

Economic Recovery Forum

April 22, 2020

1:04 p.m.

Present: Commissioner Fund, Commissioner Jackson (remotely), County Manager Erik Martin, Sen. John Braun (remotely), Rep. Ed Orcutt (remotely), Becky Butler, Andy Caldwell, Arny Davis, Bob Guenther (remotely), Sue Luond (remotely), Dennis Dawes (remotely), Cindy Johnson (remotely), Maree Lerchen (remotely), Alicia Bull (remotely), Alison Puckett (remotely), Debbie Campbell (remotely), Michelle Whitten (remotely), Annalee Tobey (remotely), Joe Clark (remotely), Colton Dodgson (remotely), Frank Corbin (remotely), Gary Fredricks (remotely), Heather Pinkerton (remotely), Jill Anderson (remotely), JP Anderson (remotely), Julie Bullock (remotely), Larry McGee (remotely), Matt Jaeger (remotely), Matt Matayoshi (remotely), Tamara Hayes (remotely), Undersheriff Wes Rethwill (remotely), Matt Patana (remotely), Yvonne Rivera (remotely), Lara McRea (remotely), Teri Zambon (remotely) and various members of the public and press

Recorder: Rieva Lester

Annalee Tobey said the Chehalis Community Renaissance Team (CCRT) has reached out to area businesses and shared information via pdfs and online. She said the group is working with Lewis County Together to spread news and tips about businesses' response to COVID-19 countywide. Annalee said CCRT has created a grant to cover ecommerce outreach for content management and / or online management. She said the group has \$20,000 available. Annalee said the group also has a façade grant that covers 75 percent of work for grants totaling up to \$2,500. She said CCRT is networking with others on Facebook to provide one-on-one business support.

Teri Zambon of the Centralia Downtown Association said she CDA has funding available for up to \$1,000 grant for businesses on Tower Avenue. She said the group is working with Lewis County Together to promote area businesses.

Matt Matayoshi of the Economic Development Council said the EDC is working on:

- Facebook ads
- Working Washington grants (Matt said the EDC received \$100,000 and expects to provide 10 grants totaling roughly \$10,000 apiece. He said the EDC received 160 applications for the grants.)
- Manufacturing

Alicia Bull of the Centralia-Chehalis Chamber of Commerce said the Chamber is working on:

- Creating a Lewis County facility center
- Sharing its motto of "Reboot, reopen, recover"
- Providing assistance with loans and grants
- Providing a hotline that's available five days a week

Maree Lerchen said the East Lewis County is trying to find the appropriate avenues regarding planned events, such as the Packwood Flea Market.

Tamara Hayes said Lewis County Together (www.lewiscountytogether.com) is working on:

- Operations linked to its launch (she noted it had launched a little more than a week ago)
- Providing information on area businesses (she noted the site lists more than 500 retail centers)
- Promoting businesses online, sharing information

Bob Guenther said the Foundation for Working Families and the Central Labor Council are working on union-related topics in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Larry McGee discussed work to define what the likely requirements to reopen businesses across the region will be. He discussed concerns regarding help for small businesses.

Debbie Campbell said United Way has been working with Twin Transit, Lewis County Seniors, the Boys and Girls Club and the Community Action Council. She said UW has raised \$200,000, a large portion of which has been donated to the Lewis County Seniors group. She said the group has planned Chef's Night In to help raise money.

Sen. John Braun discussed the need to get people back to work safely. He discussed work being done to update scientific models and the need to focus on reopening efforts that identify business that can operate safely, not some arbitrary "essential" category.

Commissioner Fund said Gary Mersereau with Employment Security has indicated he is willing to hold a Zoom meeting locally to field COVID-19-related employment benefits questions.

Becky Butler discussed concerns regarding the lack of emergency funding for cities and counties.

Centralia City Manager Rob Hill said Centralia is trying to support others' efforts to provide advice and services during the statewide shutdown.

Rep. Ed Orcutt said sales tax collection data for March will be available in three weeks or so. He said the drop in revenues will hit a little later, when April's data come. Rep. Orcutt said he feels the governor's order should have allowed for any business that can meet specific guidelines be allowed to get back to work.

Chehalis City Manager Jill Anderson said the city is focused on maintaining its core services. She said the city is concerned that budget impacts are going to be significant and serious. She said she fears the ability to maintain services will be very difficult.

Meeting adjourned at 2:04 p.m.