

County Manager Update

December 18, 2023

10:16 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Swope, Commissioner Brummer, Commissioner Pollock, County Manager Ryan Barrett, Daleyn Coleman, Josh Metcalf, Amber Smith, Doug Carey, Becky Butler

Guest(s):

Recorder: Rieva Lester

Public comment: None.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) project updates: Becky Butler said the Vader Water project is ready to go out to bid so she wanted to touch base on the use of \$2.9 million in ARPA funding for the project. Ryan Barrett said Vader has indicated it's unlikely it would be able to repay the \$2.9 million as outlined in its contract should it take the water system back.

The group discussed diverting the ARPA funding to 911 or another project instead.

The commissioners said they would like to fast-track the county's Ceres Hill Bridge project. They said their No. 2 priority would be the water project for the fairgrounds.

The commissioners said they are not proceeding with ARPA funding for the Vader Water project.

Office of Public Defense / Public Defense Coordination: Amber Smith said the State Director of the Office of Public Defense has requested the state Supreme Court take the following steps:

- Issue an order imposing a 90-day moratorium on the assignment or appointment of new felony out-of-custody clients to public defenders, effective January 1, 2024.
- Issue an order restricting assigning authorities in each jurisdiction to assign or appoint new clients to public defenders only if their current open caseloads are below 60 percent of current State caseload limits.
- Issue an order that the restricted caseload limit will remain in effect until the adoption of new caseload standards which are currently being developed by the Washington State Bar Associations Council on Public Defense (CPD) as previously requested by the Supreme Court.

Amber said she is requesting the county consider hiring a full-time staff attorney to handle indigent defense cases.

Personnel – approval re: hiring of Parks position: Ryan Barrett said the discussion is being postponed.

Calendars: Commissioner Swope discussed an upcoming solar meeting planned for later in the day, and Commissioner Brummer discussed an upcoming RCO meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 11:18 a.m.