

Mayors' Meeting

October 2, 2020

9:00 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Stamper, Commissioner Fund, Commissioner Jackson, Winlock Mayor Brandon Svenson, Centralia Port Commissioner Peter Lahmann, and Centralia Mayor Sue Luond

Zoom: Mayor Steve Dobosh, Vader Mayor Joe Schey, Chehalis Mayor Dennis Dawes, Mayor Lonnie Willey, Lara McRea, Pam Peiper, Sarah Kohout, Christine Nhan and Wes Anderson WSDOT

Guest(s): Reporter Claudia Yaw

Recorder: Tammy Martin

Discussion about Coronavirus Relief Funding:

The City of Centralia applied and received \$50,000. The City has paid out approximately \$40,000. They are currently partnering with non-profits to allocate funds. Currently the Centralia Downtown Association is helping businesses, Gather Church is helping with food and assistance, and the City created a script program. The script program gives certificates for script to any person making under the poverty line. The script is then reimbursed by the city to boost the local economy.

The City of Winlock received \$60,000. The city spent approximately \$10,000 to help with utility payments and they are using the rest of the funds for area business grants. They don't see any additional needs currently. Mayor Svenson noted that Sahara Pizza currently has pods upstairs in the building to help kids. He also said that hotspots are available in a few locations throughout the city.

The City of Toledo received \$7,000. Mayor Dobosh said they purchased new Zoom equipment. He also mentioned they re-hired an employee for approximately 30 hours a week for sanitation at the boat launch. Mayor Dobosh said that the hardware store was doing exceptionally well during these trying times. As of today, he doesn't see any additional needs. He let the Board know there are plenty of hot spots throughout the city and he was hoping to hear more information about the schools reopening.

Mayor Dawes said the City of Chehalis took care of a lot of city-related costs first then they put out a release for grant applications. They are currently working with non-profits and area businesses for grant opportunities. Currently they have additional needs for the non-profits. He is looking forward to moving on with economic recovery for the City of Chehalis and others.

The Town of Pe Ell received \$7,000. They are using the majority of the funding to help citizens pay utility bills. The stores seem to be doing pretty well. Dollar General is looking to open in Pe Ell. There are a few area businesses still struggling to re-open. The schools are looking at hybrid options to re-open. At this time, they don't see any additional needs. The town is currently looking for a town marshal.

The City of Vader received \$30,000. Mayor Schey said that City Hall upgraded their lock box for utility payments, purchased P.P.E., and also implemented a script program. Mayor Schey said that at this time there were no additional needs.

Morton Mayor Dan Mortensen said they are looking at implementing a grant program should the need arise for the businesses needing help. Most businesses have done reasonably well despite COVID-19.

Commissioner Stamper said Mossyrock Mayor Sasser donated City of Mossyrock's funds between all the businesses of Mossyrock.

Commissioner Fund said approximately 45% of the COVID-19 outbreaks are within long-term care facilities according to the recent news. Commissioner Fund discussed the issues with identifying COVID-19 cases by zip codes. LCPHSS is continuing to work on getting the information to the public.

Commissioner discussed broadband issues Lewis County is facing. There are advancements being made and the Board would provide updates accordingly.

Commissioner Jackson left at 9:47 a.m.

Commissioner Stamper stated there will most likely be another forum on Wednesday October 7, 2020.

Commissioner Fund noted that Mossyrock School District addressed a COVID-19 case very well.

Announcements:

Legislative Roundtable is scheduled for December 11, 2020. Commissioner Fund said the Legislature may go into session before the meeting. Commissioner Fund addressed possibility of new unfunded mandates and how the county will have to be vigilant about issues regarding money.

Mayor Svenson asked about broadband funding and Mayor Dawes didn't understand why certain areas with new fiber optics don't have adequate service. Commissioner Fund said that area PUDs are looking at funding for "the last mile." Mayor Svenson spoke with ToledoTel concerning broadband. Fiber optics go throughout the city. He'd like to partner with ToledoTel that at any time there is construction, putting fiber optics in places when the ground is open to reduce future costs. ToledoTel fiber optics will service the new Mickelsen Parkway. Peter Lahmann suggested having a template with all the options to reduce reopening line upgrades.

Mayor Luond said there is a possibility of moving the tractor parade out of downtown. She is trying to ensure that the parade stays in downtown with other options like being stationary and having people drive by. Mayor Luond said that she would like to see the reopening of businesses and schools. She urged leaders to think of the future instead of wallowing in COVID.

Peter Lahmann said the Lewis County Historical Museum received \$9,900 for wage mediating. The Game Wardens of Vietnam recently applied for grants as well. They are typically self-funding. Most of the funding comes from events, but due to COVID, there haven't been any.

Mayor Svenson said the First Street project is going well and is expected to be paved soon. The Mickelsen Parkway project should be completed by the end of October. There is a 38,000 sq. ft. church being built as well. He anticipates roughly 100 new homes being built in Winlock by the end of next year. Mayor Svenson addressed the amount of deaths in Lewis County last year and wondered about the low

numbers of death for COVID compared to other circumstances and what is being done for other causes of death. He is concerned about education, increase in divorces, substance abuse, and suicides due to the repercussions of COVID-19.

Commissioner Fund said that September was Suicide Awareness Month and it has been a big topic of consideration.

Mayor Dawes is concerned about the way schooling is being addressed. He's also concerned about the economy. He feels that allowing certain professions without the proper qualifications will create additional problems at a later date. He feels that the limits of the public for OPMA have not been clear and creates concerns about violations. The Chehalis City Council agreed to add to the UGA areas. Mayor Dawes briefed about the fire station, stating that the current location is still in a temporary location. They purchased a lot on State Street and Chamber Way. The location has been purchased for equipment storage. He said they have been trying to find assistance to build a new station, including bonds and government assistance.

WSDOT is replacing the overpass on 13th Street starting October 5, 2020. Wes Anderson of WSDOT said that overpass will be closed on Monday evening to start the demo and construction will be continued through the end of November 2020. State Route 6 will have barriers installed and the speed limit is reduced to 25 mph during construction. Chamber Way Stage II is still in the finalizing stage with a start date of 2023. SR507 was supposed to be paved from I-5 to the county line, but with revenue shortfalls the project has changed and they are now partnering with the City of Centralia to just improve ADA capabilities.

Commissioner Stamper asked Wes Anderson to see if there will any construction on Highway 12 turn lanes. The highway is dangerous and needs turn lanes. Wes said that he would get back to the Commissioner about that.

Mayor Dawes would like to see schools and business open up. They have opened the senior center to use for city council meetings in effort to open back to the public instead of using Zoom. Mayor Dawes said the street scape project is finishing up.

Mayor Mortensen said Morton recently added a new council member. They approved a \$1.1 million project for the wastewater plant as well. They should be breaking ground next week and finishing up in 2021. Mayor Mortensen feels that getting schools re-opened is a great move forward.

Mayor Schey said the bridge on Hwy 506 is now open. There will be continued construction in Vader through 2021. They received a preliminary report about a park project. They are looking at receiving a grant for the new development.

Pam Peiper really liked hearing the updates of grant spending. She addressed Mayor Dawes' need for grant funds for the fire department and that there were options for additional funding. She said that she would reach out to Becky Butler with information.

Sarah Kohout reported Senator Cantwell is working on transportation issues.

Christine Nhan reported Senator Murray is working on bills for funding small businesses.

Commissioner Fund said there will be a NEPA presentation on October 8, 2020 at 6-8pm and 4-6pm on October 14th. There was a recent meeting and they reflected on past floods. The Army Corps of Engineers suggested the water retention facility. Commissioner Fund said having Zoom meetings does not have the same impact and communication level as in person, but she asked for people to attend.

Commissioner Stamper empathized with the Mayors and their concerns. He feels there are needs not being met and hoping for a consensus to resume normal operations. Commissioner Stamper thanked Erik Martin, Lee Napier, Josh Metcalf and Dan Lee for keeping the Benaroya project on point.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.