GRAYS HARBOR
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
Zoom Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 15, 2026

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, Kevin Moynihan (City of Aberdeen)
  - Mayor, Linda Springer (City of Cosmopolis)
  - Mayor, Josh Collette (City of Elma) – Voted Remotely
  - Mayor, Andrea Dahl (City of McCleary)
  - Councilmember, Troy Meyers (City of Westport)
  - Commissioner, J.R. Streifel (Grays Harbor County)
  - General Manager, Ken Mehin (Grays Harbor Transit)

- Staff:
  - Vicki Cummings, Executive Director
  - Mark Northrop, Senior Planner
  - Natalie Jensen, Administrative & Grants Specialist / Planner I

- Guests:
  - Stephenie Reece, Timberland Regional Library, Regional Manager
  - Eric Lint, Grays Harbor Transit, Program Manager
  - Joe Calodich, WSDOT Multimodal Planning Team Lead

A quorum was established.

3. PRESENTATION

Stephenie Reece, West Grays Harbor Regional Manager for Timberland Regional Library (TRL), provided an update on library services, programs, financial conditions, and the proposed library levy appearing on the November 3, 2026, ballot. She explained that TRL is seeking to increase its property tax levy rate from $0.22 to $0.35 per $1,000 of assessed property value to address rising operating costs and maintain library services. She discussed recent budget challenges, staffing reductions, administrative restructuring, and measures implemented to improve financial oversight and accountability. Reece outlined the potential impacts of the levy election on library hours, staffing, collections, and community services.

Reece also highlighted TRL's community programs and outreach efforts throughout Grays Harbor County, including the Summer Library Program, which recorded 2,808 participants and 804 completions in 2026. Libraries throughout the county hosted 292 summer programs with nearly 6,000 attendees. She discussed the Anywhere Library mobile service, which provides library resources to underserved communities, and the ongoing renovation of the Aberdeen Timberland Library. The renovation began in October and includes facility improvements, updated youth spaces, and enhanced access to local history resources, with reopening anticipated in summer 2027.

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During discussion, Reece confirmed that no temporary Aberdeen library location has been established during construction, although alternative service options may be considered. Council members expressed appreciation for TRL's contributions to the community and discussed volunteer opportunities, access to library services, and continued participation by TRL representatives in GHCOG meetings.

4. GHCOG BUSINESS

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

  Mayor Linda Springer made a motion to approve the current agenda; second, Ken Mehin. The motion passed unanimously.

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

  Ken Mehin 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 monthly claims and payroll. She noted that operations and expenditures remain on track for this time of year. No additional business was discussed.

- **ACTION: Approval of October 2026 Claims Batch #26-10 which includes November 2026 Payroll**
  Chairperson Troy Meyers asked for approval of the October 2026 Claims Batches #26-10 in the amount of $91,176.28.

  Ken Mehin made a motion to approve; second, Mayor, Linda Springer. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

- **NONE.**

NEW BUSINESS

- **DISCUSSION**: Grays Harbor County Transportation Policy Forum

  Executive Director Vicki Cummings provided an overview of the upcoming Grays Harbor County Transportation Policy Forum scheduled for October 28, 2026. She explained that the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) has been conducting regional policy outreach sessions to better understand transportation needs and priorities within different areas of the county. The upcoming meeting will combine the quarterly RTPO meeting with the Grays Harbor Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting.

  The TAC portion will include a discussion of proposed WSDOT maintenance agreement language, presented by Nick Bird of the City of Aberdeen, to ensure local jurisdictions understand potential responsibilities and impacts. The RTPO portion will focus on updates to the five-county Regional Transportation Plan, including unmet transportation needs, completed projects, and future priorities. Cummings emphasized the importance of participation by member jurisdictions and their public works and transportation staff to ensure local concerns are represented in the regional planning process.

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5. **ALL STAFF REPORT**

➢ **Vicki Cummings, Executive Director**

- GHCOG submitted three Opportunity Zone applications for the Hoquiam, South Aberdeen, and East County census tracts. The Hoquiam census tract received official approval as an Opportunity Zone. The updated program provides tax incentives for qualifying investments and includes additional accountability requirements.
- GHCOG participated in a final review of the SR 105 Corridor Management Plan, which is being developed to support a National Scenic Byway designation. Staff assisted with content, formatting, photographs, and revisions on behalf of Grays Harbor County and the cities of Aberdeen and Westport. A final draft is anticipated soon.
- Completed and received approval of the annual Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) report in coordination with the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments, WSDOT, and federal transportation agencies. The report documents regional planning activities, accomplishments, coordination efforts, and anticipated needs. Cummings acknowledged Mark Northrop's contributions to the report.
- Advised members of the scheduled October 19 closure of the Simpson Avenue Bridge in Hoquiam for routine maintenance and crash cushion repairs. Traffic was to be detoured to the Riverside Bridge, with travelers encouraged to allow additional time.
- GHCOG submitted its quarterly Brownfields Grant report to the EPA, which was accepted. Staff also provided additional documentation and responses related to the EPA's ongoing compliance review. The review is nearing completion, although formal closeout has not yet been received.
- Staff are preparing presentations for member jurisdictions as part of annual budget outreach efforts. These presentations will provide updates on GHCOG activities, regional initiatives, and services supporting member communities.

➢ **Mark Northrop, Senior Planner**

- Reported no Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) amendment requests were received in October. No additional amendments will be processed in 2026, with the process resuming in February 2027.
- Mark noted that the review and ranking process for the Consolidated Grant Program will begin in November. He will participate as a member of the review and ranking panel.
- Released an interactive GIS website to member staff displaying draft mapped locations of 2027 local transportation projects. Initial feedback has been positive, and a public version is planned for future release on the GHCOG website.
- Received GIS data from Brownfields consultant Onterris identifying sites being assessed through GHCOG's Brownfields grants. Staff plan to incorporate this information into a future online mapping resource.
- Participated in GIS training focused on animated maps, accessibility, and effective communication of spatial data.
- Attended the APA Washington Conference in Vancouver, where sessions addressed flood mitigation, coastal transportation vulnerability, transit safety, and sustainable freight transportation. Northrop identified opportunities to apply these concepts locally through coastal corridor planning, infrastructure resilience initiatives, transportation safety funding, and expanded regional freight planning
- Northrop and Natalie Jensen planned to attend the October 22 symposium at Grays Harbor College, featuring discussions on rural traffic safety, speed management, and regional roadway challenges.

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- **Natalie Jensen, Office Coordinator**
  - Completed monthly claims and financial records and distributed the 2027 preliminary budget planning letters to member representatives and finance departments, providing proposed membership dues amounts for budget planning purposes.
  - Renewed GHCOG's dental and vision benefits coverage and organizational liability insurance.
  - Shared information on the Washington State Department of Commerce's Shared Standards Initiative, which aims to standardize grant application and contracting requirements. Noted an upcoming October 29 town hall and offered to share additional resources with members.
  - Developing an informational video explaining the role and purpose of a Council of Governments (COG) for the GHCOG website, with the possibility of sharing it with members for feedback before publication.
  - Continued maintaining GHCOG's LinkedIn page and encouraged members to submit announcements and employment opportunities for sharing, provided job postings are linked to their organization's website.
  - Drafted a webpage incorporating Target Zero traffic safety information and resources, following a suggestion from Chairman Meyers. The page is being prepared for future publication.
  - Reported upcoming public records training through the Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC) and Washington State Archives, including records retention practices and management software.
  - Planned to attend the October 22 Grays Harbor Health Symposium with Mark Northrop and submitted questions for consideration during the discussion with the Washington State Secretary of Health.
  - Chairman Meyers shared his jurisdiction's experience evaluating public records management software and cautioned members about potential vendor lock-in. Natalie expressed interest in learning more about available systems and their capabilities.

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:
     - The SR 109 Ocean City to Taholah Fish Barrier Removal Project, which involves removing five fish passage barriers near the Quinault Indian Nation. Temporary closures of approximately 45 minutes each were scheduled multiple times daily from October 14–16 near Moclips Highway. Work will pause for the winter, with some locations remaining under single-lane restrictions.
     - The US 101 paving project between Hoquiam and Queets is nearing completion. Final paving and striping work will result in intermittent lane closures and alternating traffic over the next several weeks.
     - Encouraged participation in the upcoming Grays Harbor County Transportation Policy Forum, where WSDOT representatives will provide updates on planned transportation projects in the region, including bridge preservation efforts.

8. **MEMBER COMMENT**

- City of Aberdeen, Councilmember Kevin Moynihan
  - No updates were reported.

- City of Cosmopolis, Mayor Linda Springer
  - Reported the city is preparing its annual budget and anticipates an audit within the next month.
  - Celebrated the unveiling of a large painting by local artist Kenneth Eugene Mitchell depicting the historic lumber schooner Lizzie Vance. The artwork is displayed in the City Hall lobby, and the public is encouraged to visit.
  - Announced the city is fully staffed, including part-time City Administrator Jon Martin, a new Deputy Clerk, and the promotion of Mackenzie to Clerk-Treasurer.
  - Reported continued maintenance and strong public use of City parks, particularly Lions Park and Highland Park.
  - Noted that Timberland Regional Library's Anywhere Library program, previously hosted in partnership with the YMCA during the summer, is now being offered monthly at the community center.

- City of Elma, Mayor Josh Collette
  - No updates were reported.

- City of McCleary, Mayor Andrea Dahl
  - Reported the City Council approved the annexation of approximately 43 acres northeast of the city following more than a year of planning.
  - Provided an update on the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) grant for Beerbower Park improvements. A cultural resources study was completed, and coordination with RCO and the Department of Commerce is ongoing.
  - Reported the city is contracting for building inspection services and updating development fees.
  - Noted the city is nearing full staffing.

- City of Westport, Councilmembers Troy Meyers
  - Reported construction has begun on the city's vertical evacuation structure, with soil mixing and foundation stabilization work scheduled to begin the following week.
  - Announced construction of the skate park and pump track is expected to be completed by the end of October.
  - Reported the departure of the city's clerk and approval of a contract for a replacement.
  - Announced a Washington State Parks Commission public hearing regarding the proposed Westport Golf Links project, scheduled for October 19 at Aberdeen High School, with both in-person and virtual participation available.

- Grays Harbor County, Commissioner J.R. Streifel

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- Shared his attendance at Westport's groundbreaking event and the City of Cosmopolis's artwork unveiling, recognizing the positive developments occurring in local communities.

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- Reported that Kyle Scott has been selected internally as the County's new Public Works Director, with a formal announcement forthcoming.
- Discussed ongoing county budget preparations, including multiple weekly meetings with department heads to address challenging financial conditions.

➢ Grays Harbor Transit, Ken Mehin
- Announced the promotion of Eric Lint to Program Manager.
- Reported the hiring of James Rizzuto as the new IT Manager.
- Noted that recruitment is underway to fill the vacant planning, communications, and community outreach position following Lint's promotion.

9. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

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

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

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Troy Meyers	Date	Vicki Cummings	Date
Chairperson		Executive Director	

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