

## **ARPA planning**

**May 10, 2022**

**11:02 a.m.**

Present: Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Swope, Commissioner Grose, County Manager Erik Martin, Shad Hail, Ricolena Anders, Austin Majors, Lee Montgomery, Samantha Mitchell, Susan Wickert, Mason Keller, Vanessa Conwell, Jamie Fleming, Sara Bumgardner, JP Anderson, Lindsey Shankle, Community Services Officer Jerry Elliott

Guest(s): Nic Scott

Recorder: Rieva Lester

Health Educator Lindsey Shankle said research indicates that “the most important thing a child needs to be resilient is a stable and committed relationship with a supportive adult.” She said a survey conducted in the fall found that Lewis County as a whole has little awareness of the mental health challenges local youth face. She discussed creating a mentorship program to address those needs.

Juvenile Court Administrator Shad Hail said he would like the county to earmark \$500,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to create a countywide mentorship program available for every child in Lewis County. Shad and others provided details about the proposed mentorship program, noting that it would be a partnership between Lewis County Public Health and Social Services and Juvenile Court.

Lewis County Juvenile Court Probation Manager Ricolena Anders, Probation Officer Lee Montgomery, Young Life Director Mason Keller, Youth Advocacy Center of Lewis County Child Forensic Interviewer Samantha Mitchell, Morton mentor coordinator Jamie Fleming and Community Services Officer Jerry Elliott discussed the benefits the project would provide.

Shad Hail said the \$500,000 request would cover the costs of the following through 2026:

- A supervisor in Juvenile Court to oversee the mentor program
- Mentor training
- Software
- Background checks

Becky Butler noted that the commissioners had allocated \$200,000 of the county’s ARPA funds for Public Health and Social Services. JP said Public Health and Social Services has identified savings – such as having Lindsey Shankle’s position paid through the one-tenth of 1 percent fund and other funding sources – that would help free up money that could then be allocated to the mentor program.

The commissioners said they would further discuss the proposal at a future meeting.

Meeting ended at 12:10 p.m.