



Monthly Meeting Minutes

September 26, 2019

5 -7 p.m. – Room 7, Methow Valley Community Center, Twisp, WA

Council Members Present: Dick Ewing, Mike Fort, Andy Hover, Greg Knott, Jeff Sarvis, Bill Tackman, Travis Thornton, Ashley Thrasher.

Others in Attendance: Lee Bernheisel (OWL), Chris Branch (Okanogan County Commissioner), Candis Graff (Ecology, by phone), Mary McCrea (MWF), Melanie Rowland (MVCC), Emily Sissen (County Watch), Lorah Super (MVCC).

Minutes recorded by: Sarah Lane, Administrative Assistant

Non-Procedural Motions

Motion #	Short Title	Yeas	Nays	Abstain
9.19-.02a	<i>Council authorizes chair to sign letter of support for Town of Winthrop Infrastructure Improvement grant.</i>	7	0	0
9.19-02b	<i>Council authorizes chair to sign letter of support for Town of Winthrop Infrastructure Improvement grant.</i>	6	0	0

1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order by Ashley Thrasher at 5:08 P.M.

2. Introductions

All introduced themselves, including Candis Graff on the phone from Ecology, and Okanogan County Commissioner Chris Branch.

3. Agenda – Review and Approval

Agenda was approved.

4. Minutes – Review and Approval

Dick moved to approve the August Minutes. Travis seconded. Andy offered amendment in section 10. Dick amended his motion to approve the minutes as amended. Mike second. Minutes approved.

5. Report from the Chair

Ashley noted Sarah’s one-year anniversary of employment and thanked her for a job well done, especially on Water 2066.

Water 2066 Community meeting happened, with about 110 attending, and good engagement, including folks taking an online survey as follow up.

Regarding meeting location, Twispworks will be our semi-permanent home until something free can be found. Bill asked if Andy could see if funds are available from the County for the meeting space, and he said he would.



6. Ecology Report

Candis Graff introduced herself and said that she comes from this position from water resources permitting unit after fifteen years. This background will help her with managing grants. Please contact her with any needs.

7. MWF Report.

Mary reported that GiveMethow is about to start, going live October 1. Sarah has talked with Winthrop Mt Sports about a possible grant, up to \$15K. MWF is also looking at Charlotte Martin, Murdock and Brainerd Foundation for funds for a part time Executive Director for the Foundation.

8. Initiating Government Reports

Town of Twisp-

No Report

Town of Winthrop-

No Report

Okanogan County-

Andy reported that many comments are coming in on Comprehensive Plan. Four applicants have applied for the Planning Director position. Andy said there may be an interview committee, as the public have weighed in that an interview committee is desirable.

Andy attended Thursday's Water 2066 meeting, and thought people's reactions to workshops were interesting and thoughtful. Andy is presenting at Water Resources Conference in Seattle next week. He will be presenting on land use and water.

Ashley asked about the WRIA 49 watershed plan process. Chris Branch said it was slowing down a little, to be able to consider Comprehensive Plan input, and they have some time as it is due Feb 2021. Simplifying what is to be done is a goal, while trying to get as much put in the plan as possible, and leave space to "plan to plan" for items that need more time.

Chris is a proponent of water for cities and towns. Mike stated his concerns with watershed plans is they do not have any enforcement capability. WRIA 48 plan has been active for 20 years, and studies have been done, but there is no way to have the initiating governments to move forward on agreed goals in the plan, despite Ecology providing funding to do a lot of studies and background work.

Chris says he has not seen the list of priorities, and Bill offered to send it. Greg reported that after presenting to previous Commissioners, he was told the watershed group did not really need to exist, and should sunset. Chris said he understands the difficulty, as WRIA 49 is on its 3rd or so try.

Chris asked about the MWC relationship with the MWF, and Mike said that it provides funds since the County has not. Sorting out the Comprehensive Plan in relation to the Methow Valley has been a challenge and there have been many comments about water, and Chris wants to see these ideas incorporated. He knows there is a fear about opening up the rule.



Dick doesn't know why Ecology can't open the rule and amend it and then take comments. Due to the rule making process, Ecology can't open the rule without taking any and all comments. Chris asked what pathway could be used – a change in statute? Chris would not like to see something like the "Hirst fix", for figuring out the future of water for Okanogan. We can't minimize the water we use and accurately plan for the future. Chris thinks people are concerned in the Okanogan that this is built around water for fish, not thinking about other uses such as waste water treatment facilitates mixing zone, and unused water rights for the town. Chris wants the process to look at these things but the law doesn't require it.

For WRIA 49, only the mainstem is considered, too, not tributaries. Even in the Methow with per reach allocations and some closures, how to solve that problem? Mike said that if County Health would allow cisterns, the problem would be solved. Chris wanted to lay out a process the county would use, and move forward, knowing that there are people who bought based on zoning at the time. Those people should be able to develop their property. This is why the commission put the overlay on Tunk, as there are a lot of lots that can't be developed because of lack of water. Chris asks, what the future looks like? Erring on the conservative side will only result in water left if estimates were wrong. What defines a rural lifestyle? Chris offered Covington as an example of housing defined as rural, but is it desirable.

Bill stated that the lower valley pushed to have large lot size just to avoid that situation. Chris asked, is there an approach to the Comprehensive Plan that changes the approach to water that could change the rule making process? Could the Comprehensive Plan dictate growth in such a way so that water isn't as contentious? Bill mentioned that the metering program is hoped to give information, and paired with response to Water 2066. Mike said under current densities, with water not bounded by reach, there should be enough water for current buildout. Chris asked, is that density desirable? Dick said development should be allowed based on current ownership. If we're striving to have more water available, is the density zoned too much for what's available, or if the water isn't allocated in a way to meet it, how can that be tied to the land use plan? It's not so much as what's available, but defining the vision. Mike said the vision can't outstrip the resource. Vision has to be tied to the resource. Travis said water rights can be repurposed under the law. Chris asked, what is the lifestyle people want and is there water for it?

9. Sub-Committee Reports

Technical Review Committee, Chair – Fort

- **Agenda item: 9.19-01** RE DIP Report, see item three.
- **Metering-** One meter set up provided one-week sample of metering data. Irrigation and leak assumptions are in the analysis, as well as a summary of daily usage. One meter in, 4 more to be installed. Goal is to present to County and Ecology a statistically viable number for water use. Optional data to be collected from residents includes seasonal or year-round residence, number of bedrooms and people living there.
- **Meeting with Senator Hawkins** – regarding getting \$75-100K for additional meters. Sandra took notes and Mike will provide to Sarah to be distributed. Bill said Hawkins suggested a list of potential interested people would help the case. We would need 75-100 people. Mike said they are thinking about a valley wide mailer to recruit participants. List currently has 10-12 people.



- Mike reported a problem with database – Database relies on file from County with all parcels in Methow, and there are errors in the parcel numbers. Aspect did not do any error checking in database. Database counts parcels as they exist and per current zoning. Goal was to present to county accounting by reach. Parcels are defined as improved if there is a well and value more than \$30K capital improvements.

Greg asked if the commissioners could use the database to devise scenarios to test zoning assumptions, and it can be used for that. Chris mentioned using currently metered data.

Political Action Committee, Chair – Greg/Soo

No report.

Outreach and Education Committee, Chair – Knott

Plan for this winter is to tie in with theatre and show a series of films on water with panel discussion. Also trying to partner with conservancy. Greg asked for suggestion for films on water.

Agenda Item 9.19-02: Request for Letter of Support ECY Grants for Sewer Connection Lines and Upgrades, Towns Winthrop and Twisp

Jeff asked for a letter to support infrastructure updates for a DOE SRF \$200,000 grant. Jeff has drafted a letter and asked the Council to approve signing it. Mike made a motion that the Council authorize the chair to sign letter of support for this grant. Andy seconded. Andy said this request fits regarding the mandate to clean healthy water. Travis asked if the Council has taken an advocacy position before and should there be limits on what the Council will support this way. Greg thinks that this is a good fit and we should use case by case basis. The Motion passed unanimously. Bill made a motion, and Greg seconded, that the Council authorize the chair to sign letter of support for a similar project for the Town of Twisp as well. The Motion passed unanimously.

Water 2066 Committee, Chair – Thrasher

Agenda Item 9.19-03: Water 2066: Community Meeting Debrief: Community meetings went well. Please forward the survey along if you have email lists. Contractors will be following up with Interested Parties to schedule meetings in the next week. IC committee needs to discuss what data we want to see in the report, and will come to Council with proposal for that next month. Mike asked if vision will come out of this process. Ashley said that is the plan for this process. Bill asked about a meeting for lower Methow, thinking many folks did not come to the Community meeting. Bill thinks a public presentation could have value. We could recreate with the materials we have, and Ashley said we would need volunteers. Travis said that is why the meeting was planned in a central location and it was on people to come. Ashley said we do have a survey. Greg suggested Lorah could help with such a meeting and she agreed. Mike thinks participation is important and if the word got out, then they have made a choice. Greg suggested we don't want to exclude possible source of vision, and that they will show up. Bill and Lorah said they would work on making it happen. Greg said he would help. Lorah would like to do it soon. Ashley said she would spearhead an effort to make that meeting happen in next two weeks.

10. Agenda Item 9.19-04: Items for next meeting

Ashley added following up on Down Valley workshop for 2066.

11. Agenda Item 9.19-05: Public Comment



Melanie asked about the recently created brochure – when was it created? Regarding “Our Priorities” box: there is nothing about fish, wildlife, and instream flow. Greg replied that planning unit did not focus on habitat and instream flows. Ashley said that the brochure may need to be reworked, as the issues discussed at water 2066 are not included in the publicly listed Council priorities either. Greg thinks the Council will revisit priorities after Water 2066.

Lorah commented that the meeting attendees needed to respect of the use of the meeting space.

Jeff commented that a good job was done by Ashley, Sarah and Travis for the Community meetings and he appreciate the effort.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:49 P.M.

Ashley Thrasher, Council Chair

Approved at the October 17th, 2019 Council meeting.