

Mayors' Meeting

September 6, 2019

9:03 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Jackson, Commissioner Fund, Toledo Mayor Steve Dobosh, Morton Mayor Dan Mortensen, Dena Horton of Sen. Maria Cantwell's office, Chehalis City Manager Jill Anderson, Dale Lewis of U.S. Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler's office, Chehalis Mayor Dennis Dawes, Wes Anderson of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Devin Reck of WSDOT, Celeste Dimichina of WSDOT, Chad Hancock of WSDOT, Centralia Port Commissioner Peter Lahmann, Winlock Mayor Don Bradshaw, Centralia Mayor Lee Coumbs, Chehalis City Manager Rob Hill, Matt Jaeger of Lewis County's IT department, EDC Executive Director Matt Matayoshi (9:06 a.m.), Mossyrock Mayor Randy Sasser (9:27 a.m.), Christine Nhan with Sen. Patty Murray's office (9:30 a.m.)

Guests: Lynnette Hoffman, Brandon Svenson, Anne Randt

Recorder: Rieva Lester

Attendees introduced themselves.

Commissioner Jackson discussed the county's WATV ordinance and efforts to extend the use of WATVs to the west end of the county.

Commissioner Fund said Lewis County is weighing its options regarding possible fireworks bans.

Centralia Mayor Lee Coumbs said Centralia also is looking at measures to limit or ban fireworks use when the fire danger is high.

Chehalis Mayor Dennis Dawes said the county's various governmental entities should consider a united front regarding fireworks use. He said he also was surprised that nonprofits have not weighed in. Mayor Dawes said illegal fireworks -- not legal fireworks -- are the problem.

Commissioner Jackson said the county is considering implanting a noise ordinance.

Winlock Mayor Don Bradshaw discussed the effect loud fireworks can have on veterans.

Toledo Mayor Steve Dobosh discussed the community efforts supported by fireworks sales.

Commissioner Jackson said he serves on the state 911 advisory committee, which is looking at funding options. He said he also has been appointed to the state inoperability executive committee. He said the county will meet again with TCOMM in October.

Mayor Bradshaw asked if federal funding is available, noting that the county's equipment needs updated.

Dena Horton said Cowlitz County recently received federal funding to upgrade its equipment.

Mossyrock Mayor Randy Sasser joined at 9:27 a.m.

Commissioner Jackson said there have been discussions about a possible initiative but that nothing formal has been decided.

Mayor Dawes said he hopes cities and rural areas are included in any future discussions. He, Commissioner Jackson and Mayor Bradshaw discussed the need for communication and collaboration. Mayor Mortensen, Commissioner Fund and others discussed the need for a united front if the request were to go to the taxpayers.

Christine Nhan with Sen. Patty Murray's office joined at 9:30 a.m.

Mayor Bradshaw invited the group to a Short Course on Local Planning workshop planned for Sept. 19 at the Olequa Senior Center.

Commissioner Fund reminded the group that the upcoming Legislative Roundtable has been moved to Nov. 1.

Announcements

Commissioner Fund noted that the meeting would be the final Mayors' Meeting for Dena Horton of Sen. Maria Cantwell's office, who has taken a new job with the senator's office.

Commissioner Fund said the Office of the Chehalis Basin said the Chehalis Tribe has noted that dams are not its first choice but that it is open to hearing about the proposed water retention facility, which would be designed to address fishing concerns as well as flooding.

Mayor Dawes said it's troubling that the public doesn't understand that the facility is designed to address fishing issues as well as flooding.

Dale Lewis of U.S. Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler's office said Rep. Herrera Beutler has introduced the CARES act to address chronic absenteeism in schools. He said she also helped secure funding to combat opioid abuse across the state.

Dena Horton of Sen. Maria Cantwell's office said the senator is working on affordable housing, as well as education and job-training opportunities. Dena said Sen. Cantwell is urging the Trump administration not to make cuts to the SNAP program.

Christine Nhan with Sen. Patty Murray's office discussed the various topics the senator has been working on, including collective bargaining, child care, SNAP, etc.

Wes Anderson of WSDOT gave an update on various projects, including the Chamber Way interchange, SR 6, SR 506 bridge replacement and others. Wes thanked Commissioner Jackson for his help with the Rush Road interchange.

Matt Matayoshi of the EDC discussed the Winlock Benaroya project. He discussed upcoming meetings with site selectors. Matt said the area's workforce study is being updated.

Toledo Mayor Steve Dobosh said Cheese Days, the bluegrass festival and Threshing Bee were a success. He invited the group to the upcoming Walk in the Park, Shindig and Barbecue Bonanza events.

Morton Mayor Dan Mortensen said the Cowlitz Basin ORV club has been working to develop WATV trails in the Gifford Pinchot, but that the feds appear to be slow to respond. He said only 18 miles of trails have been opened to WATV use over the last six years. Mayor Mortensen asked for help convincing the federal government to allow for WATV use of the forest trails. Mayor Mortensen discussed the lowering of Riffe Lake and its effects on tourism and recreational use. He invited the group to the grand opening of the new City Hall.

Mossyrock Mayor Randy Sasser discussed the lowered lake levels. Mayor Sasser discussed concerts planned at the Mossyrock amphitheater. He said a fireworks show is planned for the venue later in the month. He said the city is looking to secure more grants for the park.

Peter Lahmann of the Port of Centralia thanked the county for its help regarding the Stihl project. He discussed the need to look at requirements – such as sidewalks, etc. – for industrial sites. He also invited the group to the Sept. 14 dedication of the bridge being renamed in honor of Regina Clark.

Chehalis Mayor Dennis Dawes said the Music in the Park events drew fantastic crowds. He said the city is working on Strategic Planning. He said developers are working on the airport site. He discussed a recent groundbreaking ceremony and said the Penny Playground groundbreaking ceremony will take place soon. Mayor Dawes discussed the opioid epidemic and the need to combat overprescribing issues.

Winlock Mayor Don Bradshaw said Egg Days and Pickersfest were great successes for the city. He noted that fireworks sales help raise funds for the various community events. He said illegal fireworks are the root of the fireworks problems areas face. Mayor Bradshaw discussed work to extend the water lines and work to develop the Mickelsen Parkway project. He thanked Commissioner Jackson, Commissioner Fund and Matt Matayoshi for their help to move the Benaroya project forward.

Centralia Mayor Lee Coumbs discussed school construction projects. He discussed a Southwest Clean Air effort to reduce the reliance on wood stoves on heavily populated areas. He said funding has been made available to help homeowners switch to other heat sources.

Centralia City Manager Rob Hill discussed commercial and industrial growth, including the addition of Dollar General, Winco, Stihl and La Quinta. He said the sports center expansion will draw even more tourists to the area.

Commissioner Jackson said he is working on a project to fix aeration problems at the Toledo park. He said there are five beavers that also need to be relocated. He discussed the group effort that has helped move the Benaroya project forward. Commissioner Jackson discussed the county's community-based strategic planning effort, noting that the county's consultant, Tanner, will be reaching out through focus groups, etc., and will be on site Sept. 20 to meet with city leaders and others.

Commissioner Fund discussed the need for dates and objectives – and “measurables” – in the strategic planning process.

Peter Lahmann invited the group to the Sept. 21 UFO event.

Meeting adjourned at 10:47 a.m.