

COMMISSIONERS' PROCEEDINGS

Regular Meeting Adams County Services Building, Othello

June 8, 2005
(Wednesday)

Call to Order @ 9:00 a.m. and Flag Salute

Present:

Chairman Jeffrey W. Stevens
Vice-Chairman Roger L. Hartwig
Commissioner Rudy Plager

Columbia Basin Ground Water Management Area (GWMA)

Chairman Stevens opened the Public Hearing at 9:00 a.m. noting that it was a joint hearing of the Adams County Commissioners and the Washington State Department of Ecology for the purpose of taking public comment on the following matter:

- Columbia Basin Ground Water Management Area (GWMA) Petition:
- a. relating to expanding the existing GWMA boundary area of Adams, Franklin and Grant Counties to include the political boundary area of Lincoln County'
 - b. relating to expanding the current GWMA designation order to allow the GWMA to address other regional groundwater issues relating to water quality and water quantity within the political boundary area of Adams, Franklin, Grant and Lincoln counties in the capacity of a non-regulatory support role in providing technical assistance and planning resources to local stakeholders, citizens, communities, agencies and other water resource groups;

Chairman Stevens introduced:

John Stormon, Hydrogeologist, Water Quality Program, Department of Ecology

Paul Stoker, Executive Director, Columbia Basin Groundwater
Management Area
Dennis Bly, Lincoln County Commissioner

Chairman Stevens then opened the floor for public comment requesting speakers to identify themselves and place of residence.

Comments were heard from the following:

John Stormon, Department of Ecology noted that the Petition was a request from Adams, Grant, Franklin, and Lincoln Counties to increase the boundary area of the GWMA to include Lincoln County; and, was also a request for authorization to amend the scope of work as previously noted.

Paul Stoker, GWMA presented a brief overview of the petition request and presented letters GWMA received from the Washington State Potato Commission; Town of Lind, Town of Washtucna, and the City of Othello. These letters were summarized by Stoker as being “pro” or “in favor of” the Petition.

Chairman Stevens noted that the County had received the following and they were now being entered into the hearing record:

Comments from City of Ritzville Mayor Craig Ulleland via letter dated June 6, 2005 (received June 7 by fax) speaking in favor of both issues

Comments from Town of Washtucna Mayor Syd Sullivan via letter dated June 8, 2005 (received June 7 by fax) speaking in favor of both issues

Comments from City of Othello Mayor Jeannie L. Sanders via letter dated June 7, 2005 (received at the County Services Building address) speaking in favor of expanding the GWMA boundary area

Lincoln County Commissioner Dennis Bly spoke in support of the boundary expansion and of the work scope expansion to include water quality as well as quantity issues due to the location of the Odessa sub-aquifer. Bly noted that Lincoln County has seen data compiled by GWMA and the expansion of the area would enable additional data to be compiled.

Commissioner Plager commented that his perception was that GWMA’s task was not to “solve” water quality and quantity issues, but to compile data on those issues following study and research. He noted that he believed the East Columbia Basin Irrigation District was concerned with GWMA “creating” issues and he did not believe this was what GWMA was doing. [*See copies of letters received by the Adams County Board of Commissioners from ECBID dated May*

9, 200{3} to Paul Stoker received 5/17/05; letter dated May 10, 2005 to John Stohr, DOE received 5/17/05; and, letter dated May 24, 2005 to GWMA Board of Directors received 5/27/05.]

Paul Stoker explained that the GWMA functioned at the direction of the counties and only handled those issues and requests presented to them if they received county authorization. The RCW expressly lays out rules and regulations on how the GWMA may function and public input is sought since requests on water related issues are increasing.

Jake Wohlman, Jr., Warden Hutterian Brethren, gave his perception of the historical formation of the GWMA and what this body's primary focus (nitrates) was to be. He believed that the GWMA should stay focused on only the original issue and let the EPA and/or DOE handle other issues.

Commissioner Plager, Jake Wohlman, and Commissioner Hartwig discussed "local" v. "State" resolution of local issues. John Stormon explained that GWMA could influence; but, did not have any authority to issue water quality permits or water right permits. Clear lines of authority have been established in these matters.

Paul Stoker reiterated that GWMA has collected groundwater data and information and will respond to requests to share that information.

No further comments were forthcoming from those in attendance. Chairman Stevens closed the hearing at 9:30 a.m.

No decision on the Petition was required of the Board of Commissioners at this time. Findings of Fact are expected by month end and the Board of Commissioners will then review and determine if the findings are significant to preclude moving forward.

Commissioner Hartwig moved, Plager seconded, to *authorize the Chairman to sign a letter of response (jointly with Franklin, Grant, and Lincoln County) to the Board of Directors for the East Columbia Basin Irrigation District that explains the events relative to the GWMA Petition and that offers an opportunity for GWMA and the counties to discuss and clarify the role of GWMA on water issues.*

Motion carried.

Sheriff Department

Sheriff Barger discussed departmental staffing and scheduled Civil Service testing.

New Hope

Pat Burleson, *New Hope*, discussed New Hope's mission and scope of services. Burleson requested funding consideration for the program via Fund #123 Low Income Housing in order to provide a housing option for those who are seeking safety from abusive situations. A meeting of the Emergency Shelter Group that includes numerous local entities is scheduled for the following week and the request will be considered at that time.

Adjournment @ 12:00

Submitted:
s/Linda Reimer, MMC
Clerk of the Board

Edited and Approved:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
ADAMS COUNTY, WASHINGTON
s/Jeffrey W. Stevens, Chairman
s/Roger L. Hartwig, Vice-Chairman
s/Rudy Plager, Commissioner