

## **Mayors' Meeting**

**February 4, 2022**

**9 a.m.**

Present: Commissioner Swope, Commissioner Grose, County Manager Erik Martin, Centralia City Manager Rob Hill, Centralia Mayor Kelly Smith Johnston, Chehalis Mayor Tony Ketchum, Chehalis City Manager Jill Anderson, Chehalis City Planner Amelia Schwartz, Morton Mayor Dan Mortensen, Mossyrock Mayor Randall Sasser, Pe Ell Mayor Lonnie Willey, Toledo Clerk/Treasurer Michelle Whitten, Winlock Mayor Brandon Svenson, Josh Metcalf, Eric Eisenberg, Austin Majors, Lara McRea, Katie Conradi, Mindy Brooks, Christine Nhan of Sen. Murray's office, Chad Hancock of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Paul Mason of WSDOT, Sherri Dokken, Economic Alliance (EA) Executive Director Richard DeBolt, EA Infrastructure Initiatives Program Manager Todd Chaput, Meja Handlen, Pam Peiper of Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler's Office, Sarah Kohout of Sen. Cantwell's office, Alison Puckett, Vader Planning Director Gary Cooper, Vader Mayor Joe Schey, Meja Handlen, Tiffanie Morgan, Ross McDowell, JP Anderson, Lee Napier, Centralia Community Development Director Emil Pierson, Mossyrock Planning Commission member Marcia Manley

Guests: The Chronicle, Susan DeLaire, Nic Scott

Recorder: Rieva Lester

Commissioner Swope listed seven things people should strive for: Integrity, authenticity, humility, compassion, vision, focus and generosity.

### **Public safety**

The group discussed the increase in crime countywide and the challenges to public safety, including recent restrictions on law enforcement's ability to respond to crime.

### **Flooding**

Ross McDowell reviewed the January 2022 flood event.

- Rainfall started Jan. 5
- Record flooding was predicted for three Lewis County areas: Newaukum River near Chehalis, Skookumchuck River at Centralia and Skookumchuck River at Bucoda
- Emergency Operations Center (EOC) escalated from Level 1 to Level 3 within the course of a day
- Representatives from several area fire departments, police and public works departments joined the Sheriff's Office, the state patrol and the state Department of Transportation for operations
- Representatives from several entities served as liaisons
- LeMay and Team Rubicon helped with planning efforts

- United Way coordinated donations
- Several entities helped organize emergency shelter
- Officials received 141 calls from individuals reporting damage
- Public damages (taxing districts) totaled \$3,996,744
- Individual damages (residents and businesses) totaled \$1,613,774
- County has met the threshold for public assistance
- The state is close to meeting the threshold for public assistance, which could open the area up for FEMA assistance

Erik Martin discussed the benefits of a water retention facility. He said the recent catastrophic floods likely would have looked more like the January 2022 flood – saving millions in damages – had the water retention facility been in place.

### **American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)**

Becky Butler provided the following updates on regarding American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding:

- Treasury has released its Final Rule
- County’s Polco survey is complete, and results are available online
- Josh Metcalf and HDR are continuing to work on infrastructure priorities
- The county continues to work with the Economic Alliance on the “dig-once” program

Josh Metcalf discussed efforts to identify infrastructure needs. Mayor Sasser said Mossyrock would submit its list the following week. Mayor Dan Mortensen said Morton would turn its list in soon.

### **911 strategic planning**

Erik Martin discussed a survey regarding 911 strategic planning. Erik said the group is creating a 13-member committee. He noted that the committee will include:

- **Lewis County Sheriff’s Office:** Sheriff Rob Snaza
- **Commissioners’ Office:** Commissioner Lee Grose
- **County staff:** County Manager Erik Martin
- **Chehalis City Council:** TBD
- **Centralia City Council:** City Manager Rob Hill
- **City of Chehalis staff:** Randy Kaut
- **City of Centralia staff:** Police Chief Stacy Denham
- **Riverside Fire Authority:** Lee Coumbs
- **One fire district from the east side:** TBD
- **One fire district from the west side:** TBD
- **One law enforcement representative from a small city on the east side:** Mayor Dan Mortensen
- **One law enforcement representative from a small city on the west side:** Napavine Police Chief Brockmueller
- **One from the fire commissioners:** TBD

Erik said the group is designed to develop plans for the future of 911. He noted that a previous look into regionalization for that a regionalized approach would not be beneficial.

### **Workshop: Zoning, local vision and housing**

Centralia Community Development Director Emil Pierson discussed the struggles with housing in Centralia and countywide.

He said Centralia's Housing Plan Goal is to increase residential building capacity by encouraging the construction of additional affordable and market-rate housing in a greater variety of housing types and at prices that are accessible to a greater variety of incomes, including strategies aimed at the for-profit single-family home market.

He said cities need to:

- Ensure they meet RCW 36.70A.600(2) requirements for housing action plans
- Update the housing-related data for their comprehensive plans
- Define housing needs and demand for the next 20 years
- Identify community-supported strategies that promote increased residential building capacity, including updates to policies, regulations and programs, with a focus on:
  - Encouraging the development of transit-supportive housing throughout Centralia and its UGA and especially in downtown Centralia close to the Train Station
  - Exploring the potential for "missing middle" or other housing types in the City, and
  - Expanding affordable and market-rate options for all housing types while addressing environmental, infrastructure and urban form issues specific to Centralia as a suburban city.

Emil said the keys to working with growth are to:

- Identify weak points that will limit growth in the future and make them strong points
- Focus on utilities (sewer, water, stormwater, etc.)
- Plan for more vehicles
- Know your codes (and change them, if needed, to accomplish your goals)
- Work with developers, not against them
- Identify things you want – such as that all homes have garages – and make that a requirement
- Take the simple steps now that go a long way to meeting the needs and capitalizing on existing resources
- Be a partner in the growth process: don't be afraid to guide, and stay open to opportunities
- Be clear and concise
- Identify the area's future needs – such as streets, etc. – and set the stage now

Vader Planning Director Gary Cooper suggested that the cities plan for all modes of transportation, not just vehicular traffic.

Eric Eisenberg provided an overview of HB 1220, which the state Legislature passed in 2021. He said the Department Commerce will provide an inventory of housing needs, including:

- Units for moderate, low, very low, and extremely low-income households
- Emergency housing, emergency shelters and permanent supportive housing (PSH)

He said the county and cities must apportion them per Commerce’s guidance.

Eric said that under HB 1220, each city’s Comprehensive Plan must do the following by 2025:

- Identify land capacity for the different levels of moderate and low-income households as well as emergency housing, emergency shelters and PSH
- Address moderate density housing – such as duplexes, triplexes and townhomes – in UGAs
- Make “adequate provisions” for extremely low to moderate-income needs by
  - Documenting programs/actions to achieve available housing
  - Considering housing locations in relation to employment
  - Considering ADUs
- Identify discriminatory housing impacts from local policies and attempt to undo them
- Identify areas at risk of displacement from market forces, zoning, and capital investments
- Establish anti-displacement policies (listing several types)

Eric said cities can no longer prohibit or impose moratoria on:

- Transitional housing or PSH in any zones in which residential dwelling units or hotels are allowed
- Indoor emergency shelters or indoor emergency housing in any zones in which hotels are allowed

Eric said cities can impose “reasonable occupancy, spacing, and intensity of use requirements” by ordinance if they permit enough of these housing types to be sited, according to Commerce.

Eric said he would find another future forum during which he could share additional information.

Commissioner Grose expressed concerns with state mandates.

Mayor Kelly Smith Johnston requested that the county create a housing dashboard to make information easier to access. Commissioner Swope said the county is working on a dashboard.

### **Infrastructure improvements and the “dig-once” approach**

Economic Alliance Infrastructure Initiatives Program Manager Todd Chaput said work on the “dig-once” effort continues. He said the group continues to identify future projects and potential savings and that he and the group’s lobbyists are working to identify projects for which unencumbered funds could be used.

### **Roundtable**

Centralia Mayor Kelly Smith Johnston said the city is using a new tool for housing and budget transparency.

Chehalis City Manager Jill Anderson said Chehalis is processing a record number of permits.

Centralia City Manager Rob Hill reminded the mayors that the area cities have a shared services agreement through which area cities can help one another with services such as snow removal.

Paul Mason of the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) discussed projects taking place in Lewis County, including projects on Highway 6, State Route 506, SR 507, SR 508 and the Koontz Bridge road.

Sarah Kohout of Sen. Cantwell's office said the senator is monitoring infrastructure projects.

Pam Peiper of Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler's office said the representative is working on three bills related to public safety.

Meeting adjourned at 11:01 a.m.