

County Manager Update

March 7, 2022

11:01 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Swope, Commissioner Grose, County Manager Erik Martin, Josh Metcalf, Chris Panush, Alison Puckett, Lee Napier, Sherri Dokken, Tom Stanton, Meja Handlen, Katie Conradi

Guest: Nic Scott

Recorder: Rieva Lester

Public Works / DEM Update

Commercial Driver's License (CDL) tuition reimbursement: Erik Martin said new laws have changed the requirements for CDL certification. Josh Metcalf said the process used to be handled in-house but that the new laws require an outside resource. He said he has found a site locally that can provide the training: Western Driving School provides a four-week training course. He said he is proposing the county cover the costs through a tuition reimbursement process.

Short-term closure of Harrison Ave.: Josh said the contractor will close Harrison Avenue in Centralia overnight, from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. weekdays, through June as crews work to install sewer infrastructure for an upcoming development.

Airports update: Erik said he would like to reach out to local legislators for funding to help decommission an underground storage tank at the Toledo Airport and replace it with a small above-ground tank. Josh discussed the funding needs associated with the proposed project. Josh said several hangar leases are ending soon and that the hangars will return to county ownership at the conclusion of those leases.

Utilities update: Erik noted that the commissioners made headway regarding Water-Sewer District 2 with an agreement the commissioners signed on March 4. Josh said the Vader water plant is now operating "in the black" rather than at a deficit. Josh noted that water loss at the Vader plant has improved significantly, from 33 percent in 2020 to 18 percent in 2021. Josh said the Middle Fork water plant continues to be plagued by breaks and leaks. He said significant leaks have been repaired in two 2-inch water mains.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) grant for LCWD #1 reservoir: Erik cautioned that work on CDBG grants for other governmental entities require an extensive amount of staff support from Lewis County. He and Josh said those costs should be considered as the county considers helping other governmental entities with CDBG grants.

Interlocal agreement (ILA) with Cowlitz for municipal solid waste (MSW) disposal: Josh said he's asked staff to review costs associated with contracting for trucking services for disposal of municipal solid waste.

North Lewis County Industrial Access and West Connector: Josh said a traffic study for the NLCIA is moving forward and that WSDOT has taken the lead. He said the county and the city have discussed the need to address a “West Connector” plan, to include potential work on Scheuber Road and Highway 6. Josh said combining efforts could save funds as well as traffic headaches for commuters.

Phase II planning: Erik discussed the Department of Ecology’s (DOE) stormwater program and noted that development in Lewis County is pushing it toward becoming a “Phase II” community under the DOE. He and Josh discussed the additional costs, including staffing needs, that would be associated with a move to a “Phase II community” under Ecology. Erik said there may be a need for impact fees to offset future costs.

Commissioner Swope left at 11:50 a.m.

Rising material costs: Erik discussed rising costs for fuel and materials. He said chipseal work likely will be affected.

Announcements: Erik said work continues on updating the county’s no-spray agreements. Josh noted that individuals steal county signs to use as target practice and that the county pays to replace the signs.

Meeting ended at noon.