

Mayors' Meeting

October 7, 2022

9:06 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Swope, Centralia City Manager Rob Hill, Special Projects DPA Eric Eisenberg, Peter Lahmann, Steve Wohld, Nic Scott, Paul Mason of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Mindy Brooks, Public Works Director Josh Metcalf, Mossyrock Mayor Randall Sasser, Morton Mayor Dan Mortensen, Vader Mayor Joey Schey, Toledo City Council member Eric Hayes, Meja Handlen, Sarah Kohout of Sen. Maria Cantwell's office, John Anderson Regional Rep. for Governor Inslee's office, Yvonne Rivera Community Service Administrator for the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Logan Perkins (DSHS), Rieva Lester, Tailor Arrington, Becky Butler, Chris Roden, Chehalis City Manager Jill Anderson

Guests: Harry Bhagwandin, Isabel Vander Stoep

Recorder: Tammy Martin

Public Comment: None

Roundtable:

Centralia City Manager Rob Hill said the city is examining policies regarding the homelessness. He said the indirect consequences need solutions and he is grateful for the partnership with Lewis County. Rob said the China Creek project is complete and will have significant impacts on flooding mitigation for downtown Centralia. Rob said the city of Centralia is working on a housing action plan and has a public survey that is out in effort to be proactive regarding housing issues. There will be a workshop and information about the workshop will be available from the City's web page.

Sarah Kohout said Maria Cantwell's office is working on getting information out about culvert project grant programs. She also said there would be a meeting about Veteran benefits at the Veterans Memorial Museum on November 16, 2022.

John Anderson, Regional Rep. for Governor Inslee's office, introduced himself.

Chehalis City Manager Jill Anderson said the city of Chehalis is in process of updating its codes and Comp Plan for the growth of the city.

Mossyrock Mayor Randall Sasser said the storm-water upgrade is complete for the park. They will have a parade for Toys-For-Tots in Mossyrock at 10 a.m. Saturday, October 15.

Morton Mayor Dan Mortensen asked for updates about currency changes from the Governor's rep John Anderson. Mayor Mortensen said the city's sidewalk project is now complete. They also replaced a pump and liner. Mayor Mortensen said they are working on their capital budget funds and are looking to update the Morton airport. The truck route is in need of repair and will be a priority for 2023.

Harry Bhagwandin said Onalaska recently completed their Apple Harvest with its largest turnout.

Yvonne Rivera Community Service Administrator for the said DSHS is looking for a building to relocate its offices.

Winlock Mayor Brandon Svenson said Winlock recently permitted its 65th home. Brandon shared his concerns about electric cars, the vaccine mandate, and not enough troopers on the highways.

Toledo City Council member Eric Hayes said Toledo is planning for a major growth spurt and the city expects to see approximately 100 new homes. The city of Toledo is looking at UGA expansion. There was a water comp plan update and the amount of funding needed for infrastructure is large due to a lot of deferred maintenance.

Vader Mayor Joey Schey said there have been approximately 24 new homes permitted in Vader. The wastewater treatment plan is now online and is in the final stages of completion.

Paul Mason of WSDOT said the Highway 508 embankment project will be extended. He said there will be Cowlitz River bridge closures October 10th through the 15th for repairs and the I-5 bridge strike and will see a replacement span that is expected to be complete Q1 2023.

Resource sharing opportunities:

Eric said Toledo is utilizing Winlock for policing resources.

Mayor Mortensen reached out to the group for striping help. They do not have the equipment necessary to complete the striping.

Commissioner Swope has proposed a draft for encampment removal and clean-up policy. Commissioner Swope said this should be utilized by the cities. He said some encampments may be more hazardous and require more effort to address. Meja Handlen said it is important that the cities and towns of Lewis County work collaboratively to mitigate the movement of the encampments from one area to the next.

DSHS Administrator Yvonne Rivera said her office sees residents that need assistance obtaining medical benefits, food assistance or cash benefits. The mobile Community Service Office helps those in rural areas and those in need during national disaster emergencies. Yvonne is asking the group to help spread information about the benefits they can provide.

Meja said Public Health is updating their interlocal agreement for the Lewis County Animal Shelter and outside entities.

Commissioner Pollock addressed the Board's concerns about the Department of Natural Resource's Carbon Project. Commissioner Pollock said the gas tax will be passed onto Lewis County taxpayers, additional revenue for timber not harvested will be lost, and jobs will be impacted.

Comprehensive plan updates:

Mindy Brooks said she would like to propose changes to the Planned Growth Committee to include scope updates.

WorkEx program:

Peter Lahmann said WorkEx is a service connected work force re-entry program that uses internships paid by Veterans' Benefits. Peter suggested if there was a need for employment, this is a great transition service.

Department of Commerce response:

Meja said guidelines outlined within funding could be interpreted in multiple ways. Meja is working to provide more details and better guidelines.

Announcements:

Peter Lahmann said October 15 is the Ghost Tour in downtown Centralia.

Meja said October 29th is a drug take-back day in Morton and Centralia. This is a safe and welcoming environment to properly dispose of unused medications.

Chris Roden said PUD recently closed on an acquisition of an 80-acre parcel. The parcel will be used for the Fish and Wildlife program and RV parking.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.