

Drayton Watershed Improvement District

Minutes – January 16, 2024

Attendees

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

Board – Present	Board – Absent with Notice
Rod Tjoelker (t) (<i>chair</i>) Scott James (<i>vice-chair</i>) Marty Maberry (t) Jeb Miller	Greg Ebe

Staff and Consultants	
Name	Organization / Affiliation
Gavin Willis	Ag Water Board
Trevor Gearhart	Whatcom Conservation District
Frank Corey	Whatcom Conservation District
Sarah Faubion (t)	AESI
Fred Likkel	Whatcom Family Farmers
Jay Chennault (t)	AESI
Dillon Honcoop	Whatcom Family Farmers

Other Guests	
Name	Organization / Affiliation
<i>none</i>	

Proceedings

Rod called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm and designated chair duties for the meeting to Scott.

1. Consent Agenda

- a. Agenda was reviewed.
- b. November 21 minutes were reviewed.
- c. Financial reports were reviewed.
- d. Rod moved to approve the consent agenda. Marty seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Administration

- a. Jeb signed oath of office and per diem waiver. Marty will sign at next meeting.
- b. Rod moved to approve Resolution 2024-01 – Auditing Officer Designation. Jeb seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Ag Water Board / Water Supply

- a. Gavin provided an update on ECY’s draft filing form and instructions. There are concerns about the simplified filing form for permit exempt wells for domestic use allowing significant irrigation without requiring evidence of use. Discussion followed about source of 500 gallon/day number; Jay provided some clarification. ECY also underestimates dairy use in the instructions, and narrowly defines “stockwater”.

- i. Discussion noted that giving small claims form filers what amounts to a free pass appears to be an attempt by ECY to appease rural landowners.
- b. Gavin provided an update on the proposed joint application to ECY's 2024 Streamflow Restoration Grant. At the recent WMB meeting, Nooksack staff read a letter from council indicating that the tribe would not participate in anything related to water rights until the adjudication is filed. As a result, the joint grant application is not proceeding. Discussion noted that there is unlikely to be much project participation once the adjudication is filed since energy and attention will be directed elsewhere.

4. Drainage / Habitat / Flood

- a. Frank provided an update on the SCC's proposed new riparian buffer program. Program as written has different tiers for incentives based on buffer width. Base incentive is calculated based on land values, so pretty much all buffers in Whatcom County will be compensated at the maximum level of \$1000 per acre.
 - i. Increased compensation for the portion of the buffer that is furthest from the stream is backwards from what would get the greatest ecological benefit, but it is expected that the program will be approved in a similar form to what is currently written. The legislation requires that landowners are fairly compensated for their land, and the buffers need to be permanently protected.
- b. Jay provided an update on the streamflow augmentation project.
 - i. ECY is currently reviewing the impact analysis and mitigation sequencing plan. When asked what the status was, the ECY staff member stated that "they are having internal discussions – it's complicated".
 - ii. Hope is still to implement the project at the end of the 2024 irrigation season.

5. Water Quality

- a. Trevor provided a WQ update. Drayton Harbor is starting to show a hot spot right at the mouth of the bay; they suspect that it is a point source coming out of the marina. There are a couple of slightly elevated counts on the North Fork of Dakota Creek that the CD is keeping an eye on for now; board noted that there are not any commercial ag operations in that area.
- b. Fred provided an update on the shellfish protection district. They are working on an update to the Drayton Harbor Shellfish Protection Plan at a special meeting on Jan 24th. Gavin will attend on behalf of the WID.
 - i. A board member stated that he heard the Port is looking at potentially doing cleanup work in Drayton Harbor.

6. Education / Communications

- a. Fred noted that March 27th will be the next WFF water rights education event at the Farm Pavilion at NWWF. Event will be from 6:30-8:30 pm.
- b. Dairy Nutrient Management training will be hosted by the Whatcom CD on January 18th at the Mt Baker Rotary Building in Lynden. Registration is available on the WCD website.

7. Other Items

- a. None.

8. Next Meeting

- a. Next meeting is scheduled for February 20th at 3:00 pm.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:07 pm.

Submitted by Gavin Willis, Ag Water Board

Approved by 