

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:
 - Mayor, Linda Springer (City of Cosmopolis)
 - Councilmember, Rob Gillis (City of Hoquiam)
 - Mayor, Brycen Huff (City of McCleary)
 - Mayor, Bill Breedlove (City of Oakville)
 - Councilmember, Troy Meyers (City of Westport)
 - Councilmember, Frank Eshpeter (City of Westport) – Voting Member
 - Commissioner, Rick Hole (Grays Harbor County)
 - General Manager, Ken Mehin (Grays Harbor Transit)
 - Regional Library Manager, Evi Buell (Timberland Regional Library)
- Staff:
 - Vicki Cummings, Executive Director
 - Mark Northrop, Planner II
 - Natalie Jensen, Office Coordinator
- Guests:
 - Councilmember, Sue Darcy, City of Cosmopolis
 - Joe Calodich, WSDOT Multimodal Planning Team Lead
 - Don Williams, Community Member

A quorum was established.

3. GHCOC BUSINESS

➤ **ACTION: Approval of Current Meeting Agenda**

Chairperson Troy Meyers asked for approval of the current meeting Agenda.

Ken Mehin made a motion to approve the current agenda; second, Commissioner Rick Hole. The motion passed unanimously.

➤ **ACTION: Approval of December 2025 Minutes**

Chairperson Troy Meyers asked for approval of December 2025 Minutes.

Councilmember Frank Eshpeter made a motion to approve; second, Ken Mehin. The motion passed unanimously.

➤ **Administrative Sub-Council Report**

Executive Director Vicki Cummings reported that the Administrative Sub-Council met briefly prior to the Board meeting. The Sub-Council reviewed and approved January bills, including

payroll. A brief discussion was held regarding the closeout of a former employee, noting that all separation items were completed successfully. Chair Troy Meyers said that he would like to send a letter of thanks to Zana for her contributions to the GHCOG. No additional action was taken.

➤ **ACTION: Approval of January 2026 Claims Batch #26-1 which includes February 2026 Payroll**

Chairperson Troy Meyers asked for approval of the January 2026 Claims Batches #26-01 in the amount of \$35,909.46.

Ken Mehin made a motion to approve; second, Evi Buell. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

➤ **DISCUSSION: 2026 Cost Allocation Plan**

Executive Director Cummings explained that GHCOG is required to prepare a Cost Allocation Plan annually to document allocation of administrative overhead, benefits, and indirect costs in compliance with federal requirements. The plan is submitted to WSDOT/USDOT, which serves as GHCOG's federal cognizant agency. She noted the plan supports charging staff time and administrative costs to federal transportation programs and is dependent on receipt of year-end financial data from the County. Staff anticipate bringing the plan forward for Board approval in February, pending receipt of the necessary information from the County Treasurer emphasizing the importance of quorum at that meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

➤ **DISCUSSION: 2026 Administrative Sub-Council 2026 Election of Officers**

Executive Director Cummings reviewed the upcoming February election of officers for the Administrative Sub-Council, which includes the Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary positions. She outlined eligibility requirements, term expectations, and responsibilities, including monthly pre-meeting participation and occasional contract approvals. She noted incumbents are eligible to serve additional terms and that information on open positions and eligible members will be distributed prior to the February meeting. Chair Meyers encouraged interested members to consider serving and offered support to ensure success in the roles.

4. ALL STAFF REPORT

➤ **Vicki Cummings, Executive Director**

- Director Cummings Reported ongoing coordination related to regional transportation planning activities, including WSDOT's 2026 Freight Systems Plan.
- Reminded the board of upcoming freight funding opportunities through Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB). FMSIB, is accepting applications for projects to be funded in 2027-2033. These applications are due in March and GHCOG asks that anyone applying for this program let them know so we can help coordinate this through the RTPPO.
- WSDOT and the National Highway Freight Program has a call out for regional priority freight projects for 2027-2033. These applications are due January 29th.
- Announced completion of the Bay-to-Bay SR 105 Corridor Management Plan, a precursor to application for National Scenic Byway designation, and acknowledged staff contributions to the final document. Will be available on the ghcog.org website shortly and is also hosted on the evergreencoastwa.com website.
- Provided updates on RTPPO coordination and transportation planning activities supporting Grays Harbor County.
- Reported completion and acceptance of EPA Brownfields annual and financial reports, noting 40 sites and over 90 parcels impacted in 2025. Phase I environmental assessments

can range from \$12,000 to \$20,000, and Phase II environmental assessments that can run from \$35,000 to \$75,000 depending on depth of assessment. This is 100% free for the members who use the program.

- Outlined planned Phase I and Phase II environmental assessments for 2026 Brownfields and the goal of expending 70% of grant funds to remain eligible for future funding. This is our third year of this program.
- Worked on researching/updating new HR rules and tax changes for the new year.
- Provided a preview of upcoming Board presentations, including Timberland Regional Library Director, Cheryl Heywood in March and Olympic Region Administrator, Steve Roark in April.

➤ **Mark Northrop, Planner II**

- Mark Northrop reported development of internal project and event tracking tools and planning for professional development conferences in 2026.
- Attended the Greater Grays Harbor Legislative Send-Off and provided updates on state and federal transportation programming.
- Noted submission of the 2026–2029 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) to FHWA and FTA. Staff will be sending out letters to those communities who need to obligate a phase of their STP, or Surface Transportation Program project in 2026.
- Continued development and organization of GHCOG’s GIS data warehouse, including new regional datasets. Of note, the fire hydrant locations for area cities and park locations for our region.
- Reminded members of the Transportation Alternatives Program call for projects, open through February 26, 2026. Grant details are located on the home page of the cwco.org website.
- Shared outreach and engagement opportunities related to CWCOG surveys and StoryMap tools. To be published on the ghcog.org website and currently available on the cwco.org website.
 - 2026 Transportation Access Survey available here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CWCOG26Access> and the survey deadline is April 3rd.
 - Transportation Priorities and Issues Survey available here: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/d7bba3946a4d46b994561a646cd37d70> and the survey is ongoing.
- Planned webinar attendance on the topics of Vision Zero and Traffic Safety.

➤ **Natalie Jensen, Office Coordinator**

- Natalie Jensen completed monthly financial reporting and year-end closeout activities.
- Submitted finalized budget materials for County Treasurer.
- Mailed member dues invoices.
- Developed new internal procedures, including a staff separation checklist.
- Participated in grant compliance, advocacy, and training webinars from the Association of Washington Cities. Encourage the group to check out the free webinars for city staff.
- Created a year end overview report that will be discussed in the February meeting.
- Worked with Vicki to bring on guest speakers for future board meetings. Invited suggestions from the board.
- Will begin development of the 2026 Cost Allocation Plan.
- Posted grant opportunities and survey links on the Agency’s LinkedIn page.
- Will be adding items to the website that were discussed in this month’s meeting.
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- Announced a Library Capital Improvement Program grant from the Washington Department of Commerce. This grant closes April 15th, open to more than Libraries, and is for projects up to \$2 million. Has a 50% match and will be posted on our LinkedIn page.

5. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

- None.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

- None.

7. MEMBER/PUBLIC COMMENT

➤ City of Hoquiam, Councilmember Rob Gillis

- City Council approved Century West Engineering to conduct a survey and impact analysis related to the North Shore Levee Project at Bowerman Airfield. The work will assess impacts to airport operations, including potential relocation of runway lighting and associated infrastructure.
- Provided an update on planning for Hoquiam Celebrates America 250, scheduled for June 26–28, 2026. Planned activities include events hosted by the Pushrods, the return of the River Festival with a children’s parade, free family-oriented carnival activities, and a professional wrestling event at Olympic Stadium. Noted the event is being designed as an annual community celebration, with a vision centered on “past, present, and future” themes. Current efforts are focused on securing sponsorships, particularly for a fireworks display, with potential additions such as a drone show or laser display on either June 27 or 28. Emphasized the event is intended to be family-focused, locally driven, and to draw visitors from across Grays Harbor and beyond.
- Announced the next planning meeting for this event will be held February 5, 2026, at 4:00 p.m. in the Hoquiam City Council Chambers and invited interested parties to attend. Indicated planning is progressing well, expressed appreciation for collaboration and input, and noted openness to additional ideas or assistance as planning continues.

➤ City of Cosmopolis, Mayor Linda Springer

- Reported a positive outlook entering 2026 after several challenging years and expressed confidence in the City’s direction and financial stabilization efforts.
- Provided an update on addressing the City’s inherited sewer debt with the City of Aberdeen, noting an active committee is working toward resolution and expecting meaningful progress by the end of February.
- The City has transitioned to contracted police services with the City of Aberdeen, noting the transition has gone more smoothly than anticipated due to prior partial service arrangements. Acknowledged the retirement of the City’s long-time Police Chief and expressed appreciation for his service and dedication to the community.
- Reported Aberdeen Police have established a visible presence in Cosmopolis, with officers regularly in the community, local residency among some officers, and leadership participation in community events. Noted the transition has resulted in cost savings of over \$200,000 annually, supporting the City’s goal of long-term financial stability and operating within its means.
- Reported successful pursuit of smaller grant opportunities, including submission of a Historical Cemetery Grant, with award decisions expected in February.
- Confirmed receipt of a Periodic Update Grant (PUG) and ongoing work on critical areas review, noting a tight timeline but confidence in meeting deadlines.

- Reported ongoing collaboration with Cindy Kaiser on the Stormwater Comprehensive Plan, with support from state agencies and technical partners during the City's transition period.
 - Described proactive efforts to address inflow and infiltration (I&I) issues contributing to sewer system costs, including data collection and system assessment to support future corrective actions.
 - Announced the establishment of a community food pantry, led by Councilmember Sue Darcy, noting increased weekly participation and ongoing donation needs.
 - Reported continued growth in senior center programming and lunches, emphasizing its importance for social connection, education, and safety awareness among seniors.
 - Noted the formation of a community watch group, supported by City staff, Aberdeen Police, and emergency services, with guidance from an experienced former law enforcement professional.
 - Met with PRWA and Department of Commerce partners to identify funding strategies and technical assistance opportunities, noting services are being provided at no cost to the city.
 - Expressed appreciation for GHCOG staff support and indicated intent to follow up on grant and funding opportunities discussed during the meeting.
 - Conveyed ongoing commitment to training and education, including upcoming AWC training for council members and planned attendance at the AWC CEO Mayor Workshop in February.
- City of McCleary, Mayor Brycen Huff
- Introduced himself as the newly elected Mayor of McCleary, noting he has served on City Council since 2018 and as Mayor Pro Tem prior to assuming the mayoral role approximately two weeks ago.
 - Reported the City was awarded a grant for Beerbower Park and is working with City Administrator John Martin to prioritize improvements within the grant budget, including playground equipment upgrades, restroom renovations, potential softball field improvements, and new signage, including a reader board.
 - Announced a vacancy on the City Council resulting from his transition to Mayor, noting the position has been advertised and recruitment is underway.
 - Reported efforts to rebuild the City's development and volunteer groups, including reinstatement of the Civil Service Commission, which is currently working with Police Chief Miskell on police recruitment.
 - Provided an update on police staffing, noting a strong candidate is advancing through final review and an additional officer has recently been hired and is performing well.
 - Acknowledged inherited operational challenges but expressed confidence in the City Council, staff, and regional partnerships, stating optimism for McCleary's future.
 - Reported ongoing discussions with property owner Randy Rognlin regarding development opportunities within the city, including residential, commercial, and industrial uses.
 - Highlighted community partnerships with McCleary School, including donation drives coordinated through events such as Halloween activities, with proceeds supporting students in need.
 - Reported the McCleary Museum is planning to participate in America 250 celebrations, while also marking its 50th anniversary as a historical society and the 100th anniversary of its current building.
 - Responded to questions from Commissioner Rick Hole regarding development coordination by noting a City Council workshop scheduled for January 21, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center, where development partners will present long-range concepts and visioning.

- Reported the workshop will include participation from Summit Pacific, Randy Rognlin, and architect Ron Thomas, focusing on walkability, connectivity, public transportation access, bicycling, public health, and integration with the hospital district.
 - Noted development concepts emphasize balancing growth with preservation of McCleary's small-town character.
 - Welcomed coordination with Grays Harbor Transit and other partners on sidewalk improvements, ADA accessibility, and transit connectivity.
 - Asked whether GHCOG meetings are held in person, expressing interest in face-to-face engagement to strengthen collaboration and understanding of regional initiatives.
- City of Oakville, Mayor Bill Breedlove
- Reported the City is in the midst of an ADA sidewalk retrofitting grant, with surveying and preliminary work underway and the project expected to go out to bid within the next few months.
 - Noted construction is anticipated to begin over the summer, emphasizing the importance of ADA compliance when pursuing and competing for future funding opportunities.
 - The City had significant recent turnover on the City Council, with a majority of new council members seated and the first meeting with the new Council recently held.
 - Shared enthusiasm for new council members, noting strong engagement, formation of committees, and positive momentum.
 - Recent AWC training attended by all new council members, as well as the City Attorney, describing the training as valuable and beneficial.
 - Expressed optimism for Oakville's future and openness to collaboration with neighboring jurisdictions.
- City of Westport, Councilmembers Frank Eshpeter and Troy Meyers
- The City is exploring relocation of the senior center to the Old City Hall building, with site tours underway to evaluate renovation and multi-use opportunities.
 - Provided an update on the automated water meter reading system, noting the project is nearing completion and will integrate directly with City Hall billing systems.
 - The sewer department is completing storm-damage repairs following a lightning strike that damaged system electronics, noting significant staff effort and overtime to maintain operations.
 - Preparing to execute a contract for project management services for the new skate park, which will allow construction to resume once finalized.
 - Completed the City's state audit, noting the audit went well with no issues.
 - Announced the City is in the process of hiring a new police chief, with a contract expected to be offered soon, and is continuing recruitment for additional officers.
 - Reported the City recently renegotiated its LeMay contract to include senior discounts and bear-resistant garbage cans, encouraging other jurisdictions to inquire about available options that may not be widely advertised.
- Grays Harbor County, Commissioner Rick Hole
- Commissioner Hole reported the County continues working to better integrate with GHCOG and expressed ongoing concern regarding the County's share of the GHCOG budget allocation, emphasizing a desire to ensure the County receives full value from participation.
 - Identified housing as a top County priority, with particular interest in higher-density housing located along transit routes as a sustainable development strategy.
 - The County is completing an updated Land Use Plan, targeted for completion by the end of June, to support upcoming reviews and planning decisions.

- Announced the County plans to initiate a Housing Needs Assessment in the coming weeks, using available funding, in response to developer feedback seeking clearer guidance on housing types and locations needed.
 - Emphasized the importance of coordinating housing development with supporting infrastructure, including sewer and water systems, and asked whether GHCOG funding programs address those needs.
 - Executive Director Cummings clarified that GHCOG grant programs are limited to surface transportation, but staff can assist in identifying and applying for sewer and water funding through other programs.
 - Expressed interest in supporting development initiatives underway in McCleary, Westport, and other communities, and encouraged jurisdictions to engage with the County regarding viable development projects.
 - Noted strong interest in infrastructure investment along the North Beach corridor, including potential future extension of the Pacific Beach sewer system to support housing and coastal development.
 - Reported the County continues planning efforts related to a new correctional facility, including evaluation of potential sites.
 - Responded to a question from Chair Meyers regarding potential Growth Management Act (GMA) participation, stating the County has historically been relieved not to be subject to GMA requirements and expressed caution based on observed constraints faced by smaller communities in Lewis County.
 - Discussed the importance of long-range planning and infrastructure expansion in smaller communities to avoid future constraints should GMA requirements eventually apply.
 - Executive Director Cummings provided context on prior County discussions regarding GMA, noting the significant workload and planning requirements associated with compliance and the challenges posed by limited developable land and outdated comprehensive plans in some jurisdictions.
 - Agreed that further discussion of GMA implications would be beneficial and suggested inviting a guest planner to present on the pros and cons of GMA participation at a future meeting. Concluded by acknowledging that while GMA participation may be inevitable in the long term, proactive planning and coordination now will better position local jurisdictions in the future.
- Grays Harbor Transit, General Manager Ken Mehin
- Reported Grays Harbor Transit has several capital projects underway and will provide updates to the Board as those projects become more fully developed and ready for discussion.
- Timberland Regional Library, Evi Buell
- Reported the library system is in the early planning stages for 2026 programming, with the Summer Library Program already taking shape.
 - Highlighted a new career and job training resource available through Timberland Regional Library in partnership with the Washington State Library and other collaborators.
 - Noted the resource provides free access to training and certification preparation for programs such as CompTIA, Cisco, Microsoft, and Intuit QuickBooks, accessible with a valid library card.
 - Directed members to TRL.org under Services → Career and Job Help for additional workforce development and training resources.

8. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Ken Mehin made a motion to adjourn; second, Councilmember Frank Eshpeter. Motion passed unanimously.

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

Troy Meyers
Chairperson

Date

Vicki Cummings
Executive Director

Date

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