

County Manager & Budget Update

November 13, 2023

9:01 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Swope, Commissioner Brummer, Commissioner Pollock, County Manager Ryan Barrett, Mindy Brooks, John Abplanalp, Becky Butler, Josh Metcalf, Rudy Rodriguez, Tina Hemphill, Ross, McDowell, Matt Jaeger, Isaac Freeman, Wes Rethwill, Doug Carey

Guest(s):

Recorder: Tammy Martin

Public comment: None

Fee schedule: Lee Napier said the fee schedule will be presented in November. John Abplanalp discussed the water lab fees. The new fee schedule proposed will cover the program costs including fees for testing. The current program has a deficit, and an increase of fees are needed to cover all costs associated with the program. Based on the read-aheads sent to the Commissioners, the Board agreed the new fee schedule of a 54% increase to \$43 would be an acceptable increase.

John discussed the Food Safety Program. The Board agreed that a 1-year fixed increase of 22.5% would be appropriate for the Food Safety Program.

John discussed the drinking water program. The Board did not approve a fee increase for the drinking water program.

Notice of Hearing for Packwood Subarea Plan: Mindy Brooks, Senior Long-Range Planner, said the Notice of Hearing will be posted November 25, 2023, and all testimony should be sent to her. Mindy will present the plan during the Wednesday workshop Dec 6 and the hearing will take place Dec. 12.

WSAC: Commissioner Swope said weighted voting is being considered by WSAC. Every vote for every representative. Commissioner Swope said some counties would benefit because of population, but smaller and rural counties would not. Commissioner Swope reported a federal initiative is being proposed for Medicare options for inmates.

LTAC: Tammy Martin and Commissioner Brummer discussed the increase request by the Lodging Tax Committee. The Lodging Tax Committee asked for an increase of \$133,995 for a total of \$833,995 in funding for 2024 awardees. The BOCC asked for the applications to be sent and placed back on Wrap-up.

The Board recessed for 5 minutes at 9:55 a.m.

The meeting resumed at 10:00 a.m.

2024 Budget and Levies: Becky Butler presented Emergency Management's follow-up request. The extra position and breakdown include \$100,000 for requirements for DEM. The full cost increase is \$600,000. The current rate is \$4 per capita for partner aid and Josh Metcalf said service rate could

propose an increase. Josh's recommendation is an increase of 35% to \$5.39 per capita and use fund balance for the remainder. Becky said it is important to note Lewis County is funding the additional position. Josh said it is important to note that reserves are important to cover costs because reimbursement can take several years from FEMA and insurance. The Board is approving the \$5.39 per capita and the remaining from general transfer as needed.

Becky asked for the original meeting minutes last week to reflect a decision to move towards internal removal of decedents using LATCF and/or ARPA funds to purchase vehicles for decedents. The Board is also approving the transfer to internal removal for decedents.

Chief Sweet submitted a memo for a decrease of \$32,000 to Trinity Services. Commissioner Pollock would like to tie the budget to the contract. Any funds not used would be returned. The recommendation is to fund 80% of the \$522,150 and a request for any additional funding would require an amendment. Becky said she would send a proposed read ahead with final numbers. Becky asked for clarification was to deny the request of additional deputies and to absorb costs and request a budget amendment in the third quarter if necessary. Commissioner Swope said equipment is necessary for operations.

Becky said she's had outreach with Superior Court and a letter will be sent out from the County Manager for WSU.

Commissioner Pollock said it was determined there isn't another source for determining short-term rentals. Commissioner Brummer feels Lodging Tax dollars could be utilized to fund using Granicus. Becky said more research is needed. The Assessor's Office total request was \$66,500 to include software, food allowance and cell phones. The Commissioners asked to hold off for decisions until Monday at the next Wrap-up.

The SWCAA has a yearly increase of \$3,900. The Board approved paying the increase of \$3900, adding this is under duress.

BOCC options for setting the levies include 0 %, 1 %, and 1 % with bank capacity. Josh said he is recommending at least the 1% based on the increasing costs on the maintenance side of the Roads Dept. This would keep Lewis County in compliance with Washington State requirements. Josh said there is an added cost associated with turning back \$500,000 funding to the state. Josh said Public Works has applied for federal funding to complete projects, but they each require matching dollars. Josh said the costs associated with oil and rock continue to rise. Commissioner Brummer reached out to constituents for their opinions and did not receive positive results. Commissioner Swope received similar results from his own outreach. The Board agreed to accept the 1% for new construction for both roads and general and to bank capacity.

Calendar: Commissioner Brummer RSVP'd for Riverside Fire Authority, there is a WFFA meeting Nov. 13, and an evening budget meeting Nov 21.

Meeting adjourned 11:04 a.m.

