

## Skagit Watershed Council - Notes

### Meeting of the Board of Directors, Hybrid Meeting at Skagit Watershed Council

June 6, 2024, 10:30 to 11:50

(Underline indicates decision point; parentheses indicate attachment #; **\*bold indicates action item**)

Attending Directors: John Stein (Chair), Alison Studley, Brendan Brokes, Emmett Wild (zoom), Michael Kirshenbaum, Andrew Bearlin (zoom), Devin Smith, Aundrea McBride (Interim Executive Director)

Guest: Holli Watne

#### Beginning Business

*Call to Order:*

10:39. Quorum achieved

Agenda (#1) approved, as amended by John. Motion by Alison, second by Brendan. All approved.

Motion to approve Board Notes for May 2024 (#2) by Michael, second by Alison, Deven and Brandan abstained.

#### *ED Report*

Motion to approve April 2024 Financial Reports (#3) by Michael, second by Brendan. All approved. Aundrea explained that at this point we will likely have about \$20k in rollover from last year, which is included in the budget already.

#### Watershed Council Accomplishments

- Aundrea submitted grant for bringing Salmon Recovery Portal up to date and adding metrics requested by Puget Sound Partnership. The grant includes funding for sponsors to do the work necessary to make the updates possible.
- The Watershed Council and Conservation District restarted the Riparian Database project from last year. Funding expires in one year.
- Lead entity site visits went well. Review comments now on PRISM. 3 projects of concern (Smokehouse, Smilk, and Pressentin). 5 need more information (Island Unit, Knotweed, Maylor, DeBay's, and SRSC Collaborative Riparian). 5 cleared. 1 conditioned in the Island County grant round (Race Lagoon). The conditions has been met.
- New account at Banner Bank. High-yield Savings account should make us \$1600 a year.
- Aundrea met with Peter Browning.

## Old Business

### *Staff Plan*

Aundrea proposes to hire a 50% time Program Assistant and, later, a 75% Watershed Coordinator/technical lead.

- There will be future discussions on our staffing plan.
- The Program Assistant will take over administrative support for committees, event planning and execution support, and website maintenance. They will also shadow Scottie, who intends to retire next year (maybe).
- Goal is to hire ASAP, hopefully August or early September.
- The idea is that in the next fiscal year, this person will absorb Scottie's job and become  $\frac{3}{4}$  to full time.
- Aundrea's intention is to post a job announcement for a Technical Lead position (3/4 time) after the new Program Assistant is trained (maybe October).
- **\*Devin wants to talk about next steps for hiring.**

Motion to approve to start the process of hiring Program Assistant, getting the job description out before next board meeting. Motion Michael, second by Alison. All approve.

### *Workplan*

**\*We will approve the Workplan (#6) at the next meeting.**

### *Budget*

A new budget for fiscal year 2024-2025 was presented for approval.

- Similar to last year with following changes:
  - Includes COLA raises and an ED raise, two new staff (program assistant and technical lead). Staffing budget is overestimate because it may take several months to hire and other variable yet to be decided on.
  - Meeting budget has been increased, largely due to the cost of site visit lunches nearly doubling.
- Professional services is where we'll cut the budget if needed.
- If we have too much funds, we can roll over unused PSAR monies to next year.
- Alison – assume that there will be a 25% increase in insurance this year.
- Budget assumes that new hires will start immediately. In reality is

Motion to approve 2024-25 Budget (#5) by Brandon, second by Michael. All approve.

### *New Healthcare Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA)*

This is the final approval for adopting the new HRA benefit adopted in place of the individual benefit SWC had been providing for employees.

- The personnel policy manual was updated.

- Alison suggests that we may want to have a Layer or HR expert review our personnel handbook. The rules seem to change a little every year.
- Brendan suggests that PSP might be a good resource for that. Andrew suggests checking out 501 Commons. **\*John and Aundrea will investigate this.**

Motion to approve new Health Reimbursement Plan replace Individual Benefit (#7) by Devin. Andrew seconds. All approved.

## New Business

### *NOAA Grant Opportunity*

NOAA and SRSC approached Aundrea about SWC facilitating the creation of and hosting of a community outreach and education media piece as part of SRSC's grant for work in the estuary funded by NOAA.

- The topic would be video + graphics piece about the impacts of habitat restoration that addresses farmers' questions.
- Branden says that a lot of Farmers are asking if the restoration work being done in the estuary is making a difference. The presentation at the today's member meeting should shed some light on this.
- There will be a steering committee with scientists, farmers, and restoration practitioners.

Motion to approve Aundrea applying for NOAA communications grant (#9). All approved.

### *Retreat*

The board will schedule a 6-hour retreat to work on a 5-year strategic plan, with Joan, a hired facilitator.

- This was tentatively set for October 3<sup>rd</sup>, but Brendan has a standing conflict with the first Tues+Wed of every month. **\*A poll will be sent out to find a time. Preferably in October to early November.**
- Devin would like to know more about the agenda. Wants to make sure that there is a very clear list of what's to be discussed and what outcomes are to be worked toward.
- **\*John and Aundrea will meet with Joan and talk about this. Will make sure she's aware of sideboards of this strategic planning.**

### *Roundtable and Good of the Order*

*Adjourn: 11:50*