



## Monthly Meeting Minutes

February 18, 2021

5 -7 p.m. – Via Zoom

**Council Members Present:** Mike Fort, Andy Hover, Alyssa Jumars, Greg Knott, Soo Ing-Moody, Bill Tackman, Ashley Thrasher

**Others in Attendance:** Chris Allen (AESI), Jean Bodeau, Lee Bernheisel, Susan Crampton, Candis Graff (ECY), Alyssa Jumars (MWF), Natalie Kuehler, Curtis Koger (AESI), Tina McCrea, Craig McDonald (MWF), Jasmine Minbashian (MVCC), Jason Paulsen (MC), Melanie Rowland (MVCC), Jack Stanford, Lorah Super (MVCC), Travis Thornton, Sheri Torres, Jeanne White (MC), Jan Young

Minutes recorded by: Sarah Lane, Administrative Assistant

### Non-Procedural Motions

Motion #	Short Title	Yeas	Nays	Abstain
2.18-01	MWC will provide recordings to County Watch to post, unedited, on their website	7	0	0

#### 1. Call to order

The meeting was called to order by Ashley Thrasher at 5:07 PM

#### 2. Agenda – Review and Approval

Without any objections the amended agenda was approved by the chair.

#### 3. Minutes – Review and Approval

Greg moved to approve the January 21, 2021 minutes as amended with this note and Andy seconded. Bill noted that he was present at that meeting. The minutes were approved.

#### 4. Report from the Chair

Conflict of interest forms were noted as due from Council members.

#### 5. Ecology Report

Candis reported the metering grant is nearing completion and has been very smooth. Ashley credited Sandra for the work.

#### 6. MWF Report

Greg reported that only about two months of funding remain for Sarah's admin support. Ideas for funding solicited from the Council. Andy asked what the cost is for admin support. Sarah stated between \$900-1500.

Greg reported on Craig's work on Water 2066 and previous Council priorities, and suggested his slides be reviewed before the next strategic session.

## **7. Initiating Government Reports**

**Town of Twisp-** No Report

**Town of Winthrop-** No Report

### **Okanogan County-**

Andy reported that the County currently has two current ordinances on subdivision. 2021-01 has been updated to include the exemption for creating two lots from one. 2021-03 is a moratorium on building permits on subdivided properties post March 28, 2021.

The County has filed a lawsuit against Ecology asking for an opinion from the court. The County and MVCC are in discussion with Rep Goehner talking about funding for a watershed planning update. There's framework for a watershed planning update. County made formal request for \$250,00 for the next two years to come through Ecology for a watershed plan update.

Andy is on the SRF board, and there may be some outreach funds available in order to help with watershed update. Andy also spoke with a Colville Tribes staff member about the possibility of putting some funds into water quality study and asked where the data gaps are that may cross over with fish habitat. Hopes to discuss in the next week or so re: EDT modeling and what data they need to run that modeling, and what data we have.

Natalie asked regarding timing of the action in Superior Court. Andy did not know yet.

Greg said given characterization of funding being sought for watershed planning, he sees CRM as a broader scope of process, in relation to stakeholder groups. Andy said he didn't think a watershed plan would have any difference in regard to stakeholders. CRM would be broader in consideration of development questions. Thinks a watershed plan could identify mitigation or projects ready to go for storage, and good mitigate for a 20- year planning horizon for development in the Methow. Greg advocated for ensuring some of the outcomes of a broader process. Andy thinks a watershed update would include elements of land use. Greg said he would not like to see instream flows come off the table for discussion.

Soo said it sounds like this request for funding could be used for CRM. Andy said the request was for \$500,000 for water related issues for the Methow. It would be up to the towns and County to decide what all would be included.

Greg noted that Sage Park had be interested in getting the process going, and that even some funds would help with that. Andy said that this is not a mandated basin with a timeline to complete the process, but would like to see a timeline put on it. Soo clarified that this request goes through the operational budget, and by the time it goes through Ecology, it will probably be late summer/fall before the funding is available. Soo asked who would be contracting with Ecology, and Andy said the County would be the fiduciary, but the towns would be fully involved in creating the scope of the project.

Ashley asked what the stated reason for suing Ecology was. What remedy does the County want? The County feels that land use decisions on subdivision, have been through due process, and those land use decisions should stand. The decision affects only the 235 lots that have been subdivided that can now not be issued a building permit.

## **8. Sub-Committee Reports**

### **Technical Review Committee, Chair – Tackman/Fort**

The plumber has installed three more meters, with two more scheduled. These are all the meters currently budgeted. Meters are uploading data. Cost was under budget. Report is due to Ecology in six months or so, when they will report on the value of the meters for estimating water, after collecting summer information.

Andy said the County is just about to get updated software for the database and it will be easy to update the use number. Mike feels more meters will be helpful, and will pursue funding with Senator Hawkins.

Ashley asked about the letter recommending meters on new construction. The County has been discussing how it will work regarding using a specific meter, does the County need to provide it? Ashley asked if the other commissioners support the idea. Andy said that given that the meters sunset, the commissioners are supportive.

## **9. Outreach and Education Committee, Chair – Knott**

Sarah reported newsletter articles continue. There is a potential for having short presentations at the Council meetings, starting with Curtis Koger and AESI on storage. Sarah will be discussing ag water rights with Jon Culp, who will also share a slideshow. As strategic planning finishes up, that will guide the subject matter of presentations and newsletter articles.

## **10. Resilient Methow – Lane**

Sarah reported that a draft of the CAP will be sent out near the end of February, after which there will be three weeks for interested parties to comment on the draft.

Greg noted that the Council should start thinking about the level of engagement the Council wishes to participate with Resilient Methow going forward.

Sarah said that she thought working with Resilient Methow through a subcommittee might be a good way to continue that work that is related to MWC mission. Soo said she'd want to see proposals and ideas presented to the Council first before working on them. Ashley said she thought it would be good for the Council to stay involved as well.

## **11. Agenda Item 2.18-01: Officer Elections**

Elections were postponed until March. Ashley noted that nominations for Chair and Vice Chair are still open. Soo asked that information about the positions be sent to the Council members.

## **12. Agenda Item 2.18-02: CRM Discussion**

CRM was discussed to some degree during Andy's report. Soo said that if funding does come through, then it would partially cover what CRM would cover. Andy said that if the funding request is denied, money would have to be found elsewhere. Andy will put in the request for the second half of the biennium, should this one fail. Greg noted private foundations may also be a source for funding or matching.

Soo asked if planning the CRM is something the Council should start discussing to identify priorities for the process, or how to divide up topics if it is not fully funded. Greg thought that discussions on planning for CRM should start now so that if other funding is needed, the Council is prepared to seek funders for solving conflicts over water. Ashley asked if a committee on CRM might be helpful. Soo said she thought a more inclusive discussion would be more effective. Andy offered to bring the

original list of stakeholders from the watershed planning unit process for discussion at the next meeting. This discussion will take place at the next Council meeting.

### **13. Agenda Item 2.18-03: Crown Columbia Update (Lorah Super)**

Lorah reported on the legislative effort for water banking and on the Crown Columbia application for a new water right for 49.9 cfs, or 22,500 gpm from all surface and ground water flowing into the upper Columbia. Notice was posted in an obscure small newspaper. Application is very vague and concerning.

Legislative effort to set up water banking failed due to Trout Unlimited and Yakama Nation, though they disagree with large water speculators, out of basin transfers do leave water in the stream.

Mary McCrea helped MVCC draft an objection to Crown's water right application, based on a vague and incomplete application. Okanogan Council of Governments and Okanogan Highlands Alliance signed on to the objection. Okanogan Conservation District sent in objection. Okanogan/Tonasket Irrigation strongly opposed. County Commissioners and town officials made some calls and Ecology opened up the application to consultation with local governments and tribes.

Andy said Okanogan County formally objected, by writing directly to Ecology Director. Received confirmation that a consultation process will be started instead.

Soo also spoke with Ecology as well. She said that representatives must be consulted on issues like this. She was told that they will receive a letter from Ecology to request input. No letter has been received yet.

Lorah is hopeful that Ecology will reject the application on procedural grounds for now and reserve consultation for a new draft of the application. Lorah would like to work on educating other towns and communities on this issue. Soo, who chairs Okanogan Council of Governments, said this issue will be discussed there. Soo invite Lorah to present to the Council of Governments.

Lorah said that in legislative efforts, it became clear that stopping speculative behavior and preserving agricultural future is an issue that has cross-political support. When the legislative policy request failed, the group was advised to ask for funding for the CRM processes and to start a local water bank. These are requests for two different budget areas, and both requests are going through Rep Goehner and Rep Steel. Letters of support will be needed in about a week to show community solidarity.

Greg asked Lorah to send out information on where letters of support should go to. Lorah will send those to Sarah to send to the group.

Greg asked for an explanation of what the consultation process entails. Soo said they will ask for the official position and input of those entities included in consultation.

Soo asked for specifics to be included in the information sent out for people who will send letters of support. Lorah suggested MVCC sending out sample language in draft letters. Sarah said that could be done through the newsletter. Greg supported that idea. Soo said as long as it is not framed as a request from the MWC, but as a passthrough for the information.

#### **14. Agenda Item 2.18-04: WQ funds at County**

Mike been discussing ideas on water quality projects to be funded by the County with Andy. Andy said he has not talked about this with the other commissioners yet, but has been discussing ideas with Greg and Mike. Andy would like to see this idea get a little more definition before it gets proposed, and make sure it relates to other water quality data needs.

Mike asked how much is available. Andy thought \$160-170,000, and that Ecology would be supportive of using it. Mike asked how to move it forward. Originally, funds were to monitor water quality given increasing population – contaminants related to septic, basically. Andy would like further discussion with Mike, Greg and Colville staff. Bill noted talking to public works of Winthrop and Twisp could provide info about data gaps. Andy thinks that part of this project could include gathering and cataloging of existing data. Greg said this thought echoes the ideas shared at the MWF meeting. Soo said that the combination of all available data would be helpful. Sarah asked if the County would help pay for someone to catalog the data. Andy said yes, but it would have to be part of a well-crafted project scope.

#### **15. Agenda Item 2.18-05: Request to record and share Council meetings by County Watch**

The Council discussed sharing recordings of MWC meetings with County Watch to share on their website. Greg moved to allow County Watch to record MWC meetings. Andy seconded the motion. The motion was amended to state the MWC will provide recordings to County Watch to post, unedited, on their website. Motion passed unanimously. Soo asked about data storage capacity.

#### **16. Agenda items for next meeting**

1. March: Elections of Officers, and CRM Discussion. Andy will provide a list of stakeholders from the MBPU start up.
2. April: AESI presentation, Capacity for MWC participation in Climate Action work.

#### **17. Public Comment**

No comments were made.

#### **18. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:47 P.M.

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Ashley Thrasher, Council Chair

Approved at the March 18, 2021 Council meeting.