

Budget Update

June 16, 2020

1:01 p.m.

Present: Commissioner Jackson (Via zoom), Commissioner Stamper (Via zoom), Commissioner Fund, Budget Manager Becky Butler, Lee Napier (via zoom), Arny Davis, Suzette Smith, Dianne Dorey (via zoom) and Steve Wohld

Guests: Sean Swope (via zoom), Frank Corbin (via zoom)

Recorder: Tammy Martin

Tax distribution for April: \$139,000 down (almost 5%) through the end of May. An estimate from Dept. of Revenue (DOR) is \$534,000 for the end of June. General fund is at 34% collected. Inter-fund is at 33.4%. There have been lower collections due to forest board revenue being down for the year. Timber excise tax will post in June. Tourism and motor vehicle fuel tax has taken the biggest hit during the COVID-19 crisis.

Refund and taxes – Skookumchuck Wind Project: A refund has been requested in the amount of approximately \$796,000 in tax monies collected. DOR supplied information as to how to repay the refund request. Options include a reduction for 3 months, 6 months or refund all at once. We have asked to pay refund back in 6 months. Commissioner Stamper, Commissioner Jackson and Commissioner Fund approved the 6 month recommendation. Suzette said Lewis County would have to adjust 2019 sales tax revenue based on the refund request. 2019 sales tax will reflect the tax adjustment based on the refund.

Dianne Dorey said that weather and a death stopped construction and there will be no revenue received until 2021. It was thought that the wind farm was new construction, but recently found it is only valued as personal property. DOR will assess the wind farm and adjust the personal property for 2021.

Arny Davis said that the current collections system with DOR needs to be reworked so that the monies are held until refunds are due. Arny said he spoke with State representatives about the issue. Becky suggested having further conversations about the Wind Farm to monitor tax collections.

Corona Virus Relief Funds: All county departments are compiling all documentation related to monies spent due to COVID-19 in preparation of an audit. The county is continuing to push for more clarification from DOR. Lewis County is looking for more guidance on documentation needed to provide proof required of spending of the monies as necessary. It appears each county has interpreted directions differently. Suzette Smith stressed that all documentation as to why we think spending is necessary is crucial and should be documented.

The BOCC passed and approved a MOU with EDC yesterday. Five board members will need to be selected. There will be a grant application process as well.

Commissioner Stamper said that due to COVID-19, there are lost revenues for the industrial park in Packwood because businesses were unable to operate. Commissioner Stamper also mentioned that Providence Hospital is trying to speed up the testing process for COVID-19 from three days to less than one. Commissioner Stamper thinks that Morton Hospital should be included in the testing process

update. He also mentioned that he spoke with Kelly Johnston about the issues that school districts will encounter including shifts, sports, childcare, etc. and about creating a boys and girls club.

Commissioner Jackson spoke about WIFI hookups throughout the rural areas. He spoke about the approval of the MOU for grant funding. He'd like to know how that progresses. Commissioner Jackson asked that when the applications are released, how do we help the small businesses?

Commissioner Fund said that she was talking with the Lewis County Together to speak about broadband. There's a lot of needs assessment for WIFI. What can we ask for and have completed by October 31, 2020? Commissioner Stamper said it's not easy with the time deadline. Commissioner Fund passed along information about childcare grants to Kelly Johnston, The Boys & Girls Club and United Way. She said that these are similar issues counties are facing and that Lewis County is doing well with leading the situation.

Commissioner Stamper said that he is working with Lewis, Mason & Thurston County Area Agency on Aging about funds and where the Senior Center stands.

Positions: Replacement for office manager/ fiscal supervisor at Public Health is needed. There is a potential to use COVID-19 funds.

Other: Suzette Smith said that the 2019 financials will be sent on time. There was a positive end balance for the year even after the tax refund request from the Skookumchuck Wind Farm.

Becky Butler said that she is working on Munis. Becky mentioned as well that there will be a meeting for indigent defense that will result in an increase in the budget and she is working on options for approvals from the Commissioners.

1:59 p.m. adjourned