

County Manager Update

August 8, 2022

10:02 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Swope, Commissioner Grose, County Manager Erik Martin, Steve Wohld, Mindy Brooks, Lee Napier, Amber Smith, Becky Butler, Lara McRea, Jenn Libby-Jones, Daleyn Coleman, Nic Scott, Josh Metcalf

Guest(s):

Recorder: Rieva Lester

Public comment: None.

General Rule 42 – Independence of Public Defense Services: Amber Smith said the state Supreme Court has adopted a new rule that takes effect Jan. 1, 2023.

She said the new rule states that judges and judicial staff in superior and limited jurisdiction courts – such as Lewis County’s – shall not select public defense administrators or the attorneys to ensure the independence of the public defense system from judicial influence and control. She said this means that work historically done by court staff will have to be moved to staff outside the courts.

Amber discussed options for creating a position under the BOCC to serve the role. She said the position would serve the county’s three courts – District, Superior and Juvenile – and would be a fulltime-plus position. She said the position would negotiate contracts, audit attorney hours / billings, and conduct performance reviews.

Erik Martin said the position may be a natural fit under Risk but that there are no recommendations as of yet.

Long-Range Strategic Planning Workshop: Lara McRea said the workshops will be held Aug. 9 and 10.

Public Works: Josh Metcalf said COVID-19-related restrictions regarding water turnoffs have been lifted. He said the Vader and Middle Fork water systems have multiple homes that are 120-plus days delinquent on their bills: 30 Vader users and six to 12 Middle Fork users. Josh said the 30 Vader delinquencies are \$30,000 in arrears. He said there are also 60 homes that are 60 days overdue. Josh said those with overdue bills have been sent information on help available, including funding and payment plans. He said county crews will begin hanging door-knob hangers regarding water shut-offs.

Josh provided an update regarding concerns that had been raised in the Ashford area.

911 update - Radio job description revisions and budget adjustment: Jenn Libby-Jones said a contract with Day Wireless ends Aug. 31. She asked that the commissioners approve returning to a two-employee position model instead of contracting out for the work. The commissioners said they have no concerns with her request.

Commissioner Grose made a motion to approve Jenn's proposal as submitted. Commissioner Swope seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Budget: Becky Butler said the Budget process will kick off later in the day with the release of the Budget call letter.

Calendars / vacation schedule: The commissioners said they would be fine with canceling the PUD update planned for later in the day.

Meeting adjourned at 10:26 a.m.