

MINUTES OF MEETING
Kootenai County Waterways Advisory Board
August 12, 2021
Kootenai County Search & Rescue Building
10865 N Ramsey Rd
Hayden, Idaho 83835

MEMBERS PRESENT: Doug Harris, Gary Schmidt, Tom Torgerson, Don Warner, Terry Werner

STAFF PRESENT: Nick Snyder, Director, Parks & Waterways; Deputy Gerald Wallace, Sergeant Ryan Miller, Kootenai County Sheriff's Office; Ranell Schwartz, Recording Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT: Susan Stiger, Bob Stiger, Jim Stafford, Avis Stafford, Spokane River Association

Chairman Werner called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. Advisory Board members declared no conflicts of interest.

MOTION: Doug Harris moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. The motion was seconded; all were in favor; the motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

SLOW DOWN LAW ON WATERWAYS:

Deputy Gerald Wallace presented a proposal to have this board endorse a county ordinance which will then be forwarded to the County Commissioners for consideration: ***All vessel operators must slow down to a no wake speed when within 200' of an emergency vessel(s) with their emergency lights activated.***

When the KSCO has stopped boaters on the Spokane River, other boaters going near them too fast are swamping them. There was discussion about this proposal. Nick Snyder would like the rule to include government maintenance vessels, such as the Parks & Waterways workboat. All agreed that emergency lights must be displayed on the vessels.

MOTION: Tom Torgerson moved to support the Sheriff's Office in their request. The motion was seconded; all were in favor; the motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

UPDATE: ANCHORING ON COUNTY WATERWAYS UPDATE:

Sergeant Ryan Miller stated that this issue was brought before this board a few months ago. Temporary anchoring is currently legal on all Idaho Waterways as long as the vessel is lit at night. More sailboats and houseboats are anchoring in bays and it has become a navigation hazard. Some of the boats are abandoned. A state law regarding these issues makes the most sense. Nick Snyder suggested that a small fee added to boat registrations could fund the removal of abandoned vessels. The county legal department is working on drafting the language to present at the state level.

Chairman Werner asked Nick Snyder about the Waterways Improvement Fund (WIF) Grant Cap of 30% for each region. Mr. Snyder stated that he had participated in a public comment period Wednesday, in Wallace, Idaho at the Idaho State Parks Public Hearing. The hearing has been continued until the next meeting on August 18 at 2:00, in Boise. Anyone can participate by Zoom. Tom Torgerson stated that the public hearing was continued because Idaho State Parks did not properly notice the time of the Public Hearing. Mr. Torgerson wrote a letter to the governor and contacted other elected officials. He hopes there is a fair voice on this issue when the decision is made.

Chairman Werner asked Nick Snyder about the WIF Grant that was approved to fund the Parks and Waterways Workboat. Mr. Snyder stated that he sent the Request to Advertise the Notice Inviting Bids for construction of the workboat to the

Commissioner's Office. The grant can be extended for another year if necessary, to allow time for construction of the workboat.

FUTURE AGENDA TOPICS

Chairman Werner asked if this board would consider scheduling regular board meetings twice a year and have special meetings as needed. After some discussion, Chairman Werner stated that the current schedule would remain and he will cancel meetings as needed.

Tom Torgerson asked Mr. Snyder about the newly placed no wake buoys near the bridge at the mouth of the Spokane River to extend the no wake zone. The buoys are confusing. Mr. Snyder stated that he agrees. He and the Sheriff's office would prefer that signs be posted on the bridge, but the Idaho Transportation Department is slow to work with and the buoys had to be deployed without much notice from the Commissioners.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jim Stafford asked how many tickets have been issued on the Spokane River for excessive wake since the 8th. Sergeant Miller stated that he does not have the August numbers yet, but the KCSO issued 25 citations and 175 warnings on the Spokane River for wake zone violations this summer. The warnings are for the first offense and the citations are for second offense. They have written more citations, and completed more boat inspections this summer, than any time in history.

There was more discussion.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ranell Schwartz
Recording Secretary

Attachment to minutes:
Presentation from KCSO

SLOW DOWN LAW

Purpose

To save potential injury or death to people and / or damage to equipment when stopping and detaining vessel operators, while enforcing county ordinances and / or statutory laws by law enforcement officials on waterways within Kootenai County. Also applies to Fire Department Vessels

Proposal:

To have the Parks and Waterways board endorse a county ordinance which will then be forwarded to the BOCC for consideration that:

“All vessel operators must slow down to a no wake speed when within 200’ of an emergency vessel(s) with their emergency lights activated.”

Penalty:

As it is a safety requirement it should meet the fine requirements of other county ordinances listed under safety, which is currently set at \$99.00

Other states which have similar ordinances or statutes.

Oregon

When approaching a stationary law enforcement boat displaying its blue lights, consider it to be the same as a boat ramp with a 200-foot, “no wake” speed zone around it. You should slow immediately to the slowest speed at which it is possible to maintain steering. You also should alter your course so that you do not interfere or inhibit the operation of the law enforcement boat. You may increase your speed only when you are out of the vicinity of the law enforcement boat.

New Jersey

All power vessels shall reduce their speed to slow speed when passing:

- a. Any marina, pier, dock or wharf at a distance of 200 feet or less.
- b. Work barges or floats while actually engaged in construction.
- c. Through bridge spans.
- d. Through lagoons, canals or confined areas of less than 200 feet in width. 31
- e. Vessels not under command.

f. Emergency vessels displaying flashing or rotating lights.

Minnesota

MOVE OVER LAW When approaching and passing a law enforcement watercraft with its emergency lights activated, the operator of a watercraft must safely move the watercraft away from the law enforcement watercraft and maintain a slow no-wake speed while within 150 feet of the law enforcement watercraft.

North Carolina

100’ distance from emergency vessel with red and blue lights on.

News Article.

NEW HANOVER COUNTY, N.C. (WECT) - The New Hanover County Sheriff's Office has more watercraft than ever and they want you to be aware that Blue Light Laws apply to the water, too.

"We're out here to enforce safety. That includes the blue light law. A lot of people don't realize that if a law enforcement boat is in the water and its got its blue lights activated, that you're to slow down, like the move over law on the roads," said Lt. Jerry Brewer.

Similar to the 'Move Over Law' on the roads, if you are within 100 feet of a patrol boat you are to slow down.

If you fail to do so, the NHCSO can pull over boats and write citations for not following the law.

"We're not out here to stop everybody and cite everybody a ticket. We're out here to ensure safety and make sure everybody's having a good time," Brewer said.

The Blue Light Law applies to law enforcement jet skis as well.