

Mayors / Managers meeting

January 6, 2017

9 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Stamper, Commissioner Fund, Commissioner Jackson, SW Washington Fair Manager Tamara Hayes, Community Development Director Lee Napier, Chehalis City Manager Jill Anderson, Centralia Mayor Bonnie Canaday, Morton Mayor Dan Mortensen, Pe Ell Mayor Lonnie Willey, Winlock Mayor Lonnie Dowell, Vader Mayor Ken Smith, Chehalis Mayor Dennis Dawes, Centralia City Manager Rob Hill, Shari Hildreth (District Director for Rep. Herrera Beutler), Harry Bhagwandin (Onalaska civic leader), Napavine Mayor John Sayers, Dena Horton (SW Washington Outreach Director for Sen. Cantwell's office), Toledo Mayor Steve Dobosh

Recorder: Rieva Lester

Members of the group introduced themselves.

Tamara Hayes of the SW Washington Fair invited the group to a public meeting planned for Jan. 31. She said she'd like to hear what people love about the fair as well as what they'd like to see changed. She said she envisioned interactive maps pinpointing where agri-tourism takes place throughout the county. She talked about activities such as dump truck races, dunk tanks, cow-milking contests, etc. She invited the mayors and city leaders to apply to have vendor booths during the fair. She also said she would love to visit any of the areas.

Dan Mortensen suggested Tamara contact the Morton Chamber of Commerce.

Tamara Hayes talked about rate increases at the fair, which she said can be offset by annual rates for groups that use the fairgrounds frequently. She then gave an overview of her background.

Commissioner Fund talked about community competitions. Dennis Dawes suggested limiting those types of competitions to the high school level in an effort to avoid dividing the communities. He also talked about how fairs are becoming more of a retail event instead of focusing on their communities.

Tamara said she plans to incorporate then and now photos of the fair.

Dennis Dawes talked about the fair's permanent buildings that were lost to flooding.

Harry Bhagwandin asked if the fair has its own float. Tamara said the fair does not. She said she'd love to have someone to create one.

Commissioner Fund talked about big-name performers the fair paid to perform in the past. Tamara said money constraints have limited the fair to smaller-name performers. She said sponsorship could help change that for the future.

Bonnie Canaday said Centralia's Christmas light show drew in lots of traffic. She said the biggest night drew 616 cars for a total of more than \$2,400.

Rob Hill said Centralia has broken ground on the spray park on Pearl. He also said the city is going to award a second round of lodging tax grants. He said the city is putting out an additional \$50,000 in funding. He then talked about unfunded mandates Centralia faces, such as LEOFF I retirees' for-life benefits.

Dennis Dawes said legislators have talked about wanting to merge LEOFF I and TERS I. He said if that happens, the costs will be shifted back to the cities.

Bonnie Canaday said the cities are responsible for everything from glasses to nursing home coverage – for life – for the LEOFF I retirees.

Rob Hill said other unfunded mandates Centralia faces include: administration of state programs such as Growth Management, Stormwater, Shoreline; sentencing requirements through courts, such as DUI sentencing regarding mandated penalties, which includes medical coverage; law enforcement training; and indigent defense.

Dan Mortensen said Morton also held a drive-through Christmas light display. He said a golf-cart parade kicked off the event. He said the city is still digging out from heavy snowfall. For unfunded mandates, he identified the following: court-appointed attorneys, attorney fees, DUI / driving while suspended. For one year in jail, it would be \$18,000 plus medical costs, he said. He also talked about the high costs of water treatment plants, etc.

Ken Smith said that in addition to previously discussed unfunded mandates, Vader also faces the high costs of state audits and water treatment facility costs. On a positive note, he said the city secured a grant for installing streetlights and paving.

Lonnie Dowell said Winlock also held a Christmas tree-lighting ceremony. He said the city used a small live tree. He said unfunded mandates woes echo those already discussed: jail medical costs, interpreters, attorney fees, and audits (which he said cost the city \$12,000 this last round).

Steve Dobosh said Toledo also decorated a live tree. Theirs was a 20-foot tree, he said. He said the city has hired Steve Bluhet as its Public Works director. He said the city's police officer accepted a position elsewhere. He said the city is slowing bringing the new water tank online. He said Cool and Connected is moving right along and that a phone conference is planned in January. He said Toledo was one of five in the nation to get the grant. As far as unfunded mandates, he said Toledo faces the same constraints as the other small cities.

Dennis Dawes talked about the Christmas light displays Chehalis had. He said Community Development has been busy with two upcoming schools as well as development at the airport. He said the city has created a brochure explaining the city's upcoming ballot measure. Dennis talked about the difference between court rulings and state mandates. He also talked about the reduction in state-shared revenues. He lambasted sales tax revenue changes and talked about marijuana legislation and the monies going to the state rather than the small cities. He discussed the court monies going to the state rather than the cities. He talked about the Public Work Trust Fund, which he said will evaporate. He also further discussed the LEOFF I / TERS I merge, which he said will put cities and counties on the hook.

Jill Anderson said Chehalis has hired a Community Development Director.

Dennis Dawes said he has met with Fire District 6 about future annexation(s). Dennis said they'll meet again in February.

Ken Smith asked about the three new businesses going in. Dennis Dawes said there has not yet been an announcement about the biosolids company. He said a decision is expected in January 2017. He said if that moves forward, there could be growth in the outlying areas as workers seek housing, etc.

John Sayers said Napavine saw success when Cardinal Glass came in. John said each year, the city has to look to see if it will have to cut, etc. as it grapples with unfunded mandates. He said the city was able to pass a budget despite recent turmoil (the resignation of two council members). John gave an overview of the city's Christmas celebration. He said the 2017 Funtime Festival will include sponsorship from the Lions Club.

Bonnie Canaday said Centralia is working to go paperless.

Shari Hildreth of Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler's office said Herrera Beutler will sign a Western Caucus letter to President-elect Trump.

Dena Horton of Sen. Cantwell's office said her office has tickets are available for the inauguration. She said Sen. Cantwell is among a group that submitted a bill regarding gulf drilling. She said Cantwell is reviewing energy standards. She said her office is working with the Corps of Engineers.

Lee Napier said it will soon be time for the Planned Growth Committee. She said discussions will include population allocations.

Dennis Dawes asked about forced annexation. Lee Napier and Commissioner Stamper said that was not going to occur.

Commissioner Stamper said he was happy to report that he shopped local for Christmas.

Commissioner Jackson talked about his first week in office and the fact that the BOCC has a united front and looks forward to this new chapter.

Meeting adjourned at 10:37 a.m.