

## BOCC Wrap-Up / COVID-19

September 17, 2020

4:02 p.m.

Present: Commissioner Stamper (by phone), Commissioner Fund, Commissioner Jackson, County Manager Erik Martin, John Abplanalp, JP Anderson, Fionna Velazquez, Gary Fredricks, Undersheriff Wes Rethwill, Sara Sons, Tawni Shepherd, Lee Napier, Tammy Martin, Lara McRea

Guests: Frank Corbin, Alicia Meehan, Kelsi Hamilton, Cade Evander, Joaquin Patraea, Charles Miles, Lindsey Miles, Rene "RJ" Remund and various members of the public and press

Recorder: Rieva Lester

JP Anderson and John Abplanalp provided a recap of the weekly COVID-19 update, noting that the county had 448 total confirmed cases as of Sept. 16.

JP noted that Lewis County's infection rate is significantly higher than those of area counties but that Lewis County is continuing to work to move toward opening schools quickly and safely.

JP discussed an upcoming agreement with Infection Prevention & Antimicrobial Consultants (IPAC), a consulting firm offering services to area school districts to help the schools learn how to reopen safely.

JP discussed the need for concrete metrics as the schools prepare for further reopening efforts. JP said Pierce County has issued a health order requiring in-person education. He said Pierce is a moderate-risk county, noting that Pierce has a lower case-rate than Lewis County. JP said Lewis County can use that as a model to create its plan for moving forward.

JP said IPAC's goal is to review each school's plans by Sept. 28. He noted that many if not all of the area schools have considered the "A/B" model that Mossyrock is using.

JP said recurring closures also must be considered when weighing the reopening of schools.

Erik recapped what Lewis County Public Health & Social Services is working on:

- IPAC working with the area school districts
- Pushing the state Department of Health DOH for concrete models to help in decision-making efforts
- Reviewing Pierce County's model for in-person learning
- Meeting twice-weekly with workgroups
- Taking input and questions from the public

JP noted that transportation will be a challenge as students return to school.

### TO-DO LIST / RECAP

**Health staff:** Complete Q and A

Fionna Velazquez said the county has received cloth masks for low-income students, N95 masks for school nurses and disinfecting wipes. She said those will be distributed to area schools.

Erik said the state Public Works Board was allocated \$25 million for broadband projects, of which \$17.7 million was earmarked for construction projects. Erik said the Public Works Boards received requests totaling \$76 million.

Alicia Meehan of Winlock read a letter from her 14-year-old daughter, Maddy, who is struggling with the hurdles distance learning presents. She noted that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicate that children are at a lower risk for contracting COVID-19 than adults and that transmission rates in schools may be low.

Kelsi Hamilton questioned why Dr. Wood rescinded her sports recommendation but that the schools remain closed.

Cade Evander of Napavine shared his concerns about the effects school and athletic closures will have on scholarship opportunities. He said seniors should be allowed to attend class and participate in sports, noting that he has had to travel out of state to compete.

Joaquin Patraea said he feels like he is being robbed of his senior year, especially considering sports, prom, etc. He said online learning is not enough.

Charles Miles expressed his concerns with distance learning, noting that students don't have a one-size-fits-all learning experience. He also shared concerns with internet issues. Charles said his sister has concerns about being left behind.

Lindsey Miles shared her concerns about school closures.

Rene "RJ" Remund noted that other schools across the state have reopened without issues.

Alicia Howard said she wants to see a deep dive into local COVID numbers, wants to have parents added to the school group that meets weekly and wants to see answers to the questions posed during the Sept. 10 COVID-19 Education Forum. John Abplanalp discussed the expanded information being provided in weekly updates instead of smaller information being provided daily. Alicia asked the county to release cases by zip code so she can know her personal risk. John said risks are more related to mask use, social distancing and how many people an individual interacts than they are to locations, because the zip codes would identify where the individual lives but not where they've been. JP discussed the merits of identifying cases by zip codes.

Commissioner Fund discussed Coronavirus Relief Funding available.

Meeting adjourned at 5:07 p.m.