

Skagit Watershed Council
Meeting of the Board of Directors – Final Notes
September 4, 2014, SWC Office, Mount Vernon, WA

(* indicates action item; indicates decision)

Attendance: Chair Ken Dahlstedt, Loren Everest, Carolyn Kelly, Dave Pflug, Brenda Cunningham, Bob Everitt and Richard Brocksmith. Steve Hinton and Margaret Fleek were absent.

The meeting was called to order at 9:21 am, with quorum. The agenda was approved.

The Board reviewed draft August 7, 2014 meeting notes. Bob moved to approve the meeting notes and Brenda seconded, with unanimous approval.

The Board reviewed the July financial reports. Richard noted that the month's profit & loss showed our expenses to be higher than income, mainly because we held a check for a couple of weeks for a bill due for the contractor's work on the website, and then those funds weren't reimbursed by the Recreation and Conservation Office. The indirect rate continued to cover our unallocatable expenses. Bob moved to approve the July financial reports and Carolyn seconded, with unanimous agreement of the Board.

Next the Board heard updates and provided direction on several topics consolidated into an Executive Director's report:

- We will be able to announce 6 new SWC members at the Annual Lunch, bringing us to 31 total members.
 - ***The Board asked if we can ask members about what resources or skills they can bring to the organization.**
 - This is the result of concerted outreach, raising the question of what are our next priorities for new partners
 - ***We need to have an inventory of interests compared to members and use that to keep an efficient and focused team.**
 - Richard relayed status of ongoing outreach to towns and agriculture and infrastructure, and the ***Board reconfirmed their interest in garnering an additional agricultural interest on the Board.**
 - ***Richard directed to relay to members that we are a volunteer organization that will only get as far as our representation allows.**

- Ken thanked the current Board members as the organization seems to be strengthening.
- The hiring process has run its course with the failure of negotiating a feasible indirect rate with Fish and Wildlife for an Inter-Personal Agreement. ***Richard relayed that he, and hopefully others, will next launch into a direct outreach effort to qualified individuals before then starting afresh with broader advertising.**
 - ***Should we rescope the job description, maybe look at other approaches such as hiring someone with less experience?** The Board agreed that there were strengths and weaknesses to using an intern approach, but mostly the latter. The Board also began to wonder if paying the high overhead with WDFW made sense as a temporary solution.
- The 15% general fund reduction *exercise* is happening across the State, including for lead entities. This would limit some of our work, but would only amount to about \$3,500 in lost income. Decisions on this topic will be made in the fall by the governor.
- Richard has executed 2 new contracts in recent months since the Board adopted new financial policies. One contract was released to Kit Rawson with Swan Ridge Consulting for monitoring & adaptive management work, as his first contract has been expended and additional work remains. The Swan Ridge contracts were for \$2,369.50 (phase 1) and \$3,300 (phase 2), respectively. The second contract was to Natural Systems Design for \$2,000 to help the Town of Hamilton with developing some concepts into a funding plan (see next bullet).
- Richard relayed that two proposals were submitted to Ecology for their Floodplains by Design grant opportunity, including Skagit Hydrodynamic Modeling (which is very similar to the currently proposed but still pending project in the local SRFB process) and the Town of Hamilton's Alder Slough Floodplain Restoration. Both are requesting letters of support. The lead entity program and the Board have already agreed to support the former (HDM SRFB proposal at least), while the latter is still early in concept though identified in the Middle Skagit Assessment. ***The Board provided direction to Richard to write the letters of support pending the positive outcome of a technical review by TWG.**
 - ***Look for in-kind cost-sharing and ask for support from our main partners.**
- Richard handed out updated copies of the Financial Policies as he had found an error in not incorporating one of the policies approved by the Board in April (for handling different size contracts in different ways). Final versions should have five subsections under section 5 (5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, and 5.5), with 5.3 being "between \$2,501 and \$10,000."
- The website is ready for a soft launch. The look and feel has been updated and the underlying program has been updated/translated into Wordpress making it easy to

manage for staff. Most of the basic content has been updated and ***now we are ready to launch into telling the story of salmon recovery in a more compelling and easily digestible format.** That will be the next phase.

- Richard relayed that he has made no progress on the 3FI letter the Board asked him to write, but that is still on the list of to-dos.
- Richard briefed the Board on the status of the lead entity program. The Illabot protection and riparian restoration project has found funding for the amount withheld from the project, so that will move forward ASAP. Martin Slough fish passage has been down-scoped to be feasibility with design funds assuming the project will determine it feasible to vacate a portion of the road.
 - ***The Board directed Richard to cancel the pending Lead Entity Citizen Committee meeting if we can get consensus of the committee to update the Martin Slough fish passage deferral and authorize it to be forwarded to SRFB.**
 - ***There is still a need for process improvements, including adding an LECC work session for information sharing, setting timeline in advance without conflicts around holidays, and others that will be captured in a longer list of “lessons learned”.**

As requested at the last Board meeting, Richard and Carolyn reviewed the draft proposed budget. The contingency account was changed to specifically denote personal property tax that we anticipate will be due to the county at end of 2014. We added a reserve account of 3% of salaries and benefits, and removed superfluous references. Bob moved to approve the proposed budget and work plan and Brenda seconded, with unanimous agreement of the Board.

Richard handed out a detail sheet showing how much of our total professional services budget (\$269,107) was already obligated by existing contracts for the fiscal year (\$22,786.91), how much was needed to be obligated to the two upcoming SRFB projects (\$112,573), and how much remained (\$133,747). The handout also penciled in how these remaining, unobligated funds could be spent for contractual obligations beyond the current anticipated capacity of staff, including a community engagement strategy, strategic approach development, monitoring and adaptive management, and capital project development. ***This should be further fleshed out and an approach authorized by the Board to be implemented soon.**

The Board reviewed the Annual Lunch agenda and how the different topics would be approached. Most discussion was around the strategic approach agenda item, with the Board emphasizing that after Richard’s presentation and any audience comments we should be sure to leave with the point that this is draft and folks should go home and think further about what our needs are. ***Richard will draft up talking points for Ken and Carolyn.**

Richard outlined five topics developed in consultation with the TWG and subcommittees that should be relatively easy to implement in 2014 but still add value to our Chinook-centric 2010 Strategic Approach (“housekeeping items”). ***These include improving how we objectively identify Tier 2 rearing habitats (most intensive effort of the five topics), mapping refinements, riparian clarification, references to stewardship and outreach/education strategies, and clarifications to Tier 3 eligibility and multi-tier projects.**

The Board meeting was adjourned at about 11:30am.