

**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. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**2. ATTENDANCE**

- Members:
  - Councilmember, Joshua Francy (City of Aberdeen)
  - Councilmember, Sue Darcy (City of Cosmopolis)
  - Councilmember, Jim Sorensen (City of Elma)
  - Councilmember, Robert Gillis (City of Hoquiam)
  - Mayor, Tyler Trimble (City of Montesano)
  - Mayor, Bill Breedlove (City of Oakville) – Voted Remotely
  - Councilmember, Troy Meyers (City of Westport)
  - Commissioner, Rick Hole (Grays Harbor County)
  - General Manager, Ken Mehin (Grays Harbor Transit)
  - Engineering/Planning Director, Kris Koski (Port of Grays Harbor)
- Staff:
  - Vicki Cummings, Executive Director
  - Mark Northrop, Senior Planner
  - Natalie Jensen, Office & Grants Coordinator
- Guests:
  - Steve Roark, WSDOT Olympic Regional Administrator
  - Christi Bentz, WSDOT Olympic Region Executive Assistant
  - Joe Calodich, WSDOT Multimodal Planning Team Lead

A quorum was established.

**3. PRESENTATION**

Steve Roark, Olympic Region Administrator for WSDOT, provided a comprehensive transportation update covering regional operations, funding, and key projects affecting Grays Harbor. He began by outlining the scale of the Olympic Region, which manages over 3,000 lane miles, approximately 650 bridges, and serves around 1.8 million people, emphasizing the breadth of assets and responsibilities under WSDOT’s purview. Roark highlighted the recently adopted supplemental state budget, noting a significant \$1.3 billion investment in preservation and \$200 million in maintenance over six years, describing it as a much-needed “down payment” toward addressing long-standing funding gaps, though still insufficient to fully meet system needs. He also indicated uncertainty in future federal funding but expects relatively stable levels in the near term.

Project updates focused heavily on recent storm impacts and ongoing infrastructure work. Roark described emergency responses to landslides on SR 109 and US 101, both currently operating under alternating one-way traffic while stabilization solutions are developed. He also highlighted a major 45-mile paving project on US 101, made possible by new preservation funding, which will

involve rolling work zones and traffic delays but significantly improve roadway conditions. Fish passage projects remain a major focus, with multiple sites on SR 109 scheduled over the next two years, including culvert replacements and bridge installations, though environmental restrictions will limit construction hours and extend timelines. Additional unfunded fish barrier projects are anticipated east of Montesano and along US 12, likely beginning no earlier than 2027.

Roark also addressed the condition of Grays Harbor's aging movable bridges, noting that nearly half of the state's inventory is located locally and many are experiencing deterioration in structural and mechanical components. He shared that WSDOT is resorting to sourcing obsolete parts, even from secondary markets like eBay, to keep them operational. A key update included delays to the Heron Street Bridge deck replacement due to material procurement issues, which in turn postpones related work on the Wishkah Bridge and may create coordination challenges with the Aberdeen Grade Separation Project. Despite these setbacks, Roark confirmed the bridges remain safe for travel. He concluded by noting that while maintenance funding increases will help stabilize current service levels, rising costs and increased damage (such as vandalism and theft) continue to strain resources, and he encouraged local agencies to coordinate early on funding opportunities, particularly through WSDOT's local programs office for bridge-related grants.

#### **4. GHCOG 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, Councilmember Joshua Francy. The motion passed unanimously.***

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

Chairperson Troy Meyers asked for approval of March 2026 Minutes.

***Councilmember Joshua Francy 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 prior to the full meeting and completed its routine business, including reviewing and approving the monthly bills and payroll. During the meeting, members also discussed a potential amendment to the organization's bylaws, which are still under development and expected to be brought forward for consideration at a future meeting. No formal action was taken on the bylaws item at this time, and no other actions were reported beyond the standard approvals.

➤ **ACTION: Approval of March 2026 Claims Batch #26-4 which includes May 2026 Payroll**

Chairperson Troy Meyers asked for approval of the April 2026 Claims Batches #26-04 in the amount of \$225,187.00.

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

➤ **Grant Funding Opportunities Report**

The Grant Opportunities Report provided an overview of upcoming funding, training, and planning resources available to member agencies. Staff first highlighted a Grant Writing Workshop scheduled for May 20 in Aberdeen, encouraging members to attend or share with their teams as a valuable introduction to federal grant processes. This was followed by the Department of Commerce Capital Projects Webinar Series, a four-part training beginning April

29 that walks participants through planning and managing capital projects. Additionally, members were introduced to FundHub WA, a searchable portal for state and federal climate and clean energy funding opportunities.

Transportation-related opportunities included several WSDOT programs. The Freight Rail Assistance Program (FRAP) offers state grants for freight rail infrastructure such as track rehabilitation, terminals, and bridges, with applications expected to open in May and close in September. The Freight Rail Investment Bank (FRIB) provides low-interest loans for similar freight rail projects, requiring a 20% match. The Consolidated Grants Program supports public transportation needs, including operations, planning, and equipment, with match requirements ranging from 5–10% depending on project type, and a September deadline anticipated. The State Buses and Bus Facilities Grant funds transit vehicles and facility improvements, with a variable match (0–20%) and an expected August application deadline.

At the federal level, staff discussed the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program, which funds safety planning and implementation projects aimed at reducing roadway fatalities and serious injuries. Applications are due May 26 with a 20% match requirement. Staff also noted GHCOG's intent to pursue a regional Safety Action Plan under this program, potentially incorporating local plans from Elma and Montesano and inviting member participation. Direct contact will be made to each member agency separately in the coming week.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

➤ **DISCUSSION: Opportunity Zones 2.0**

Executive Director Vicki Cummings continued discussion on Opportunity Zones 2.0, noting recent updates including an extended application deadline of May 28 and more stringent federal requirements focused on accountability and demonstrated community benefit. Staff explained that while 10 census tracts in Grays Harbor County are eligible to apply, only a limited number will ultimately be designated, making it important to prioritize the strongest candidates.

The revised program places greater emphasis on readiness, including the ability to attract private investment and alignment with local and state policies, rather than simply meeting baseline economic criteria.

To avoid competing applications within the county, GHCOG will coordinate closely with the County and cities to identify and advance the most competitive tracts. Staff emphasized the need for timely coordination and outreach, noting that they will be contacting jurisdictions directly to begin discussions. The key ask to members was to confer internally and confirm their interest in participating so that collaborative application efforts can move forward quickly.

No Board questions were raised.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

➤ **ACTION: Rescission of Voting Rights, Timberland Regional Library**

Under New Business, the Council considered an action to rescind the voting rights of Timberland Regional Library for non-payment of member dues due to budget constraints. In accordance with the bylaws, the organization is not currently in good standing and therefore cannot vote. They were encouraged to continue participating in meetings as a planning partner.

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

## 5. ALL STAFF REPORT

### ➤ **Vicki Cummings, Executive Director**

- Mark Northrop and Natalie Jensen attended the Greater Grays Harbor “Lunch with the Mayors” Business Forum, providing an opportunity to support member jurisdictions and engage in regional networking.
- Mark Northrop and Natalie Jensen also represented GHCOG at the annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) meeting, coordinating with USDOT, WSDOT, and federal partners to align regional transportation planning priorities, budgets, and processes.
- The Executive Director completed the City of Hoquiam’s Parks and Recreation Plan, with formatting support from Natalie Jensen; the plan was adopted by the city and approved by RCO, securing eligibility for recreation funding for the next six years.
- Brownfields program work continues across multiple sites, with approximately 70% of grant funds expended and the project on track to be completed nearly a year early, enabling GHCOG to pursue a new round of Brownfields funding.
- Upcoming RTPO policy forums are being restructured into smaller, community-focused meetings scheduled throughout May (May 5 and May 18), with outreach underway; feedback from these sessions will directly inform regional transportation planning efforts and improve local input in decision-making.

### ➤ **Mark Northrop, Planner II**

- Continued maintaining and updating the internal transportation grant matrix, and participated in the 2026 Transportation Alternatives (TA) project scoring process, submitting recommendations to regional partners.
- Initiated the annual Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) development process, with reminders sent to members and an offer for in-person assistance; submittals are due by the end of June.
- Advanced GIS program development, including creation of a data release terms document and request form, evaluation of pricing for non-member services, and exploration of integrating GIS tools (e.g., map libraries and dashboards) into the GHCOG website.
- Provided GIS data support to the City of Aberdeen for a drainage-related project and continued reviewing archived datasets for potential inclusion in current inventories.
- Participated in public engagement efforts, including promotion of the regional Transportation Priorities and Issues Survey.
- Completed spring coursework for the Road Safety Champion program (National Center for Rural Road Safety), with additional training scheduled for fall.
- Attended multiple trainings and webinars, including a USDOT session on the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program (with Natalie Jensen) and a Vision Zero Network webinar on successful grant applications.
- Upcoming: Attendance at the Washington GIS Conference (May 19–21) for continued professional development and networking.

### ➤ **Natalie Jensen, Office Coordinator**

- Completed monthly financials and submitted the annual report to the State Auditor ahead of schedule.
- Increased outreach and communications through LinkedIn, highlighting member achievements, job postings, grant awards, trainings, surveys, and planning efforts.
- Provided additional community outreach support by sharing member surveys, plans, and opportunities through local social media channels to broaden public engagement.

- Conducted ongoing grant research and supported development of the monthly Grant Opportunities Report; encouraged members to share project ideas early to better align with funding opportunities.
- Participated in insurance coordination, including meeting with the organization's insurance representative.
- Continued general administrative and team support, including assisting with document formatting and communications efforts.

## 6. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

- None.

## 7. PUBLIC COMMENT

- None.

## 8. MEMBER/PUBLIC COMMENT

- City of Aberdeen, Councilmember Joshua Francy
  - Reported construction has begun on the U.S. 101 Safety Improvement project, a 1.4-mile corridor from the Chehalis River Bridge to Cosmopolis along Curtis and West Boulevard. The project includes lane reductions, addition of bike lanes, ramp improvements, and initial work on water mains is already underway.
- City of Cosmopolis, Councilmember Sue Darcy
  - Earth Day efforts will focus on Mill Creek, including debris removal (with LeMay), hazardous tree removal (with Grays Harbor College Forestry Department), and invasive species cleanup (with Grays Harbor Noxious Weed Control).
  - Makarenko Park community garden restoration is underway, with an April 27 cleanup event, fencing repairs, and planned goat-assisted blackberry clearing in early May; long-term goal is to reestablish the garden for community and youth programs.
  - Applying for an RCO Youth Activity Fund grant to support improvements to the Lions Park baseball field.
  - Comprehensive Plan update has been formally accepted and is moving forward (currently outdated from 2006), with support from GHCOG; seen as a key step toward future grant opportunities.
- City of Elma, Councilmember Jim Sorensen
  - Mailed out community survey for the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program to all residents.
  - Preparing for summer construction season, with the F Street project as the primary focus.
  - Advancing Main Street improvements in preparation for future chip sealing.
- City of Montesano, Mayor Tyler Trimble
  - Launching a major \$2.5 million infrastructure project (May–August) covering multiple streets, including roadway, sidewalks, water mains, and safety improvements such as four-way stops and pedestrian islands.
  - Funding for the project includes contributions from DOT, TIB, water capital funds, and local sources.
  - Upcoming chip seal work with bids currently out.

- Selected for approximately \$2.5 million in federal community project funding for fire department upgrades (ventilation systems, crew quarters, equipment), with additional local funding anticipated.
  - Supporting a potential RCO grant application for Montesano Little League field lighting.
- City of Westport, Councilmembers Troy Meyers
- Announced an upcoming City Council vacancy and encouraged outreach for interested candidates, with more information to be released soon.
  - Issued an RFP for development of a housing project on DNR-owned land.
  - Restarting the skate park and pump track project after a previous delay.
  - Early discussions underway for a South Beach regional recreation district (swimming pool) and a potential erosion and drainage district in the Cohasset/Dune Crest area.
  - Community garden improvements are ongoing, including a new greenhouse and potential relocation.
  - Invested in upgrading municipal planters and offered to share local plant expertise with other jurisdictions.
- Grays Harbor County, Commissioner Rick Hole
- Ongoing coordination with state legislators regarding formation of a regional erosion control district for Westport and Ocean Shores; early indications suggest it may be feasible under existing special district authorities.
  - Efforts gaining momentum to define the scope and structure of a district aimed at long-term beach stabilization.
  - Middle Satsop Road repair project is progressing quickly following receipt of funding support from the WA State Public Works Board, with improved access expected soon.
- Grays Harbor Transit, General Manager Ken Mehin
- Promoting a youth art program in celebration of the nation's 250th anniversary, inviting submissions from individuals 18 and under, with selected artwork to be displayed on transit buses and prizes awarded.
  - Planning relocation to new administrative offices in Hoquiam (across from the maintenance facility) in mid-May.
  - Noted ongoing rebranding efforts, including updated colors and logo, with outreach tied to the youth art program.
- Port of Grays Harbor, Engineering & Planning Director Kris Koski
- Terminal 4 expansion project is on track for completion and operational startup this summer, supported by federal grant funding.
  - Improvements underway at Friends Landing, including boat launch upgrades (paving, lighting, ADA access) with completion targeted before Memorial Day, and additional day-use enhancements (pickleball court, sidewalks, ADA parking) planned for later this summer; future grant planned for boat ramp improvements.
  - Ongoing activities at Satsop include timber sales and water system planning.
  - Westport marina project planning includes pile replacement later this year, along with pending major grant applications for float replacements (EDA and PIDP funding).
  - Bowerman Airport project planned to replace the fuel system, heavily supported by FAA grant funding.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

***Ken Mehin made a motion to adjourn; second, Councilmember Joshua Francy. Motion passed unanimously.***

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Troy Meyers  
Chairperson

Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Vicki Cummings  
Executive Director

Date

DRAFT