

Update with Economic Alliance

March 7, 2022

1:31 p.m.

Present: Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Swope, Commissioner Grose, County Manager Erik Martin, Becky Butler

Guest: Susan DeLaire

Recorder: Tammy Martin

Richard DeBolt said that it is important for the Commissioners to pick projects to apply for funding availability and submit those as pilot projects. Richard said to watch transportation spending as the State has taken money from Public Works to fund infrastructure needs.

Todd Chaput spoke about how metrics will identify projects for ARPA and single out special projects that are needed for Lewis County. These projects will be in partnership with the Commissioners and Public Works. Todd said wildlife corridors have become a hot topic to consider and the Economic Alliance is coordinating ideas with the stakeholders and HDR Consulting for GIS mapping consideration.

Richard said there are grant and federal dollars to be spent around the probability of creating a hydrogen valley. Richard said to expect a post-Covid summit in June. This will be to speak to inflation and supply chain shortages and how these issues are affecting small business in the area. Richard said the EA has taken on the Fox Theatre. The goal is to complete renovations within a 2-year timeline. Once it is operational ready, the Fox Theatre will be turned over to a new Board.

Richard said he would like to have a planning session to discuss projects and pilot projects for ARPA dollars in preparation for 2023 Legislative session. Commissioner Swope said he would like to focus on the types of jobs coming into Lewis County. Commissioner Pollock was concerned about exporting water via hydrogen production. Richard said the energy created at the hydrogen facility would primarily be for local use.

Todd said MMG is a new consulting group solution alternative to the water retention facility.

Richard said the EA will partner with the BOCC to provide updates on current .09 projects.

Distressed counties funding will remain in place.

Richard said homelessness and cleaning city streets is going to be a focus.

Meeting adjourned at 2:17 p.m.