

ESC / Directors' Update

January 21, 2026

9 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Brummer, Commissioner Swope, County Manager Ryan Barrett, Becky Butler, Wes Anderson, Rocky Lyon, Geoff Soderquist, Nate Kunishige, Gabe Anzelini, Meja Handlen, Amanda Price, Angie Hodge, Treasurer Arny Davis, Assessor Ross Nielson, Erika Katt, Matt Patana, Graham Gowing, Casey Mauermann, Caroline Garibay, Fionna Velazquez, Grace Jimenez, Kirsty Ward, Mindy Brooks, Marni Larson, Natalie Kamieniecki, Shelly Stewart, Clerk Scott Tinney, Sherri Dokken, Tom Stanton

Guest(s):

Recorder: Rieva Lester

Public comment: None.

ESC

VPN changes and IT equipment costs: Nate Kunishige provided an update on upcoming VPN changes. He also cautioned staff about increased costs – roughly 30 percent increases – for storage software.

Electeds' roundtable

Assessor Ross Nielson said the county's conversion to a new tax software program is ahead of schedule.

DIRECTORS' UPDATE

Meja Handlen discussed a notice of hearing regarding Ordinance 1372, which would repeal Ordinance 1354 and remove from Lewis County Code Chapter 8.80, which regulated sterile needle and syringe exchanges operating in Lewis County and made violations of the chapter a civil infraction or a misdemeanor.

Rieva Lester discussed a resolution to appoint Joe Mano to the Civil Service Commission.

Amanda Price discussed the declaration of surplus personal property.

Angie Hodge discussed a resolution to amend the 2026-2027 collective bargaining agreement between Lewis County and AFSCME Council 2, Local 1341, effective January 1, 2026.

Ryan Barrett discussed the declaration of surplus personal property, vehicles and equipment.

Wes Anderson discussed a resolution to approve a Maintenance Agreement with Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) regarding work by WSDOT crews.

Matt Patana discussed resolution to accept grant funds from the Department of Agriculture for Friendlyville improvements at the SWW Fairgrounds.

Commissioner Brummer made a motion to move one notice item, two consent items and six deliberation items to the Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2026, BOCC agenda. Commissioner Swope seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Announcements / new business

Rocky Lyon discussed the county's ongoing flood recovery efforts, including the vouchers for free flood debris disposal. He said the county has spent roughly \$20,000 on labor, hauling and disposal costs. He discussed ending the voucher program, noting that it appears some individuals are trying to take advantage of the program. The commissioners said taxpayers should not be footing the bill for non-flood debris cleanup at Cascade Peaks.

Meja Handlen invited employees and the public to an upcoming polar bear plunge fundraiser for Special Olympics planned for 10 a.m. Jan. 24.

Meja said the "point in time" homelessness count will take place at the end of the month.

Wednesday Workshop

Flood recovery / Conex boxes and RVs in the Cowlitz and Tilton rivers: Erika Katt said RVs and Conex boxes remain in the Cowlitz and Tilton rivers following the December 2025 flood. Commissioner Brummer said he will work with Erika to find a solution.

Road vacation workshop: Wes Anderson recommended the commissioners allow Public Works personnel to vet road vacation requests prior to accepting vacation petitions from the public. The commissioners directed staff to codify the department's process and to require petitioners to pay for surveys when they request a road vacation.

Minute folders: Commissioner Brummer made a motion to approve minute folders for the weeks of Dec. 8, 15, 22 and 29, 2025.

Potential resolution for amended levy information: Ryan said the Department of Revenue has indicated the county does not need to take action now to correct the error on the recent levy certification as it will be addressed within the 2027 levy certification process.

Meeting ended at 10:28 a.m.