

Bertrand Watershed Improvement District

Minutes – Regular Meeting – October 14, 2024

Attendees

“(t)” indicates presence via tele-conference, “(p)” indicates proxy vote.

Board – Present	Board – Absent with Notice
Vern VandeGarde Scott Bedlington Greg Ebe (t)	Mike Schoneveld Pete Vlas

Staff and Consultants	
Name	Organization / Affiliation
Gavin Willis	Ag Water Board
Jay Chennault (t)	AESI
Katie Faber (t)	AESI
Fred Likkel	Whatcom Family Farmers
Ethan Brown (t)	Willamette Partnership
Bill Clarke (t)	Clarke Law

Other Guests	
Name	Organization / Affiliation
Vivian Ericson	Peak Sustainability
Jon Hutchings	City of Lynden Public Works
Dave Timmer	City of Lynden Planning Department
Alan Chapman (t)	Whatcom Conservation District

Proceedings

Vern called the meeting to order at 1:58 pm.

1. Consent Agenda

- a. Agenda was reviewed.
- b. Minutes of September 9 meeting were reviewed.
- c. Financial report was reviewed.
- d. Voucher B-Gen-0924 in the amount of \$8,345.73 was reviewed.
- e. Voucher B-Parklyn-0924 in the amount of \$322.00 was reviewed.
- f. Scott moved to approve the consent agenda. Greg seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Administration

- a. Expiring board terms of Scott and Greg were discussed.
 - i. Scott moved to nominate Greg for another term. Vern seconded. Greg moved to nominate Scott for another term. Vern seconded. Both motions carried unanimously.
- b. AWB budget request and draft budget for 2025 were reviewed and discussed.
 - i. Scott moved to approve Resolution 2024-02, adopting the 2025 budget and setting the assessment rate at \$11.00. Greg seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- c. The assessment rolls were reviewed. The WID did not annex or remove any territory this year.

- i. Scott moved to approve Resolution 2024-03, adopting the 2025 assessment roll. Greg seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- d. Advertisement will be placed in the Lynden Tribune of the opportunity to nominate candidates for the board, as well as the upcoming Board of Equalization.

3. FEMA

- a. Gavin provided an update on FEMA projects. Hope to have invitation to bid out for the Farm Field Debris project by the end of the year.

4. CLASS

- a. Ethan provided an update on CLASS work. CLASS will have a first draft of the H&H study in November, and will create a Summary of Study Findings. Will also work on preparing for stakeholder meetings in early February, including with NRCS-WA. Once we get past that point we will be able to pursue funding options.
 - i. Gavin noted that the NRCS state conservationist for Washington, Roylene Comes At Night, is very interested in the project. Fred noted that she is a get-things-done type of person, and her support bodes well for the success of the project.
- b. Gavin shared an amendment to the interlocal agreement with the City of Lynden that would extend it to June 30, 2027, and allow the work to continue.
 - i. Scott moved to approve the amendment extending the interlocal agreement. Greg seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Ag Water Board / Water Supply

- a. Bill provided an adjudication update. Looking like first half 2026 claims filing deadline. Steering committee is starting to look at some basic procedural issues.
 - i. Bill explained proposed legislation that he has drafted that would create a new claims filing period for members of the adjudication.
- b. Gavin noted upcoming water rights office hours on October 24 and December 6. Signup is available on the Ag Water Board website. Fred noted another water rights info evening at NWWF on October 22nd.
- c. Vivian and Dave solicited the board for feedback on the City of Lynden comprehensive plan as it relates to agriculture and climate resiliency.
 - i. Board's main concerns with natural hazards are related to stormwater management during rainy seasons along with low flows in the dry season. It was noted that some of those issues are related to incoming flows from Canada, which neither the WID nor the city can control.
 - ii. Potential options for stormwater management mentioned include pump stations, infiltration within city limits, and flood easements. Some of those options are currently being pursued in the CLASS work.
 - iii. Street parking having a negative impact in the ag industrial zone was mentioned as a problem. Roads being wide enough to move trucks and equipment through town is also an ongoing concern. Jon and Dave noted that the city is aware of issues with oversized traffic on arterials through town, especially around traffic surges related to Lynden Christian School.
 - iv. Was suggested to include the WIDs (via Gavin) in public notice communications related to potential development. Dave and Gavin will follow up on making that happen.

6. Drainage / Habitat / Flood

- a. Fred noted that FLIP may be looking at some connections into CLASS work related to habitat improvements in reach 2.
- b. Gavin is continuing to coordinate beaver trapping efforts with USDA. Current area of focus is Schneider Ditch.

- c. WID mergers with drainage districts were discussed. Gavin noted that Bill is working on drafting some language for legislation that would allow mergers to proceed when a small portion of the DD is outside of the WID, so that the merger when approved by county council would result in those parcels being annexed by the WID.

7. Water Quality

- a. Cynthia provided a WQ update via email. Bertrand mainstem at H St had a count of 16,000 – that count was reported to B.C. The intent is that reporting would trigger additional testing on that side of the border, as it is unclear if that testing always occurs on a regular basis.

8. Communications / Education

- a. Fred noted that Whatcom Family Farmers will be hosting their annual farmer rally on November 20th at the fairgrounds.

9. Next Meeting

- a. The next board meeting on November 11 will also serve as the Board of Equalization.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:41 pm.

Submitted by Gavin Willis, Ag Water Board

Approved by 