

Mayors' Meeting

September 10, 2021

9 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Swope, County Manager Erik Martin, Toledo Mayor Steve Dobosh, Eric Eisenberg, Becky Butler, Michelle Whitten, Chehalis Mayor Dennis Dawes, Todd Chaput, Richard DeBolt, Austin Majors, JP Anderson, Chris Panush, Tammy Martin, Josh Metcalf, Vader Mayor Joe Schey, Lara McRea, Centralia Mayor Max Vogt, Centralia City Manager Rob Hill, Willie Painter, Pam Peiper of U.S. Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler's office, Sarah Kohout of Sen. Maria Cantwell's office, Peter Lahmann, Susie Palmateer, Steve Wohld, Morton Mayor Dan Mortensen

Guests: The Chronicle, Nic Scott

Recorder: Rieva Lester

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Richard DeBolt and Todd Chaput discussed the EDC's work regarding the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Todd noted that the EDC is continuing its efforts to create a map that identifies projects countywide. The benefit, Todd and Richard noted, is that projects can piggyback on one another, saving time and money.

Erik Martin noted that the county would be moving forward with a request for proposals for a project to improve broadband service in unserved or underserved areas countywide.

Josh Metcalf said the county has identified a consultant to help with water / sewer infrastructure work.

Becky Butler noted that the county has hired Polco to help with citizen engagement.

Housing Summit

Commissioner Swope invited area city councilmembers to send one or two representatives to a Housing Policy Summit planned for 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Oct. 14. He noted that high price points are pricing area residents out of purchasing locally.

Commissioner Swope said the summit will focus on all facets of the "housing pipeline": homeless, emergency shelters, transitional housing, social housing, affordable housing, affordable home ownership, market rental housing and market home ownership. He said the hope is that permitting processes can be streamlined countywide.

Centralia Mayor Max Vogt discussed recent state legislation that requires a housing study.

Eric Eisenberg discussed his role in the county's housing work.

JP Anderson discussed efforts to get services out to area children.

JP discussed increases in local COVID-19 cases. He also discussed concerns regarding a drop in local services in response to vaccine mandates.

Legislative Roundtable

Commissioner Pollock said the 2021 Legislative Roundtable will take place at 9 a.m. Oct. 1. She noted that it would be an in-person event for lawmakers, mayors and commissioners and that all others would be able to attend remotely.

Roundtable

Toledo Mayor Steve Dobosh expressed concerns regarding dwindling due to COVID outbreaks and individuals leaving their professions in response to the vaccine mandates. He also noted that one of Napavine's departments is closed down due to a COVID-19 outbreak. He said area cities are trying to help cover one another's shortages.

Chehalis Mayor Dennis Dawes discussed concerns regarding a lack of common sense when it comes to new state laws. He also expressed concerns regarding a lack of transparency regarding COVID outbreaks. Mayor Dawes discussed projects taking place in Chehalis, including road improvements, a new car dealerships, etc. Mayor Dawes voiced concern regarding housing availability. He also discussed a vacancy on the Chehalis City Council.

JP Anderson discussed the steps health departments take regarding outbreaks. He echoed some of Mayor Dawes' frustration regarding transparency and vaccine mandates, noting that the vaccine mandate often stops individuals' conversations about whether to get vaccinated. JP and Mayor Dawes also discussed the use of antibody testing in response to the vaccine mandates.

Centralia Mayor Max Vogt said the city has received a \$40,000 Department of Ecology grant to hire an employee to clean up the city's freeway exit ramps. Mayor Vogt said the city is nearing completion of Phase II of its China Creek flood mitigation project. He said the city is purchasing body cameras and dashboard cameras for its police force. He noted that the resulting staffing needed for reviews and redaction will increase costs. Mayor Vogt said the city's next Music in the Park is scheduled for Sept. 11.

Centralia City Manager Rob Hill discussed the PFD's expansion of the Sports Hub.

Morton Mayor Dan Mortensen expressed frustrations regarding masking and vaccine mandates. He said the city is working on its sewer treatment plan build. He said the city also is working on a sidewalk project.

Vader Mayor Joe Schey discussed donations that have made the creation of a new park possible. He said the city is updating its design standards. Mayor Schey said work on the wastewater treatment plan continues.

Pam Peiper of Jaime Herrera Beutler's office said the congresswoman is working to help area veterans in response to the closure of the Chehalis veterans' center. Pam said Rep. Beutler has reached out to Gov.

Inslee's office regarding concerns about the vaccine mandate. She said work continues on housing funding

Tammy Martin said Sarah Kohout of Sen. Maria Cantwell's shared that the Senate-passed Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act included wins for Washington.

Meeting ended at 10:19 a.m.