

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)
 - Mayor, Linda Springer (City of Cosmopolis)
 - Mayor, Josh Collette (City of Elma)
 - Mayor, Tyler Trimble (City of Montesano)
 - Councilmember, Troy Meyers (City of Westport)
 - General Manager, Ken Mehin (Grays Harbor Transit) – Voted Remotely
 - Commissioner, Phil Papac (Port of Grays Harbor)
- Staff:
 - Vicki Cummings, Executive Director
 - Natalie Jensen, Office & Grants Coordinator
 - Mark Northrop, Senior Planner
- Guests:
 - Joe Calodich, WSDOT Multimodal Planning Team Lead

A quorum was established.

3. GHCOG BUSINESS

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

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

- **July 2026 Meeting Report**
Chairperson Troy Meyers asked for approval of July 2026 Minutes.

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

- **Administrative Sub-Council Report**
Executive Director Vicki Cummings reported that the Administrative Sub-Council met briefly and reviewed the August bills. The Administrative Sub-Council approved the Council's bills, including payroll. No other action was taken.

➤ **ACTION: Approval of August 2026 Claims Batch #26-8 which includes September 2026 Payroll**

Chairperson Troy Meyers asked for approval of the August 2026 Claims Batches #26-08 in the amount of \$36,198.58.

Ken Mehin made a motion to approve; second, Commissioner Phil Papac. The motion passed unanimously.

➤ **Grant Funding Opportunities Report**

GHCOG staff provided an overview of several current and upcoming grant funding opportunities. The Public Works Board's Flood Resiliency Grant Program reopened August 17 and will remain open until funds are exhausted. The program is tied to impacts from December 2025 flooding and can support infrastructure including water and sewer systems, bridges, roads and streets, and solid waste and recycling facilities. The Ecology Water Quality Combined Funding Program opened August 11 and closes September 30, offering funding for similar water quality and infrastructure projects without the requirement that they be related to the December flooding. The RCO Boating Facilities Program is also open through November 3, with approximately \$13.6 million available; applicants must have an eligible comprehensive plan and provide a 25 percent match.

Staff also highlighted two transportation-focused opportunities. The FTA Low or No Emission Program provides funding for the purchase or lease of low- and zero-emission transit buses and associated facilities and closes September 21, with a required local match. The WSDOT Tribal Transit Mobility Program, which supports transportation needs of tribal communities, closes September 17 and does not require a match. Members were also reminded of several previously discussed opportunities with approaching deadlines, including the Consolidated Grants Program on September 9, Connecting Housing to Infrastructure on September 15, and the Housing Trust Fund on September 3. The Community Economic Revitalization Program remains available as a rolling funding opportunity.

OLD BUSINESS

➤ **NONE.**

NEW BUSINESS

➤ **DISCUSSION: Grays Harbor Council of Governments 2027 Preliminary Budget.**

Executive Director Vicki Cummings provided an initial overview of GHCOG's 2027 preliminary budget, noting that the official draft budget and membership dues letters will be presented in September. GHCOG anticipates seeking a 5% increase in membership dues, consistent with increases in prior years, to help offset rising operating costs such as software subscriptions and insurance, as well as the loss of two members during the current year. Even with the proposed dues increase, the preliminary budget is expected to reflect approximately a 5% shortfall.

Cummings noted that GHCOG has two pending grants that staff are reasonably confident will provide additional revenue in 2027; however, those funds have not been included in the preliminary budget. Staff are budgeting only for confirmed revenue and will bring a budget amendment to the Council if and when grant award letters are received. The additional grant revenue would help offset costs and improve the overall budget outlook. Cummings invited members who would like additional information to meet with her individually to discuss GHCOG's work program and budget prior to the formal budget discussion.

4. ALL STAFF REPORT

➤ **Vicki Cummings, Executive Director**

- Hoquiam Broadway Avenue Safety Project: GHCOG helped the City of Hoquiam secure an additional \$750,000 for its Broadway Avenue safety project. Because the region met its state obligation authority requirements, GHCOG was able to access available statewide funds and reallocate them locally to help meet Hoquiam's additional funding need.
- Grays Harbor Transit: Prepared three letters of support for Grays Harbor Transit's upcoming Consolidated Transit Grant applications. Cummings also reviewed several of Transit's grant applications and provided recommendations.
- Mobility Coordination: Provided a letter of support for continued funding of the regional Mobility Coordinator, recognizing the program as a successful and needed service.
- Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan: Reviewed the draft plan to ensure it accurately reflects regional transportation needs identified through public meetings, surveys, and other outreach. Projects seeking Consolidated Transit Grant funding must be identified in the plan and address needs established within it.
- Critical Rural Freight Corridors: Submitted requests to maintain Critical Rural Freight Corridor designations for US 12 entering Aberdeen, US 101 through Aberdeen and Hoquiam, and Port Industrial Road. Maintaining these designations is important because it provides eligibility for additional transportation funding that could support the significant projects and investments planned along these corridors.
- EPA Brownfields Program: Submitted our quarterly EPA Brownfields report. The current grant is nearing completion, with most funds expended. Staff plan to pursue another round of Brownfields funding next year, building on three successful previous grant rounds and the program's significant benefits to local communities.
- Grays Harbor Historical Seaport: Assisted the Historical Seaport with its pursuit of facilities grant funding by completing a requested survey and providing a letter of support. The proposed improvements could provide important benefits for tourism, historic preservation, and the community's connection to the waterfront.
- Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB) Survey: Members were reminded that FMSIB has a survey open through September 18 seeking general information from communities with freight facilities. Communities were encouraged to participate regardless of whether they currently use FMSIB funding.

➤ **Mark Northrop, Senior Planner**

- Port of Grays Harbor Terminal 4 Expansion: Mark and Natalie attended the Terminal 4 Expansion Grand Opening on July 31. He congratulated the Port on the project and noted the event provided a valuable opportunity to tour the facility.
- Transportation Grant Tracking: Staff continue to maintain GHCOG's internal matrix of transportation-related grant opportunities to assist with regional planning and funding efforts.
- Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP): The STIP was amended in July to allocate additional funding for Hoquiam's Broadway Avenue Safety Improvements Project, as discussed in the Executive Director's report. No STIP amendments were received in August.
- Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP): Assisted CWCOG staff with follow-up questions from member agencies regarding their transportation projects as the 2027–2030 Regional Transportation Improvement Program was prepared for public release.
- GIS Training: Participated virtually in the annual Esri User Conference held in San Diego in July. GHCOG's Esri account provides free access to recorded conference sessions and GIS training resources for several months following the event.

- Grays Harbor Transit Bus Stop Lighting: Developed a GIS map identifying bus stops where Grays Harbor Transit is seeking grant funding to install lighting, supporting Transit's grant application.
- 2027 TIP Mapping Project: With local 2027 Transportation Improvement Programs completed, began digitizing the locations of individual TIP projects in GIS. Also developing a website that will allow member agencies to review project locations, submit corrections, and provide comments. Once completed, the GIS files will be available to members for local planning and will support future GHCOG planning activities.
- Critical Rural Freight Corridors: Developed maps to support GHCOG's requests to maintain the region's Critical Rural Freight Corridor designations.
- RTIP Public Comment Period: Members were reminded that the 2027–2030 Regional Transportation Improvement Program is currently available for public review, with comments accepted through September 1 at 5:00 p.m. Information about the document and options for submitting comments are available through CWCOG.
- Regional Transportation Survey: GHCOG continues to host an ongoing transportation survey developed by CWCOG. The survey provides an opportunity for residents and stakeholders to identify transportation needs and provide input that can help inform future funding priorities for transportation projects and programs throughout the region.

➤ **Natalie Jensen, Office Coordinator**

- Financial and Administrative Work: Continued regular financial duties, including preparing claims, maintaining the financial books, and compiling the monthly grant funding report.
- 2027 Preliminary Budget: Worked with Executive Director Vicki Cummings on development of GHCOG's preliminary 2027 budget.
- Payroll Services Research: Began researching ADP as a potential payroll service provider, including whether it could offer cost savings or improved payroll services for GHCOG.
- Website and LinkedIn Communications: Continued sharing regional and member-related information through GHCOG's LinkedIn page, including recent Port of Grays Harbor news and information about the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP).
- RTIP Public Notice: Added information about the RTIP public review and comment period to the GHCOG website homepage, with a link directing visitors to CWCOG for the full notice and related materials.
- September Guest Speaker: Announced that Haley Falley with Target Zero is expected to join the September Council meeting as a guest speaker. Members were encouraged to submit questions or topics in advance so they can be shared with Falley as she prepares for the presentation.

5. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

- None.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

➤ **Joe Calodich, WSDOT Multimodal Planning Team Lead**

Joe Calodich with WSDOT Olympic Region's Multimodal Planning Office provided an update on current and upcoming WSDOT projects in Grays Harbor County:

- US 101 Humptulips Area Pre-Design: WSDOT is completing pre-design work associated with a larger US 101 pavement preservation project. Because the project passes through Amanda Park, Neilton, and Humptulips, it triggered the state's Complete Streets requirements. Recommended improvements include new shared-use paths and crosswalks in the Humptulips and Amanda Park areas to better accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists.

- US 101 Paving: Paving between Quinault and Lake Quinault recently wrapped up, while the segment between Humptulips and Neilton is currently under construction and expected to be completed this fall.
- Fish Passage Projects: Fish barrier removal projects along US 12 and SR 8 near Elma are expected to wrap up this fall. Several additional fish passage projects are underway along SR 109 toward the coast, with individual construction schedules extending through December 2027.
- Aberdeen-Hoquiam Bridge Preservation: WSDOT received significant bridge preservation funding during the most recent legislative session, with upcoming work expected to focus on several historic bridges in the Aberdeen-Hoquiam area. Project timelines and delivery details are still being developed, and Calodich anticipates providing a more detailed update at a future meeting.
- Project Information: Calodich offered to provide GHCOG with links to WSDOT project webpages for the paving and fish passage projects so they could be distributed to Council members following the meeting.

7. **MEMBER COMMENT**

➤ City of Aberdeen, Councilmember Joshua Francy

- Numerous City projects remain underway, with Public Works managing a significant workload supported by state and federal funding.
- The City continues to utilize GHCOG's Brownfields Program, including assistance related to the Rail Grade Separation and Levee projects prior to right-of-way property acquisition.
- Improvements between Aberdeen and Cosmopolis are progressing, with new sidewalks beginning installation. Crews are working overtime to advance project completion.

➤ City of Cosmopolis, Mayor Linda Springer

- Cosmopolis Mill Cleanup: EPA is on-site at the former mill property and is expected to remain for several months removing and disposing of chemicals, including a significant quantity of red liquor. EPA plans to hold regular community drop-in sessions and has established [a website for project updates](#). The City also plans to add a dedicated cleanup section to its updated website.
- City Staffing: Hired John Martin as a part-time City Administrator and Kasey McAbee as its new volunteer Fire Chief. Interviews were also completed for a Deputy Clerk, with the expectation that the City could soon be fully staffed for the first time in approximately two and a half years while remaining within budget.
- Community Events: Promoted its upcoming Festival in the Park and announced plans for regularly scheduled community blood drives.
- Comprehensive Plan & Finances: Cosmopolis adopted its Comprehensive Plan and approved the transfer of REET funds to cover cost overruns associated with the municipal building. Recently sold a surplus parcel for nearly its full asking price.
- City Property: The former police station now has a tenant, and the City hopes to welcome Crisis Support Network as an additional partner in the building beginning in September.
- EMS Services: The City Council approved updated EMS rates associated with services provided by Aberdeen. The new rates will take effect next month and represent a significant increase after Cosmopolis had paid a reduced rate for a number of years.
- Partnership with Aberdeen: With Cosmopolis' Code Enforcement/Building Inspector temporarily unavailable, Aberdeen is assisting the City with inspection services to help keep development projects moving forward.
- Development & Grants: The PAPÉ project is nearing completion after approximately two and a half years, and new housing construction is underway. With the Comprehensive Plan

now adopted and additional staff capacity in place, the City plans to begin pursuing more grant opportunities with assistance from GHCOG.

➤ City of Elma, Mayor Josh Collette

- **Street & Sidewalk Projects:** The City is working to complete several projects before the start of the school year. Rehabilitation of F Street, an important route serving multifamily housing and access to Summit Pacific, is expected to be completed within the next few weeks. ADA sidewalk improvements are also nearing completion.
- **Street Maintenance:** Grays Harbor County assisted with asphalt repairs to address potholes on Main Street near the school and applied fog seal to recent chip seal work on Harding Road and Eaton.
- **Downtown Improvements:** Completed stamped concrete improvements to the downtown bulb-outs, replacing grass that had previously occupied those areas.
- **Lighting Improvements:** After initial bids for a larger downtown lighting project came in at approximately \$350,000, the City revised its approach. Improvements include upgraded bulbs in decorative downtown streetlights, new overhead string lighting, and LED streetlights in the high school and middle school zone. The work remains under the City's \$50,000 budget, and Elma hopes to continue converting additional streetlights to LED next summer.
- **Councilmember Mike Cooper:** Mayor Collette announced the passing of longtime City Councilmember Mike Cooper. The City planned to fly flags at half-staff through Monday and anticipated soliciting applicants to fill the vacant Council position the following week.

➤ City of Montesano, Mayor Tyler Trimble

- **Infrastructure Projects:** Work continues on several City projects, including improvements along Main, Broadway, and Spruce. Crews recently worked overnight on water main connections to ensure service was restored to residents by morning.
- **Emergency Response:** Mayor Trimble highlighted the value of Grays Harbor County Emergency Management following two recent gas leak incidents, including an evacuation of the County jail. He thanked the Sheriff's Office, Sheriff Wallace, and the City's fire and police chiefs for their coordination and response.
- **Farmer's Market:** Montesano's seasonal Farmers Market is scheduled to conclude at the end of August.
- **Congressional Visit:** The City recently hosted a visit from the area's Congresswoman at the Montesano Fire Hall.
- **GHCOG Outreach:** Mayor Trimble invited Executive Director Cummings to attend an upcoming Montesano City Council meeting.

➤ City of Westport, Councilmembers Troy Meyers

- **Vertical Evacuation Tower:** The tsunami vertical evacuation tower project is moving forward, with subcontractor notices of award completed and Absher beginning work. Construction is expected to progress quickly.
- **Recreation Projects:** Work on the City's skate park and pump track continues to progress well.
- **Workforce Housing:** Acquired three parcels from DNR that are designated for middle-income workforce housing.
- **Float 21 Modernization:** Congratulated the Port of Grays Harbor on receiving grant funding for the Float 21 modernization project, noting the City's enthusiasm for the investment.
- **Undersea Cable Project:** The undersea cable project continues to move forward and has begun generating technical employment opportunities in Grays Harbor County, including positions for individuals with telecommunications experience.

- Great ShakeOut: The 2026 Great ShakeOut is scheduled for October 15 at 10:15 a.m. Emergency Management is encouraging communities to help promote participation, and Westport plans to include information in City utility bills.
- Flock Cameras: The City continues working with Flock regarding cameras that were installed but have not yet been used. Mayor Meyers reported positive progress in negotiations and expects the City to receive credit for at least some of the period the cameras were unavailable for use.

➤ Grays Harbor Transit, Ken Mehin

- Transit IT Manager: Grays Harbor Transit is in the final stages of hiring for a new Transit IT Manager position and hopes to announce the selection soon.
- Solar Bus Stop Lighting: Applied for grant funding to install solar-powered lighting at bus stops, particularly in rural locations where electrical service is unavailable. Testing of the lights has been successful.
- Safety & Visibility: The proposed lights provide low-level illumination for passengers waiting at stops and can be activated to flash, alerting approaching bus drivers that a passenger is waiting. The project is intended to improve safety and comfort at remote bus stops.

➤ Port of Grays Harbor, Commissioner Phil Papac

- Terminal 4 Expansion: Terminal 4 ribbon cutting and grand opening drew approximately 622 attendees. The project as a significant investment for Grays Harbor with the potential to bring additional jobs to the region.
- ORCA Project: The Port is awaiting a court ruling related to the ORCA air permit. Papac expressed hope that the matter will be resolved soon, allowing the project to break ground within the next few months and create additional employment opportunities.
- Float 21 Modernization: The Port recently secured funding for the Float 21 modernization project in Westport. Additional details are expected to be shared at the Port Commission's September meeting in Westport. Commissioner Papac noted that the project will provide an important benefit to Westport's commercial fishing community.
- Friends Landing Improvements: Improvements at Friends Landing are progressing well, including significant accessibility upgrades to the ADA area. The project will also include a new pickleball court, with Papac encouraging members to visit as the improvements near completion.

8. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Mayor Linda Springer made a motion to adjourn; second, Ken Mehin. Motion passed unanimously.

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

Troy Meyers
Chairperson

Date

Vicki Cummings
Executive Director

Date