

Skagit Watershed Council
Meeting of the Board of Directors – Final Notes
October 2, 2014, SWC Office, Mount Vernon, WA

(* indicates action item; indicates decision)

Attendance: Chair Ken Dahlstedt, Loren Everest, Bob Everitt and Richard Brocksmitth. Steve Hinton and Margaret Fleek arrived late in the meeting. Carolyn Kelly, Dave Pflug, and Brenda Cunningham were absent.

The meeting was called to order at about 9:15 am, without a quorum. The draft agenda was reviewed and two items were added to the draft agenda. First, the group discussed Steve's proposal to start organizing the agendas by call to order, executive director report, committee reports, old business, and new business. It was felt that the proposal had merit and that if it could help us focus more effectively on our mission then ***the Board should follow the recommendation to adjust agenda layout**. Second, Richard relayed that the Technical Work Group (TWG) had discussed organizational structure options for starting to develop a steelhead and bull trout strategic approach and was recommending we form a new subcommittee. Following a question about this potentially increasing staff and meeting time, Richard noted that the TWG discussed this and would try to piggyback meetings together to decrease travel time but the TWG and new subcommittee would likely have different membership given the needed expertise from outside TWG and some members of TWG not wanting to or able to be directly involved. ***The directors present directed Richard to bring forward a fleshed out proposal in November**.

Recognizing the Board would not have time to cover the entire agenda once a quorum arrived, the discussion moved to the next informational agenda item of exploring our role in Puget Sound recovery. Richard relayed his growing awareness that while our mission was fairly wide-reaching, our operations were fairly limited or focused in scope, and in some cases partner operations weren't even covering our mission (for example floodplain management and forest conservation). Richard also relayed that a lack of conversation around broadening operations to meet our mission limited guidance for how he and the rest of the Council's structure operates, which has, and could further, lead to friction and lack of efficiency. Richard also relayed his opinion that this lack of coordination and planning has led to missed opportunities to forward common-sense actions, which would likely become worse in the future if not addressed. It was noted that the steelhead habitat planning we are beginning will be one avenue to address these needs.

Puget Sound recovery is clearly broader than our mission, but our mission is a very large part of Puget Sound recovery, so how we support a potentially new, local integrating organization is critical. This topic is pretty central to the legislature's recent budget proviso directing the Puget Sound Partnership to offer findings and recommendations on how to strengthen and streamline local integration efforts (which recently sent out a survey requesting input on the topic and which was forwarded to our membership and other Skagit watershed interests). The Board members present discussed the history of these various processes briefly to help bring each other up to a common knowledge base. ***They felt this likely should be discussed in more detail when time allowed, potentially at this year's Board retreat.**

Richard has begun to schedule a Board retreat, first looking at our existing scheduled date of December 4, 2014, but realizing at least two directors couldn't be available that day. Another option might be December 11. ***This date may not be available for Bob, but the Board asked Richard to continue to seek a date that would work for the most members, likely a half day meeting with lunch.**

Margaret arrived at this time, approximately 10:30.

The Chair took this opportunity to ask each Board member present if they had any concerns with the recent direction and operations of the Council. None were noted. Margaret thanked everyone for trying to make something valuable to the community of Hamilton happen with our recent efforts for building a multi-benefits project concept to restore salmon habitat, benefit drainage and agriculture, and reduce flood hazards.

The Board began discussing legislative priorities proposed for discussion by Richard, focusing on the operating and capital programs the Council and its members depend on for salmon habitat recovery, such as federal and state grant sources.

Steve arrived at 11:10, establishing a quorum. Bob moved and Loren seconded approval of the notes as written, with that motion then approved by consensus of the Board.

Bob moved and Margaret seconded adoption of the financial report as provided, with that motion then approved by consensus of the Board.

Richard relayed the Nomination Committee's (Tim Manns, Carolyn Kelly, and Margaret Fleek) slate of candidates included one candidate, Jon Paul Shannahan from the Upper Skagit Indian Tribe. Steve moved and Margaret seconded a motion to forward the nomination to the Council of Members for their consideration. The motion to forward the nomination was approved by consensus of the Board.

The next agenda item was to discuss revoking the March 2010 Operating Manual in preparation for development of new operations in the near future. Richard recommended this as it was mostly subsumed into the recently updated Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws and now was duplicative and lent confusion to our operations. A question was raised about unintended consequences of revoking the manual as it may be interrelated to other organizational documents, particularly the Lead Entity Program Guide. Richard will look into that question for the next meeting. ***Steve moved and Loren seconded tabling this discussion for a subsequent meeting.**

Next there was a brief overview of SWC's involvement in the Town of Hamilton's proposed project for the Floodplain by Design grant program, including Richard facilitating and supporting financially the development of the current concept. Steve expressed his procedural concern about a partially developed proposal being submitted in association with the Watershed Council name without wider and more proactive vetting, and that this was disrespectful of the base membership. He felt this was another example of this happening like the riparian project that went into the SRFB grant round this year sponsored by the Watershed Council. Steve stated that if the project did meet the Watershed Council requirements and relevant standards such as recent WDFW fish crossing manual, then the Cooperative would be 100% supportive. Ken felt that it was important for us to strive to not surprise members and to keep everyone together on our actions. ***Richard noted the comments were fair and he would be mindful and more proactive in future efforts to vet project and program concepts.**

The Board next discussed development of legislative priorities for the upcoming legislative session. Richard provided an additional one-pager that summarized different operational and capital programs we rely on, and briefly highlighted why they are important. The Board asked Richard how these priorities would be used. Richard noted that the work plan requires a community engagement strategy, with one element being legislative outreach, and that this would likely take the form of support letters for these different programs and a statewide legislative day with other lead entities. He is also continuing to develop relationships with state elected officials in the Skagit watershed that would benefit from this kind of widely supported set of priorities. He suggested that different Watershed Council members (minus state and federal agencies) could also use them to share legislative priorities in their communications with decision-makers. In response to a question, Richard noted that he didn't plan to allocate a significant amount of time, effort, and money to that outreach, but some effort is prudent. ***While it seemed valuable to talk about these opportunities together, the topic was tabled until the next meeting.**

The final agenda item was a request for authority to seek temporary administrative support through a competitive request for qualifications and quotes, as required in our financial

policies. This was necessary as the hiring process has been delayed and contract obligations and work plan objectives were piling up given only two employees trying to implement the work of three. Bob noted that this seemed feasible from a financial perspective as the funds were likely being conserved in the last year given the lack of hiring new staff. Richard clarified his briefing materials that the admin support could be onboard within a month and that would also help to free up his time to bring forward other work plan aspects including several necessary professional services contracts for work plan tasks, including capital project development, community engagement strategy, riparian and protection strategy updates, and possibly adaptive management and monitoring. ***It was noted that the protection strategy project has languished and needs to be a focus.** Steve moved to let an RFQQ for up to \$25,000 for administrative support with Richard reporting back at the next meeting on status. Loren seconded the motion and it was approved with unanimous consent of the Board.

The meeting adjourned around noon.