

COVID-19

March 19, 2020

4 p.m.

Present: Commissioner Stamper, Commissioner Fund, Commissioner Jackson, County Manager Erik Martin, Jonathan Meyer, Becky Butler, John Abplanalp, Steve Wohld, Steve Walton, Daleyn Coleman, Josh Metcalf, Lara McRea, Matt Matayoshi, Scott Smitherman, Andy Caldwell, Cullen Gatten

Guest: Matt Matayoshi

Recorder: Rieva Lester

Erik Martin provided an update on the Emergency Management team:

Discussion about protocols to ensure everyone follows safe protocols

Kittitas County and City of Ellensburg request to the state regarding lodging taxes and .09/Distressed Counties funding in which the governmental entities asked for permission to use funding to help small businesses

Jonathan Meyer said Attorney General Bob Ferguson provided guidance March 17 on using funds to help local businesses. He said he fears Ellensburg's request borders on being a gifting of public funds. He said freeing up funds for virus testing or child care for first responders would be fine but that providing funding merely to help keep small businesses afloat would be a gifting of public funds.

Erik discussed a proposed policies related to quarantine and / or isolation 14 days leave. Combined donated leave pool for those with less than 40 hours combined sick and vacation time.

Steve Walton said the policy provides additional benefits on top of what employees already receive. He said it would apply to regular employees, not casuals. Steve said the policies also address telecommuting and alternative work schedules.

Daleyn Coleman outlined how the donation pool would work. She said employees could donate sick or vacation time. Daleyn said employees could only access the pool once their sick / vacation time drops below 40 hours. Daleyn said HR would process the requests after the elected or director approves allowing the request.

John Abplanalp discussed outreach with area food establishments in response to COVID-19. He also said he is working with the Boys and Girls Club about its efforts to provide childcare. Jonathan suggested also reaching out to the Centralia School District regarding its plans.

John said the Cold Weather Shelter planned to close April 1 but instead it closed March 19 as a result of a volunteer shortage.

Becky Butler said guidance is base-line staffing polls. She said she also has worked with the Auditor's Office regarding plans to continue providing payments to employees and vendors.

John discussed help available for mental health care.

Erik said the Sheriff's Office indicated an uptick in email, phone and web contacts. He said Josh Metcalf received positive feedback regarding changes at Public Services. He said Solid Waste has fielded a lot of phone calls.

Steve Wohld discussed supplies.

Steve said there has been a 100 percent increase in web traffic. He said the county received 1,000 more emails March 19 than it did the previous day.

Josh Metcalf said Public Services staff and customers have expressed appreciation for the changes.

Erik said Lee Napier also provided positive feedback about the changes.

Becky said Treasurer Arny Davis will weigh in on property taxes at the next COVID-19 update.

Erik and Cullen Gatten discussed meeting dates.

Erik discussed the county's efforts to help local businesses.

Matt Matayoshi discussed delays with the state employment website. Matt discussed closures as a result of Gov. Inslee's statewide bans. Matt said the self-employed would not qualify for employment benefits as they do not pay into it. Matt discussed efforts to fast-track employment benefits.

Erik said the county has shared lists of restaurants still providing take-out.

Andy Caldwell discussed an update with superintendents. He discussed a survey going out to area businesses.

Commissioner Stamper said Twin Transit has identified its new routes.

Commissioner Stamper encouraged the public to donate blood.

The commissioners discussed their calendars.

Meeting adjourned at 4:46 p.m.

Note: In an effort to provide the greatest level of transparency possible during Lewis County's building closures related to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was live-streamed on Facebook and YouTube and was available by phone (toll-free) and online through Zoom.