

## Skagit Watershed Council - Final Notes

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

May 2, 2024

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

**Attending Directors:** John Stein (Chair), Alison Studley, Emmett Wild, Michael Kirshenbaum, Andrew Bearlin (zoom), Devin Smith (zoom, 10:40 to 10:51), Kara Rowe (zoom), Aundrea McBride (Interim Executive Director)

**Guests:** Holli Watne, Owen Peth (call in)

**Call to Order:** 10:39. Quorum achieved

Agenda (#1) approved with modified so Devin could be included in important votes.

Motion to approve Board Notes for March 7, 2024 (#2) by Michael, second by Kara, All approved. Note there was no Board meeting in April.

#### **ED Report**

Motion to approve February and March 2024 Financial Reports (#3) by Alison, second by Michael. All approved. Aundrea explained that we're still seeing the effect of the accounting adjustment in January and are thus \$20,000 in the red this month.

- Aundrea began discussions with NOAA and SRSC about a small grant for creating a website communication tool about estuary science.
- Aundrea met with Whidbey Basin group about a collaborative grant opportunity to improve the Salmon Recovery Portal (SRP).
- The Whale Museum has been accepted as our newest member organization. They have already been regular participants at our quarterly meetings for years.
- Four organizations that are active with our Community Engagement Committee (CEC) have been invited to become member organizations: The Salish Sea School, Glacier Peak Institute, the Salal Chapter of the Washington Native Plant Society, and Hampton Lumber.
- Aundrea has been meeting with Richard and focusing on the financials of the council. He has currently used about 35% of his contract.

Committee reports were distributed in writing in advance of the meeting.

## New Business

A draft 2024-25 Budget (#4) was presented. The budget presents one option of hiring new staff (.5FTE Program Assistant and .75FTE Data Specialist), but there are multiple scenarios we might go with. This draft does not include any funds from Skagit County. It seems that there is a need to do some fundraising. The board agreed that these additional expenses should be considered for the budget (**\*Aundrea will get estimates**):

- Board retreat with a facilitator, ½ day to full day. In-person only. Minimal technology.
- A professional update to the SWC website to add a new ‘customer service oriented’ landing page. This would be a great way to improve our image and get some good information into the public. This would probably require an outside grant or other additional funding.
- NOAA story map matching funds.
- Salary increase of new ED in 2025.
- Legal services. Not currently clear where the funding for this would come from. Allison does believe this would be a legitimate “overhead” expense, could be part of indirect, though some funding sources may not cover.

**\*Budget will ideally be approved next month in time for the next fiscal year.**

Workplan (#5) initial discussion. Andrew: I think one of the roles of the SWC is to communicate what the science is and what the policy is that shapes our decisions and prioritization. We should be explaining to the public why we have adopted the policies that we have. Kara: A lot of the turmoil we’ve had is due to a feeling in the community that the SWC is making important decisions behind closed doors. I agree with Andrew. We deal with the same thing in our organization.

Collaborative Whidbey Basin grant for SRP improvements (#6): Motion to proceed with new grant opportunity by Michael, second by Emmet. All agree. This grant will be for SWC to hire a contractor to clean up and add data for Island, Stillaguamish and Snohomish lead entities as well as SWC into the Salmon Recovery Portal (SRP). SWC will manage the contract and the contractor. SRP is a public facing database so cleaning up the data is important for representing work in the basin. We’re going to apply for up to \$250K to be spent over 2 years.

- Devin asked if this requires work by the sponsors and the answer is “yes”. We will need metrics for projects on the 4 Year Work Plan from sponsors. The grant will include funding for sponsor participation.
- Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) is federally required to maintain the SRP metrics for the 4YWP projects.
- Alison states that the board likely needs to write a formal letter of support for this grant. We may need one from PSP as well. **\*Aundrea will look into this.**

## Old Business

**\*The approval of the new Health Reimbursement Arrangement Replacing Individual Benefit in SWC Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual (#7) has been moved to next month's meeting, as some other issues recently came up that need to be addressed first.**

## Lead Entity Program Updates

- Motion to approve the final lead entity committee membership (#8), with a placeholder for Upper Skagit Tribe from whom we are still awaiting a response, by Alison, second by Emmet. All agree.
- Project-level adaptive response reinstate review. (#9) **\*Tabled**
- Site visits are set for next week.
- The 2024 riparian project ranking process brief (#10) has been sent to Emmet and **\*Aundrea will talk to him about it offline.**
- SFEG's 2023 Upper Skagit Riparian project: In 2023 a \$220k SFEG project that was approved for funding, then set aside unfunded so that the Tenas Creek project could have more funding. All agree that the intention at the 2023 LECC meeting was to ensure this project was guaranteed SRFB funding in 2024 so that it could proceed this fall (per Richard's initial motion). Motion to rank this project at the top of the 2024 list to ensure that it gets funding this year by Emmet, Michael seconds. All approve, except Alison who abstains due to conflict of interest.

Review Brocksmith Consulting Scope of Work (#11) and resignation letter (#12): Reviewed offline.

**Adjourn: 12:10**