

**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. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**2. ATTENDANCE**

- Members:
  - Councilmember, Joshua Francy (City of Aberdeen)
  - Mayor, Linda Springer (City of Cosmopolis)
  - Mayor, Josh Collette (City of Elma)
  - Mayor, Tyler Trimble (City of Montesano)
  - Mayor, Bill Breedlove (City of Oakville)
  - Councilmember, Troy Meyers (City of Westport)
  - Commissioner Phil Papac (Port of Grays Harbor)
  - Commissioner, Rick Hole (Grays Harbor County)
  - General Manager, Ken Mehin (Grays Harbor Transit)
- Staff:
  - Vicki Cummings, Executive Director
  - Mark Northrop, Senior Planner
  - Natalie Jensen, Office & Grants Coordinator
- Guests:
  - Councilmember, Sue Darcy, Cit of Cosmopolis
  - Library Manager, Tania Remmers, Timberland Regional Library
  - Regional Library Manager, Evi Buell, Timberland Regional Library
  - Joe Calodich, WSDOT Multimodal Planning Team Lead

A quorum was established.

**3. PRESENTATION**

Jacque Goodwill, Marketing Communications Manager with the Washington State Department of Commerce, provided a presentation on the upcoming [Opportunity Zones 2.0 program](#), a federal tax incentive initiative designed to encourage private investment in low-income and high-poverty census tracts. She explained that the current Opportunity Zones (1.0), established in 2017, have resulted in significant nationwide investment estimated between \$90 and \$100 billion, primarily in housing, mixed-use development, and business infrastructure, though limited federal reporting requirements have made outcomes difficult to fully quantify.

Goodwill outlined key changes in the 2.0 program, which will take effect January 1, 2027, including enhanced federal reporting requirements, stronger accountability measures, and a more targeted approach to designating eligible census tracts. Washington State's number of designated Opportunity Zones will be reduced from 139 to 98, with an increased emphasis on rural and truly low-income areas, as well as anti-gentrification measures. The program will also become permanent, with zone designations reviewed every ten years.

She described how the program works from an investment standpoint, noting that investors can defer and reduce capital gains taxes by reinvesting proceeds into Qualified Opportunity Funds, which must then invest in eligible projects within designated zones. Opportunity Zones 2.0 increases certain tax benefits, particularly for rural areas, and introduces stricter requirements to ensure timely project development and discourage speculative property holding without improvement.

The presentation also highlighted examples of successful projects, including mixed-use housing developments and redevelopment efforts across Washington, as well as opportunities to leverage the program alongside other funding sources. Goodwill emphasized that brownfield redevelopment and community-focused projects may score favorably in the upcoming application process.

Goodwill reviewed the anticipated timeline for Opportunity Zones 2.0 implementation, noting that the state application portal is expected to open around April 1, with recommendations to the Governor finalized by early summer and submitted to the U.S. Treasury by July 1. She also acknowledged several outstanding federal uncertainties, including final eligibility criteria and reporting requirements, which may impact timelines and guidance.

During discussion, members raised questions regarding project eligibility, housing applications, and concerns about speculative property holding. Goodwill noted that new program rules will include penalties for lack of substantial progress on projects. Additional questions were raised regarding coordination, application processes, and community collaboration, particularly given the compressed timeline and changes from the previous program structure. Commerce staff committed to providing follow-up information and resources, including application guidance, scoring criteria, and relevant contacts.

Overall, the presentation emphasized the potential for Opportunity Zones 2.0 to support economic development, housing, and redevelopment projects in Grays Harbor County and similar communities, while highlighting the importance of early coordination and strategic planning to maximize local benefit.

#### 4. **GHCOG BUSINESS**

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

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

***Councilmember Joshua Francy made a motion to approve the current agenda; second, Ken Mehin. The motion passed unanimously.***

➤ **ACTION: Approval of February 2026 Minutes**

Chairperson Troy Meyers asked for approval of February 2026 Minutes.

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

➤ **Administrative Sub-Council Report**

Executive Director Vicki Cummings reported that the Administrative Sub-Council met prior to the main meeting and approved the monthly claims, including payroll. The group also discussed adding a new standing agenda item focused on grant funding opportunities to better organize and present funding information previously included in staff reports. Cummings reported that overall operations are running smoothly, with no issues to note at this time.

- **ACTION: Approval of March 2026 Claims Batch #26-3 which includes April 2026 Payroll**  
Chairperson Troy Meyers asked for approval of the March 2026 Claims Batches #26-03 in the amount of \$37,434.79.

***Commissioner Phil Papac made a motion to approve; second, Mayor Linda Springer. The motion passed unanimously.***

- **Grant Funding Opportunities Report**

Grant Coordinator Natalie Jensen introduced a new recurring Grant Funding Opportunities report to highlight upcoming and active funding opportunities relevant to member jurisdictions. Natalie provided an overview of three Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) grants—Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA), Community Forest Program, and Youth Athletic Facilities—all with April 30 deadlines and match requirements.

Senior Planner, Mark Northrop, reported on transportation-related funding, including the upcoming federal Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program, and state programs such as Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety and Safe Routes to School (both due April 15), noting eligibility and match requirements.

Staff emphasized that grant lists would be shared regularly and encouraged members to coordinate with GHCOG on potential projects at any stage for funding support.

**OLD BUSINESS**

- **NONE**

**NEW BUSINESS**

- **NONE**

**5. ALL STAFF REPORT**

- **Vicki Cummings, Executive Director**

- Staff reporting format updated to be more streamlined and reduce overlap/repetition.
- Reported that approximately \$80 million in BRIC funding is forthcoming for Aberdeen/Hoquiam
  - City of Hoquiam preparing to move to construction.
- Met with Grays Harbor County representatives to discuss ways GHCOG can better support county needs; ongoing coordination anticipated.
- Attended County Strategic Plan meeting will monitor progress and identify opportunities for support.
- Participated in Human Services Transportation Plan Open House outreach emphasized importance for future consolidated transit funding eligibility.
- Attended US 101 (Humptulips) Complete Streets planning session; reviewed potential safety and traffic improvements near school area.
- Provided Brownfields program update; project progressing well with continued expenditures in preparation for future funding.
- Ongoing coordination with RTPO partners and participation in local planning efforts, including Cosmopolis Comprehensive Plan update.
- Notified Board that Timberland Regional Library will discontinue membership due to funding constraints; will remain engaged but without voting rights per bylaws and an action item forthcoming.

➤ **Mark Northrop, Planner II**

- February STIP amendment approved:
  - included removal of Aberdeen US 101 Safety Improvements project; no amendments received in March.
  - upcoming TIP/STIP cycle noted
  - member TIP submittals due by end of June, with reminders to be sent in April.
- Serving on Transportation Alternatives (TA) program scoring committee; noted low application volume (two projects region-wide).
- GIS program efforts focused on data development, including updates to recreation datasets and creation of functional classification mapping.
- Provided reminders on active transportation surveys, including Transportation Access Survey (deadline April 3) and Transportation Priorities Engine Survey.
- Completed multiple traffic safety trainings through the National Center for Rural Road Safety and attended AMPO webinar; training supports development of a comprehensive safety action plan.

➤ **Natalie Jensen, Office Coordinator**

- Ongoing financial management activities, including preparation for annual tax filing and SAM renewal.
- Continued website updates; plan to expand online grant and resource information.
- Conducted ongoing grant research
- Attended National League of Cities webinar on grant implementation.
- Attended Federal Highways Obligation Authority meeting
  - Noted potential redistribution of approximately \$219 million in federal funds later this year.
  - Advised members to review existing TIP/STIP projects for readiness and scalability to compete for potential redistributed funds.
  - Emphasized priority for obligation-ready projects (e.g., paving, preservation, and projects in planning/PE phases) and need for timely response if funding becomes available.

**6. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS**

- None.

**7. PUBLIC COMMENT**

- None.

**8. MEMBER/PUBLIC COMMENT**

➤ City of Aberdeen, Councilmember Joshua Francy

- Reported multiple ongoing infrastructure and capital projects, including US 101 safety improvements, North Shore Levee, North Aberdeen Bridge, roadway re-striping, and police gun range construction.

➤ City of Cosmopolis, Mayor Linda Springer

- Recognized community volunteers Kay Bramstedt and Sue Darcy for significant service contributions, including food bank and senior programs.

- Reported partnership with Grays Harbor College on a multi-year plan to improve Mill Creek Park (tree management, invasive species, park restoration).
  - Expressed interest in multiple grant opportunities (e.g., Safe Routes to School, YAF) and noted challenges with match requirements.
- City of Montesano, Mayor Tyler Trimble
- Noted upcoming bid process for multiple roadway projects.
  - Reported initiation of strategic planning discussions for the fire department, including long-term sustainability considerations.
- City of Oakville, Mayor Bill Breedlove
- Reported reopening and restoration of Holy Lamb Organics facility following prior damage. Encouraged by the business reinvesting locally with potential expansion.
  - Noted upcoming retirement of long-time building/code enforcement official. Seeking contract replacement with emphasis on code enforcement.
- City of Westport, Councilmembers Troy Meyers
- Reported progress on golf course project and vertical evacuation structure (VES), with positive budget outlook.
  - Announced new police chief hire and onboarding.
  - Noted closure of Pacific Seafood shrimp facility and potential economic impacts to local workforce and tax base.
  - Provided update on C-Link fiber optic project progressing with permits secured.
  - Highlighted \$30,000 in private donations supporting municipal park softball field improvements and potential expansion.
- Grays Harbor County, Commissioner Rick Hole
- Raised concerns regarding erosion and infrastructure impacts along the Satsop River corridor.
    - Emphasized need for more proactive infrastructure management to avoid higher long-term costs.
  - Discussed regulatory and environmental constraints affecting infrastructure maintenance (e.g., riprap placement).
  - Expressed interest in coordination and support from GHCOG on infrastructure and planning challenges.
- Grays Harbor Transit, General Manager Ken Mehin
- Announced leadership transition with Board Chair Vicki Raines stepping down and Mayor Doug Orr to assume role beginning in April.
- Port of Grays Harbor, Commissioner Phil Papac
- Reported ongoing legal appeal (third appeal) related to ORCA permit for PNWRE project, creating uncertainty for potential job creation.
  - Noted concerns regarding closure of seafood processing facility and efforts to support reopening.
  - Highlighted significance of North Shore Levee funding moving forward.
  - Indicated upcoming federal advocacy efforts in Washington, D.C. for marina funding.

- Timberland Regional Library, Manager Evi Buell
  - Provided brief update noting ongoing budget challenges but continued operations.
  - Introduced additional regional library representation, Tania Remmers, to support coordination across service areas.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

***Mayor Bill Breedlove made a motion to adjourn; second, Ken Mehin. Motion passed unanimously.***

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

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Troy Meyers  
Chairperson

Date

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Vicki Cummings  
Executive Director

Date