



GRAYS HARBOR
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
Zoom Meeting Minutes
Thursday, November 21, 2024

1. CALL TO ORDER/FLAG SALUTE

- The remote meeting, held via Zoom was called to order by Chairperson, Troy Meyers at 6:30 p.m. Attendance was called.

2. ATTENDANCE

- Members:
 - Councilmember David Lawrence (City of Aberdeen)
 - Mayor Linda Springer (City of Cosmopolis)
 - Councilmember Brandon Pauley (City of Hoquiam)
 - Councilmember Troy Meyers (City of Westport)
 - General Manager Ken Mehin (Grays Harbor Transit)
 - Port Engineer, Kris Koski (Port of Grays Harbor)
 - Elma Library Manager, Dee Depoe (Timberland Regional Library)
 - Commissioner Kevin Pine (Grays Harbor County)
- Staff:
 - Vicki Cummings, Executive Director
 - Natalie Jensen, Office Coordinator

A quorum was established.

3. GHCOG BUSINESS

- **Action: Approval of Current Meeting Agenda**
Chairperson, Troy Meyers, asked for approval of the current meeting Agenda.

Brandon Pauley made a motion to approve; second, Ken Mehin. Motion passed unanimously.
- **Action: Approval of September 2024 Minutes**
Chairperson, Troy Meyers, asked for approval of the August 2024 Minutes.

Ken Mehin made a motion to approve as amended; second, Linda Springer. Motion passed unanimously.
- **Administrative Sub-Council Report**
Executive Director, Vicki Cummings, reported a Sub-Council meeting was held. Bills and payroll were reviewed. Note was made of current projects, hiring a new planner, budget updates and that final budget approval will be next month. No other action was taken.

➤ **Action: Approval of November 2024 Claims Batches #24-11 which includes December 2024 Payroll**

Chairperson, Troy Meyers, asked for approval of the November 2024 Claims Batches #24-11 in the amount of \$27,217.83.

David Lawrence made a motion to approve; second, Ken Mehin. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

NONE

New Business

➤ **DISCUSSION: Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC) Grays Harbor Visit**

Vicki spent the preceding weeks planning, lining up speakers, creating the agenda, tour itinerary and working with the Commission to get our county leadership on the agenda. A special thank you to the Grays Harbor Transit Authority for their support on the tour.

Natalie Attended WSTC Two Day meeting and shared her notes.

- The tour was well received. Although we missed having Hoquiam City Administrator, Brian Shay, to offer his thoughts on each of Hoquiam's tour stops, Kris Koski and Nick Bird covered them, adding some geological information we might not have had otherwise. The rain & foggy windows made it tricky to really see well, and I would suggest photos of each stop should have been included in their tour packet.
- Day one covered the purpose of the WSTC and areas they have been working on this year. Namely their West Coast Network Plan, a Statewide Route Jurisdiction Study, and establishing sustainable transportation funding; Transitioning from the gas tax to a Road Usage Charge.
- The regional high-level overview from Robert Stevens, CWCOG and our area managers for Target Zero covered our demographics, successes and challenges, and set the stage for the more specific needs covered by the County and City panel.
- Overall, the themes were our aging infrastructure - particularly bridges, pinch points in our road systems, limited staffing/time with suggestions on how to increase efficiency – rural has more limited resources but the same challenges as urban and there is a struggle to compete for funding.
- The Commission seemed particularly impressed with the collaboration among our local municipalities and stakeholders, noting the wins for the Grays Harbor Transit and City of Aberdeen's projects. (Implementing of New technology & Rail Separation/Levy)
- Day two was focused mainly on our economic development where the Port of Grays Harbor really shined, driving home the importance of what our area brings to the entire state of WA; the expansions that are currently in the works and the need to provide more living wage jobs.
- WSDOT Regional Administrator, Steve Roark, gave an overview of current road, bridge and fish passage projects they have happening and are being planned in 2025. He also covered our local bridge projects in greater detail as well as Project Zero targets and safety issues on our local highways.
- I would definitely suggest watching the replays on the WTV website and you can even watch it sped up so it takes a little less time.

➤ **DISCUSSION: Grays Harbor Bridge Replacement Priorities (Based on GH Transportation Policy Forum process)**

- Vicki addressed the topic of bridges in GH. Thanks to the timing of the Policy Forum meeting that happened right before the WSTC meeting, we were able to specifically address the urgent bridge issues in our county. Grays Harbor County has 321 bridges, 31 rated in POOR condition which includes a few of our most critical bridges. This condition includes a list of functional issues that often result in weight restrictions and reduced travel. GHCOG continues to keep focus on our bridges and increase awareness in all the plans we do, and in all the local, regional, state and federal plans and studies.
- Vicki shared a map of all the bridges that were 50 years or older with the council. Including the Wishkah and Simpson Avenue bridges which are over 100 years old.
- The Policy Forum included RTPO staff and our transportation TAC. The goal was to create a list of bridges we think are the priority for our region. In all 16 bridges were chosen. This was an initial draft. More work is needed to refine the final list. We will also incorporate WSDOT's project priorities.
- This list will be used in the update of the SWRTPO Five-County Regional Transportation Plan as well as in discussions with WSDOT, state and federal agencies and our legislators.

● **Member Action Request**

- ✓ **None**

4. ALL STAFF REPORT

➤ **Vicki Cummings, Executive Director**

- Expressed pride in how well everyone pulled together for the WSTC meeting.
- Much time was dedicated to outlining the tour, reconfiguring the agenda, recruiting various speakers and confirming they were prepared for their presentations in front of the Commission. Went to great lengths to ensure the topics covered were focused on the needs of our county, rather than a presentation from WSDOT.
- Consolidated Transit Grants have been submitted and are awaiting review. On the committee to review the grants at the RTPO level, where they are ranked and that will be sent to WSDOT. Final funding rankings will be sent out by WSDOT in January.
- WSDOT Cycle Highways Provisory Report is a multi-jurisdictional network of facilities on state and local rights-of-way that optimize bicycle micro-mobility. We are encouraging the use of the previous ADA planning and non-motorized bike and pedestrian planning to be incorporated into this report. Keeping an eye on this for our members to avoid any required implementation of plans without funding.
- Brownfields program is busy with filing the last quarterly report and yearly reports. Westport is about to kick off their areawide planning in January. Includes Brownfield site plan review as well as future usage planning. We have previously completed these plans for Elma and Cosmopolis.

➤ **Natalie Jensen, Office Coordinator**

- Attended Brownfield Coalition check-in meeting.
- Completed the 2025 medical and benefits renewals
- Paid job postings – Receiving a few applications but also receiving feedback that the pay range is insufficient.

- Attended GGHI Business Forum – Meet & Greet with Sam Kim, Grays Harbor County Administrator
- Attended CWCOG Regular Meeting
- Attended all day Public Records Act workshop – Now the Public Records Request onsite person.
- Attended pre-WSTC planning meeting
- Helped prepare 2024 Impact Report for the County
- Created presentation template for GHCOG
- Vicki trained Natalie on DRS Reporting
- Updates on GHCOG LinkedIn Business Page – NOFOs, office closures and meeting announcements.

Vicki noted that we will be sending out letters to all Mayors and Administrators asking them to submit their 2025 representatives in December. This must be documented before our January 2025 meeting to ensure voting rights.

5. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

- None

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

- None

7. MEMBER/PUBLIC COMMENT

- City of Aberdeen, Councilmember David Lawrence
 - Public Works Department applied for federally funded Highway Safety Improvement Program grant in the amount of \$640,000 to design and construct new pedestrian activated cross walks, including curb extensions, high visibility signs, pavement markings and curb ramps on West First, East First, and West Market Streets.
- City of Cosmopolis, Mayor Linda Springer
 - Finishing up 2-year audit & completing their 2025 budget,
 - Mill creek preservation grant update, on hold until spring but still on track. Submitted 1st Phase report to the state.
 - Holiday activities to share and will send over more details for the group. Look for details in the newspaper and on local radio as well.
 - On track with the Municipal building project completion, with move-in planned for end of January and an Open House to follow. All are invited.
- City of Hoquiam, Councilmember Brandon Pauley
 - Saron Lutheran steeple missing about 10' from the top from the lightning strike.
 - Riverside Road Changes are mostly complete and seem to be working well to slow down traffic. Residents are slowly warming up to the changes.
 - Voted in the last meeting to approve the purchase of property from Coastal Harvest for the levee project.
 - Opening the discussion up on the legal use of side-by-sides in town.

- City of Westport, Councilmember Troy Meyers
 - Working on completing 2024 administrative budget.
 - Completed North 4th street with the replanting grass in the inswell in the spring.
 - Deck the Docks this weekend and the annual Crab Pot Christmas tree has been erected.
 - Grays Harbor Public Health having a movie premiere “Voices of Resilience” on December 5th at 6:30 PM at the 7th Street Theater. The documentary covers homelessness in Grays Harbor.

- Grays Harbor Transit, General Manager Ken Mehin
 - Working on their 2025 budget. To be approved in December.
 - Board approved the Fair Free Program again for another year.

- Timberland Regional Library, McCleary Library Manager Karen Kienenberger
 - McCleary Library had a successful teen program last week with 17 teenagers visiting. They do host a monthly teen night.
 - Finalizing their new Strategic Direction plan.
 - Sharing the TRL Podcast “No Shhh... It's the TRL Podcast.” This month’s podcast topic covered the remodels and refreshes happening at various locations.
 - Karen shared a link to the podcast in the chat:
https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzqJGkcPXPVh5qCS-xhVnupOiPq3HR4C_&si=1mpdcgA2zivBJ-oJ

- Grays Harbor County, Commissioner Kevin Pine
 - Survived the storm but a couple roads were blocked, and the road crews have cleared them as of yesterday.
 - GHC has approved a new website. Just in the preliminary stages.
 - Finalizing the county’s budget at the Tuesday meeting next week.

8. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

Ken Mehin made a motion to adjourn; second, David Lawrence. Motion passed unanimously.

GRAYS HARBOR COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
 115 S. Wooding St.
 Aberdeen, Washington 98520

 Troy Meyers
 Chairman

Date

 Vicki Cummings
 Executive Director

Date