

BOCC Wrap-Up / ESC / COVID-19 meeting

May 20, 2020

3:02 p.m.

Present: Commissioner Stamper, Commissioner Fund, Commissioner Jackson, County Manager Erik Martin, Steve Walton, JP Anderson, Daleyn Coleman, Doug Carey, Scott Tinney, Steve Wohld, Jonathan Meyer, Shad Hail (remotely), John Abplanalp (remotely), Matt Patana (remotely), Scott Smitherman (remotely), Matt Jaeger (remotely), Amber Smith (remotely), Kevin McDowell (remotely), Gary Fredricks (remotely), Lee Napier (remotely), Undersheriff Wes Rethwill (remotely), Susie Palmateer (remotely), Graham Gowing (remotely), Brittini Rogers (remotely), Suzette Smith (remotely), Dianne Dorey (remotely), Frank Corbin (remotely), Arny Davis (remotely)

Recorder: Rieva Lester

JP Anderson said Lewis County has learned of four new recoveries, all in District 1. He said 25 patients out of the 35 cases have recovered, noting that there have been three fatalities.

County Manager Erik Martin said the county has learned from the Department of Commerce that the county's \$4.3 million is available.

Budget Services Manager Becky Butler said the funding will cover expenses from March 1 to Oct. 31.

Becky said a group will meet with the commissioners the following week to determine how to best allocate the funding. Becky noted that the funding cannot be used to offset lost revenue. She said it also cannot be used toward something that already was in the budget as of March 27.

Steve Wohld said county staff have been preparing work spaces for reopening, including remodels, plexiglass, line queues, etc. He thanked Matt Thuston and other Facilities crew members who have done extra work to get buildings and county parks ready for public use.

Jonathan Meyer thanked county crews and contracted employees for their preparation efforts as well as their cleaning efforts. He also discussed plans for upcoming court proceedings.

Lee Napier reviewed a return-to-work guideline for county employees. She asked for feedback regarding:

- **Prescreening employees:** Jonathan Meyer discussed requirements for taking individuals' temperatures.
- **The use of masks:** Jonathan Meyer said the courts are requiring masks in common areas. He and Scott Tinney said they will not require them within their offices.
- **Will any critical infrastructure employees be required to always wear a mask.** Susie Palmateer said Superior Court is requiring that employees wear masks if they leave or if anyone else enters the office.
- **Social distancing.**

Scott Tinney said the Law and Justice Center has not closed. He said the Clerk's Office has remained opened.

Jonathan Meyer said the PA's Office has been closed to the public. He said out-of-custody cases will change.

Undersheriff Wes Rethwill said the Sheriff's Office has been closed to the public. However, he said, the office has a phone through which the public can request help.

The group discussed the planned opening of the courts during the first week of June. Undersheriff Rethwill said the Sheriff's Office is not yet ready to open.

Jonathan Meyer said the PA's Office plans to open June 1.

Shad Hail said Juvenile plans to open June 1, though he noted that Juvenile never technically closed.

Jonathan clarified that the commissioners can reopen the county building to the public but that there is nothing determining that the Auditor's Office, Treasurer's Office and Assessor's Office would have to open.

Treasurer Arny Davis said the Treasurer's Office is ready to open June 1 or sooner. He noted that property taxes can be paid through May 29 and that he'd like to open by then.

Steve Wohld said flooring for the Auditor's Office is scheduled for June 7. He said Auditor Larry Grove has indicated he would like to wait until construction is complete to open.

Assessor Dianne Dorey said she hasn't heard any updates on the glass and stickers needed for her office.

Steve Wohld said the stickers will take five minutes to install. He said the county has plexiglass that could be used.

Matt Patana said the county should have the BOCC ready within three weeks. He said plexiglass could be used as a temporary measure to prepare the Assessor's Office.

Commissioner Jackson said he'd like to see the BOCC open as soon as possible.

Erik Martin noted that BOCC staff had voiced concern that if other offices within the building are closed, there will be increased traffic in the BOCC office.

Commissioner Stamper said he'd like to see the BOCC open by the end of the month.

Jonathan Meyer said there is still concern about having all three commissioners to attend meetings in person. He said he'd like to see minimal contact but that he understands there will be a need for an increase in face-to-face meetings.

Jonathan Meyer said he'd want to see guidelines adopted prior to reopening the buildings to the public. The group said the BOCC and Treasurer will plan to open May 28.

Steve Wohld recommended targeting the opening of the Health Building and Community Development during the week of June 8.

Erik asked if the commissioners will resume open public meetings once the buildings reopen.

Becky Butler said she'd like to talk with electeds regarding a letter she had sent out regarding budget concerns in wake of COVID-19.

Scott Tinney said the Clerk's Office has a vacant position that remains unfilled and will therefore provide a cost savings. He noted a large loss of revenue tied to passports. He said revenues for copies also have dipped. He said LFO revenues likely will be down slightly. Scott said he doesn't foresee processing passports again until July.

Arny Davis said the Treasurer's Office is cutting back on travel and seminars. He identified potential savings through the general fund.

Jonathan Meyer said the PA's Office has incurred additional expenses to backfilling a position that was vacated. He noted that the crime rate has increased, leading to increased filings. Jonathan discussed his office's telecommuting work. He said the civil side has seen a huge increase in work related to the coronavirus. He said the PA's Office will have some revenue as the result of an agreement with Centralia to help with JNET.

Becky reminded the group that expenses related to the coronavirus response must be spent by Oct. 31, 2020.

Dianne Dorey said new construction has dropped considerably. She noted that there were 2,900 to review the previous year and that this year's totals are at 2,100. Dianne said she has three vacancies for which she has opted not to fill just yet since employees are telecommuting at the time and would be available to train new hires.

Susie Palmateer said Superior Court does not bring in revenues. She said there have been not cost-saving measures identified as Superior Court already is pretty bare-boned.

Shad Hail said Juvenile brings in revenues via block grants. He said it's unclear what will happen with some of those funds. He noted that some of the funds received are tied to services Juvenile provides. Some of those services are not being provided, so there will be no reimbursements in those cases.

Brittni Rogers said District Court had looked to fill a vacant position but that it may realize savings since the position has not yet been filled. She noted that a recent remittance was \$100,000 less than normal.

Undersheriff Wes Rethwill discussed work to fill vacancies. He said training has been placed on hold. He said the jail will realize some savings for meals, etc., due to smaller jail population sizes but that revenues are down too as they are linked to interlocals. He noted that restrictions on jail population would have to continue if some current vacancies are not filled.

JP Anderson said revenue will decrease for Environmental Health as development slows. He said there is unanticipated revenue linked to the county's COVID-19 response.

Steve Walton said Risk and HR are rate-based.

Steve Wohld said the county will see decreased expenditures for utilities, fuel and paper products. He noted that the lack of the fair and interim events will affect the funds that would have been tied to those.

Josh Metcalf said Public Works placed on hold an \$800,000 county project that would have been entirely county-funded. He discussed upcoming retirements that could have an effect on his budget. Josh also discussed state funding. Josh said Public Works learned earlier in the day that two projects planned for the summer will be fully funded through the state or feds.

Lee Napier said Community Development has issued fewer permits but has been quite busy. Lee said the Assessor's Office may see an increase in permits once Community Development starts processing those again.

Dianne Dorey said the Assessor's Office would not be able to process new construction for anything after May 31 until the following year. She said everything would have to be picked up by July 1.

Jonathan Meyer asked if the Assessor's Office could process permits if they were available by June 10.

Becky said WSAC is preparing a bill to ask for certain restrictions to be lifted. She urged offices and departments to contact her with any suggestions.

Scott Smitherman said 911 will be reviewing whether user fees will have to be reviewed.

Becky said the Financial Impact Team is meeting regularly to develop plans for reacting to a potential drop in revenue.

Erik Martin said Tanner will be reaching out to offices and departments regarding strategic planning.

Steve Walton said the county received proposals from eight entities regarding the salary study.

Meeting adjourned at 4:40 p.m.