

## **Meet-and-greet with Jennifer Westerman**

**July 1, 2019**

**2:04 p.m.**

Present: Commissioner Jackson, Commissioner Fund, JP Anderson, Jennifer Westerman, Commissioner Stamper

Guest: Dr. Lindsey Pollock

Recorder: Rieva Lester

Jennifer Westerman, the new CEO of Housing Opportunities of SW Washington, introduced herself and discussed her background regarding affordable housing.

Jennifer said she would provide data regarding how many housing assistance vouchers are used in Lewis County. She said individuals pay 30 percent to 40 percent of their salary for rent. She said there is a waiting list and that the elderly are given preferential placement on the list. Jennifer said the housing-assistance program is income-based and does not have a time limit. She said most of the funding comes from the federal government and that the group has a partnership with Reliable Enterprises.

Jennifer discussed the possibility of consolidating efforts.

JP Anderson discussed the process by which the committee he sits on determines who will be referred to Housing Opportunities. JP said he would invite Jennifer to an upcoming meeting.

Jennifer said her group issues tenant-based vouchers, which recipients can use anywhere they choose in Lewis County.

The group discussed rental rates.

Jennifer discussed rental assistance available through the USDA. She said she will be meeting with Sen. Cantwell's office and U.S. Rep. Herrera Beutler's office to push for better representation for the rural areas.

Jennifer praised the benefits of having a larger-sized benefit authority.

Jennifer noted that the Longview Housing Authority renamed itself the Housing Opportunities of SW Washington to reflect that it represents other areas, such as Lewis County.

JP discussed low-barrier housing options and Public Health and Social Services' work on five-year plan.

Meeting adjourned at 2:39 p.m.