

## Economic Alliance Update

May 6, 2024

1:34 p.m.

Present: Commissioner Brummer, Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Swope, County Manager Ryan Barrett, Todd Chaput, Richard DeBolt, Eric Eisenberg, Becky Butler

Guest(s): None

Recorder: Tammy Martin

**Public comment:** None.

**Business Equity Center:** Richard DeBolt said the Economic Alliance received a grant for its new Business Equity Center, with a move-in date planned for June and an open house planned for September.

**ADO:** Richard said EA contracts with – and reports to – the state for its associate development organization (ADO) work. Todd said EA will share its state ADO reporting with the county.

**.09:** Richard said EA is working on verbiage for its .09 contract. Becky Butler said it must specify which specific section the .09 will be funding based on RCW. Richard said the Economic Alliance made changes to the contract to approve accepting the needed insurance pieces and reporting pieces. Becky said reporting needs to be tracked by hours and rate of pay instead of just a quarterly payment.

**Tourism:** Todd said a May 20 training event will focus on how best to use social media and how to connect with the Economic Alliance. Todd said the EA is hosting a summer photo contest and will offer a cash prize. Todd said EA merchandise now available includes shirts, beanies, hats, etc. Todd said the Economic Alliance received a \$15,000 grant to assist with GIS for trail mapping and received another grant to help launch EA's new virtual reality photoshoots, "Discover Squatch," which adds AI-generated sasquatch images to visitors' photos when they scan a QR code.

**Events:** Richard said 20 vendors participated in the recent Inclusive Career Fair, which focused on those who have disabilities or face challenges in public settings. Richard said a golf tournament fundraiser is planned for September.

**Recruitment:** Todd said he is working on a number of projects, including finalizing a hotel agreement in Centralia and pitching other potential hotel sites in Centralia. He said he is working with the Port of Chehalis to secure a wood product company, a furniture manufacturer, and expects an agreement to be announced soon.

**Announcements:** Todd said the EA is creating a video for the Bioeconomy Development Opportunity (BDO) zone initiative. Richard said there will be Washington Economic Development Association (WEDA) conference in Spokane June 18-20.

Meeting adjourned 1:53 p.m.