

Mayors' Meeting

April 2, 2021

9:03 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Stamper, Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Swope, JP Anderson, Becky Butler, Steve Wohld, Andy Caldwell, Meja Handlen, Chehalis Mayor Dennis Dawes, Centralia Mayor Sue Luond, Centralia City Manager Rob Hill, Morton Mayor Dan Mortensen, Mossyrock Treasurer Angie Hartmann, Wes Anderson of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Katie Conradi, Toledo Mayor Steve Dobosh, Lewis County Prosecuting Attorney Jonathan Meyer, Lee Napier, Pam Peiper of Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler's office, Sarah Kohout of Sen. Cantwell's office, Alison Puckett, Vader Mayor Joe Schey, Centralia Port Commissioner Peter Lahmann, Chehalis City Manager Jill Anderson, Toledo Treasurer Michelle Whitten, Pe Ell Mayor Lonnie Willey, Napavine Mayor Shawn O'Neill

Guests: Susan DeLaire, Edna J. Fund, Nic Scott, Susan DeLaire

Recorder: Rieva Lester

American Rescue Plan

Becky Butler discussed funding that will be available as a result of the American Rescue Plan (ARP). She and Commissioner Swope outlined other funding sources available and encouraged cities and other governmental entities to access those funding sources.

Becky said the county will receive its ARP funding directly from the U.S. Treasury while the cities' portions likely will be allocated through the state.

Becky said WSAC is working on a breakdown of the various funding sources available to use as additional funding, match funds, etc.

The group discussed funding available to help with rent and utilities. Meja Handlen said the assistance will cover utilities such as water, sewer, garbage, internet and phone. Meja said landlords can instigate the application process for rental assistance and that the funding is available for those at or below 56,500 for a family of four in the last two months.

TransAlta

Commissioner Swope said the county is working on a possible plan regarding TransAlta's proposed sale to the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). He praised TransAlta's recent outreach efforts.

Former Commissioner Edna J. Fund praised TransAlta's efforts to reach out to the Flood Authority and the Office of the Chehalis Basin regarding the future of the Skookumchuck dam.

COVID-19

JP Anderson said vaccination shipments have improved and that availability continues to improve. He noted that eligibility will change to those age 16 and older in mid-April. He said work is being done to establish mobile clinics to help those with transportation concerns and those who are homebound. JP said Twin Transit is coordinating to help transport individuals to the mass vaccination events.

Legislative session update

Commissioner Pollock said two bills being closely watched at the state level include SB 5475 and SB 5476, which would address the state Supreme Court's recent Blake decision regarding the possession of a controlled substance.

Lewis County Prosecuting Attorney further discussed the proposed bills. He said it sounds like the Blake fix likely will be done at the state level.

Roundtable

Centralia Mayor Sue Luond says streetscape projects are underway. City Manager Rob Hill said the children's museum project is moving forward. He said the former King Solomon will become a La Quinta hotel. Mayor Luond commended Peter Lahmann and his group of volunteers for their cleanup efforts.

Peter Lahmann said Stihl Northwest held its grand opening the previous week.

Chehalis Mayor Dennis Dawes said Reclamation Park's ball fields have opened for tournaments. He said Penny Playground's equipment has been repaired and that turf repairs should be completed soon. Mayor Dawes said Honda plans to begin work on a dealership site soon. He said a credit union project and a car wash project also are moving along. Chehalis City Manager Jill Anderson said Chehalis also is working on streetscape projects.

Morton Mayor Dan Mortensen said houses are being sold faster than they can be built. He said work is being done on the "lift station" for the waste treatment plant.

Pe Ell Mayor Lonnie Willey said Dollar General is building its new facility. He said the housing market also is hot in Pe Ell.

Toledo Mayor Steve Dobosh said the city has been working on park improvements. He echoed comments about the hot housing market. Mayor Dobosh said Toledo is looking for grants to finish a water line park.

Mossyrock Treasurer Angie Hartmann said the city plans to host a two-day 4th of July event.

Steve Dobosh mourned the loss of a city councilmember.

Pam Peiper of Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler's office said the Congresswoman is working to help create grant program that would help with affordable housing. She said Rep. Herrera also is working to help with mental health

Sarah Kahout of Sen. Cantwell's discussed work being done to provide federal funding for infrastructure.

Wes Anderson of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) said upcoming and ongoing projects include:

- Highway 6, including replacement of the Highway 6 bridge and a fish culvert
- Interstate 5 interchanges
- Highway 507

Former Commissioner Fund said the state's proposed capital budget includes \$70 million for flood projects. She said projects can be viewed at fiscal.wa.gov.

Commissioner Stamper provided the following updates:

- The Washington State Patrol has erected a monument in honor of slain Trooper Justin Schaffer.
- Twin Transit has unveiled a new hydrogen bus.
- The state's proposed budget includes \$8 million for the Packwood sewer project.

Meeting adjourned at 10:29 a.m.