

COVID-19 funding

April 28, 2021

10:38 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Swope, County Manager Erik Martin, Becky Butler, Chris Roden, Richard DeBolt, Willie Painter, JP Anderson, Rep. Peter Abbarno, Rob Hill, Jeff Baine, Katie Conradi, Grace Jimenez, Jill Anderson

Guests: Lauren Day, Teri Zambon, Ron Averill, Edna J. Fund, Bret Rodersen

Recorder: Rieva Lester

Becky Butler reviewed information available on the National Association of Counties (NACO) website at <https://www.naco.org/resources/featured/american-rescue-plan-act-funding-breakdown>.

Rep. Peter Abbarno discussed funding awarded to Lewis County projects through the state's recently-passed budget. He stressed the need for Lewis County to diversify its economic portfolio.

The meeting paused at 10:52 a.m. due to technical difficulties (lost audio). The meeting resumed at 10:54 a.m.

Rep. Abbarno continued discussing projects funded through the capital budget. He stressed the need for outreach and efforts to secure rural broadband.

Richard DeBolt said the Port of Chehalis withdrew itself as lead on the grain terminal project. He said the EDC will take the lead.

Rep. Abbarno said it's possible the Legislature will call a special session to address transportation bonding.

The meeting paused at 11:03 a.m. due to technical difficulties (lost audio). The meeting resumed at 11:06 a.m.

Becky discussed the need to seek outside funding to protect local dollars. Rep. Abbarno suggested piggybacking projects too.

Rep. Abbarno and Richard DeBolt said that projects already in the works and those with multiple stakeholders are more likely to receive funding.

The meeting paused at 11:15 a.m. due to technical difficulties (lost audio). The meeting resumed at 11:18 a.m.

Becky said the BOCC is considering an MOU with the EDC to establish a coordinated effort regarding the American Rescue Act plans.

PUD Manager Chris Roden said the PUD has identified the following as its planning pillars:

- Cost effective
- Future proof
- Technology neutral
- Equal access
- Scalable

Chris said the PUD is securing partnerships and meeting with potential contractors for its broadband efforts. He said funding and asset planning will continue in 2022 and that construction will take place beginning in 2023.

Chris said federal, state and local funding sources likely will be available.

Chris said the next steps include finalization of designs and financials. He said the PUD is looking for ways to fund the \$1 million purchase of 60 reels of “backbone” fiber to help catapult the project to a “shovel ready” status.

Willie Painter said the PUD would see a 17- to 23-week lead time if it were to order the 60 reels now. He said the timeline – and costs – could increase exponentially as time progresses and other entities access funding for similar projects.

Ron Averill asked if the PUD would be able to help City Light customers.

Rep. Abbarno suggested reaching out to City Light and the city of Centralia.

Becky said allocation proposals will be reviewed May 5. She said offices and departments will be asked to identify a point of contact for potential grants.

Meeting adjourned at 11:44 a.m.