

## Mayors' Meeting

May 3, 2019

9:03 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Stamper, Commissioner Fund, County Manager Erik Martin, Public Works Director Josh Metcalf, Lorraine Ralston of the U.S. Census Bureau, Chehalis City Manager Jill Anderson, Dale Lewis of U.S. Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler's office, Chehalis Mayor Dennis Dawes, Kimberly Pincheira of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Christine Nhan of Sen. Murray's office, Toledo Mayor Steve Dobosh, Lee Grose of Packwood, Winlock Mayor Don Bradshaw, Centralia Mayor Lee Coumbs, Morton Mayor Dan Mortensen, Vader Mayor Pro Tem Joe Schey, Greg King of Friends of the Cowlitz, Napavine City Councilman Shawn O'Neil (10:15 a.m.)

Guests: County employees and various members of the public and press, including Greg King, Centralia Police Chief Carl Nielsen, Riverside Fire Authority Chief Michael Kytta, Marcia Manley, Susan DeLaire, Bob Thomas, Lynnette Hoffman, Anne Randt, Budget Services Manager Becky Butler, Assessor Dianne Dorey, Treasurer Arny Davis, Will Rubin of The Chronicle, Ike Nwankwo of the Department of Commerce, Michelle Whitfield of the Department of Commerce

Recorder: Rieva Lester

### Census

Lorraine Ralston, Partnership Specialist with the United States Census Bureau, gave a presentation about the upcoming 2020 Census.

She noted that funding for the following can be tied to the data collected through the census:

- Medicaid
- SNAP/WIC
- Transportation planning
- Student loans/Pell grants
- Section 8 housing
- School lunch program
- Head Start

Lorraine said census data also is used for the following:

- State legislative districts, school districts, voting precincts
- State, local and tribal governments planning decisions
- Business and nonprofit decisions (where to locate, size of market)
- Local trends
- Population benchmarks

### TO-DO LIST / RECAP

**Mayors:** Identify points of contact for the census

Lorraine said new features for 2020 include paperless data collection, a toll-free number residents can call and mobile devices for field workers.

Lorraine said the census will include the following 10 questions, though an 11th question regarding citizenship may be added:

- Address
- Phone number
- Count of each person at that address
- Name
- Gender
- Age and date of birth
- Race
- Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin
- Whether someone lives somewhere else
- Relationship

Lorraine reviewed the timeline for the count as well as steps to keep the information private and confidential. She also discussed a partnership to educate and engage the public.

Lorraine discussed the creation of Complete Count Committees and urged members of the group to participate in outreach efforts. She also noted that the Census Bureau will be hiring hundreds of temporary employees.

Christine Nhan discussed outreach regarding the census and said cities and counties may lose out on grants and other funding if not all residents are counted.

Lorraine discussed cybersecurity measures in place to protect residents' information.

Lee Grose expressed concern over the questions asked during the census as well as the methods information-collectors use to gather the data.

Toledo Mayor Steve Dobosh said incorrect data can cost schools and cities. He urged participation.

Lorraine, Dianne Dorey and Arny Davis left at 9:45 a.m.

## **911**

Erik Martin discussed the goals regarding the future of 911 governance:

- Safety
- Economics
- Efficiency and effectiveness
- Unity

Erik said options for the future include the following:

- Continue under Lewis County's governance

- Shared authority, which could include an executive board
- Regional authority, which could include Thurston County's TCOMM

Centralia Mayor Lee Coumbs said he has been impressed with the "Users" group. However, he said, the group is unbalanced because the small communities and districts aren't always fully involved. Mayor Coumbs said Centralia favors a regionalized service.

Morton Mayor Dan Mortensen said funding has been an issue for the county. He said he is surprised the taxpayers haven't been asked to approve a tax to provide funding.

Mayor Bradshaw said it's important for the small communities to have a voice.

Commissioner Fund said the timeframe for the next steps depends on input from others. Erik noted that the commissioners want to hear from the small communities about what their concerns may be.

Mayor Mortensen said politics oftentimes get in the way but that the communities need to go to the taxpayers to seek funding.

Erik said TCOMM has indicated its priority would be to maintain the standard of current service and that it also has indicated that the community would have to have a united front regarding regionalization.

Chehalis Mayor Dennis Dawes said he is disappointed that a solution is taking so long. Mayor Dawes said complaints are down because entities have just stopped filing the inquiries because they felt those were being ignored. He said he is concerned that calls go unmanned for 20 to 30 seconds at a time. Mayor Dawes clarified that the taxpayers already are paying for the service but that they don't appear to be getting their money's worth. He said TCOMM is being run by two-tenths of 1 percent sales tax. He said that funding wouldn't have to come out of cities' budgets. Mayor Dawes said the commissioners have been asked to submit a letter to TCOMM indicating its interest in exploring using TCOMM but that the county has not yet done so. He noted that Lewis County is the public-safety answering point (PSAP) but that other entities could explore providing their own service. Mayor Dawes said regionalization could pave the way for grant funding. He said the line-level people who are putting their lives on the line feel that the current model is not working.

Lee Grose said he shares Mayor Dawes' frustration and fears that the smaller areas of the county will be left out. Lee said he feels the community would support a one-tenth or two-tenths of 1 percent tax to pay for regionalization.

Mayor Dawes said likened 911 service costs to those of power rates: users pay a base service fee and then a use fee. He said the current 911 model doesn't charge that base fee, so the larger entities pay a larger share while the smaller communities receive 24-hour-a-day coverage without a base fee.

Napavine City Councilman Shawn O'Neil joined at 10:15 a.m.

Mayor Dobosh echoed the need for unity. He said Toledo also feels the response under the current model is lacking.

Mossyrock Mayor Randy Sasser said it's critical to have a service that is 100 percent reliable. He said time is of the essence, and he asked if there were any timeline benchmarks already identified.

Erik said there are no specific timeline benchmarks as of yet but that the commissioners are meeting with the mayors and will meet with the fire commissioners soon to help identify their next moves.

Winlock Mayor Don Bradshaw said all stakeholders need to have a voice.

Mayor Coumbs said the mayors and commissioners need to listen to the members of the User group.

Chief Mike Kytta said the Combined Users Group appreciates the county for undertaking the studies about technology and center assessment needs. He said the rates have increased roughly 35 percent over the last four years. He said the Combined Users Group is just asking if it's time to look at other options. He said he has heard from all of the area's police chiefs, aside from Pe Ell's town marshal, and that the consensus is that now is a good time to review the current operations and possible alternatives.

Erik thanked Chief Kytta, Rob Hill and Jill Anderson for their efforts regarding the future of 911.

Commissioner Fund said the group needs to be united about the future of 911 in order to receive grants. She likened it to the Flood Authority in its early years of disagreement. Once the group was unified, she said, the Flood Authority was successful in securing funding.

## **Fishing**

Greg King of Friends of the Cowlitz discussed the economic impacts fishing has on the region. He noted the state sees \$1.1 billion in annual economic activity linked to fishing. He urged citizens and elected officials to write to lawmakers to ask for rules to be relaxed.

Commissioner Stamper echoed the need to relax fishing rules.

## **Roundtable**

Ike Nwankwo, western Washington manager of Growth Management Services for the Department of Commerce, introduced Michelle Whitfield, the new Senior Planner for Growth Management Services for the Dept. of Commerce. Ike said Michelle will be the contact for GMA and GIS.

Centralia Mayor Lee Coumbs said the Spring Youth Fair is taking place over the weekend. He said Phase I of the China Creek project has begun.

Ike and Michelle left at 10:45 a.m.

Mossyrock Mayor Randy Sasser said Tacoma Power held a meeting in Mossyrock the previous evening. He said the Blueberry Festival, the Buffalo Nickel Tour and Movies in the Park are planned for the coming months. Mayor Sasser introduced Marcia Manley, who discussed her concerns regarding the local homeless population. She said a homeless encampment along Highway 12 has grown significantly in just the last six months. She noted that for many, it's a choice to live that way but that taxpayers are forced to shoulder the costs.

Lee Grose invited the group to Packwood's parade and festival planned for the weekend.

Winlock Mayor Don Bradshaw said the city has received funding for the Mickelson Parkway project and that construction will begin in July. He thanked the county for providing .09 funding and announced that the water line work has been completed. He said the city's First Street and Tennessee Bridge projects will soon go out to bid. He invited the group to the upcoming Egg Days celebration.

Morton Mayor Dan Mortensen said the city just completed work on its water tank. He said the "steam donkey" has been moved to the park. He invited the group to the upcoming Loggers' Jubilee.

Vader Mayor Pro Tem Joe Schey said the city's May Day parade and festival is May 4. He said a survey linked to grant funding is taking place.

Toledo Mayor Steve Dobosh said Wallace Pond will host a fishing derby May 4. He said the city has received grant funding for a variety of upcoming projects.

Kimberly Pincheira of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) gave an update on upcoming transportation projects in the area, including projects on SR 6, SR 506, Chamber Way and the Newaukum River Bridge.

Christine Nhan of Sen. Murray's office discussed various rural grants available. Christine said Sen. Murray has reintroduced a child-care bill and has worked on the "BE HEARD" bill and the "PRO" bill.

Dale Lewis of Rep. Herrera Beutler's office said Rep. Herrera Beutler introduced a bill signed by the president the previous week and is working on a smattering of health-care bills.

Chehalis Mayor Dennis Dawes discussed SB 5894. He said he was pleased with funding provided through the state's capital budget. He said Music in the Park will take place over three weekends in July. Mayor Dawes noted that Les Schwab is building a new store and that the Warren Smith Elementary School has opened. Mayor Dawes also noted that the steam train engine is out for repairs.

Chehalis City Manager Jill Anderson thanked Chief Kytta and Erik for their work on the future of 911. She said the Rotary club has an auction planned for May 10.

Napavine City Councilman Shawn O'Neil said the Leonard Road project has gone out to bid and will begin soon. He said Dollar General will be opening a store in the city. He said a strip mall also is a possibility.

Commissioner Stamper thanked Mossyrock for hosting the Tacoma Power meeting the previous night. He said Tacoma Power needs to work on the boat launches and community involvement. Commissioner Stamper noted that the Packwood flood plain study and Onalaska Alliance projects received funding through the state Legislature's capital budget.

Commissioner Fund said the capital budget included funding for the theater and other area projects but that it did not provide the funding requested for indigent defense and election costs.

Meeting adjourned at 11:29 a.m.