

County Manager Update

January 22, 2024

10:18 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Brummer, Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Swope, County Manager Ryan Barrett, Terry Wentworth, Doug Carey, Lee Napier, Josh Metcalf, Geoff Soderquist, Becky Butler, David Bailey (on phone during executive session), Josh Metcalf

Guest(s):

Recorder: Rieva Lester

Public comment: None.

State-of-the-market real estate update: Terry Wentworth provided updates on residential and commercial sales. She said residential prices are increasing roughly 3.1 percent each year and that properties are spending longer on the market. She said interest rates have dipped slightly. Terry said commercial sales have laxed, leading to increased vacancies. She said interest rates have increased, making commercial purchases a little more risky than they had been. She said many of the commercial properties for sale are in need of renovations.

Mountain View Cemetery: Becky Butler said staff has developed a draft legal notice regarding the potential sale of Mountain View Cemetery.

At 10:29 a.m., Commissioner Brummer announced that the Board would be going into executive session under RCW 42.30.110(1)(c) until 10:40 a.m. to discuss real estate matters regarding Mountain View Cemetery and the Masonic Lodge.

At 10:40 a.m., Commissioner Brummer extended executive session until 10:43 a.m.

Executive session ended at 10:43 a.m. Commissioner Brummer noted that no decisions had been made.

Commissioner Pollock made a motion to authorize staff to proceed with the notice as discussed. Commissioner Swope seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) project review: Becky Butler said BerryDunn has reviewed the Ceres Hill Road bridge project to determine eligibility. The group discussed the pros and cons of allocating ARPA funds for Ceres Hill Road repairs. Geoff Soderquist said permitting is a concern. He said it's unclear whether National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review will be required.

Geoff said the bridge has been submitted to the Historic Register, which could further complicate matters. He said the bridge has not yet been added to the Register.

Josh Metcalf said the project has been added to the county's list of legislative priorities. Becky and Josh noted that the project will not have enough money to proceed if the state doesn't earmark funding toward it.

The commissioners said they will delay decisions on Ceres Hill, the jail roof and / or Vader water until after the legislative session ends. Commissioner Swope stressed the need to complete the Fairgrounds water repair project.

Geoff said the county may be able to secure County Road Administration Board (CRAB) funding for the Ceres Hill bridge as part of the Rural Arterial Program (RAP).

Lodging Tax reimbursement guidelines update: Becky Butler said staff is working on reimbursement guidelines. She said the proposed update includes approval for promotional items.

Meeting adjourned at 11:12 a.m.