



MINUTES for the November 8th, 2006 Board of Directors Meeting

As approved by the Board of Directors, 1/24/07

5:30 to 7:455 pm, at the Yakima County First St. Conference Room, Yakima

Attendance:

Board: David Bowen (Kittitas County), Paul Ward (Yakama Nation), Morgan Everett (City of Prosser), Matt Bleich (City of West Richland), Leo Bowman & Adam Fyall (Benton County), Mike Leita & Terry Keenhan (Yakama County), Neil McClure (City of Yakima), Nancy Lillquist (City of Ellensburg)

Staff: Alex Conley.

Other Participants:

Don Gatchalian (Yakima County Public Works), Richard Visser (WDFW), David Lind (Yakama Nation)

Chair David Bowen convened the meeting. Roll was taken and the presence of a quorum confirmed. The agenda was accepted as presented (motion by Matt B; second by Mike L.). Minutes for the Nov. 8th, 2006 Board of Directors Meeting were approved as presented by a motion of the Board (motion by Leo B; second by Mike L.).

Review of Americorp Contract & Letter of Agreement

The Board discussed the proposed Americorp volunteer position and the manner in which it would be split between the Board and the Yakim Basin Environmental Education Program (YBEEP). A motion was made by Leo Bowman and seconded by Neil McLure to approve the contract and letter of agreement. Board members asked for clarification regarding the intent of the position and the funding. At the August meeting it had been agreed that the Board would contribute \$5,500 of the \$7,500 presumed program fee, with YBEEP paying the remainder. The 2007 fee has been increased to \$8500, and the Board agreed that it would continue to contribute \$5,500, and ask YBEEP to increase its contribution to cover the remainder. Concerns were raised about the fact that YBEEP was not recommended for future funding by the Northwest Power & Conservation Council. The Board agreed that approval of the Americorp contract should be made contingent on receiving assurances from YBEEP that secured funding was available to pay their share of program fees and support the volunteer position. The Board then discussed the need for legal review of the contract, and identified the need for a future discussion about what level of legal review was or was not needed when approving Board contracts. Dave Bowen offered to have his legal staff review the contract. The motion was revised to state that approval of the contract and letter of agreement was contingent upon 1) satisfactory results of the legal review, 2) assurance that YBEEP has funding available to cover its portion of the program costs, and 3) a commitment from YBEEP to increase its cash contribution to \$3,000 to cover the increased program cost. An initial straw vote received two nay votes; after noting that the Board worked by consensus, members were polled again, and consensus was noted, with two abstentions by parties that did not support the measure, but did not desire to block it.

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Review of Draft Letter re Legal Assistance

The Board discussed a legal bill sent by Foster Pepper to Yakima County for work done for the Board. Mike Leita agreed to follow up directly with Foster Pepper to clarify the issue.

Board Hiring Updates

Alex noted that the Program Coordinator job description had been flawed, that he anticipated reviewing applications after Nov. 15th, and that he was pleased with the quality of the applications received. The Board agreed that the final selection of candidates should be made by Alex; Alex invited interested board members to join him in the interview panel and provide input.

Alex noted that there were two applicants to date for the Americorp volunteer position, and that, pending resolution of outstanding issues, he would work with Bob Tuck to set up interviews and make a selection.

Alex also mentioned that the Mid-Columbia Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group is interested in having a half-time person based in the Yakima Basin, and Alex and their director, Margaret Neuman, have discussed the possibility of sharing office space, and splitting an employee with the RFEG, so that a full-time position could be offered. The Board supported continuing these discussions, with the understanding that there might be a presentation to the Board about a joint hiring proposal early in 2007.

Board Program Updates

Alex and Richard Visser gave an update on the 2006 SRFB process. Alex, Richard and Jack Clark gave a presentation on our review process and project list to the SRFB state review panel in Olympia. The State review panel placed a Project of Concern (POC) tag on the Naches project which could cause funding issues if we do not find a way to remove the POC tag. Alex noted that he is working with the county to restructure the grant request to address the POC tag.

Alex and Richard updated the Board on efforts to secure alternate funding for projects that were not expected to receive funding from the SRFB in 2006. They noted that:

- Due to restructuring of the Naches project, the North Yakima Conservation District's project on Cowiche Creek is likely to receive funding.
- The Forest Service has secured funding for the Jack Creek culvert replacement project that can be used as match for future SRFB funding requests.
- WDFW will be able to help the City of Ellensburg with its Reecer Creek project. The SRFB request was for engineering design. WDFW made arrangements to provide the engineering design work needed for the project.

The Project Review for the Community Salmon Fund will occur on the 15th of November. Our Basin will receive \$100,000 for projects. A local group (made up of TAG and CC members) will provide input into the review process which will be used by Alex and National Fish and Wildlife staff to develop our final list for funding.

Alex attended meetings of the Water Users Joint Board and the Water Quality Round Table. Both were productive. Leo asked how the Joint Board responded to his presence. Alex stated that they were glad he was there but expressed some skepticism about the recovery planning process.

Alex presented the list of transactions made since the last meeting. There was a question about why some bills were listed twice. Alex answered when multiple funding sources (WDFW and GRSO contracts) were used to pay a single bill, each portion shows up as a separate transaction in the reports. Morgan stated that the internet bill seemed to be very high and that he would work with Alex on possible alternatives.

Update on Salmon Recovery Plan Edits

Alex updated the Board on the status of the draft Yakima Subbasin Salmon Recovery Plan and NOAA's draft Mid-Columbia Steelhead Recovery Plan. He explained that recent changes to the Yakima stock status reports developed by NOAA's Interior Columbia Technical Review Team make it desirable to make substantive changes in our draft plan that incorporate and respond to these changes. Board members expressed their frustration at the ongoing changes in NOAA's recovery planning process, noting their sense that we are trying to hit a moving target. Members also noted that the best science will change and that our plan should be viewed as a "living" document, but that we also need a clear sense of when the current phase of the planning process can be declared done. The Board discussed what the implications of not responding to the changes are. Alex and Recovery Plan technical committee members explained that there would be significant inconsistencies in terminologies and mapping units between our current plan and NOAA's Mid-C plan that would create confusion and the potential for inconsistent interpretations of one or both plans. The Board asked whether Alex and tech team members felt that an appropriate response could be developed in the time frame on hand; they responded that it should be possible to develop a response to the TRT stock status reports that adopts most of those reports by reference, but also highlights areas of disagreement or questions raised based on local technical expertise. The Board discussed whether funding and staff time was available within our existing contracts; Alex noted that funding and time was available, but that the editing and associated public review would result in delaying some planned tasks. The Board then discussed the level of public review needed if these types of substantive changes were made. Alex responded that we should conduct a local peer review of NOAA's stock status reports. Richard stated that to remain consistent with our past efforts and promises that we do need to provide stakeholders with updates of our efforts if substantive changes are made. The Board discussed the review requirements for the Salmon Recovery Plan. Staff noted that it is a non-regulatory plan that does not have a legal review requirement; the legal review process will be for the Mid-C steelhead plan, and will be run by NOAA. Our responsibility is to adhere to our commitment to communicate with stakeholders, and to encourage all to participate in NOAA's review process. Leo B. made the motion to support staff efforts to develop edits that respond to the revised stock status reports. Mike Leita seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Miscellaneous Business

The next meeting date was tentatively set for November 29th, from 5:30 to 7:30 pm in Yakima, in order to accommodate a proposed presentation from the Bureau of Reclamation. No public comment was received. The meeting was adjourned at 7:45.