

SLTCRC – Finance Committee Meeting DRAFT Summary
Meeting via WebEx | February 7, 2022, | 10:00 am- 11:00 am

Meeting Attendees:

Bill Fashing —*Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments (CWCOG)*

Dave Howe *WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)*

Rudy Salakory —*Cowlitz Indian Tribe*

Chris Strebbig, Sue Ripp—*US Forest Service (USFS)*

Mark Smith —*Public, Business Owner (EcoPark)*

Dennis Weber —Cowlitz County

Maggie Counihan, Chris Page, Kara Whitman—*William D. Ruckelshaus Center*

To discuss:

- Overall funding for collaborative
- Funding proviso request – white paper, fact sheet.
- Facilitation

Discussion:

- Mark Smith: Still would like to pursue the idea of funding from ports/shipping on the Columbia River. Port of Longview is putting in some funding for the short term of the collaboration. There is pushback against taxing or placing fees on river traffic. Dena Horton is the point person for the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association on this issue.

ACTION ITEM: Ruckelshaus Center to connect Mark Smith with Dena Horton (COMPLETE).

- Dave Howe gave a brief update from Kessina Lee. State agencies (as well as Federal) need to be careful when looking for funding, particularly in the State budget proviso. Another entity in the collaborative would have to champion this effort. They are looking into how they can help to finance the collaboration. It is too late for agencies to impact the budgets during this legislative session. They would need to put the Decision Package (Dec Pac) together in April to be funded for the next fiscal year. Director –Kelly Susewind.
- It will be the local groups that have to carry the weight of asking for money for now. Non state and/or federal entities can make an ask of the short budget, and the governor’s budget for the next fiscal year.
- Dennis Weber has confirmed that the City of Castle Rock is going to provide some funding. Only missing Cowlitz PUD (have currently 23-25,000 committed), set up as a 3-year commitment. Would prefer other funding to replace this if can.
- Dennis explained that he received a letter regarding Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Title II/Secure Rural Schools legislation funds actions that benefit local communities and national forests. Projects are set for FY2022, however FY2023 project submission will be occurring this fall. The projects covering Cowlitz, Klickitat, Lewis, Skamania counties total approximately \$1 million this FY. The collaborative has a need. Is this something that it could be used for? They need to talk with Rebecca, and counterparts in the other (Skamania) counties. There may be opportunities here. Sue Ripp has worked on the Title II Secure Rural Schools program.

ACTION ITEM: Dennis Weber to communicate with Rebecca and keep Chris Strebbig in the loop. Sue Ripp will also investigate this and report back.

- Dennis cannot attend the next full meeting since he will be at a national conference, where he will have the opportunity to share the work the collaborative is doing.
 - Economic issues are connected to sediment management in Cowlitz and the collaborative goals. Perhaps this could be wrapped into a legislative funding request.
 - Dennis will be encouraging support for the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). Extending authorization for the Corps for flood protection.
- The Collaborative is in the news: three different articles/news on the collaborative as of this date.
- Federal Delegation has been supportive of the collaborative. They have been attending meetings and have visited Spirit Lake.
- Funding Request/Fact Sheet: Separate the fact sheet from the funding request. Discuss the effectiveness of the facilitation, mention that the need to continue this facilitation.

ACTION ITEM: Sue Ripp to send revised fact sheet for review. (COMPLETE)

- Timeline: need to identify \$90,000 by April 2022. What does this look like?
 - Can key state agencies buy into this project? WDFW (Fish and Wildlife Service) has expressed support, but DNR (Department of Natural Resources) and Ecology have not articulated their level of support. To what extent do these other State agencies want to get involved? Need to clarify this.
 - Need to make sure the Governor is okay with a budget proviso for the State Agencies (who to contact?). Kessina Lee followed up with Jennifer Hennessey (Governor's staff). Jennifer reiterated that the collaborative members need to be clear on the ask, explain "what are they buying" ideally including a work plan and deliverables.
 - Would it be helpful to reach out to the Office of Finance and Management? Jennifer Hennessey has a direct connection with OFM. Dennis could ask her about this.

Ruckelshaus Center folks stepped off the call so that the group could discuss facilitation. The group agreed that an open RFQ process through the CWCOG makes sense, with a small group (perhaps the Finance Committee to review submittals and recommend a top choice for facilitation to the full collaborative.