

Mayors' Meeting

February 5, 2021

9 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Stamper, Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Swope, Peter Lahmann, JP Anderson, Lara McRea, Katie Conradi, Jill Anderson, Chehalis Mayor Dennis Dawes, Napavine Mayor Shawn O'Neill, Toledo Mayor Steve Dobosh, Centralia Mayor Sue Luond, Pam Peiper of U.S. Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler's office, Napavine Police Chief Salyers, Christine Nhan of Sen. Murray's office, Cody Duncan of TransAlta, Sarah Kohout of Sen. Cantwell's Office

Guests: Susan DeLaire, Edna Fund, The Chronicle, Nic Scott, others

Recorder: Rieva Lester

Commissioner Swope said he met with TransAlta and the state Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) earlier in the week. He said DFW is considering an agreement with TransAlta that would transfer Lewis County's Industrial Park at TransAlta (IPAT) lands to DFW. DFW would use the land to create a haven for potential endangered species. Commissioner Swope said the 4,400 acres are designated for industrial use. He said the move would be a massive economic hit. Commissioner Swope urged the area's mayors to write letters in opposition. Commissioner Swope said the county has invested roughly \$10 million in infrastructure at the site.

Commissioner Stamper said the county needs to demand that WDW be transparent.

Chehalis Mayor Dennis Dawes shared concerns about the water rights that would be lost if the land transfer were to take place. Mayor Dawes suggested the mayors write a joint letter in opposition of the proposal.

Centralia Mayor Sue Luond also voiced concerns about the proposal.

Commissioner Stamper suggested the county write a letter expressing area leaders' concerns about the proposals and then have the mayors sign.

Cody Duncan of TransAlta said the proposed acquisition would not affect the Skookumchuck and Chehalis River water rights. He said TransAlta is working to create a water bank separate from the proposed agreement with DFW. He said TransAlta will reach out to all of the mayors to ensure they have correct information from which to base their positions.

Commissioner Stamper said he would reach out to Mayors Dan Mortensen and Randy Sasser regarding the proposed letter.

JP Anderson expressed concerns about HB 1152, which would create regionalized health jurisdictions. He discussed problems associated with taking local control away from the counties and creating regionalized jurisdictions.

The group discussed vaccine distribution, the increased number of COVID-19 cases and testing improvements.

JP urged mayors to direct constituents to the state's Phase Finder tool to sign up for vaccines. He expressed concerns with the number of out-of-county residents receiving vaccines in Lewis County. He noted that of the 6,422 vaccines administered locally, only 4,105 were administered to county residents.

JP discussed a plan to work with Bird's-Eye Medical to set up vaccination sites locally. He said Lewis County also is creating a phone line residents can call to get on the local vaccination list.

The group discussed concerns with other bills before the state Legislature.

Roundtable

Napavine Mayor Shawn O'Neill asked what Napavine would stand to lose if it rescinded its declaration of emergency.

Mayor O'Neill left at 10:13 a.m.

Centralia Mayor Sue Luond provided updates on traffic improvement projects the city is working on as well as its use of CARES funding.

Toledo Mayor Steve Dobosh discussed a traffic change in Toledo (a street in front of the school was switched to a one-way street) and improvements in city parks. He said he met with Commissioner Stamper earlier in the week to discuss the proposals regarding the Toledo airport.

Mayor Dawes discussed destruction a drunken driver caused at the new Penny Playground. He discussed said a company is interested in the former Children's Museum site and that a car wash company has reached out to the city regarding development. He said the city has been inundated by records requests from a specific individual.

Peter Lahmann invited the group to the Historical Museum's annual meeting Feb. 16.

Sarah Kohout of Senator Cantwell's Office urged the group to reach out if any help or information is needed.

Christine Nhan of Sen. Murray's office discussed pushes for a \$15 minimum wage, child care, unemployment stimulus, etc.

Pam Peiper of U.S. Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler's office said appropriation requests are due March 1.

Commissioner Stamper discussed the county's request to have the state consider the Toledo airport during its study of potential sites for a regional airport. He said there's no chance Toledo will be selected. He said the county chose to have its name on the list to potentially secure grants for other improvements at the airport.

Meeting adjourned at 10:42 a.m.