

BOCC Wrap-Up / COVID-19 meeting

March 23, 2020

4 p.m.

Present: Commissioner Stamper, Commissioner Fund, Commissioner Jackson (by teleconference), County Manager Erik Martin, Jonathan Meyer, Becky Butler, John Abplanalp, Steve Wohld, Andy Caldwell, Steve Walton, Daleyn Coleman, Josh Metcalf, Scott Smitherman, Cullen Gatten

Recorder: Rieva Lester

County Manager Erik Martin said the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Lewis County remains at two.

John Abplanalp said drive-through testing has been taking place in Morton and at Mary's Corner. John said test results can take up to five days to receive.

Andy Caldwell discussed supplies and work to identify needs and identify how to disperse equipment as it becomes available.

Erik discussed telecommuting plans for the BOCC office and elsewhere.

Steve Wohld said the county website has had 57,000 page views in seven days.

Erik said the NW Jail Transport Shuttle has closed for now.

Erik said countywide, offices and departments are identifying mission-critical employees in anticipation of a possible shelter-in-place directive.

Jonathan discussed staffing and work-from-home efforts within the Prosecuting Attorney's Office. He noted that the jail has switched to its weekend booking procedures.

Jonathan asked the commissioners to consider permanently telecommuting to protect themselves during the pandemic, noting that two commissioners are needed to conduct business.

Erik listed the sectors Homeland Security and FEMA identify as essential services. He said outreach work continues. He also said HR is working on policies regarding essential employees, etc.

Erik said the new Families First Coronavirus Response Act provides up to 80 hours of paid leave. He asked whether the county would want to provide for leave in addition to those two weeks.

Andy Caldwell discussed proactive efforts to continue water services throughout the county as well as planning efforts to create a field hospital.

Andy left at 4:40 p.m.

Commissioner Fund asked for a sample of scenarios that may arise regarding sick time.

Daleyn Coleman noted that the Families First law goes into effect April 2, 2020.

The commissioners said they would like to review the request again the following day.

Erik said he received an email from Treasurer Arny Davis earlier in the day regarding property taxes. Erik said Arny indicated many counties are considering delaying the payment due date and considering waiving late fees in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Becky Butler said the county had only received about 8 percent of property taxes as of last week. She and Erik noted that they would expect to see about 50 percent of first-half property taxes collected during the same time other years.

Erik discussed ideas for future video updates.

The commissioners approved sending a letter to Gov. Inslee regarding identifying the forest products industry as essential business.

Becky Butler left at 4:52 p.m.

The commissioners agreed to limit in-person participation to one commissioner daily.

Cullen Gatten left at 4:54 p.m.

Becky Butler returned at 4:54 p.m.

Commissioner Stamper thanked staff for their efforts. He said he has heard positive reviews about the county's response and its outreach efforts, especially from those on the east end of the county.

Commissioner Jackson discussed his efforts to reach out to area city leaders.

The group encouraged the public to be cautious about donations and robocalls and to help support local businesses.

Becky Butler discussed efforts to shift WSU employees from Lewis County oversight to direct pWSU oversight. She said the MOU will go before the BOCC during its next legislative meeting.

Becky discussed expenditures related to COVID-19. She said there has been no significant increase in the number of ill employees over the past week. She discussed work to coordinate telecommuting efforts.

Erik discussed the need to obtain and wear county ID badges.

Meeting adjourned at 5:05 p.m.