

Funding Work Group

Charge from Groundwater Management Area Advisory Committee

Working Group Members

Vern Redifer (Chair); Bud Rogers; Dan DeGroot; David Bowen; Ginny Prest; Jason Sheehan; Jim Davenport; Laurie Crowe; Matt Bachmann; Rand Elliott; Rick Dinicola; Steve George; Stuart Turner.

Meetings/Calls Dates

Meeting: Wednesday, September 13, 2017, 5:00-7:30 PM
Call Number: 360 407 4780 PIN CODE: 306589#

Participants

Present: Vern Redifer (Chair); Jim Davenport; Laurie Crowe; Bud Rogers; Steve George; Mark Peterschmidt and Bobbie Brady (Yakima County Support Services).

Key Discussion Points

Vern began the meeting at 5:08 PM and explained the goal was to discuss who would carry out those proposed alternatives that appeared to have the green light from the GWAC, the cost for each and possible financial sources. Jim added that the group had already discussed the first four items and now needed to address the next eight found at the bottom of page 1 and all of page 2.

GIS database/GWMA Website. A member asked if the cost of keeping the GIS data base and website current was included in the cost of Yakima County acting as lead agency. Vern indicated that the website could be hosted anywhere by anyone.

Jim asked Vern to explain funding options. Vern said funding appropriations could come to the County as the lead entity and be disbursed to other entities through contracts. Vern added that typically legislative funding would be given to a state agency similar to the three initial appropriations made to Ecology for the LYV GWMA. The only downside is that Yakima County has to spend their own money and then get reimbursed – funds are not provided up front. Vern added that if WSU had a GWMA assignment they could get the money from the State directly as they are a state agency. A member asked if anyone else had been suggested to be lead agency. Vern said no – he knew Ecology would if there were no other alternatives. However, several members thought it was important to keep the leadership local. Jim noted that a central entity would provide the capability to have a clearing house. Vern agreed and thought it would help prevent duplicative efforts too but reminded everyone that ultimately the Commissioners would need to approve Yakima County acting as the lead entity.

Jim asked if the work of administration and GIS and GWMA website updates would equal one full-time employee. Vern thought it would depend on what Yakima County would be required to administer. A member thought that to start with it would be important to limit the endeavor to one full time-employee to see what could be accomplished and to keep from overloading the

County. He also understood that the work might be broken up between several different people. The member believed responsibilities could include coordinating data and quarterly meetings with a possible advisory committee. Vern stated that if County personnel were required to analyze data it would require another level of employment. When asked to cost it out Vern estimated a salary and benefits package at \$80,000.00, but added that \$100,000.00 might be more appropriate considering space charge, car mileage and other costs incurred beyond a salary and benefit package. Vern reiterated that it might not be necessary to add a full-time job as numerous County employees are fractionally funded. A member asked if the County currently had the necessary staff. Vern thought the County would probably need to hire someone.

Three educational campaigns –agricultural producer, urban and hobby, and health risk. Jim asked who would be the logical entities to handle each of these. A member thought that either SYCD and/or WSU could handle the agricultural producer, urban and hobby education. Vern agreed and thought that health education should be given to the Yakima Health District. He believed it was important to use local groups as they would have greater success reaching out to people they were already familiar with. A member was concerned that if the education efforts were funded separately from the lead entity it would be difficult to coordinate communication. Vern said the group could consider two models: 1) money channeled through the lead agency who would then contract with local groups enabling them to hold these groups accountable; or, 2) the groups could rely on their professional relationships. A member thought that any entity should plan to attend quarterly meetings and provide a report. Jim asked which model the legislature might respond to better. A member thought it was important not to let the requests for funding look like competition. Vern agreed and stated that if all financial requests were in the program it would strengthen the request considering the diversity of interests pulling for the same program.

Jim asked Laurie to estimate the financial need if SYCD took on the agricultural, urban and hobby portion of the education. Laurie estimated one FTE would be \$100,000 (including salary, benefits and ancillary costs) plus hardware – approximately \$10,000 (to do soil sampling demonstrations, etc.). Vern asked what sort of qualifications would be necessary. Laurie stated she would need a resource technician.

A member inquired if a full time engineer was needed at SYCD as there had been a discussion about this at the previous GWAC meeting. Laurie explained that currently four conservation districts share a “cluster” engineer funded through a grant. The member wondered if that structure was adequate to meet the engineering needs in the GWMA. Laurie didn’t believe that there was a need for a full-time engineer. She explained that an engineer was only used if someone was building a storage pond for instance. Laurie thought that funding a technician would be more cost effective.

Vern asked Laurie to give some thought to what kind of program she would put together considering the potential alternatives discussed and approved at GWAC meetings, what would it include, and what would it cost. For example, a deep soil sampling program (which would require purchasing a geo probe because as both Laurie and Vern agreed it would be less expensive than hiring someone else). Vern asked Laurie if she could complete this task by the time the next Funding Working Group met and suggested she go through the green alternative list. Laurie agreed.

A member estimated that between SYCD and Yakima County Lead Agency costs the annual funding would be \$250,000.

Engineering study - Jim stated that this would be a Public Services project but costs needed to be estimated. Vern said that County engineering studies had been funded through Community Development Block Grants which are limited to about \$30,000.00 per grant. Vern thought there were probably four areas in the GWMA requiring study but noted that the standard in these types of situations would be to look for a way to provide clean water first and then examine ways to fix the problem. He added that engineering studies usually advance engineering solutions to solve problems. He thought that the State Department of Commerce might fund Community Development Block Grants and said the County can also make an application every three years for a \$750,000 construction Community Development Block Grant.

Building from the WSDA's Nitrogen Availability Assessment - a member wanted to know where the language for "hire a technical consultant to conduct a literature review" came from. Jim said it was a compilation of alternatives that had been coded green. The member wanted to make decisions from data collected and was not interested in decision making from literature reviews. Jim thought that was a problem since most of the locally collected data for the NAA had been disputed causing the WSDA to refer back to literature review. Vern stated that Gary Bahr had put a lot of effort into thinking about this and Gary recommend collecting more data locally because it was more meaningful than literature review. The group agreed to take the sentence out for the purposes of the Funding Group discussion so that they might ascertain funding for WSDA to accomplish this alternative.

Vern and Laurie agreed that the data collections from deep soil samples would be the most beneficial. A member went on to ask if the sampling data needed to be collected every year or if it could be done every few years. Jim will talk to Gary Bahr and have him summarize his recommendations, estimate the frequency of each recommendation and the cost of each. Preliminarily the group agreed to an estimate of \$25,000. Vern said the real figure should include: what data is needed, how and when it will be collected and what it is going to cost. He added that the cost to plug the information in to the NAA will be less since all of that work has already been done.

Jim asked the group if he should continue to put together alternatives for the group to put prices to. The group agreed this would be profitable. Vern noted that Yakima Health District was looking at and was interested in doing the well monitoring. Vern thought this was good as a local group would cost less than bringing someone in from out of the area.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Resources Requested**Recommendations for GWAC****Deliverables/Products Status****Proposed Next Steps**

Laurie Crowe will consider potential GWAC approved alternatives, put together a program, cost it out and report at the next Funding group meeting.

Jim will talk to Gary Bahr (WSDA) about the NAA and have him summarize his recommendations and estimate the cost and frequency of each.