

Economic Recovery Forum

May 27, 2020

1 p.m.

Present: Commissioner Stamper, Commissioner Fund (remotely), Commissioner Jackson, County Manager Erik Martin, Becky Butler, Larry McGee, Andy Caldwell, Arny Davis, JP Anderson, Rep. Jim Walsh (remotely), Rep. Brian Blake, Carson Coates of Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler's office, Christine Nhan of Sen. Patty Murray's office, Centralia Mayor Sue Luond (remotely), Morton Mayor Dan Mortensen (remotely), Napavine Mayor Shawn O'Neill (remotely), Toledo Mayor Steve Dobosh (remotely), Napavine Police Chief Chris Salyers (remotely), Gary Fredricks (remotely), JP Anderson (remotely), Joe Clark (remotely), Lara McRea (remotely), Undersheriff Wes Rethwill (remotely), Maria Ayers (remotely), Andy Alexander (remotely), Matt Matayoshi (remotely), Megan Fiess (remotely), Peter Lahmann (remotely), Sara Gingerich (remotely), Scott Haas (remotely), Suzette Smith (remotely), Tamara Hayes (remotely), Tracy Croshaw (remotely), William Haas (remotely), Meri Hamre (remotely), Alicia Bull (remotely), Amber Smith (remotely), Annalee Tobey (remotely), Cathy Murphy (remotely), Jan Nontell (remotely), Mike Morgan (remotely), Dale Pullin (remotely), Candy Hallom, various members of the public and press

Recorder: Rieva Lester

Andy Alexander of Security State Bank discussed work to navigate the world of PPEs, loan forgiveness, etc. for clients. He said the bank has helped with roughly 320 PPE loans, ranging from \$1,100 to \$2 million. He said the 11-page submission forms are not user friendly.

Maria Ayers of Twin Star said the bank has been processing loans totaling \$380,000 for members.

Meri Hamre of Title Guaranty said the real estate market continues to operate.

Sara Gingerich of Three Dogs Night said her business was deemed essential and has been weathering the COVID-19 storm well.

Heather with APD Plumbing and Mechanical said her company recently got its PPE, so all of the company's employees have been able to return to full duty.

Dale Pullin of the Northwest Sports Hub said the Sports Hub hopes to open as recreational facility under Phase 3. Rep. Jim Walsh suggest Dale reach out to one of the state's representatives for assistance on navigating the application process.

Napavine Mayor Shawn O'Neill discussed work to coordinate resource sharing.

Toledo Mayor Steve Dobosh said the city's businesses are slowly getting back on track.

Anita from Vader's Little Crane restaurant said the restaurant will open over the weekend. She said the restaurant has laid off three employees.

Morton Mayor Dan Mortensen said many of the city's businesses are reopening. He said the businesses are having a hard time deciphering what is required.

Centralia Mayor Sue Luond said many of the city's businesses are reopening. She said people need to understand that there will be more cases of COVID-19 and more deaths but that the nation cannot allow another shutdown to take place.

Scott Haas of the Employment Security Department said the state has not yet differentiated the actual number of unemployment claims in Lewis County in the wake of a statewide fraud attack.

Annalee Tobey said the Chehalis Community Renaissance Team (CCRT) has been delivering toolkits and helping businesses wade through the requirements for reopening.

Tracy Croshaw said Packwood Station has canceled vacation rentals through July and that the yoga studio located there has ended its lease.

Alicia Bull of the Chehalis-Centralia Chamber of Commerce said local businesses have been stressed about collecting the PPE needed to reopen and about how to repay loans. She said the group has a website and hotline to help area businesses. She said the Chamber has been providing Chamber members with "goodie bags" full of items needed for reopening and has other items for sale.

Mike Morgan of Vision Toledo said the Blue Grass Festival, Threshing Bee and Cheese Day events have been canceled. He said the Lewis County Together task force has provided "goodie bags" for the group to share with area businesses.

Jan Nontell of Centralia Downtown Association (CDA) is distributing of the Lewis County Together toolkits.

Cathy Murphy of Onalaska Alliance said many businesses are now open. She thanked Lewis County Together for the toolkits it has provided. She said Apple Harvest Festival has been canceled.

Matt Matayoshi said the EDC has been distributing Working Washington grants to area businesses. He noted that the business are struggling because the grants are reimbursement-only grants.

Rep. Jim Walsh expressed a shared frustration about the lack of clarity regarding the rules for reopening. He said there also is concern about the role Labor and Industries will play as the state moves forward.

Rep. Walsh said OSPI may offer county-specific reopening plans, rather than use a statewide approach to school districts.

Rep. Brian Blake encouraged constituents to CC his office on correspondence with state agencies.

Christine Nhan from Sen. Murray's office expressed her appreciation for the efforts the cities and county are making in response to the pandemic.

Carson Coates from Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler's office echoed the request that businesses and citizens reach out to their state leaders for help when needed.

Christine said Sen. Rubio has drafted a bill to address requirements related to PPE.

Tamara Hayes with Lewis County Together said the group is sending out a survey to area businesses. She said the group distributed 500 toolkit bags the previous week.

Meeting ended at 2:06 p.m.