

Whatcom County Business and Commerce Committee
Minutes with Discussion Transcript
March 21, 2022

Voting Members Present: Ryan Allsop (Committee Vice Chair), Paul Burrill, Clark Campbell, Pete Dawson, Casey Diggs, Andrew Gamble, Troy Muljat, Bob Pritchett, Brad Rader, Sarah Rothenbuhler (Committee Chair), Chris Trout

Voting Members Not Present: Debbie Ahl

Nonvoting Members Present: Councilor Tyler Byrd, Don Goldberg, Mayor Seth Fleetwood, Eva Schulte, CJ Seitz

Nonvoting Members not Present: Small Cities Rep Michael Jones, Executive Satpal Sidhu

Public Present: Ken Bell, Cara Buckingham, Lance Calloway, Barbara Chase, Dan Dunne, Rob Fix, Kevin Hester, Dillon Honcoop, John Huntley, Jon Howe, Fred Likkel, Derek Long, Jennifer Noveck, Guy Occhiogrosso, Senator Simon Sezik, Gina Stark, Doug Thomas, Dana Wilson

Call meeting to order

- Called to order at 11am

Introductions / Comments from the Public

- Chair Sarah Rothenbuhler - committee member introductions
- No public comments

Administrative business (10 min)

- Approve minutes from February 2022 meeting - approved

Meeting Transcript

Sarah Rothenbuhler: We have Dana Wilson here, who hopefully will be an ongoing committee member as well. And Dana will take over marine services and Paul will move into food processing. That's our game plan. Does that sound good, everybody.

Don Goldberg: I just want to say either sometime during the meeting or before you leave, if you can sign in. There's also coffee, water, and everything here for you.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Thanks, Don. All right. So, introductions. Everybody that's on the committee, do you mind just saying your name and the area that you cover?

Casey Diggs: I help manage Boundary Bay Brewery and I represent the retail sector.

Clark Campbell: Clark Campbell with Gear Aid. I represent outdoor recreation.

Paul Burrill: Paul Burrill now food processing.

Kevin Hester: I don't know if I'm on the committee or what. I just got the invite. I'm Kevin Hester of the City of Nooksack.

Don Goldberg: Don Goldberg, Director of Economic Development, and a port representative.

Brad Rader: Brad Rader. Rader Farms and Lynden - I am the agricultural sector liaison.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Sarah Rothenbuhler, Birch Equipment. I'm open, and could we have the people Zoomed in that are on the committee introduce themselves next.

Don Goldberg: Do they want me to just call on each one and ask them?

Sarah Rothenbuhler: They can do it. Go for it.

Andrew Gamble: Hello. This is Andrew Gamble, and I'm representing the energy industry.

Ryan Allsop: Ryan Allsop. Allsop Incorporated - open. Manufacturing and commercial development mostly.

Troy Muljat: Troy Muljat. Open.

CJ Seitz: CJ Seitz. Higher Ed.

Seth Fleetwood: Seth Fleetwood, Mayor of Bellingham.

Chris Trout: Chris Trout. President of Wood Stone Corporation. Manufacturing sector.

Tyler Bryd: Tyler Byrd. County Council.

Bob Pritchett: Bob Pritchett. Technology.

Eva Shulte: Eva Shulte. Higher ed.

Pete Dawson: Pete Dawson. Dawson Construction representing real estate. Not sure how that happened, Troy, but that's what I'm designated -- real estate. Thanks, all.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Thank you, everybody. And thanks, everybody, for being here. For administrative business, we need to approve the February meeting minutes.

Clark Campbell: Motion to approve.

Unknown: Second.

Update on Water Management for Fish, Floods, and Farms: Presented by Whatcom Family Farmers Executive Director Fred Likkel

Fred Likkel: Thank you, Sarah. Appreciate that. Thank you all for having me here. I understand this is where the zoom folks are, so thanks for you inviting me too. I first have to make an apology to Ken Bell, because the other day I called him John. What he ran into is one of the challenges that I had from a few months ago getting coded was that I ended up with cold brain -- cold fog. It's all gone for some reason, except for named, so don't let me get your names wrong, because it's bound to happen. It has been really

nice because in our office -- I see Dylan's online and Dillon Honcoop as well as in there -- and I'm able to walk into the office now and there's four of them there. All I need to do to say, 'Hey, Dylan' and everybody's head pops up, so it makes it easier.

Fred Likkel: So, solving our Whatcom water crisis. I know Brad has discussed this with you before as well. I know when I talk to others about the water crisis in Whatcom County, they say, you're kidding me. I had a friend who moved here from Michigan about ten years ago, and he got a little frustrated with me because he ended up with seasonal affective disorder where it's always so dark, rainy, and dreary. He said how could we have a water crisis here in Whatcom County. But the reality is that is what we have. Some folks don't necessarily recognize that it is a challenge that we deal with.

Fred Likkel: So, for myself, my involvement really started about 12 to 15 years ago. I was an environmental consultant in agriculture for a number of years and mostly working with the dairy community. I had been hired to kind of transition into I guess you could say the political side of it. I was hired part time by the Washington State Dairy Federation to represent our farmers. They were really frustrated with they weren't getting good drainage out of their fields, especially those along the river. They said they were removing gravel up to about 1990 and now we've got gravel building after that. So, it's a huge issue. What can we do there? I jumped into it innocently thinking well we just need to figure out how to get gravel out of the river. And what you find out if it is a complex issue dealing with our water management issue. It isn't just as simple as 'just get gravel out of it or just build a dike'. It's just not that simple. Then about five or six years ago, Brad and a group of farmers started up a couple of different organizations. One of them was governmental with watershed improvement districts, which are known collectively as the Ag Water Board. The second one was the nonprofit group, which I'm now the executive director of called Whatcom Family Farmers. The primary focus there was the farmers could see coming -- especially those who progressed the more out there -- that we were running into water challenges in Whatcom County as well.

Fred Likkel: I know you talked about this a bit, Brad, but it was really because Western water law is set up the way it was in Washington State, a lot of folks came here and didn't know and understand that they needed to get water rights for their fields as well. A lot of these other countries that they came from -- a lot of farmers and migrants -- water was one of those things that was granted to you, was accepted. That isn't the case here. So, we ended up having some farmers with water rights, some who didn't, and it was creating a huge challenge. In addition, Department of Ecology was saying, 'look, we're not going to grant any more water rights because we can see that this place is potentially overallocated'. It just became increasingly a challenge that the farming community said, we need to step into this because this is going to be something that's difficult. Then, of course, as you get into that, you understand once again, that side of it is equally complicated. We have issues with not enough water for our salmon. We have questions about what's going to be happening with our economic development if we don't have water. Well, how does this all look? So that's why in some ways we do have a water crisis, even though we don't really necessarily recognize it.

In some ways we could see that unfortunately, sometimes you need to have a real catastrophe in order to get there. Those in the farming community could see we've been dodging bullets for years as it related to flooding. Sure enough, this November, we had a challenge. This flood was just an absolutely devastating one for the community. There is \$100 million plus in damages. All the homes that were destroyed. We lost a worker's life. Quite honestly, in talking to some others, we are fortunate that we didn't lose more lives. There are some folks and some really scary situations. Animals suffered and died. It was a challenge. And of course, Canada had it even worse. I think most folks don't recognize that the water naturally flows towards Canada once it gets too high. That's the way it goes. And it ended up pooling

down there in the old Sumas Lake, and it caused devastating damage there, over four hundred dairy cows. I've heard that over 700,000 poultry, 12,000 hogs. I heard that damage number is now closer to a billion. And of course, widespread anger, class action lawsuits, I understand, filed up there with threats of lawsuits to be filed up here as well. So obviously a huge challenge that occurred there.

What most folks don't recognize is that the Nooksack actually has twin problems, because two months before that flood hit, we had 2,500 salmon that died in the South Fork. They died because the flows are too low, the temperatures were too high, and a bacterial infection developed because of that that caused the salmon to die. So, this is obviously those two crises that hopefully brought us to a point where maybe we can have an opportunity to bring the community together to say, what is it that we can do to fix these issues? Because it isn't going to be just as easy as well, we'll just pump some more water in, or we'll dike things up.

Fred Likkel: This shows we had way too little water and way too much. So how are we going to how are we going to fix that? Then you add into this climate change, which regardless of whether you agree with climate change or the causes of climate change or not, I can tell you is that somebody who's out there in the farming community and done a fair bit of study on this, the reality is, it's there. It is something that is real. What we are seeing is our dryer seasons are getting drier. Our wetter seasons are getting wetter. We're getting more rain; we're getting faster snowmelt. And this shift in timing points to whether we need to look at some way of seasonal storage because the South Fork especially is in essence turning into a sea creek in August and September. It doesn't get water out of the glacier. It gets water from the twin sisters and some of those smaller mountains. It's dry. You get to September and it's dry. What are we going to do with that? For the farming part of it, the low flow obviously threatens the future of farming in our community. Even though 85% of the water the farmers take is from the aquifers, which are fairly plentiful, the issues surrounding water rights become a challenge because those river flows need to be met.

The river flow is below that level, so the river needs to meet in stream flows for salmon reasons and that got set in 1985. The reality is in the summer, about 60% of the time, that river doesn't even come close to that. And even currently, if you look at what other users would use, other than the in-stream flow, it's about less than 10% of the actual water would come from either agriculture or our community. The rest of it is supposed to be for the salmon. Well, the truth is, the river is significantly below that much of the time, so what is it that we're going to do?

That has led to ecology over time to decide that they wanted to sue all water rights holders in what's called an adjudication to determine who has water legally. The Court is almost certain to find the tribes have the most senior rights, and those most senior rights would also be related to what's needed for the salmon. Those would be significant rights. And when those tribal rights are insufficient to make the change flow, all of the junior rights holders could be or will be cut out. This is what we face. And what the farmers have said is, it's not just those guys that don't have water rights. It's others and it's the cities as well, which shows that we need to figure out what to do to fix this in. Basically, we can take that previous graph and change it around and get those flood levels in it so that we have enough flow for the fish and hopefully that way we can move forward a little better.

I've been involved on the political as well as the technical side of this for quite a while, and what's really been laid out is there are five different proposed solutions that are out there. All of them have their pluses and minuses, but this is what we need to be looking at. The first one was used for about 30 or 40 years from 1960s to about 1990, which is sediment management. Sediment management has its pros and cons. Many people would say, well, let's just do that. It's flood prevention at a low cost. But there are some huge

cons there that most don't recognize. The biggest one, of course, is it threatens industry habitat, and the reality is it does. Yes, the salmon like deep pools, but they also need gravel for spawning, and they need places to hide. The reality is that we if just come in and dredge out a channel those things are gone. So, mitigation for that would be massive would be difficult to figure out what we're going to do there.

It also requires continual maintenance. I would imagine, because it's been so many years since it's been done, it would take 20 to 30 years just to get enough gravel out even if we want to go there. It does not help the low flow of things in the summer. If anything, it's going to move that water up quicker and cause us more challenges. It might have some possibilities in certain places to be a partial answer, but it is certainly not the answer.

The other one would be raising and enhancing levees. Levees and dikes get used interchangeably as a word. The pro there is that, yes, this would give you flood prevention at a low cost. But there are huge problems there as well. If you just build up a dike in one place, it's going to flood somebody else out. Perfect example I tell folks is shortly after early December, the watershed improvement districts meeting and first up was the Sumas Watershed Improvement District. Even the City of Sumas was there as well. And they were all fired up. 'We need to have a dike, an effort to keep the water from going to Sumas and Canada. It has to happen. We need to get that thing built up. It wasn't an hour later that we had the Lynden Watershed Improvement District came in all fired up the other way. And these are farmers say, don't you dare put a dyke up there. You're going to flood us out. Then it hits Lynden, then it hits Ferndale, then it hits Lummi. It's not just as easy as we'll just raise the dyke. In the end, it does not help that low flow issue that we are dealing with in the summer.

The next one up there, which you can't see too well, but its dykes or levees with setbacks. And this has some interesting potential there. It has places where it could work. This is the idea of giving the river more room to roam in various places in times. It has some fairly moderate cost, but it does gobble up farmland. And it's just not as simple as what would set these farms, these levees back. What's happened over time is the river has been in the same channel for the last X number of years. Honestly, the lowest areas sometimes are on completely the other side of the valley. So, it really doesn't work to say 'well, we'll just set it back'. There's going to be places where it could work everything. And again, it doesn't necessarily address the problem of low flow. Then of course the middle is buyouts,

I wouldn't necessarily call this a solution. What we're looking at there -- the county has been looking really hard at this and offering out the folks is -- let's buy out people that are in flood prone areas. There are a number of people that have been flooded over and over again. What this really does is it helps reduce the costs significantly year on year. This is a smart move, but I don't know it is necessary to call this the water management solution. It doesn't solve the flooding, and it certainly doesn't solve the low flow issues either. So, the bottom line there is storage, and that's the one that I think has the most potential for being a really a win-win scenario. Storage gives us flood prevention, and it also is a low flow solution. It also comes with pretty inflated cost. It's not that easy to do.

I think if we can't see it down there, but it says the D-word. What you see whenever you start talking about storage is you get folks pretty fired up about two D words -- Dam and on the other side of the set of management is dredging. These are words that are emotional triggers, I would say on both extremes of political spectrum where right away people get fired up. I think it's important to recognize that storage does not necessarily mean dams. They found this out in the Chehalis Basin. It can mean other things as well, and we'll get into that. For the storage, you have multiple ways that you can look at this. First of all, you can look at aquifer augmentation. The City of Lynden right now has a multimillion-dollar grant through the Department of Ecology to look at aquifer augmentation in the Nooksack in the Upper

Forks, I believe it's in the South Fork higher up. They're going to be taking water out in high flows, putting it into a natural aquifer, and then over time it'll release back into the river. It's in the preliminary stages of it. It's a study, but it is something that is a possibility. We have other places in the lowlands as well where, what if we could reconnect an old aquifer, old storage? So, we've talked about, for instance, gravel pits. There are old gravel pits that are sitting empty. Is there a way that we could reconnect those and then over time? The water would go naturally through to the river in the summer.

Increasing natural storages fits with that. That's looking at things like expanding wetlands, looking at a semi-natural retention. There have been places where folks have had lakes that have been expanded to make it take advantage of that. It does help with flood control. There's a little bit of increased benefit. There's a lot of studying that needs to be done on it. But it's certainly something that we need to look at. And then, of course, the last one is looking at reservoirs which have been used successfully in other places -- Skagit, Yakima -- for several reasons. In the Skagit it's really helped on the flooding side. Not really quite as successful -- because it was done earlier - on the salmon side. There's work that needs to be done there. But they say that the City of Mount Vernon would have been inundated with six feet of floodwater had they not had their reservoirs up above.

Clark Campbell: In the Yakima, it has been immensely successful for both for both floods and farms and fish, because those reservoirs, as you go over I-90 -- you all know that big one that's sitting there -- those get released over time, and they help out all three of the solutions. So, there are places in ways that reservoirs could be done that are potentially helpful. And I would say that even though that the dam word, can get a lot of people really uncomfortable, we are starting to see that folks are recognizing that it has some potential. It needs to be done well. It needs to be done right. It might not be one big dam. It's several different places higher up that we can we can work with and maybe it's natural instead of artificial. But I would say that in a variety of government circles, I'm starting to see that. For example, when Governor Inslee first proposed funding for salmon work back in November or December, one of the things he said in there is 'I'm proposing funding for green infrastructure, for water storage'. There's a recognition that there are some things that we can and possibly should do that we're really hoping that we start looking at the sorts of things.

I guess in summary, what's it going to take? Obviously, you're looking at political will. As I mentioned before, there are voices on both sides of this thing -- extreme voices --that are very much opposed to this. They don't want to see this happen, and they get emotionally triggered by some of these things. And that happens both ways. I've seen 'All we just need to do is dredge the river'. I see it over and over again. Likewise, on the other side, I hear there's no way we can do anything to artificially affect the river. We need to let it run the natural. Both of us are going to need to look at give and take to solve our solutions. It's going to take local, state, federal and tribal coordination. These are things again, I see these crises starting to bring people together, but honestly, I can see right now they're a bit overwhelmed with the need and what it is that has to be done. I'm hearing it locally. I heard it from tribes, not so much from the federal, but this flood really overwhelmed the resources out there. There's plenty of technical work that needs to be done, and there's plenty of policy work that needs to be done to bring this all together. And then, of course, funding. When we all work together, one of the nice things about the funding side of it is, it'll start showing up. When you get tribes and farmers and their government officials together, there is a lot of funding at the federal level to bring these things together. The Chehalis Basin brought in \$70M, I believe, in the last biennium alone, just to look at a variety of solutions. And those solutions are there. It is really going to take a concerted, sustained, and enthusiastic, community wide effort to promote these solutions that assure success. So that's my summary. I'm going to turn it over to Brad if there's anything you want to add to that.

Brad Rader: I won't talk long. Great presentation. We've been working on this one for a while, and the important thing for all of us in this room to know about the water crisis, it's going to touch all of us. It's not just an agricultural issue. It's not just a salmon issue. It's going to affect cities. It's going to affect whoever has a five-acre piece out in the county -- it's going to affect them. I think that's an important piece to remember. Is that it's not just agriculture and water rights and adjudication. That's really the point of this. What we found with the Whatcom Family Farmers and the water improvement districts is that standing together, having all farms -- whether it's maybe the crops in the county, are berries, sweet potatoes and dairy, dairy being the largest, -- is that it's better for us to stand together. We're using that same idea and others are using that same idea to be standing together. We've been talking a little bit across folks you wouldn't normally talk with and talk about coalitions. Farmers can't just go to DC and get the money that's needed to fix this for everybody. It needs to be a coalition or a group.

We're very worried from an agricultural standpoint about this, about the future of the industry. And we're spending a lot of time and energy trying to figure it out. And I invite any ideas that might come out of this, other places we need to talk to knock on some of those doors. Let's do it. We need to figure it out.

John Huntley: Just quickly. I'm John Huntley owner of Mills Electric. We started this coalition and what we're really trying to do is bring in business owners, nonprofits on both sides of the aisle to start this discussion. Because what we really have found out, it's not just the farmers, it's just it's not just the tribes. We've all got to come to a resolution and find out what we can do to help. So, my task is to bring in those people, and so far, I've had some great feedback from business owners and different people on both sides of the aisle. The more we get involved, the better to come to some kind of solution to the problem.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: We'll want to revisit the water issue in a few months, and it will be even more powerful with farming and fisheries working and reaching out together. Thank you for the presentation. Let's open up to Q&A-

Don Goldberg: Just one question is where is the process right now? At what stage is it and are you at a place where you can affect it?

Fred Likkel: Yes, absolutely. You're talking about a couple of different processes, starting to look at how we roll it all together. So, on the discussions surrounding, let's just take the water access, the water rights side of things first. The Department of Ecology been in the process of putting together an adjudication. And that is ongoing. They're hoping to file that in June 2023. In the meantime, Whatcom County that started a process where they were looking at together what's known as a solutions table that would deal with those issues from the policy side, because clearly this is a policy issue that's going to have to be determined. At the same time, there has been a group put together by the county that's been meeting for about a year, and that involves staff from farmers, from the tribes, from the county and now small cities are engaged in this as well, looking at comprehensive solutions. They've picked three pilot drainage areas that they're looking at. The first one is the South Fork, because it seems like that is the most critical issues are related to that as well as habitat and issues like that. That group has been meeting monthly for about a year now.

The flooding side of it, that program has been working with the program called floodplains by Design which is through the state. Locally is called FLIP - Flood Plain Inversion Planning -- and is the technical side. We've been working longer on just the flooding side of it, and how can we work with things within the floodplain. So, with what happened in 2021, that has really been ramped up. Working now with a lot of the same players to integrate the technical side of it.

On the policy side, obviously with everything that's happened with Canada and our federal and state governments very much involved, they are reinvigorating that international task force. I expect we'll be seeing more of that, and it might be further behind. But the urgency is much, much bigger. Again, how to integrate all of what's being done. As far as locally, what John had mentioned, what we're really hoping to do is get a group of folks together for a broad range who can come together and coalition, where we can affect to come forward to some of these groups and say 'we need to have change, how can we support you? What does this look like?' That is just in the infancy stages. We're working on that right now. We've been leading at Whatcom Family Farmers, but we would love to see it be a broader group. It would be something where we're not necessarily leading it, but just part of it.

Paul Burrill: I think that's an important fact, Fred, because sometimes it gets glossed over by the public looking at it, saying it's water and agriculture, using it all. It's not. You are creating food, much like Dan and I produce fish. We don't just catch product for ourselves. We sell it to the public. It's food sovereignty, making sure we can produce the good, healthy product here locally. It creates jobs. Revenue is extremely important. Everybody uses the water, and I think it's really important we all take care of it. It's everybody's issue, not just agriculture. It's great seeing you leading the charge, getting out there, getting groups and other companies in. That's the way to do it because it's something we're all going to be affected by.

Fred Likkel: The encouraging part is you talk to people who are in the desert southwest or in other areas of the country, Texas, and other places. They have the same challenge, but they have much more limited water with which they can work. One of the things that we have is we have a lot of water. We just need to figure out how to manage it better.

Clark Campbell: Just a comment and then a question. I was reading actually a Barron's article this morning about businesses approach to sustainability, and a lot of that's been focused on carbon with climate change. But water is really one of the bigger issues. The way they described it was if you think of climate change as the shark waters, the teeth. That's how we're all going to experience it, either by too much or not enough. And the Nooksack Basin is a classic example of that. I'm not expert on the subject, but it seems like in Skagit Valley, the approach that they've taken is creating diversion channels and intended flood areas. Is that part of the approach here? Obviously, that's a political issue because if you're a landowner and your area is one of the intended flood areas. But it seems to have worked in combination with higher dikes and levees in certain other areas. And you said they are also doing more with reservoirs and dams. Is this diversion of the water to another area that then could be in an impound zone, or are we talking about dams right on the channel as the technical solution?

Fred Likkel: Ideally, you want to be able to say we don't want a dam there. We need to study it realistically. That might be difficult to get to a meeting about, but I know, for instance, that with Chehalis where they have started this process -- and they're ahead of us after their big flood shut down -- They did a bunch of work, and they haven't done anything with big dams, but they've done things like -- timing the flow in different creeks and including things like that. And I know that the city of Centralia, after getting through flood season in January, said, 'wow, we can't believe the difference.'

Clark Campbell: In terms of the diversion channels.

Fred Likkel: Yes. Yes. In a variety of ways. And so, they still are looking at if they still need a dam. That's still in discussion. But it does show that, yes, we can make some efforts in doing those sorts of things as well.

Clark Campbell: And with regard to the Nooksack Basin have there been studies done as to if you were to create a significant impact zone that would be a storage area that's not the channel.

Fred Likkel: Yes. But years back. So, you're looking at 30, 40 years or so. So, there's plenty of study that needs to be done as well. What we're going to need to look at is what are some short-term solutions? Because Canada, understandably, is making a lot of noise and they should. What happened there was devastating. So, what is it that we can do in the short term and what is it that we can do in the long term?

Paul Burrill: With impound zones or reservoirs. Would they be outside or above the traditional spawning habitat of salmon?

Fred Likkel: That's the hope. A lot of the studies are old, but that would be the ideal thing to do. But it also could be where it's in the zone where it's minimal. But let's just say you put it up here and most of your spawning is happening down here. Well, we're going to help affect it, and that's a positive, too. There's also discussions about, for instance, in the middle fork diversion is still there. Could they move some water from the middle fork if there's more in the South Fork? There are a lot of discussions like that.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Just a couple more minutes for Q&A. Does anyone else have anything they'd like to ask?

Doug Thomas: I would just mention that two board members of our San Juan A.R.E.A. Sea Life with Paul Burrill. We've been working on this – with Dana Wilson, to a certain extent with tribes about six to seven years now. The concept if you haven't heard is to adopt as a pilot project, here at Whatcom Creek, with the support of the Port of Bellingham. It's exciting. We've got the retired V.P. of operations in Juneau, Alaska. We've identified DIPAC in Juneau as the best in class really worldwide for its tactics and techniques increase the survivability of salmon as they return from natural progression. The State of WA averages around 1.2 or 1.6% of the released salmon actually make it back to Alaska somewhere between 2 and 4% which is a significant difference. Whatcom Creek hatchery right now, Bellingham Technical College Salmon Hatchery Program about four million salmon a year. We propose to return to the 1985 recent high watermark to release 40million, which is thought to be by the WDFW, and the tribal organizations mutually agreed that that was the last high watermark. If we increased releases by tenfold and increase the survivability rate of the salmon as they return and navigate through all the predators and all the different things that they have to go through to get through to get back such that we will change returns from about 65 to 75,000 adult salmon return to Whatcom Creek waterway to somewhere between 800 to 1.6 million salmon.

The reason that this is complementary to what I think you're trying to accomplish here, if you go back to the floods, the farmers, and the fish -- three FS I guess it is -- if the salmon survivability and the robustness of that salmon fishery here in the area, which is all San Juan Islands. If that were more robust, it would be like having an 18-year-old helping you with that kindergartner. Recovery of that and the survivability of that fishery would be just that much more durable, such that the recovery of that component of it might be restored sooner and be sustainable, more viable fishery. When you take the pressure off of the fish side, it reduces the urgency, if you will. So that's what we're about.

We made a presentation to Bellingham Rotary Club last Monday with whoever was there. We included our group all stakeholders -- fly fishing, sport fishing, education, tourism, marine fisheries, tribes, biologists on the environmental side. Would like to have more support from the tribe. Really in the state of Washington, it's a co-managed fishery that WDFW and tribal organizations. You can't have one without the other, so we need that support. We think it makes a lot of sense. We've taken a number of field trips

to Juneau with a number of different groups, including senators, representatives, port officials and various stakeholders. We just say, why reinvent the wheel? Why keep trying to do what we're doing here in the State of Washington with Washington state hatchery program that's been in existence for over 70 years and keep doing it the same way, hoping for different results. Let's go someplace where they've really perfected it, adopt that best-in-class approach, and have success sooner and more sustainably.

Paul Burrill: As a fisherman and a beneficiary of programs up in Alaska, it's pretty amazing to see what happens. When you are fishing and you have the food chain coming at you with tens of thousands of fish, if not millions - Whales, eagles, whales of all sorts - humpbacks, killer whales, which is great for our J-pod around here. It really is amazing to see what happens. My uncle was a marine biologist down here and he's since passed, but he taught me one thing a long time ago was that salmon are the great nitrogen bringers to our environment, and having the salmon that go from the beach line and works its way up through floods, through animals, carrying them into the bushes, that's a really important part of our environment. And we can also take some of these salmon that come from hatcheries and replant those where we previously lost those things to help bring back some of those nutrients that we've lost. There's many good facets to what a hatchery program does. These are real fish, not farmed fish. It's the real DNA. Many people think of a hatchery like this is that the net pens were accidentally released out there. This is not that. The reality is they go out, live a normal life, come on back in, and they enhance the environment out there. The high seas pastures need those fish because we've lost a lot of that.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: I'm going to wrap up this topic but thank you everyone. Thank you, Fred and Brad, and everyone who spoke. I'm hoping that we can revisit the water issue in a few months again, so I'll be leaning to Brad, Paul and Dana on the presentation and speakers to bring in.

Update Legislative Session Wrap Up, Senator Simon Sefzik

Sarah Rothenbuhler: So now while I am thanking everybody, I would like to thank Senator Sefzik for joining us. He's just completed a session wrap and is going to give us an update.

Sen Simon Sefzik: Great. Thank you, Madam Chair, so much for getting us all together. I'm sorry I missed the memo. I saw it in the calendar invite, but I didn't realize there was an in-person option, so I just totally missed that. Otherwise, I wish I could be with you today. Thanks again so much for all the work that you do, and thanks for giving me the opportunity to give each one of you a session update. I wanted to double check, did you still want me to cover sort of those three main categories of water management, public safety and some infrastructure highway issues? Or do you want me to cover anything else other than those three issues?

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Whatever you find relevant would be great.

Sen Simon Sefzik: Ok great. Fred Likkel had that great water presentation, so he stole some of the things I was going to cover. This was supposed to be, in our legislative session, a big year for some water issues, but honestly, not a ton happened in that regard. There's a real importance to both study water storage and improve the in-stream flows for salmon and cities to potentially use. It was mentioned, I think earlier there was a University of Washington climate group that pointed out that climate change will likely affect Western Washington the most, and particularly the Nooksack Basin as being the most vulnerable. We need to find ways on the upstream of the Nooksack to store water without trapping the salmon

population and identify where those locations could be. The federal infrastructure package, which is recent and obviously quite large, could be used for finding some of that money on the issue. Other counties have been able to use federal money to fund these local plans, and I think that the Whatcom County Solutions Table could also be helpful for this issue. It also underscores the importance of collaboration with Canada, with farmers, with the tribes and with the county to address this issue. I saw the mayor of Nooksack here, and I'm sure he'd be able to talk about this, too.

There's a real urgency and sense of hopelessness that I'm hearing from constituents that just feel as though they've been forgotten or that November is coming soon, and they're wondering what their future is going to entail. So just reminding them that that we're working hard to find a solution is, I think, important. There was some money in the budget to go to the Chehalis, Yakima, and Odessa for some different water storage issues, and I think in the future we should push for some of that in Whatcom County as well.

In terms of public safety, that's another issue that some of you may be tracking. I actually just had a meeting a couple of hours before this with a different county group on this issue. There was some progress made in relation to public safety, but not as much as I think some people would have liked, including myself. We amended a bill that has to do with a case in the 1960s, Terry vs Ohio, regarding the use of force by police officers. That has to do with what are called Terry stops. So, we returned police officers to the pre 2020 and 2021 laws which gives police officers the ability to use reasonable force instead of just probable cause and reasonable suspicion for those areas. So that's a big change that law enforcement is happy about because of the amount of damage caused. I don't know if some of you may have seen in the Bellingham Herald there was an article talking about how I think there's been about a 300% increase in car theft even since last year in Bellingham. There was another statistic I saw indicating that Bellingham is the third highest city in the country right now regarding property theft. These are some real issues. I'm sure if you've talked to law enforcement, you get a sense for how bad it is in Whatcom County. Unfortunately, we didn't make enough progress, as I would have liked in those areas. For example, regarding vehicular pursuits, there was a bill that would have fixed some of those issues to allow law enforcement to pursue vehicles involved in crime. Unfortunately, that bill failed by one vote in the Senate. Everybody in my caucus supported it, and we had a few in the other caucus that voted for it, but the majority simply did not vote for that fix. If you talk to law enforcement officers, they're going to tell you that it's going to be another difficult year for a lot of these issues because the legislature didn't make the progress that they would have hoped for.

Some people also may not know this, but I've seen various statistics. I saw one statistic that indicated we have the least amount of police officers per capita in the entire country. Now, I saw another statistic that said we were third to last in that race, but the bottom line is we need to find ways to incentivize more police officers and give them the tools that they need to protect the county and to do their job.

The other area that I'll touch on briefly are some infrastructure projects. We did secure \$5 million to go to Lummi Island to help electrify the ferry. There was also money that went towards the Kendall Trail, some projects up in Lynden, Blaine, and Ferndale civic center. We've made some good progress in terms of capital budget projects, and I'm excited to see where those things will go. The one other thing I'll touch on from the session that I was personally disappointed in was I just wish we would have seen some meaningful type of tax relief that would have been provided. This was a budget year with more than \$16 billion in surplus for the state, and there wasn't really any tax relief that was provided to people in Whatcom County that definitely needed it, nor was there anything at the statewide level. There was a small tax relief for businesses that make less than \$250,000 a year. But for example, there were proposals about pausing the sales tax on diapers or a potential sales tax holiday that was fairly bipartisan

that didn't end up getting passed. I think that especially as we're seeing rising inflation and rising costs, this would have been a great way to give the people back some of their money, because they know how to spend it better than a group of politicians and bureaucrats in Olympia. Those are some of the hits and misses from the session and overall, I'm looking forward to coming back next session to hopefully address some of those issues. With that, I'm happy to answer any questions that anyone may have.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Anyone have any questions?

John Huntley: How about Alcoa? We got the \$10 million for that. Where are we sitting on your side of things? I guess I could ask the port.

Sen Simon Sefzik: Yes. \$10 million to Alcoa to provide about seven hundred jobs, and I saw something saying that those jobs have a multiplying effect of about 2.5. So theoretically, that will provide many other jobs in the county as well. The hold up now is going to be the power issue with BPA. I'm cautiously optimistic that they're going to be able to work something out. I've heard different people like Larry Brown with the Labor Council who's worked with me on some of these issues has argued that they are statutorily required to provide power to Intalco. I think Blue Wolf Capital is making the same argument, but I also saw another part of the RCW that was quoted to insinuate that they are not legally able to provide or allowed to provide it to the plant. I think that there's going to be a little bit of back and forth there as they work out those different issues. I'm cautiously optimistic that they're going to be able to work that out and provide some green aluminum in the county, which I think would be a great thing. So, we will see what happens from there. Thank you for the question.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: This falls in line with public safety. Is there any work being done in relation to the mental health and addiction crisis? What's the attention on that in Olympia?

Sen Simon Sefzik: Great question. You're absolutely right that it goes hand in hand with the public safety discussion. We're getting constant feedback that we're getting from law enforcement on mental health issues including the need for facilities for these individuals that may be struggling with homelessness or addiction or mental health issues. There were some different programs created. I don't remember the exact budgetary amounts going towards behavioral health and increasing incentives for mental health counseling and prevention on some of these issues. Progress is being made, obviously. In Whatcom County, it's a little bit difficult with the jail situation and the capacity we have there where if you talk to law enforcement, they'll tell you that one of the problems is you for different crimes. You can't hold people because we just don't have the capacity to hold certain people in our jail right now. And finding new facilities for some of the more behavioral health issues I think is going to be important. So, the short answer is, yes, some progress was made there. But again, I think there's still a lot more that has to be done on some of those mental health and addiction issues.

Paul Burrill: Senator. Earlier you talked about incentivizing police officers for retention. What is it that we don't have those other states do have? Is it overall sentiment towards the police? Is it pay? Is it benefits? What is it that you were discussing this winter?

Sen Simon Sefzik: I think it's a few of those things. One of the things that we did do was increase incentives through pay for our state patrol, because statistically it's actually lower than most other areas in the country. And so, we increased the pay for those folks. But a big part of it, Paul, like you mentioned, does have to do with the mentality of policing in Washington State. There are plenty of police officers that love this state. They love this county, but they find that they're going to be more well received in other states. When you pair that up with the housing issue and the inflation issue, they're more likely to leave

the state. I co-sponsored a bill that would have eliminated that 25% cost sharing requirement by the Criminal Justice Training Commission for Law Enforcement Training, which would have been a way that we're hearing from law enforcement folks that would have increased the likelihood of employing law enforcement officers and increasing the likelihood that we can recruit a lot of different law enforcement folks. It has to do with overall mentality of policing in Washington State, in addition to some financial incentives that should be offered to increase the number of law enforcement that we have.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Regarding water adjudication, it makes me nervous when we have government entities making these big determinations without really connecting locally with the people that are living and breathing and really know more about what's happening to protect our lands and our fish. That adjudication seems like a huge representation of that. Is that inevitable?

Sen Simon Sefzik: I'm glad you mentioned that because I think you're right. It does illuminate a disconnect between the decisions being made by ecology in Olympia and some of the local interests up in Whatcom County. One of the bills that I sponsored was an adjudication transparency bill, and the bill simply would have required the Department of Ecology to release the estimated number of water rights and the potential cost of an adjudication before they proceed in Whatcom County. The idea behind that is to say, as a bottom-line transparency measure, we should know how long and how much money it will potentially take before we engage in a potentially decades-long process that will cost tens and millions of dollars. I don't know that it's inevitable. I do think ecology is pushing hard. They did secure some funding in the budget to begin that process, and that's why I think it's even more critical for people to be aware of how much these things cost and the potential implications that they'll have, especially in rural areas like Whatcom County. I feel it could be not only costly but just difficult for our farmers and our agricultural community. If we value our own domestic supply chain of good berries, for example, and other good products, then we have to be careful about proceeding with this process that would be potentially very harmful to our agricultural community. I think that they're going to keep pushing for it, and we need to respond to it responsibly.

Fred Likkel: Yes. I want to say I agree. At the same time, I'll put a little caution out there on that. One thing we don't want to do is kick the can of solutions down the road. I'm not saying that education is necessarily the solution. We clearly have issues related to our water resources that we need to work out. Something that's happened over the last 40 or 50 years is we kicked it down the road many times. We want to make sure that we actually deal with the issue whether it's some sort of alternative or whatever. And to be fair, the tribes do deserve to have their water rights quantified as well. That's something that has not occurred. I don't think that it has to go through an adjudication, but we need to make sure we work on what the answers are.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Does everyone know what adjudication is? (group all said yes). What about highway systems? To my understanding, when you talk to a lot of the older contractors in the area, our I-5 corridor was built to last until the 1970s. It was designed to handle the Pacific Northwest population up into the 1970s. We're a bit beyond that huge population growth, and we've got mass transit coming in. From what we see just from Skagit to the Canadian border, there are accidents every day on I-5 and our on and off ramps. We've simply outgrown our road system. Is there any focus on that in Olympia?

Sen Simon Sefzik: I did not know those statistics, so instead we reached out to somebody from the Department of Transportation. I can send you over the spreadsheet that they sent us. I thought it was interesting. It quantifies the number of total collisions and damages and injuries and fatalities. The numbers are actually smaller in the past few years. I think it's because people are driving less and less with Covid, so it didn't give me information before 2006. I can reach out and see how the data is

compared decade by decade, and I can send over that information to you. Otherwise, that's something that I think the federal infrastructure package may end up addressing. But I haven't been involved very much with the federal highway system and potential answers there. I think it's an interesting issue to look into, and I'll try to see if I can find the decade-by-decade analysis from the Washington Department of Transportation people.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Does anybody else have questions or comments? Everybody on Zoom. You're welcome to chime in at any time.

Don Goldberg: Sarah it might be a good time for our required public comments too.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Yes. So, frankly, in this meeting, anyone can speak up at any time. The committee will be here, and we're all good to talk. If anyone in the public that is on zoom and here attending the meeting has something to say, please comment at any time. (All nod) Anything else, Senator? Thank you so much for being here.

Sen Simon Sefzik: Thanks so much for having me. The mayor and I are both hopping off for another obligation. Thank you all so much for having me and if you ever need anything, feel free to reach out again. I don't know a lot of these statistics, but if you're curious about something, there's a likelihood I am, too, and we can figure out how to get that data. Just let me know, and I'm happy to make those inquiries. Thank you all.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Thank you and thank you, Mayor Seth, for being here as well. All right. We are at the end of the meeting. We've got a couple of minutes left.

Casey Diggs: I have a few things from in the last city council meeting that was brought up. I don't really fully understand it, but the 'just transition' with the labor workers -- mostly the pipefitters -- for the legislation that the city council is passing with electrification. Trying to get those folks in to room to ask them how the process is going and working with the City of Bellingham. They discussed the post point recovery project. Keep an eye on our sewer portion of our water bills here in Bellingham to pay for that project. They're saying it's going to be 12% -- and that's just on the sewer portion of the project -- 12% a year from 2023 to 2027.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: A 12% increase?

Casey Diggs: Every year. But that still needs to go to city council they think first part of the year that'll happen. Tonight, there's a town hall for the Climate Action Fund in the city limits of Bellingham. They're trying to raise \$5 to \$7 million a year on property values, so your house is worth \$500 grand it's going to be \$100 more on taxes. That is supposed to go to the voters in November. I strongly encourage anybody who lives in the city limits of Bellingham to go to that climate action fund town hall tonight and just ask how those funds are going to be spent. Are they going to partner with nonprofits in our community to run programs? I asked that question at the last town hall meeting and didn't get an answer. I was looking for a response like 'hey, we're going to partner with Sustainable Connections. We're going to give them a million bucks a year and if a homeowner wants to put solar on their roof, they're going to get it at a 2% loan or whatever.' But they couldn't answer that.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: What's your water bill at Boundary Bay Brewery?

Casey Diggs: Like \$4,000 - average annually a month.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: The impact on business is astounding. How's it going with the parking change?

Casey Diggs: May 1st, parking in downtown Bellingham will go from Monday to Saturday, 11am to 6pm. It'll be \$1/hour and parking tickets will now be \$30.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Are those programs with managing parking ticketing ever profitable for the cities? I hear those tend to run in a deficit.

Casey Diggs: Yes, that's true.

Don Goldberg: That's why they're manage this change. They're trying to pay for itself.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Instead of just not doing it.

Casey Diggs: Any surplus revenue is going to be given to the Downtown Partnership or the Fair Association, because it's not just downtown. It's in Fairhaven as well.

Don Goldberg: It's an incentive by the retailers. They don't want people parking there all day. It's not really a money thing. It's about getting people to move so that new people can come in and shop.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: I hear the opposite.

Casey Diggs: From our standpoint, it's just the city is trying to manage the parking. I think they're trying to control it. We have regulars that come in every single day, and they're going to be pissed off that the parking is going up. They're never going to call the city and complain about it. They're going to complain to me about it.

Don Goldberg: And Fairhaven was added as well.

Casey Diggs: They had a lot of folks, a parking task force to work through the process. So, it's going to be a struggle to navigate it for a year. I'm going to have to have a lot of uncomfortable conversations with some folks.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Thank you for that update. Really appreciate that.

Casey Diggs: The Whatcom County notify me tool...is anybody on that? I just learned about that. It's on the website, and you can sign up to what you're interested in. You'll get updates of just about anything you are interested in weekly, almost daily, actually, on just whatever you want to subscribe to.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Thank you Casey.

Our next meeting will be on public safety and Sherriff Bill Elfo will be speaking, and we have a couple other speakers in the wings. We're just waiting to confirm their schedules and we'll get the next couple of agendas out. We're looking at water by way of active fisheries, public safety and addressing whatever we can do to find solutions with public safety in general, as well as the mental health and addiction crisis that we're in. The other crisis that we're in is housing and affordable housing and also the buildable lands permitting challenges, Troy.

We plan to rotate each month through these topics and having our committee members and anyone else that has good ideas or speakers that we should be bringing up and talking to us. Please let us know. Please let me know. The other thing is, we want as many people at these meetings as possible. We kind of were just a group that was talking to ourselves, and while I'm chair, my goal is that we do the exact opposite of that. Tyler is our connection with County Council, but I'd love to see as many County Council members at our meeting, city council members, small city mayors -- anyone that you work with or do business with or business members that should chime in. We need to get our community voice stronger and help guide policy versus find out what policy is later and where we pay the bill.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Does anyone have any suggestions for me as we're walking down this path?

Clark Campbell: While we have a little bit of time. One of the things is as a county board getting an update from Tyler as our representative as a regular part of the agenda.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: I should have said Tyler and I spoke. We're checking in regularly. He said there were no big topics this time.

Clark Campbell: Casey is bird dogging what's going on at the city level. Just being able to make sure that we're aware of any new topics that are coming on.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Casey is keeping us updated on the county and cities level.

Casey Diggs: They talked a lot about the closure of Gulf Road last week.

Tyler Byrd: That will be our discussion this week, too. The one other thing that will be coming up this week during our council committee of the whole meeting -- should start around 2:30, 3pm -- there will be a discussion regarding the comprehensive plan review process. So what Troy presented on last week, we've asked him to come forward and give us an update on that as well, hoping to use that as an opportunity to get the assumptions worksheet from that point too. If anyone wants to attend that would be great. If you have any input, we'll see if we can get the chair to the pull you in for comment too.

Clark Campbell: What's the timing on the comp plan update?

Tyler Byrd: It'll be in the committee of the whole that starts at 2:30p. There's a presentation that precedes it in the Committee from Northwest Innovation Resource Center on Entrepreneurship and Whatcom County. Then this will be the second item for the committee, so I'm going to guess it will be around the 3:00p mark that we will see that item.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Thank you Tyler, Clark and Casey. All right. No other topics?

Paul Burrill: Don, don't you attend most small cities meetings. I would think things that might come up there. That's kind of where things tend to start.

Don Goldberg: Sure. Twice a month: there's one meeting a month, which is the actual Small Cities Caucus, which is open to the public, similar to here run by Scott Korthuis. And they are here, and, we go over how the small cities, the county and the city of Bellingham can coordinate their efforts, best practices, things of that nature.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: What is the focus right now?

Don Goldberg: The last meeting was talking about the jail was part of it. It seemed to me and Bruce, your thoughts are better on it, but it seems to be it was the first time the seven mayors and the county executive all agreed that a jail had to be built. the discussion turned to how to coordinate that, what it looks like, how big it would be, what the site would be. We talked quite a bit about that.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Is there a speaker that would be able to talk about it? Is it pretty preliminary? It's almost like a Groundhog Day.

Don Goldberg: Yes, well, you know, it's been a preliminary concept for seven years now. It's the first time, I think, that all the leadership with the crime going up and the problems that everybody's seeing that all the political sides agreed that something had to be done. Satpal and all the mayors agreed that it's going to get more expensive as time goes by, so if we keep on kicking the can, it's just going to get more out of hand. Probably the two entities are Sheriff Elfo and Satpal. They're the two leaders in that project right now. Of course, we talked about flood and flood response.

Kevin Hester: The main focus of our last few meetings was still working through the flood response to recovery efforts and rebuilding. We're still in flood season, so people have held off rebuilding but now they are getting back to it. I know a lot of people are rebuilding as quickly and as cheaply as they can. Then they're planning on selling. They're done. They've rebuilt three times in the last two years, and they can't do it. Happening in Sumas as well.

Don Goldberg: There's a new fund that Mauri Ingram's group has started. She was really a savior to all the people before we were federally listed as a disaster area. Mauri raised about a million and a half dollars of private funds that went right out the door to people that were trying to eat and survive and stay in hotels. Now, there's a new fund that's just starting this week, I think, that's directed at businesses. FEMA has funding for housing. Not very much, but some. There have been programs for housing, but there is no money in federal or state appropriated for businesses. A lot of these small businesses in Sumas in particular, they might have lost their home and their business, and there's little help for them. We're trying to raise private funding to get that out the door for \$5,000 to \$10,000 grants just to help people keep their doors open. The other thing we're trying do is to get people to shop up there, because there's so many houses that have gone away. There's a population that's gone away. The businesses that have survived don't have a lot of customers, so if you can shop north, that would be a good thing for consumers in particular.

Clark Campbell: Is there any ARPA funding, anything that's potentially there?

Don Goldberg: No, we didn't really get funding out of the state. We were trying to get state funding, but ARPA can't be used for that funding. It's got to be directly Covid related.

CJ Seitz: Hi. I just wanted to make sure. Don, did you cover that on state funds that we got for the \$10 million for Northwest Washington?

Don Goldberg: No. CJ is leading with the SBDC response, so she is the best person to ask what's going on with the business.

CJ Seitz: Can you tell me the original question, Don?

Don Goldberg: Just what's going on with the flood situation, and I was talking about business response and Mauri and what's going on there.

CJ Seitz: The Whatcom Community Foundation funds should be opening any day now and those will be smaller grants, up to \$5,000. We're looking at potentially doing some webinars around those. Those will be great, less restricted. And then Alicia Rule proposed a bill which was funded. It's \$20 million for businesses that were affected by disaster and there's \$10 million earmarked for the northwest area. Those will be going through the State Department of Commerce and then going to Don. There is earmarked money from this last legislative session. Sadly, it's only from the surplus, from the COVID 19 money, so it's a onetime funding. We do have work to do encouraging the state to get more involved in disaster recovery and a long-term solution. But for now, we'll celebrate the short term and that money coming our way.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Thank you C.J.

Clark Campbell: What's the timing on that? When would it be released and be available?

Don Goldberg: CJ do you have a release date yet?

CJ Seitz: Good gravy. No, no. Let's put pressure on the Department of Commerce to get that out. Don, you, and I could also send out to the group what the fund is and who's going to get covered. It's like for less than \$5 million in receipts. There are parameters there. Don, you, and I can get together and start rattling the cages at commerce and seeing if we can get that out sooner than later.

Don Goldberg: Sounds good and there is COVID grant funding. That's through the state commerce. It's Working Washington, Round five. They're almost done with figuring out who they're going to focus on, but they want to focus on the groups that got hit the hardest -- restaurants, bars, entertainment, nonprofits, things of that nature that really got shut down and had no choice. We've been working with them on getting the details, but I think that's going to be released probably in the next 30 days.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: Thank you Don. Thank you, CJ, We are right at meeting end. Can we take a quick minute? Dana would like to say something.

Dana Wilson: Thank you for giving me the chance to be on the committee. Just to let you know I don't speak for the tribe. I'm here as a fisherman, but I can get the answers that you need from the tribe and streamline that a little easier. I really appreciate the opportunity to be here.

Committee Members all Chimed in: Happy to have you. Thank you for being here.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: For the record, I asked Dana, because he's a good businessman, good fisherman and cares about Whatcom County.

Clark Campbell: If you look at some of the largest employers in the county. The tribe is right there at the top. So, it's been a missing seat.

Sarah Rothenbuhler: All right. Thank you everybody.

Chat Messages:

- **Andrew Gamble:** Energy has solid solutions for the summer in stream flows combined with added capacity of water holding check out two projects in BC- run of river hydroelectric at Forest Kerr and Volcano Creek - (AltaGas)
- **Jennifer Noveck:** Would it be possible to close the presentation so that those on Zoom can view the in-person speakers a bit better?
- **Simon Sefzik:** Yes, agreed.
- **Jennifer Noveck:** I also changed my view to "Speaker View" in the upper right corner View options and it is much improved (shows the OWL camera better).
- **Chris Trout:** As mentioned, I need to jump off to go to the airport. Look forward to meeting everyone soon. Thank you.
- **Seth Fleetwood:** Thanks Simon. Excellent report. And thanks water presenters. Very informative. I must run to another obligation.
- **Simon Sefzik:** Thanks, Seth! Take care.
- **Andrew Gamble:** Excellent to have the Senator and I'd love to see him back!
- **Derek Long:** no public comment from me. thank you.
- **Andrew Gamble:** I plan to attend
- **Troy Muljat:** Tyler... what day is that meeting again?
- **CJ Seitz:** don, we did get state covid funds

Next Meeting: Monday, April 18, 2022, 11am – Hybrid with in-person and Zoom options available.
 Topic: Update on public safety by Whatcom County Sheriff Bill Elfo.