



1. CALL TO ORDER/FLAG SALUTE

- The remote meeting, held via Zoom, was called to order by Chairperson Troy Meyers at 6:31 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)
 - Mayor, Tyler Trimble (City of Montesano)
 - Councilmember, Troy Meyers (City of Westport)
 - Rick Hole, Grays Harbor County Commissioner
 - General Manager, Ken Mehin (Grays Harbor Transit)
 - Commissioner, Phil Papac (Port of Grays Harbor)
 - Elma Library Manager, Dee Depoe (Timberland Regional Library)
- Staff:
 - Vicki Cummings, Executive Director
 - Mark Northrop, Planner II
 - Natalie Jensen, Office Coordinator
- Guests:
 - Georgia Miller, Grays Harbor County Commissioner
 - County Administrator, Sam Kim (Grays Harbor County)

A quorum was established.

3. GHCOC BUSINESS

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

Phil Papac made a motion to approve; second, Brandon Pauley. The motion passed unanimously.
- **ACTION: Approval of April 2025 Minutes**
Chairperson Troy Meyers asked for approval of the April 2025 Minutes.

Ken Mehin made a motion to approve as amended; second, Brandon Pauley. The motion passed unanimously.
- **Administrative Sub-Council Report**
Executive Director Vicki Cummings reported that a Sub-Council meeting was held. The May bills and payroll were reviewed and approved. No other action was taken.

- **ACTION: Approval of May 2025 Claims Batches #25-5 which includes JUNE 2025 Payroll**
Chairperson Troy Meyers asked for approval of the May 2025 Claims Batches #25-5 in the amount of \$83,975.96.

David Lawrence made a motion to approve; second, Brandon Pauley. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

- **ACTION: Approval of Resolution #695 – Grays Harbor Council of Governments 2026-2031 Transportation Improvement Plan**
Vicki explained this resolution is for the Grays Harbor Council of Governments Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). GHCOG receives federal funding for Surface Transportation Program (STP) administration and the only funding secured projects in the TIP is STP Administration, 2026 through 2031. Other projects are regional and do not have a funding source currently but remain in our TIP in the event funding becomes available.
- **ACTION: Decision Regarding June Meeting – which falls on the Juneteenth holiday**
Vicki explained that the only business on the docket for that meeting is the approval of bills and payroll, and the upcoming RTPO contract. The funding amount of \$31,000 and the Scope of Work will remain unchanged. According to Agency Bylaws, the Administrative Sub-Council has the authority to approve both items so a Full Board meeting may be unnecessary. She offered to send out a survey to the group to determine the best course of action, moving the meeting date or cancelling the meeting for the month of June. The group agreed this would be the best course of action.

4. ALL STAFF REPORT

- **Vicki Cummings, Executive Director**
- **RTPO Policy Meeting on May 7th.**
The first of two annual Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) policy meetings was held. The meeting focused on the State Highway Systems Plan, which outlines 20-year funding recommendations for the preservation, maintenance, capacity, and operational improvements of the state highway system. Slides will be sent out after this meeting. Washington State has sought public input on the plan, and a link to participate was shared with members last month. GHCOG continues to monitor developments closely and participates as needed to ensure that the interests of Grays Harbor are represented.
 - **Funding Overview**
Current transportation funding in Washington is approximately \$48 billion per year, which is insufficient to meet needs—leaving 90% of highways in disrepair. Two future funding scenarios have been proposed: a moderate increase to \$69 billion, which would still leave about 50% of highways deteriorating, and a full increase to \$91 billion, which would better address system-wide needs. The proposed spending strategy for any remaining funds after covering current projects includes allocating \$1 to highway expansion for every \$2 spent on safety and efficiency improvements.
 - **Concerns**
Without adequate funding, highways falling into disrepair may eventually be closed due to safety concerns, resulting in service disruptions. Additional funding concerns stem from the escalating cost of the fish barrier removal program, which has repeatedly doubled its

funding requests and remains far from completion. GHCOG is particularly concerned that growing costs for other state programs, like fish passage, could impact funding for vital local infrastructure such as bridges. Staff continue to monitor these developments to ensure regional equity and prevent any detrimental impacts on Grays Harbor.

- **Rail and Notices**

GHCOG is also monitoring the update of the State Rail Plan to ensure local priorities are reflected and no adverse policies are introduced. Staff continue to distribute notices from WSDOT regarding upcoming bridge or highway work in the area so that local representatives are informed and can alert their constituents in advance.

- **Brownfield Program**

The Brownfield program remains strong and active, with no funding rescissions affecting our projects. Environmental analysis is scheduled for several large parcels in Aberdeen and Hoquiam, with costs fully covered by the program—at no cost to participating cities. The program continues to focus on site rehabilitation and returning properties to public use and the tax roll. GHCOG has been recognized at both regional and state levels for leveraging Brownfield grants to support broader projects.

- **Administrative Updates**

Due to changes under the new federal administration, new reporting requirements have been introduced. Staff, particularly Natalie, are undergoing training to stay current with compliance. Mark and additional staff will attend the upcoming Brownfield Conference in Yakima, which is both a grant requirement and fully funded through the program. Grays Harbor has been highlighted at recent conferences as a success story in the effective use of grant funding.

- **Community Engagement**

Staff met with McCleary Mayor Miller and City Manager John Martin to discuss upcoming projects and long-term planning. The city is proactively engaging in thoughtful pre-planning to prepare for anticipated growth, and GHCOG will continue to support them through these efforts.

➤ **Mark Northrop, Planner II**

- Participated in a visit to McCleary to discuss transportation-related questions and local projects and toured the city to view previous TIP projects funded through STP funding.
- Attended the public meeting for the Transit Headquarters Relocation Project's Feasibility Study and Environmental Review; project expected to provide a significant benefit to regional transit.
- Local agencies are currently updating their local TIPs, due Monday, June 30th; has begun working with staff to review and provide feedback.
- Continued development of the draft Title VI Plan; completed demographic section, now focusing on public engagement.
- Monitoring funding and training opportunities to support member agencies.

➤ **Natalie Jensen, Office Coordinator**

- Planning to attend upcoming training courses for EPA payment processing and WA State Department of Commerce.
- Completed regular monthly bookkeeping and claims processing.
- Participated in tracking House and Senate bills related to budget matters, as part of a team effort.
- Attended Brownfield Coalition and WSDOT Obligation Authority (OA) meetings to stay informed on funding issues.
- Rebuilt GHCOG's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the year — first time completing this process. Offered to assist local agencies with TIP questions if needed.

- Attended the RTPO Grays Harbor Policy Board meeting; found discussions from local cities and transit agency insightful.
- Received WSDOT funding approval for GHCOG's 2025 Surface Transportation Program (STP) contract.
- Met with WCIF (Vision & Dental) representative for annual insurance review to ensure appropriate coverage.
- Continues to update and maintain GHCOG's LinkedIn page; posts Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs), workshops, and training information.
- Ongoing review and updates of GHCOG's personnel policies. First draft is now ready for Vicki's review.

5. **MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS**

- None

6. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- None

7. **MEMBER/PUBLIC COMMENT**

- City of Aberdeen, Councilmember, David Lawrence
 - Sidewalk improvement projects on Sumner have begun with limited impact to traffic. Single lane closure to be expected.
- City of Cosmopolis, Mayor Linda Springer
 - Thanked GHCOG for its ongoing work to provide information and funding support to Grays Harbor.
 - Held a ribbon cutting for the new municipal building; GHCOG attended, and turnout was strong. Acknowledged mixed community reactions as residents adjust from the previous, more personal town hall.
 - Preparing to present the city budget to Council in June.
 - Planning to participate in Aberdeen's World Music Day on June 21st and the 22nd. Includes a ribbon cutting for Mill Creek Park following maintenance and improvement grant work. Music and vendors coordinated with Darren Westmoreland. Improvements address needs that have existed for 25–30 years. Project supported by RCO funding, local business contributions, and volunteer efforts.
 - Mill Creek Cleanup event held with Grays Harbor College; LeMay supported with disposal services. Mayor Springer expressed appreciation for community and business support in Cosmopolis.
 - Planning several community events for the summer; more details to be shared soon.
 - Collaborating with Engine Company No. 1 to revive the old Fire Museum. A five-year contract is being developed to reopen the museum and showcase historical artifacts. Museum work is expected to begin within the next couple of months.
 - Reiterated appreciation to GHCOG for ongoing support and information.
- City of Hoquiam, Councilmember Brandon Pauley
 - The main concern addressed at the last meeting involved Moore Wright's intentions with the recent purchase of Hoquiam's largest motel and with it approximately 90% of our LTAC funds.
 - Concerns over the levee funding getting pulled, but Brian Shay is confident that will get fixed and returned to us.

➤ City of Montesano, Mayor Tyler Trimble

- Project season is underway with multiple initiatives starting.
- McBride Sidewalk Project will be completed this summer, completing a full sidewalk loop around the city.
- Approximately 10 road projects planned for the year, including: Chip sealing, overlays, and water main replacements. These projects were funded by TIB grants.
- Daycare and dog park projects are nearing completion; both expected to open by the start of the school year (September). Ribbon cutting events are anticipated.
- A forestry tour is scheduled for July 15th. Montesano manages nearly 6,000 acres of city-owned forest land. Tour will be led by City Forester John Bull (also forester for Aberdeen and Hoquiam). State natural resource representatives will be in attendance. Vicki will receive a formal invitation to share.
- City Hall roof replacement is in progress; clay tile removal is underway.

➤ City of Westport, Councilmember Troy Meyers

- Expressed appreciation to the County for assisting with a resident concern related to the North Forest Street grant project by having the county engineer review the grant process.
- Provided update on the Fish Landing Tax: The bill did not make it out of committee this session. Will return next year during the longer legislative session.
- Discussed the FEMA grant: \$15 million potentially available. Final confirmation of funding expected in September. Only limited work will be done in the next three months due to funding uncertainty. The focus will be on inexpensive, fast tasks such as tsunami modeling. Exploring the feasibility of geotechnical studies, though unlikely at this time. The city has the 10% match already set aside.
- Announced approval of the new domain: westportwa.gov, which will replace the current ci.westport.wa.us domain. Noted website visibility concerns: Constituents reported difficulty locating the city's website via Google search (appearing on page 5 search results). Offered support to other jurisdictions interested in obtaining a .gov domain.
- Thanked attendees of the AWC Small City Connector event. Issued an apology for seeming distracted at the Southwest Regional Transportation Policy Forum.
- Troy wished safe travels to Mark and Vicki on their trip to Eastern Washington [EPA conference].
- Participated in FEMA Grant Q&A with Commissioner Rick Hole: Grant is obligated, but uncertainty remains about full access to funds until September. The city is cautiously proceeding with reimbursable tasks that can be completed in the short term. Only a small portion of the \$15M is expected to be spent in the next three months. Tsunami modeling is the only task likely to move forward immediately:
 - The Geotech modeling helps determine siting and construction standards for vertical evacuation structures. Similar to modeling done by emergency management but more focused on construction-specific impacts.

➤ Grays Harbor Transit, General Manager Ken Mehin

- The new headquarters design project is progressing on schedule.
- Awaiting notifications from the state regarding the status of grant applications and are expecting award letters by end of May or early June.

- Timberland Regional Library, Elma Library Manager Dee Depoe
 - Reminded attendees that four Grays Harbor libraries now offer extended access. Patrons can check out materials, print documents, and access library services outside of staffed hours. Each library cardholder receives \$44 worth of free printing each month, including color printing. Highlighted the value of this benefit, especially considering the cost of printer cartridges.
 - Councilmember Troy Meyers shared that Westport is one of the extended access locations. Initially they had concerns about vandalism or misuse without staff present. After more than a year of implementation, they reported zero incidents. Troy praised the program as a valuable service, noting personal use of the after-hours printing option. Thanked library leadership for their progressive approach to access.
 - Dee mentioned that Elma Library was one of the largest to adopt extended access. Despite initial concerns from her 40+ years of experience in the library world, the program has had very few incidents, none of which were serious or noteworthy. Emphasized that extended access has helped maintain service availability amid budget constraints.
 - Encouraged attendees to use their libraries and take advantage of the free monthly printing.
- Grays Harbor County, Administrator Sam Kim
 - Reported on a visit to Grant County's new jail construction site: Originally a 100-bed facility, now expanding to a 512-bed complex, scalable up to 1,024 beds. Project is on schedule and \$9 million under budget. Funded without levies, bonds, or new taxes—notable public support and efficiency. Jail utilizes stacked steel cells and was designed for low operational costs. Facility is operated with the same staffing as the previous 200-bed jail. Architect involved has extensive experience designing cost-effective jails.
 - Plans to bring the architect to Grays Harbor to tour the existing jail and new jail site. Explore design and cost options that fit within Grays Harbor's smaller footprint.
 - Requested to add an agenda item for the June or July meeting to discuss potential consolidation of the Grays Harbor Council of Governments (GHCOG) with the Economic Development Council (EDC).

8. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

Ken Mehin made a motion to adjourn; second, Brandon Pauley. Motion passed unanimously.

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



08/15/2025

Troy Meyers
Chairperson

Date



Vicki Cummings (Aug 15, 2025 12:23:13 PDT)

08/15/2025

Vicki Cummings
Executive Director

Date

May 15, 2025 _Zoom GHCOG Minutes-fnl

Final Audit Report

2025-08-15

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