

## Quarterly Update with PUD

August 9, 2021

2:33 p.m.

Present: Commissioner Stamper, Commissioner Pollock, County Manager Erik Martin, Willie Painter, Dianne Dorey

Guests: Frank Corbin, member(s) from the Chronicle

Recorder: Tammy Martin

Willie Painter provided the following updates:

**Winlock Substation and Transmission Facilities:** PUD received a planning grant as well as PUD contributions for an analysis to construct the substation and transmission facility in Winlock. PUD was allocated \$3.5 million from the American Rescue Plan Act and recently a \$2.5 million request was advanced to the 2022 appropriations Bill at the Federal level. PUD is seeking a grant from Economic Development Association (EDA) funding program to support the project. PUD estimates the project to be in the \$9-12 million range. PUD is still in negotiations to determine the best site for the substation.

**LED Light Conversion:** PUD launched a county-wide program to change all high-pressure sodium lights to LED lights. They have converted approximately 600 lights. Phase II will include light poles and will begin in 2022. For private customers receiving these LED lights, they will see a reduction in rates due to the conversion.

**Broadband Network and Deployment Plan:** Willie said that broadband is a great deficiency in Lewis County. The PUD has a network architecture plan utilizing current infrastructure. They have divided Lewis County into 17 zones. Once grant funding is secured, PUD will own, maintain and operate the infrastructure. Through partnership with private internet providers, the provider would then supply the service to private or commercial residents.

### **Utility Bill Arrearages/Utility Disconnect Moratorium Extension/Utility Bill Assistance**

**Announcements:** This last month the moratorium was extended through September 30, 2021. Since March 2020, all unpaid balances have not been disconnected and all late payments have been waived. There are currently 1,193 customers with unpaid bills at the disconnect stage totaling \$781,835. Willie Painter said there are options for assistance through Community Action Council (CAC), Treasury Rental Assistance Program (TREP), and LOVE Inc. The PUD has received grant assistance from the Salvation Army to provide nearly \$30,000 to those in need. Willie said the goal is to get as much assistance out to those that need it from the non-profit agencies. They are encouraging participants that need help, to reach out.

Meeting adjourned 3:04 p.m.