

Sumas Watershed Improvement District

Minutes – Regular Meeting – November 12, 2024

Attendees

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

Board – Present	Board – Absent with Notice
Al Sytsma Terry Lenssen Keith Boon Brad Rader	Andy Enfield

Staff and Consultants	
Name	Organization / Affiliation
Gavin Willis	Ag Water Board
Elizabeth Link	Whatcom Conservation District
Katie Faber (t)	AESI
Fred Likkel	Whatcom Family Farmers

Other Guests	
Name	Organization / Affiliation
Helen Solem (t)	Sumas River Farm

Proceedings

Terry called the meeting to order at 1:15.

1. Board of Equalization

- a. Terry opened the board of equalization.
- b. No one was present to contest their assessment.
- c. Al moved to close the board of equalization. Keith seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Consent Agenda

- a. Agenda was reviewed.
- b. Minutes from October 8 meeting were reviewed.
- c. Financial reports were reviewed.
- d. Voucher S-Gen-1024 in the amount of \$22,405.16 was reviewed.
- e. Keith moved to approve the consent agenda. Al seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Administration

- a. Congrats to Keith on being elected for a new 3-year term.

4. FEMA Projects

- a. Gavin provided a FEMA update.
 - i. NW Survey has shared an initial survey point file and thalweg profile with Dale, but the full map file is not yet complete. Initial review shows places where thalweg trends uphill as you move downstream, so there is definitely room to improve the drainage. Challenge is that there is only 15 feet of drop between Morgan Rd and the border (0.7' drop per 1000')

- ii. Still awaiting EMD approval on the Kneuman Ditch RFQ.

5. Ag Water Board / Water Supply

- a. Gavin provided an adjudication update.
 - i. Next court hearing is on December 3rd. Expectation is that the judge will approve the claims form and issue the summons, which would lead to a filing deadline of May 2026.
 - ii. Bill continues to work on draft legislation that would create a new claims reopening for pre-code water users without water rights documentation to participate in the adjudication. Bill and Gavin met with ECY staff for an initial review of the draft language; unsurprisingly they had some concerns. Bill will bring the draft language to more stakeholders for their input and then seek to find a sponsor.
 - iii. More water rights office hours are available on December 6th. Signups available on agwaterboard.com by clicking the “Water Rights Resources” link. For landowners unsure of their parcel numbers, the “WID Parcel Finder” link on the top of the signup page will take them to a map that will show them their parcel numbers.
- b. Question from a board member on the Watershed Management Board. Gavin explained AWB’s role as an ex-officio member, and noted that may change to a full membership if WMB ends up being the venue for federal settlement talks.

6. Drainage / Habitat / Flood

- a. Fred provided a FLIP update. WC River and Flood is setting up a meeting in January with stakeholders in and around the City of Sumas about what mitigation options are available to address flooding concerns.
 - i. Initial modeling shows the Widen the Funnel concept would likely provide some benefits for the Sumas area, but is unclear at this point what impacts would occur downstream.
- b. Gavin provided an update on drainage issues.
 - i. Paatstel Creek continues to be a problem. Gavin will follow up with the drainage district to develop a work plan.
 - ii. Landowners in the Osgood Ditch area reached out with some concerns. Gavin identified a portion of the ditch that would benefit from spraying reed canary grass next summer.
 - iii. Al noted that John Vanderveen has invoices and is seeking reimbursement for work performed to improve drainage issues on Lindsay Road. Gavin will follow up on the invoices and talk to the drainage district about cost sharing.

7. Water Quality

- a. WQ results were reviewed. Some poor numbers from a few of the sub-drainages.

8. Communications / Education

- a. Gavin noted the annual WFF Farmer Rally is Wednesday, Nov 20 at 4:30 pm.

9. Next Meeting

- a. Next meeting dates are December 10th and January 14th.

Meeting adjourned at 2:14pm.

Submitted by Gavin Willis, Ag Water Board

Approved by _____