



Clean Water Advisory Committee

July 15, 2021

Committee Members in Attendance: Lynn Bahrych, Jenny DeGroot, Kyle Dodd, David Duggins, Bob Eagan, Erin Halcomb, Ryan Hawkins, Vicki Heater, Ann Jarrell, Jolyn Leslie, Laura Jo Severson, Kimbal Sundberg
Ex-officio, County support staff, and members of public: Krista Davis, Byron Rot, Kendra Smith, Cindy Wolf

8:36 AM Welcome, Coast Salish Acknowledgement: *Let us acknowledge we reside on the ancestral lands and waters of the Coast Salish people who have called this place home since time immemorial and let us honor inherent, aboriginal and treaty rights that have been passed down from generation to generation.*

8:37 AM Approval of May 2021 meeting minutes – unanimously approved

8:38 AM Agency Updates

Jolyn: Governor declared drought for state of WA, including SJC. That can provide for emergency funding, water rights provisioning, etc. Also, expecting influx of money available as loans for water projects.

Q: if there are water issues affected by emergency declaration, should they be directed to Ecology?

Jolyn: if related to water systems can contact Jolyn, also Buck, Jeff Marty is water response coordinator

Link to Ecology website with the declaration and other information, <https://ecology.wa.gov/Water-Shorelines/Water-supply/Water-availability/Statewide-conditions/Drought-2021>

Q: would well running dry constitute an emergency?

Kyle: contact our office at DOH for that, Ecology won't formulate individual response. Our office is tracking regionally, and can serve as an education point for new islanders not familiar with bedrock wells

Laura Jo: Gardeners are concerned, is there contact information I can share with them?

ACTION ITEM: Laura Jo and Kyle will connect about this question later offline

8:43 AM Public Comments, none

8:46 AM Welcome new members: David Duggins, Ann Jarrell, Bob Eagan, Lynn Bayrych
Introductions all around the virtual room with more in-depth bios from the four new members

8:54 AM 2021-2027 draft Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for review and discussion *Kendra Smith*

- Review update CIP for meeting

- In CIP document, first page is clean copy, second page are changes, third page is rate increase

We collect service fees which fund operations to implement projects as well as capital program, that's in local code. Kendra can share that with the group so new members can see how utility was formed and how rates are set. Little funding for culvert replacement/drainage infrastructure so often seeking outside grants.

Kendra reviews key elements/challenges. Started building CIP in 2018, different bidding climate today. Trying to re-size program to get a couple projects done every year. Balancing many factors when making projections. CIP options: reduce project list, shift timing of delivery, include estimates for potential future grants and add caveats to CIP to indicate which projects are grant-dependent. Project list already reduced.

We maintain a 6-year Capital improvement program, the new CIP will be for 2022-27. Kendra describes how rate is calculated based on 5-year rolling average for 2022-26, points out details for a few projects.

Total budgets: 2.4 million on Lopez, just under a million for SJ, and 2.8 million for Orcas

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

Kim: lower number on SJI because most stormwater issues addressed by town of FH, whereas County is tasked with upgrades for Eastsound and Lopez village. That's why rates are higher to build on those two islands.

Cindy: Crescent beach estuary restoration – what is the vision?

ACTION ITEM: Cindy and Kendra can meet on Orcas for Kendra to show it

- Discuss details for a couple projects, i.e. Crescent Beach on Orcas and Bailer Hill road culvert on SJI.

Capital Rate Adjustments: estimated equivalent service units from number of parcels. Using GIS, some errors due to exempt parcels (vacant land with impervious surfaces). In 2018 estimated 16K ESU but actually more like 10K. Kendra shows ESU count for each island for 2020 (Shaw combined with outer islands), explains varying capital charge rates among Islands. Shaw + Outer island rate decreased, Lopez and Orcas increased.

- Discuss base and total rate adjustment calculations and provisions for outer islands

9:39 AM Vote on the final CIP

This will go into budget process and county council will adopt. Kendra will present CIP to county council

MOTION: shall CWAC adopt the 5-year CIP as proposed?

Vicki moves to do so, Jenny seconds. All in favor, none opposed. The motion passes

MOTION: shall CWAC adopt the rate adjustments as presented?

Laura Jo so moves, David seconds. All in favor, none opposed. The motion passes

9:42 AM Groundwater discussion

Kyle Dodd

- Review PGG report sent June 14th on Lopez seawater intrusion

Kyle addresses confusion regarding groundwater monitoring network, confirm that County Health continues to maintain it via contractor hydrologist PGG. Sent out latest monitoring report for 2020 with groundwater monitoring results from November. Highlight of that report was no long-term trends in groundwater elevation declines, nor in water quality degradation. Two wells have high chlorides - Green and Port Stanley.

In 2019, started gathering data from landowners on some additional wells in effort to expand network.

ACTION ITEM: money available for that from clean water utility? will discuss at Groundwater subcommittee

Vicki: The report is a formula, I'd like to see it expand and ask some new questions, do some new analysis

Kendra: in Lopez village, consider excess winter stormwater strategies. Should we look at potential to protect a well by injecting stormwater? evaluate in context of climate change and drought conditions

Kyle: the term 'injection' concerns me, but retention is great. Need filtration for surface and storm water

9:53 AM Discuss USGS grant

USGS project to work on groundwater recharge estimates, scope of work which Kyle emailed to committee:

Task 1: evaluate available groundwater, surface water, meteorological data to complete recharge estimate

Task 2: Updated groundwater recharge model looks at rain/snow fall, subtracting stormwater and what's consumed. USGS will take another look at bedrock aquifers to come up with best estimate recharge

Task 3: water balance for the county, what's being recharged vs. used? Find if uses are over recharge amount.

This study will be a springboard to identify data gaps that we can focus on and contract hydrogeologists. In discussion with USGS about agreement, working on tentative timeline for project completion

ACTION ITEM: Kyle will send around the proposal again

QUESTIONS

Q: is USGS bringing new model to the study that addresses bedrock?

A: they have a different model than what's been used in past, they know bedrock aquifers are our challenge

Q: will county collect data for them? A number of people on island don't meter how much water they use.

A: some will be estimates. We'll provide data we have. There will be gaps to fill but it'll be starting point

- Discussion of how to factor in VRBO's and vacation rentals, commercial use on private wells?

- more discussion regarding methods to determine recharge rates, possibly with isotope analysis

10:25 AM Groundwater subcommittee

Bob, Vicki, Laura Jo, Ann, and Lynn all interested in joining. In the past we did subcommittee meetings in the even months, main committee in the odd months. Please keep this time open in even months.

ACTION ITEM: Kyle will send a message around regarding August availability

Q: in September are we planning to meet in person?

Jenny: could have a hybrid model, may have more participation from other islands if there are virtual options

Vicki: May I see surface water committee minutes from last month's meeting?

ACTION ITEM: Byron will check on that

Kendra: we could use small legislative meeting room, they have a screen and camera

Kim: sounds like a hybrid system for September meeting

ACTION ITEM: Kendra/Byron look into reserving meeting room

10:33 AM Adjourn, great meeting – thanks everyone