



BRIDGE REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Bi-State Working Group Meeting Summary

Monday, November 14, 2022 | 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Port of Hood River – Commission Board Room & Via Zoom
1000 E Port Marina Drive, Hood River OR 97031

In Attendance:

Members: Chair, Mike Fox (Commissioner), Port of Hood River; Catherine Kiewit (Mayor), City of Bingen; Kate McBride (Mayor), City of Hood River.

Alternates: Arthur Babitz (Commissioner), Hood River County.

Staff/Consultants: Kevin Greenwood (Executive Director), Michael Shannon (Project Manager), HNTB; Kary Witt, HNTB; Steve Siegel, Siegel Consulting.

Guests: Michael Williams, WSDOT; Jessica Pickul, JLA; Steve Siegel, Siegel Consulting; Kary Witt, HNTB; Alice Hodge, JLA; Jessica Hostler; Hal Hiemstra, Summit Strategies.

Welcome

Commissioner Mike Fox called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

The Bi-State Working Group (BSWG) minutes for October 31 were approved by consensus.

Review of Previous Action Items

Michael Shannon, HNTB Project Manager, noted that they followed up with Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) regarding the Biological Opinion (BiOp). ODOT is anticipating having the draft BiOp ready by the end of November.

Shannon commented that the recommendation on the approach for appointees to the Bi-State Bridge Authority (BSBA) is moving forward in Hood River County. Commissioner Fox offered to forward the Hood River County draft to Klickitat County to be used as a template.

The third draft for the Commission Formation Agreement (CFA) went out last week for review. Kevin Greenwood, Executive Director, suggested having BSWG members attend other agency board meetings to present the CFA and provide a better understanding of the document. Commissioner Fox noted his concern regarding the proposed language in the footnote on the CFA that would prevent public officials from being on the board of the new BSBA. Shannon commented that legislation requires that the BSBA be named. Currently the name is Mid-Columbia Bridge Commission, but it requires approval from the BSWG. Mayor Catherine Kiewit requested that someone attend their council meeting on November 15 to discuss the CFA. Greenwood and Shannon will attend the meeting.

Shannon turned to Hal Hiemstra for a brief update on the DC Trip. Hiemstra reported that he has been in communication with Mike Shannon and Mike Fox to discuss talking points and strategies for the upcoming DC Trip. The schedule includes meetings with all the congressional staff who are relevant to the Bridge Replacement Project. There will also be meetings with the US Department of Transportation (USDOT) and the office of the Secretary. Greenwood inquired about the RAISE program. Hiemstra replied that the next round of RAISE funding will be announced by the end of November and anticipates the grant to be in the \$25-35 million range. Hiemstra added that this grant is flexible, but a significant amount tends to go towards alternative transportation such as bicycle or pedestrian infrastructure projects. Commissioner Fox suggested highlighting the bicycle and pedestrian path of the new bridge to Representative Earl Blumenauer. Commissioner Arthur Babitz commented that there is a different influence group for bike facilities that could help emphasize the need for the new bridge and asked if this would be productive. Hiemstra commented that the support from other entities would help the project.

Shannon reported that the draft Fishing Treaty MOA has been sent to Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for review. At the last BSWG meeting there was a question regarding the TIFIA loan repayment schedule. Shannon noted that the interest incurs when the proceeds are drawn, and the principal payments can be deferred up to 5 years after substantial completion. JLA will provide regular updates on the communications plan. Updates will be provided in the meeting packets.

Shannon turned to Alice Hodge of JLA, for a brief overview of the website for the Replacement Bridge Project. Commissioner Fox suggested incorporating all the BSWG meetings into the new website. Shannon noted that the grant dashboard that was requested by the BSWG is in development.

Informational Items

- a. **Status on Oregon Legislative Meetings** – Shannon reported that there are two more meetings remaining.
- b. **NEPA/FEIS** – Section 106 was submitted with the MOA to FHWA. Once finalized the request will be made to separate the treaty tribe mitigation agreement from the FEIS/ROD to get it finalized.
- c. **RMBC** – Geotech drilling is in process. They will need a Section 106 clearance from ODOT that will take about 45 days. ODOT will also help with obtaining a tribal monitor for the cultural resources piece of the Geotechnical drilling. Once it is determined which tribe will be monitoring, a contract will need to be made with the tribe to reimburse the monitor's time.

Upcoming Actions

- d. **Project Delivery Method Determination** – Shannon noted that over 80 people attended the event, and there were 16–17 individual meetings with contracts and engineers.

New Action Items

- a. Add BSWG meetings to the new website.

Adjourn

Greenwood announced that as of January 2023 Mayor Kate McBride will no longer be attending the BSWG meetings, and it is unknown if the new Mayor will be attending the meetings. Next meeting is scheduled for December 12. Commissioner Fox adjourned the meeting at 3:20 p.m.

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