

**County Road Administration Board
Meeting Minutes
January 18, 2024
CRAB Office – Olympia, WA
and Zoom participation**

Members Present: Rob Coffman, Lincoln County Commissioner, Chair
Grant Morgan, PE, Garfield County Engineer, Vice-Chair
Lindsey Pollock, Lewis County Commissioner, 2nd Vice Chair
Doug McCormick, PE, Snohomish County Engineer
Art Swannack, Whitman County Commissioner
Eric Pierson, PE, Chelan County Engineer
Carolina Mejia, Thurston County Commissioner
Peter Browning, Skagit County Commissioner

Members Absent: Al French, Spokane County Commissioner

Staff Present: Jane Wall, Executive Director
Derek Pohle, PE, Support, Training and Compliance Manager
Jason Bergquist, Executive Assistant
Steve Johnson, PE, Grant Programs Manager
Jacque Netzer, Communications Director

**Staff Present:
Via Zoom** Drew Woods, PE, Deputy Director
Eric Hagenlock, IT Director
Mike Clark, Road System Inventory Manager
Brian Bailey, Design Systems & UAS Program Manager

Guests: John Becker, Grays Harbor County Engineer
Kevin Pine, Grays Harbor County Commissioner / Chair
Axel Swanson, WSACE Managing Director

Thursday, January 18, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Coffman called the meeting to order at 1:30 pm.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Approve Agenda for January 18, 2024 Meeting

Commissioner Pollock moved and Commissioner Swannack seconded to approve the agenda as presented. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Approve Minutes of October 26, 2023 CRABoard Meeting

Commissioner Pollock moved and Commissioner Swannack seconded to approve the revised minutes of the October 26, 2023, CRABoard meeting. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Board Appointment

Chair Coffman read a letter from WSAC announcing the appointment of Skagit County Commissioner Peter Browning to fill the term expiring in June 2025, and welcomed him to the Board. Commissioner Browning shared that he's excited to be joining the CRABoard!



Public Comment Period

Chair Coffman opened the floor for any public comment. Seeing that there was none, he closed discussion. Chair Coffman resumed the Board meeting.

***Agenda Revision**

Given that invited guests from Grays Harbor County arrived early, out of respect for their busy schedules, we moved around the schedule to cover their topic next (originally under **Compliance.**)

Update on Conditional Certificates of Good Practice – Grays Harbor County

Derek Pohle provided the Board with an update on Grays Harbor County. 7 counties were out of compliance with National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS). Specifically, a federal FHWA requirement deadline of December 31, 2022, regarding load rating for Specialized Hauling Vehicles. These counties had failed to meet the deadline for a variety of reasons. Those counties were: Clallam, Franklin, Grant, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Pierce, and Yakima.

Those counties were issued conditional certificates of good practice with a requirement that they become compliant by December 31st, 2023. All but one county was able to implement their corrective action plans and become compliant by the required date.

Grays Harbor County did not make the deadline for compliance with the conditional certificate of good practice. A good faith effort was made after the issuance of the conditional certificate but, staffing issues and lack of consultant capacity hindered those efforts. Approximately 30 bridges remain to be load rated.

In attendance, on behalf of Grays Harbor County, were their newly appointed County Engineer John Becker, and Grays Harbor County Commissioner / Chair, Kevin Pine. Mr. Becker provided a brief update on their current state of bridge inspection and shared their plans to hire a 2nd consultant (a structural engineer) to get the remaining work done. Mr. Becker reassured the Board that they're going to be more proactive moving forward. No estimated timeline for completion was given. CRAB staff recommended extending the conditional certificate of good practice to April 2024, at which time the Board can revisit the situation at their next board meeting.

Commissioner Mejia moved and Commissioner Pollock seconded to approve extending the Conditional Certificate of Good Practice for Grays Harbor County to April 2024. **Motion passed unanimously.**

WSACE Managing Director – Axel Swanson

Mr. Swanson reported on the activities of the Washington State Association of County Engineers (WSACE). He shared that they are in the thick of the 2nd week of session hearing bills that have been introduced. Bills from last year could also reappear. A Washington State Association of Counties (WSAC) Legislative Steering Committee (LSC) meeting was held this morning, gearing up for hearings coming up. Budgets are beginning to be talked about, Capital and Operating Budgets, having discussions with the Chairs. Mr. Swanson then spoke about a variety of bills he's tracking.

WSACE has its 2024 Professional Development Conference February 5-7 in Leavenworth, WA. An updated agenda is now posted on their website. The conference's focus will be on finance and risk management.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

2023 Annual Report

Jane Wall shared that CRAB's 2023 Annual Report, for the first time, is fully digital, and has been posted to our website and shared out electronically via e-mail to the members of the House and Senate Transportation Committees, and other interested parties. Additionally, we are pleased to announce a new Legislative Resources page on our website, housing our annual report and new resources including: Detailed Legislative Requests, Informational Dashboards, and Contact Form for Agency Inquires.

Jacque Netzer, Communications Director, spoke about the goals and objectives with the redesigned Annual Report. She stressed that our new focus was to meet the statutory requirement (per RCW) that our agency provide "recommendations and requests" to the Legislature. The Annual Report also highlighted some of our legislative asks going into session and pointed out some of the key accomplishments from the prior year.

Director's Activities

Ms. Wall shared that things have been busy with the start of the 60-day legislative session. She has met with a number of legislators and continues to meet weekly with transportation colleagues & partners. During Quarter 4, 2023 Ms. Wall reported on the several public presentations she made, including, at the County Leaders Conference and to the Legislature's Joint Transportation Committee (JTC). CRAB also had a presence at the County Leader's conference as an Exhibitor. In December 2023, Ms. Wall presented on the preservation and maintenance challenges counties are facing to the both the WA State Transportation Commission, and at the interim briefing of the Washington Highway User's Federation.

Legislative Hill Debrief – The Board discussed how their meetings went between CRAB Board Members and Legislators on Wednesday, January 17. Overall feedback was that things went great, and prepared materials were very helpful. The suggestion was made that "thank you" notes should be sent to Legislators who made time in their busy schedules during session.

Chair Coffman called for a 10-min recess @ 2:43 pm, and meeting resumed @ 2:59 pm.

COUNTY COMPLIANCE

Derek Pohle reviewed Compliance Report (reporting period from mid-October 2023 to mid-January 2024).

December 31st, 2023 Submittal Requirements:

- Annual Construction Program
- Six Year Transportation Improvement Program
- County Arterial Pavement Preservation Program
- Pavement Management System Certification
- Maintenance Management Work Plan and Budget
- Road Fund Budget Summary
- County Engineer's Certification Form.

All the above forms and reports required to be submitted to CRAB by December 31st, 2023 in order to maintain compliance with the Standards of Good Practice have been submitted on time by 36 of the 39 counties. This is the first submittal using the new SmartSimple version of CARS and it had its hiccups but, by and large, the launch was successful, and the change did not appear to result in any counties missing the submittal deadline. A number of counties were struggling with

personnel vacancy issues which had an outsized effect on submittals. The three counties which did not make the deadline, had at least one delinquent report, were Asotin, Garfield, and Pacific.

For these three counties, compliance with the deadline could have been avoided had they gotten started on the submittals earlier, the forms were available on October 6th, 2023. Lack of having a full-time county engineer on staff was also a key issue for two of the three counties.

Staff recommended to the Board that it issue conditional certificates of good practice, at the April Board meeting, to Asotin and Pacific, entitling them to continue to receive their MVFT allocation. Staff will have updated recommendations at the April 2024 Board meeting.

Cooperative Procedures for Processing of County Road Accident Reports – WAC 136-28

All counties are required by WAC 136-28 to have responded to/processed at least 90% of the county road collision reports submitted to them for coding by December 31st of each calendar year. For 2023, 34 of 39 counties were compliant as required with the 5 remaining counties being very close to compliance and considered to be in reasonable compliance due to timing issues. One issue still plagues the CLAS system which relates to how the WSDOT program reacts to a “not my jurisdiction” response from the county.

Bridge Inspection Certification – WAC 136-20-040 – covered previously under “Update on Conditional Certificates of Good Practice”

IT DIVISION REPORT

Eric Hagenlock (IT Director) gave a high-level overview of agency IT business including core applications, supporting systems and security activities, training & support programs, and IT strategic plan. Referenced individual IT staff in each area of responsibility.

Key IT activities mentioned were CARS go-live and successful completion of December 2023 reporting period as well as the SecureAccess Washington security incident response.

CERTIFICATIONS

Resolution 2024-001 - Apportion RATA Funds to Regions

Steve Johnson presented Resolution 2024-001 - Apportion RATA Funds to Regions, which authorizes the accrued amount of \$3,319,897 deposited to the RATA for October and November 2023 be apportioned to the regions by the established 2023-2025 biennium regional percentages after setting aside \$120,690 for administration.

Doug McCormick moved and Commissioner Browning seconded to approve Resolution 2024-001 - Apportion RATA Funds to Regions. **Motion carried unanimously.**

ENGINEERING REPORT

Deputy Director Drew Woods shared that we do not have the December 2023 financials yet, so what's being shared in this report is through November 2023. Right now, we're coming just a little under budget, projecting right where we need to be. Most of that is because of salary savings due to a position vacancy we're looking to fill shortly. Overall, the status of the budget is we're in great shape, we're a little ahead of schedule on travel, since we're in the months where we don't do as much travel. We did submit 3 decision packages, two of which are included in the Governor's budget.

Mr. Woods provided an update on the work being done by the Rural Arterial Program (RAP) workgroup to implement the Grant Effectiveness Study. We have completed the RFP process and selected Berk Consulting to conduct a survey, direct user input, and complete the study in time for CRAB to submit budget packages based on the results of the study. The workgroup is very engaged and we're looking forward to working with Berk on this study. Berk and CRAB staff will present the results of the study to the Board at the July 2024 meeting.

Mr. Woods commended CRAB staff's work on developing training materials for GIS-Mo. Brian is doing a great job coordinating amongst the various companies helping to develop material and have it ready to put on our LMS system. Cameron, Lianna, and Eric have been helping to guide the material that is needed. This work is being done through a \$200,000 grant from the Traffic Safety Commission. Brian has been going out to the county's for design system training and preparing training videos for the new CARS system on the SmartSimple platform and RAP Online moving to SmartSimple. The LMS and Brian's great work on it continue to provide a huge benefit to the counties and our efforts to train on these new initiatives.

The transition from the old CARS to the new SmartSimple platform went well this November and December. While there were some hiccups in getting the December submittals completed (see Derek's compliance report for more detail), the hiccups were not due to the transition to the new platform. The transition was successful due to the hard work of James, Derek, Eric, Brian, Angela and Scott. A team effort - Great job to everyone involved! It is rare for a change like this to go as well as it did and that is 100% due to your hard work.

County Engineer Appointments

Mr. Woods shared the appointment of Ed Sewester, P.E. as County Engineer for Island County which took effect on November 27, 2023.

County Engineer Vacancies

There are 2 active county engineer vacancies in Asotin and Pacific counties. Asotin County has a consulting firm providing interim county engineer support. *CRAB was notified just yesterday January 17, 2024) that John Becker, PE was appointed County Engineer for Grays Harbor County effective January 17, 2024.

Pacific County is in the process of contracting with a consulting firm (DCI) to handle their P.E. services on a short-term basis, while they continue to search for a permanent County Engineer. Jennifer Oatfield and Richard Drake were both appointed as Acting County Engineer team.

County Audit Reviews

According to the State Auditor's Office (SAO), there were 16 county audits – 4 Financial, 11 Accountability, and 1 Fraud – with a total of 8 findings and 6 management letters sent out. Cowlitz County received a management letter with a finding regarding suspension/debarment. Ferry County received a management letter regarding updating its procurement policy.

Design Systems & UAS Update

2024 Road Design Conference - We have secured 80% of our usual funding for the 2024 Road Design Conference. Registration for the conference will be opened mid-January to county staff. A preliminary agenda will be available on our website when registration opens. Brian is continuing to lock down more sponsorships to help cover costs to be able to offer the conference free of charge to attendees. Brian has done training classes in Olympia and Colville for design system work, we're getting a lot more demand for that from the counties to provide those trainings at great value to the counties and saves in travel costs.

RAP Program Status

The RAP Program Status summary sheet presents an at-a-glance summary of the number of active RAP projects, project status, account total historic revenue and usage (which includes \$165.3M Total RATA obligated to currently active projects) and summarizes the most recent quarterly revenues and expenses.

Regional RAP Meetings

Regional meetings were held in January 2024. Topics covered: (1) Funding and project status for the RAP program, as summarized on the RAP Program Status Report. (2) Reviewed 2025-2027 Call for Projects – highlighting preliminary prospectus due date (March 1, 2024) and regional county funding and submittal limits. (3) Discussed new project type worksheets for NW and SW regions (now that all projects types are allowable for all regions). Updated worksheets based on discussion and will finalize prior to final prospectus opening in July. (4) Reviewed all active RAP projects with a high-level (construction-centric) project status overview. (5) RAP Online is being replaced using a SmartSimple application. There are obvious differences in visuals and navigation through the site, but the process is designed to remain similar to current practice. Briefly demonstrated SmartSimple's RAP Online home screen and basic navigation. (6) Encouraged all counties to participate in the RAP Grant Effectiveness Study survey that will be available soon.

Completed Road Projects

Mr. Woods shared before & after photos and project highlights for a recently completed road project at *Smackout Pass Bridge* – #FA-2321-01 (Pend Oreille County).

Current & Previous Board Actions

Project Actions taken by CRAB staff were briefly shared on screen, followed by an update on Previous Board Actions taken (included in the board packet).

Updates on previous Board actions - Projects

III. Updates on previous Board actions – Resolution 2022-010 – Allowing additional RATA funding for projects reaching construction in 2023/2024

The following projects were granted contract amendments for reaching construction in 2023 as authorized by Resolution 2022-10: (projects in Bold are new amendments this quarter)

• Chelan County – Goodwin Road #0419-02	\$154,000
• Chelan County – Chumstick Highway #0421-01	\$122,000
• Columbia County – Rose Gulch Road – Vernon Smith Bridge	\$ 52,500
• Ferry County – Boulder Creek Sec. 1 #1015-02	\$190,000
• Ferry County – Inchelium Hiway Rehabilitation	\$ 83,300
• Grays Harbor County – Garrard Creek Road Realignment	\$173,000
• King County – Ames Lake Road Bridge No. 1320A	\$288,900
• Kitsap County – Burley Olalla Rd SE	\$ 83,800
• Mason County – North Island Drive Culvert #2317-01	\$ 55,500
• Mason County – Old Belfaire Hwy #2319-02	\$232,000
• Okanogan County – Old 97 #2419-02	\$204,000
• Skagit County – Pioneer Rd #2923-01 (match deletion only)	\$0
• Spokane County – Wheeler Rd #3221-01	\$142,700
• Stevens County – Swenson South #3317-01	\$350,000
• Whitman County – Almota Road (Phase 3)	\$383,333
• Yakima County – Independence Rd – Fordyce to Maple #3917-01	\$200,300
	Total to date: \$2,715,333

Chair Coffman *noted that there was no need for an Executive Session.*

Chair Coffman adjourned the meeting at 4:29 pm.

Chair 

Attest 