**Skagit Watershed Council**

**Meeting of the Board of Directors – Final Notes**

**May 5, 2016 SWC Office, Mount Vernon, WA**

(**\* indicates action item**; \_\_ indicates decision)

Attendance: Chair Ken Dahlstedt, Richard Brocksmith, Carolyn Kelly, Jon-Paul Shannahan, Colleen McShane, and Steve Hinton.

Not in attendance: Brendan Brokes, Michael Kirshenbaum, and John Vanderheyden.

The meeting was called to order at 9:13 am with a quorum.

**Draft Agenda Review**

Introductions, quorum determined, and agenda approved.

Approve Board Notes: January 27, March 3, and April 7, 2016 (#2)

Carolyn moved and Steve seconded approval of the January 27, March 3, and April 7, 2016 notes as presented.

**Executive Director Report**

* Richard made general comments about the February and March Financial Reports.

February financials are negative because there were three pay periods in that month. (This happens twice a year.)

Carolyn pointed out that accrual accounting would allow these numbers to be depicted more accurately so that they balance. **\*Richard and Carolyn will work with the new bookkeeper to look at the details.** Carolyn moved and Steve seconded the motion to approve the February and March 2016 financials as included in the board packet. Motion carried unanimously.

**Committee Reports**

* Monitoring and Adaptive Management Subcommittee

The subcommittee met recently and steady progress is being made on establishing methods for assessing habitat status and trends. They are still working through floodplain and riparian discussion and now beginning to think about larger processes of freshwater hydrology and sediment. Talking to Skagit Climate Science Consortium about integrating hypothesized impacts from climate.

* No other committee meetings occurred in April.

**Old Business**

* Affordable Care Act Changes to Personnel Policies

The Affordable Care Act requires that we adjust our current policies away from an employee payment plan to either group health insurance or a personal benefit reported as taxable income. The SWC Executive Committee (officers) recommends to the Board of Directors to replace the current health insurance policy (see below) with a personal benefit (see proposed language below). This recommendation was based on having simpler administration very similar to current operations and providing for SWC’s current and future staffing needs. A reassessment of these policies can always be considered at some future point.

The following language was proposed to replace Section 5.2 in the Personnel Policies: “The SWC offers a personal benefit for all employees. All employees who work 30 hours or more per workweek are eligible. No health or medical benefits are offered or implied via employment at SWC. When a new employee is hired, they will become eligible for the SWC personal benefit on the first day of the first full pay period following their hire date.

Adjustments to personal benefits can be made at the discretion of the Executive Director in consultation with the Board of Directors if implemented equitably for all eligible employees, are consistent with these policies and relevant regulations, are consistent with an adopted budget, and are consistent with SWC’s primary funding program policies.“

Carolyn moved and Steve seconded to amend Section 5.2 of the SWC personnel policies to implement the personal benefit option, as recommended above. Colleen abstained. The vote was otherwise unanimous.

* Lead Entity Program Update (#6)

Draft applications are complete and two days of site tours are scheduled for May 10 and 11. \***Board members were invited to attend these tours if they can come.**

The Board agreed that all new members should try to attend some or all of these tours to orient themselves on these projects and the work being done in the watershed.

Steve made a motion to approve the 4 Year Work Plan project list and narrative and Jon Paul seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Steve made a motion to approve the Technical Review Committee and Lead Entity Citizen Committee rosters and Colleen seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

* Community Engagement Program Update

Richard is really excited about the potential for community engagement. A contract with Kulshan Services has been signed to move forward on the community engagement planning process. Staff and Kulshan Services met for an initial planning meeting in April. Richard has cued up a group of key educators to guide us as we re-establish our Community Engagement Committee. He’s been meeting with NCI and SFEG to discuss how to collaborate more to do a more effective job in the watershed of educating school age and young adult age groups. So many good things are already happening, and we are identifying great new opportunities as well. .

Steve moved and Jon Paul seconded to adopt the motion with one change: Richard will serve as chair for a period of one year with the proposed membership as outlined in the memorandum to adopt the Community Engagement Committee. Motion carried unanimously.

**New Business**

* SWC Work Plan & Budget

The Board will be reviewing the coming year’s budget in June. The Board’s role is to ensure the work plan and budget are aligned with SWC priorities, as well as identify any shortfalls or resources that are left to build into the budget for July 2016–June 2017.

Richard clarified several aspects of the Work Plan:

* + - It represents to a large part what is already contractually committed and stated that while there isn’t much that is discretionary now, how our contracts are focused in future years is more discretionary. It was noted that the specific details of how programs are implemented and specific outcomes are somewhat flexible, and would benefit from Board collaboration.
    - Steelhead planning for instance was not mandated by the State but was written into the contract at our request.
    - Tasks 1-7 are required. The Lead Entity program tasks are handed down by the State and SWC is under contract to complete.
    - Task 8 - Capital Project Development is the funding for the Skagit Capacity Fund, which are already allocated and contracted up to $50K.
    - Task 9: Chinook Salmon Monitoring & Adaptive Management Plan will be due June 2017.
    - Task 10: Steelhead Habitat Planning, which has a modest set of tasks and funding.
    - All PSAR funds and one year of the Lead Entity program funds are already in the RCO contract, but another year of LE funds will be added to our contract in June 2016 to finish out the biennium.
    - Tasks 11: Update Skagit Riparian Habitat Strategies
    - Task 12: Update Skagit Protection Strategy
* Review Current Work Plan; Discuss Priorities Moving Forward; What Can Each Member Do?

Steve asked for more consistency and alignment with M & AM and the Task 11 – riparian habitat strategies. \***Richard indicated this can be further clarified in the Work Plan for the rest of 2016 and into 2017.**

* SWC Representation at the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council

Ken has represented SWC on the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council in the past, though he is now transitioning to being the rep for WA State Association of Counties. Steve has been asked by the Swinomish with Sauk support to attend these meetings as well. The goal is to harness more Skagit watershed representation proportionate to the importance of the Skagit in salmon recovery. Richard has been attending as well as part of his work plan. With 3 local reps we will be able to more effectively represent our broad needs but, more importantly, coordinate in areas we agree.

Carolyn moved and Colleen seconded that Richard represent SWC at the Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council. The motion passed unanimously.

**\*The Board asked that Richard continue to summarize what he’s taking to the PSSRC meetings so that SWC can speak with one voice and ensure solidarity in action.** It also implies more input from the SRC. This gives Richard more clarity about what he can speak about when synergy is there as well as the differences in interests in the watershed. This involvement demonstrates SWC’s strategic leadership and facilitation of communication in the watershed.

* Other

A Save Our Sound group is going to Washington DC to get more funding for Puget Sound. The Skagit Watershed should participate and advocate that some of that money, if obtained, be applied in the Skagit watershed. In addition to increased funding, having a designated work plan through this process helps the SWC to have conversations with other players who have funding to benefit the entire watershed.

Ken spoke to his upcoming bid for reelection. He also indicated the shared desire for Board members to take leadership roles on the Board.

Carolyn asked that the Work Plan be explained to the new Board members.

**\*Richard will initiate conversations with these new Board members to make sure they are engaged and informed as they learn the ropes.**

**\*Richard will provide a draft budget and work plan as well as a retrospective analysis of how the SWC did on its tasks and accomplishments. Jon Paul asked that Richard re-send last year’s “State of the SWC” report to inform budget and work plan decisions moving forward.**

Adjourned at 10:30 am.

Next SWC Board Meeting is June 2, 9am to noon.