

## **ARPA and Infrastructure Initiatives Stakeholders Meeting / Mayors' Meeting**

**May 6, 2022**

**9:06 a.m.**

Present: Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Swope, Commissioner Grose, County Manager Erik Martin, Becky Butler, Steve Wohld, Rep. Joel McEntire, Rep. Jim Walsh, Sen. Jeff Wilson, Rep. Peter Abbarno, Rep. Ed Orcutt, Economic Alliance Executive Director Richard DeBolt, Economic Alliance Infrastructure Initiatives Program Manager Todd Chaput, Pe Ell Mayor Lonnie Willey, Morton Mayor Dan Mortensen, Centralia Mayor Kelly Johnston Smith, Centralia City Manager Rob Hill, Vader Mayor Joe Schey, Buck Lucas of the Department of Commerce, Rich Doenges of Ecology, Chad Hancock of the Washington State Department of Transportation, Lee Napier, Meja Handlen, Lara McRea, Twin Transit Executive Director Joe Clark, Pam Peiper of U.S. Rep. Herrera Beutler's Office, Christine Nahn of Sen. Murray's office, Centralia Public Works Director Kim Ashmore, various other city representatives, stakeholders and invitees

Guests: Jared Wenzelburger, Isabel Vander Stoep, Nic Scott, Susan DeLaire, and various other members of the public and press

Recorder: Rieva Lester

Commissioners Lindsey Pollock, Sean Swope and Lee Grose welcomed the various participants and guests. They discussed work the county has undertaken to use American Rescue Plan Act funding to improve infrastructure and other county needs.

Rep. Joel McEntire, Rep. Jim Walsh, Sen. Jeff Wilson, Rep. Peter Abbarno, Rep. Ed Orcutt discussed their legislative efforts.

Economic Alliance CEO Richard DeBolt and Infrastructure Initiatives Program Manager Todd Chaput outlined the EA's MOU with Lewis County, under which EA has been contracted to:

- Facilitate and plan stakeholder meetings as related to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
- Research and lobby for infrastructure funding
- Develop criteria and application process for grant funding
- Facilitate Economic Impact meetings with stakeholders

Todd and Richard discussed their role in helping create a "dig-once" program to save taxpayer dollars on various projects.

Buck Lucas discussed the Department of Commerce's Dig-Once Pilot project, which he oversees.

The group discussed the need for stream-lined permitting processes, which would help projects move forward. They noted that the cooperative dig-once mentality will allow various entities to use collaborators' work as matching funds.

Public Works Director Josh Metcalf discussed HDR engineering data.

Centralia Mayor Kelly Johnston Smith outlined some of Centralia's infrastructure needs, including:

- Road improvements
- Housing
- Water-sewer hook-ups
- Water rights
- Broadband access

Pe Ell Mayor Lonnie Willey said Pe Ell needs help creating access to its dam.

Vader Mayor Joe Schey said Vader is working on infrastructure improvements and that the county is upgrading the county-owned water system in Vader.

Morton Mayor Dan Mortensen outlined some of the city's infrastructure needs, including:

- Help with culverts
- Help with flooding
- Help with permitting processes
- Help replacing water and sewer lines

Mayor Mortensen said the city is working on upgrades to its water system.

Napavine Mayor Shawn O'Neill outlined some of the city's infrastructure needs, including:

- Help to rebuild 1.5 miles of road
- Repairs to Exit 72
- Park upgrades

At 10:40 a.m., Commissioner Pollock announced that the meeting would recess until 11 a.m.

The meeting resumed at 11:03 a.m.

County Manager Erik Martin discussed the county's efforts to tie its ARPA allocations to its Vision 2025 initiatives as well as the county's efforts to establish a long-range plan.

Budget Administrator Becky Butler outlined some ways the county is allocating its ARPA funding, including:

- 911 Communications center
- Technology projects
- Vader Water system
- Fair water system
- Public Health

Erik expanded on the radio infrastructure improvements planned for the 911 Communications center.

Public Health and Social Services Deputy Director Meja Handlen steps being taken to improve public health and how infrastructure ties in to public health needs.

Eric Eisenberg discussed the county's efforts to address the local housing crisis. Eric discussed the county's work to establish a year-round, permanent night-by-night shelter to help the region's homeless community.

Port of Chehalis Commissioner Peter Lahmann thanked the legislators for their efforts and also discussed a free apprenticeship program being offered May 9 through June 3.

A Chehalis representative discussed the city's need for help with a failing bridge, water line repairs and infrastructure in the downtown corridor.

Twin Transit Executive Director Joe Clark discussed Twin Transit's efforts to improve transportation locally. He also discussed the company's efforts regarding hydrogen as well as its and to expand transportation services along the I-5 corridor and its efforts to increase the number of charging stations locally.

Richard DeBolt invited students to apply for – and community members to donate toward – a scholarship in honor of late Commissioner Stamper Gary Stamper.

Richard invited attendees and the public to attend a post-COVID summit planned for June 15.

Eric Eisenberg outlined options for a Countywide Municipal Resource Committee (COMUNREC) to provide access to information and services:

- County-run committee
- Committee run collectively by the cities
- A quasi-regional planning authority
- Any one of the three with Community Development's involvement

Eric said he would further discuss the matter at a future Mayors' Meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 11:46 a.m.