

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) – Voted Remotely
 - Mayor, Josh Collette (City of Elma)
 - Mayor, Tyler Trimble (City of Montesano) – Voted Remotely
 - Mayor, Bill Breedlove (City of Oakville) – Voted Remotely
 - Councilmember, Troy Meyers (City of Westport)
 - Commissioner, J.R. Streifel (Grays Harbor County)
 - 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:
 - Haley Falley, Community Health Specialist, Target Zero Managers, Grays Harbor Public Health
 - Sue Darcy, Councilmember, City of Cosmopolis
 - Joe Calodich, WSDOT Multimodal Planning Team Lead

A quorum was established.

3. PRESENTATION

Haley Falley, Target Zero Manager for Grays Harbor, Mason, and Pacific Counties, provided an overview of the Target Zero program and current traffic safety efforts in the region. Target Zero is part of the Washington Traffic Safety Commission's statewide effort to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries. Falley explained that the program has expanded beyond traditional enforcement activities to a Safe System approach that includes prevention, education, community engagement, infrastructure, emergency response, and collaboration with law enforcement, schools, tribes, EMS providers, and other community partners. Impaired driving and speeding continue to be significant concerns in the three-county region, particularly on rural roadways.

Falley highlighted several ongoing initiatives, including high-visibility enforcement patrols, child passenger safety and car seat checks, youth traffic-safety programs, public education campaigns, and community outreach designed to identify locally appropriate safety strategies. Upcoming efforts include community and stakeholder workshops focused on rural roadway safety and areas

experiencing higher numbers of fatalities and serious injuries. Falley encouraged local agencies to incorporate traffic safety into their own policies and planning and emphasized the value of cross-agency collaboration and available traffic-safety data when pursuing grants and community projects. During discussion, she noted that while some overall safety measures have shown improvement, impaired driving remains an ongoing concern in the region.

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, Commissioner, Phil Papac. The motion passed unanimously.

➤ **August 2026 Meeting Report**

Chairperson Troy Meyers asked for approval of August 2026 Minutes.

Ken Mehin made a motion to approve; second, Mayor Josh Collette. The motion passed unanimously.

➤ **Administrative Sub-Council Report**

Vicki Cummings reported that the Administrative Sub-Council met briefly and approved the claims and payroll for consideration later in the meeting. She noted that expenditures and the budget remain on track for this point in the year and staff are beginning to work on next year's budget. No other action was taken.

➤ **ACTION: Approval of September 2026 Claims Batch #26-09 which includes October 2026 Payroll**

Chairperson Troy Meyers asked for approval of the September 2026 Claims Batches #26-09 in the amount of \$36,890.56.

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

➤ **Grant Funding Opportunities Report**

Mark Northrop highlighted the federal PROTECT (Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation) Program, which provides competitive funding to improve the resilience of surface transportation to weather events, natural disasters, and changing conditions. Eligible activities include planning, construction, technology, technical assistance, workforce development, and training. The program includes a rural set-aside, requires a match, and closes October 9. Staff noted that bridge projects may qualify for funding under the program.

Natalie Jensen reviewed several additional funding opportunities including: a Washington State Microenterprise Association grant supporting collaborative economic-development projects involving strategic partners; several multifamily affordable housing funding opportunities available to local governments, housing authorities, nonprofits, tribes, and other eligible organizations; and upcoming deadlines for the Ecology Water Quality Combined Funding Program and Connecting Housing to Infrastructure Program (CHIP). Natalie also reminded members that the Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) funding opportunity is ongoing. The full Grant Report, including eligibility information, deadlines, and application links, will be distributed to members following the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

- **NONE.**

NEW BUSINESS

- **ACTION: Approval of Grays Harbor Council of Government's 2027 Salary Ranges.**

Executive Director Vicki Cummings presented Resolution #704 approving the 2027 GHCOG staff salary ranges. She explained that salary ranges are reviewed annually using current salary data to ensure GHCOG positions remain appropriately aligned and that staff compensation remains within ranges approved by the Council. Vicki noted that the State Auditor also looks for documentation of Board-approved salary ranges.

Vicki clarified one change that was not reflected in the document included in the meeting packet: the Office/Grant Coordinator–Planner I position title was changed to Administrative and Grant Specialist–Planner I. The title change does not affect the position’s salary range or funding.

Ken Mehin made a motion to approve; second, Commissioner, J.R. Streifel. The motion passed unanimously.

- **ACTION: Grays Harbor Council of Governments 2027 Preliminary Budget.**

Executive Director Cummings presented Resolution #705 approving the 2027 Preliminary Budget and Work Program. She noted that the proposed budget includes a 5% increase in membership dues to address escalating operating costs, particularly insurance and annual software subscriptions, and to keep pace with inflation. Otherwise, the proposed budget remains consistent with current operations.

Vicki explained that grants GHCOG has applied for are not included in the preliminary budget and will only be added once funding is formally awarded, at which time a budget amendment would be brought before the Council. During discussion, Council members expressed appreciation for the work of GHCOG staff.

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

5. ALL STAFF REPORT

- **Vicki Cummings, Executive Director**
 - Attended the quarterly RTPO meeting, with discussion primarily focused on the upcoming Consolidated Transit Grant submission and review process.
 - Developing a year-end summary of RTPO activities to be incorporated into the final Unified Planning Work Program.
 - Worked with the City of Hoquiam and WSDOT to resolve issues related to obligating an additional \$750,000 in STP funding. The issues were resolved and the funding remains secured.
 - Reviewed the WSDOT Freight System Plan for accuracy to ensure Grays Harbor County facilities and freight classifications were appropriately represented.
 - Continues to monitor and seek funding opportunities for bridge projects. Transportation funding opportunities are currently limited while the federal transportation program continues under a continuing resolution.
 - Completing final revisions and corrections to the SR 105 Scenic Byways Plan to ensure the plan addresses all 14 required planning elements prior to submission.

- Participated in the monthly Brownfields program check-in. Staff and consultants are finalizing environmental reports and beginning grant closeout activities as the current grant nears completion and remaining funds are expended. GHCOG will then complete the required final grant reporting and pursue the next Brownfields grant opportunity.

➤ **Mark Northrop, Senior Planner**

- Continued monitoring transportation-related grant opportunities and maintaining GHCOG's internal grant matrix.
- No Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) amendment requests were received in September. Assisted CWCOG staff with follow-up questions related to Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) projects.
- Selected to serve on the Consolidated Grant Ranking Panel. The program supports public transportation and specialized mobility services, with the ranking process beginning this fall and Southwest Washington RTPO Board consideration anticipated in early 2027.
- Completed digitizing draft locations for individual TIP projects and developed a website where member jurisdictions can review project locations and provide comments. A user guide was also developed to assist member staff. Final GIS files will be available for local planning purposes and future GHCOG planning activities.
- Began developing an interactive GHCOG History Story Map to present the agency's history through maps, photographs, and other information. The Story Map is expected to eventually be incorporated into the GHCOG website.
- Participated in GIS-related professional development, including an AMPO GIS and Data webinar focused on performance management websites and an Esri training on developing ArcGIS dashboards.
- Reminded members about the Transportation Priorities and Issues Survey available through the GHCOG website. The CWCOG-developed survey seeks input on regional transportation needs and priorities for future transportation funding.

➤ **Natalie Jensen, Office Coordinator**

- Continued regular monthly financial and administrative activities, including preparation of claims and accounting records, with significant time devoted to development of the 2027 Preliminary Budget.
- Attended two public records trainings offered by the Washington State Archives and a Washington Cares webinar offered through the Employment Security Department.
- Continued researching grant opportunities for distribution to GHCOG members.
- Added the new Brownfields Program video produced by GHCOG's consultant to the Brownfields page of the GHCOG website. The video features GHCOG staff and members discussing the regional Brownfields Program and will also be promoted through LinkedIn and other outreach.
- Encouraged members to notify GHCOG of news releases, job openings, projects, and other information they would like shared through GHCOG's website and LinkedIn page, particularly when information is available on the member's website for GHCOG to link to.
- Reported that website traffic has gradually increased as additional content and resources have been added. Continued development of interactive resources and other new content is expected to make the website a more useful resource for members and the public.
- Encouraged members to suggest resources or information they would like made available through GHCOG. At Chair Meyers' suggestion, staff will look at adding a link to the Washington Traffic Safety Commission's Target Zero data dashboards to the website.

6. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

- None.

7. 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:

- Joe Calodich reported that the planning phase for the US 101 paving project near Humptulips, Amanda Park, and Neilton was recently completed.
- Paving work continues along US 101 in northern Grays Harbor County.
- WSDOT continues work on several fish passage projects throughout Grays Harbor County.
- Several bridge preservation projects are planned in the Aberdeen and Hoquiam area, although there were no new updates to report.
- In response to a question regarding a recent road closure near Lake Quinault, Calodich noted that he was not aware of the specific closure but mentioned recent emergency bridge work farther north near Forks.

8. MEMBER COMMENT

➤ City of Cosmopolis, Councilmember Sue Darcy

- Reported a successful City Hall blood drive with 22 donors and 18 units collected.
- Festival in the Park had its largest turnout to date, with more than 25 vendors, music, and a display from the Fire Museum.
- Announced an upcoming Mill Creek cleanup and community potluck.
- City Council approved its Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program and will begin pursuing funding for identified street and sidewalk projects.
- EPA provided an update on cleanup activities at the former COSMO facility. Hazardous materials are being removed from tanks and ponds, with EPA's work expected to continue through the end of the year.
- The Department of Ecology will conduct additional sampling and environmental assessment following EPA's work.

➤ City of Elma, Mayor Josh Collette

- Reduced the speed limit near the elementary school from 35 mph to 25 mph, with generally positive community response.
- The City is considering a similar speed reduction near Summit Pacific and Eagle's Landing.
- A second public hearing is scheduled regarding creation of a Transportation Benefit District to provide additional funding for transportation projects.
- Added a sidewalk replacement program to the City's Six-Year Transportation Program to address deteriorating sidewalks.
- Plans to adopt a Target Zero resolution as part of the Safe Streets for All initiative.

- City of Montesano, Mayor Tyler Trimble – (Reported by Natalie Jensen)
 - Began work on the City's 2027 budget.
 - Working to complete several street projects and submitted projects for Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) funding.
 - Pursuing funding for the storm-related Albert Culvert project.
 - Beginning a levy campaign supporting EMS and general City services.

- City of Westport, Councilmembers Troy Meyers
 - Completed a property transfer from DNR to the City for potential development of middle-income housing.
 - The City's skate park is nearing completion, remains on schedule and budget, and a soft opening will be announced soon.
 - Announced an October 3 groundbreaking for the Vertical Evacuation Structure project.
 - The Fisher Memorial Project completed its fundraising campaign.
 - Announced the upcoming 30 Miles of Junk event.
 - Noted that the next Washington State Parks Commission meeting regarding the proposed Westport Golf Links is scheduled for October 19 at Aberdeen High School.

- City of Aberdeen, Councilmember Joshua Francy
 - Reported approximately 50 public works projects currently underway.
 - The road diet project is nearing completion, with striping among the remaining work.
 - Public Works recently completed sidewalk improvements near A.J. West Elementary in time for the start of school.
 - Highlighted positive response times through the City's existing Citizen Action Request system.
 - Aberdeen is working toward launching an app-based reporting system that will allow residents to submit photos, locations, and service requests and track the City's response.

- Grays Harbor County, Commissioner J.R. Streifel
 - The County is working through its 2027 budget process while continuing implementation of its strategic plan.
 - Conducting an employee survey focused on organizational communication and workplace culture.
 - Implementing a new payroll system to replace and consolidate older systems, with completion targeted for April.
 - County representatives planned an East County business tour.

- Grays Harbor Transit, Ken Mehin
 - Successfully tested three solar-powered lights at bus stops where additional lighting was needed for passenger safety and security.
 - Applied for grant funding through Transit's insurance agency to purchase 27 additional lights, which would bring the total to 30.
 - The lights can be programmed for operating hours and intensity and include a passenger-activated flashing feature to alert approaching buses.

➤ Port of Grays Harbor, Commissioner Phil Papac

- The Port provided the final funding toward the Westport Fishermen's Memorial and continues to support the project.
- Preparing to begin replacement work on Float 21, a commercial dock in Westport, with approximately \$6.5 million identified toward the larger project.
- Recently hosted a gathering of ports at the Port of Grays Harbor.
- Awaiting resolution of the second appeal related to the proposed pellet manufacturing facility in Hoquiam, an approximately \$250 million project.
- Noted upcoming Westport dock and waterfront tours and highlighted the significance of Westport's commercial seafood industry to the region.

9. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Ken Mehin made a motion to adjourn; second, Commissioner Phil Papac. Motion passed unanimously.

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

Troy Meyers
Chairperson

Date

Vicki Cummings
Executive Director

Date