

County Manager Update

June 14, 2021

11:04 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Stamper, Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Swope, Erik Martin, Becky Butler, Katie Conradi, Chris Panush, Lee Napier, Josh Metcalf, Rieva Lester, Sherri Dokken

Guest: Nic Scott, Edna J. Fund, Eric Rosane

Recorder: Lara McRea

Public Works update

Erik Martin reported that Josh Metcalf has been in conversations with several public works departments including Thurston County regarding staffing challenges. He said the higher technical engineer positions are currently in high demand and hard to come by. He also noted that Josh is looking at a strategy to hire entry level people out of college and train them up.

Erik said road approaches are at an all-time high. Road approaches are the central part of the building permit process because you need to have access to the property to get a building permit.

Erik discussed that shop supervisors have been tasked with handling road approaches with homeowners.

Josh said not every road approach has a building permit attached to it.

Erik said that there are a number of factors that are weighing into the lag with building permits.

Erik noted that Josh is currently reviewing the permitting process and fee schedule. He is working with Lee Napier for a process that will allow a citizen to go to one counter for permits and fees. The goal is to have Community Development handle the permit processing for all three departments to include Community Development, Public Works and Environmental Health.

Erik further discussed and said the departments will also have an MOU in place for services.

Community Development update

Erik discussed Community Development's permit report. In 2021 Community Development has issued 770 permits through the end of May. In May of 2020, 507 permits were issued.

Community Development is interviewing for building inspectors this week and they will be interviewing for an entry level planning position next week.

Commissioner Stamper voiced a concern about builders waiting for water accessibility and some have waited six months for a well driller.

Lee Napier noted the challenges are due to the Hirst decision and Streamflow Restoration Act, which reinforce that water availability is part of the application. She understands there is a backlog but noted that it isn't due to COVID-19. She said this is the industry standard.

Commissioner Pollock commented that a well is not guaranteed and a person cannot have a house without water as it is critical. She said there could be a potential for a shared agreement with a neighbor while the person's well is being drilled.

Erik noted that the best way to solve the issue is to get out in front of it sooner than later.

Public Health & Social Services update

Erik said that representatives from Washington State Department of Health will be at the Board of Health meeting at 1:30 to discuss the isolation and quarantine facility at Lakeview Inn.

Commissioner Pollock stated that the City of Centralia has an improved relationship as of recently with the state over the issue.

Erik said that one public health admin staff is taking a position in an elected office. The health department will be looking to recruit for that position.

911 update

Erik noted that 911 is down to 12 employees and they should have 20 employees. The department will be testing 6 applicants this week.

Commissioner Stamper suggested asking retirees from the department to see if they would be interested in helping until some of the positions are filled. Erik said he will discuss this with Scott Smitherman.

911 Consolidation Feasibility update

Erik said he is meeting with the consultant this week to get an update on the finalization of the 911 consolidation feasibility study. The consultant should have a report with recommendations in a few weeks. Erik said he will review the report with Jill Anderson, Rob Hill, and Mike Kytta. The recommendation will then be brought to the BOCC with next steps.

HR update

Chris Panush reported that there are several job openings in the county right now and HR is seeing some interest in some of the positions. The department has been analyzing the hits on the government jobs

website they contracted with a few months ago. They are also strategizing on reaching out to schools informing them of the open positions.

Becky Butler noted she is conducting second round interviews for the Financial Analyst position.

Erik said he hopes to have updates on the capital facilities projects next week.

Becky discussed the Open Gov. program and said the online budget book should be available later this year. The Open Gov. program should be open to the public by the end of January 2022.

Meeting ended at 11:37 a.m.