests	
Name	Organization / Affiliation
Alan Chapman	Whatcom Conservation District

Proceedings

Mike called the meeting to order at 10:03 am.

1. Consent Agenda

- The agenda was reviewed.
- Minutes from the June meeting were reviewed.
- The financial report was reviewed.
- Voucher L-Gen-0725 in the amount of \$3500.00 was reviewed.
- Voucher L-Gen-0825 in the amount of \$5591.67 was reviewed.
- Leroy moved to approve the consent agenda. Jon seconded. Motion carried forward unanimously.

2. Administration

- AWB budget work plan for 2026 was discussed.
 - Consideration of hiring a staff member to assist with the adjudication process was discussed.
 - A board member requested an outline detailing what the role of this staff member would look like.

3. Ag Water Board / Water Supply

- Gavin gave an adjudication update.

- b. There was a good turn out to the hearing in Lynden on September 8, 2025.
 - i. 6000 landowners need to be served. This will take place by public docket in a county newspaper.
 - ii. Ecology will have to notify all landowners that all future notices will be by public docket. Landowners will be responsible for staying informed. Postcards with this info are expected to be sent by the end of October.
 - iii. The state budget came out. \$600,000 was requested for technical support. \$200,000 was given. \$1.4 million was requested and granted for court capital costs. \$200,000 was requested and denied for settlement costs. Roughly \$2.8 million was requested and denied for court operating costs. Ecology received all the funds requested.
- c. Judge will not allow motions to be filed until all landowners are served.
- d. Sarah noted that AESI is checking to see if they can assist people with filing claims online.

4. Drainage / Habitat / Flood

- a. Gavin noted there isn't much update for Laurel regarding FLIP.
- b. Everson bridge repair was briefly discussed.
- c. Cougar Creek floodgate construction is underway and making good progress.
- d. Ditch maintenance was discussed.
 - i. West of Hannigan is overgrown.
 - ii. Gavin hasn't heard back from DD#3.
 - iii. Gavin left a message with the drainage district.
- e. Ditch spray was discussed.
 - i. If anyone has any concerns let Gavin know.
- f. Fred noted that the county seems to be changing their approach to wetland buffers, especially for pasture. Trevor noted that those appear to be coming from non-ag planners as it relates to the land use.
- g. Fred shared about a recent Forest tour.
 - i. Fred mentioned recent developments in riparian buffers in working forest lands.
 - ii. Forest practices board is looking to further restrict logging adjacent to NP-type streams.
- h. Fred noted a recent Cascadia Daily article about air pollution from farms. The article had numerous errors.

5. Water Quality

- a. Trevor gave a water quality update.
 - i. There has been a trend of elevated counts over the summer. Whatcom Conservation District is investigating further. We will get an update at the next meeting.

6. Other Items

- a. Whatcom Family Farmers, Farmer Rally is November 19.

7. Next Meeting

- a. Next scheduled meeting is October 13.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:07 am.

Submitted by Tania Grim, Ag Water Board

Approved by Mike Box