

ESC / Directors' Update

February 19, 2025

9:02 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Brummer, Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Swope, County Manager Ryan Barrett, Meja Handlen, Mindy Brooks, Becky Butler, Geoff Soderquist, Grace Jimenez, Jenn Libby-Jones, Angie Hodge, Gabe Anzelini, Warren McLeod, Debbie Fredricks, Gary Fredricks, Kate Chatterton, Casey Mauermann, Guilherme Motta, Linda Mastin, Marni Larson, Preston Pinkston, Sarah Hensley, Shelly Stewart, Scott Tinney, Sherri Dokken, Tom Stanton

Guest(s): Unnamed guests

Recorder: Rieva Lester

Public comment: None.

>> ESC

WSU: Debbie Fredricks provided information on farm safety and suicide prevention services.

Coroner's Office: Coroner Warren McLeod provided the following updates:

2024 totals: 885 deaths investigated, including

- Four homicides
- 10 suicides
- 43 accidental deaths
- 32 drug deaths, with fentanyl as the most common drug causing death
- Six deaths ruled undetermined
- Autopsies: 69 full autopsies, 54 external exams and 12 "limited" autopsies

2025 totals year to date: 120 deaths investigated, including

- One homicide
- One suicide
- Four accidental deaths
- One drug death
- Seven cases "pending"
- Autopsies: 11 full autopsies, 10 external exams, one "limited" autopsy

Warren said Lewis County has saved \$63,260 by performing its own decedent removals, noting that the county's contracts had cost \$500 per removal and would have totaled \$82,500 had it not switched to performing its own removals. He said costs for performing the service in-house totaled \$19,240.

Warren said he is working on an ILA with Mason County, and possibly others, to allow other entities to use Lewis County's autopsy facility. He said the county will charge users \$350 per use.

Warren said he is working on contracts with three forensic pathologists.

Treasurer Arny Davis said property tax bills were delayed a few days. Arny said he is working with Tyler to implement new software.

Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update: Mindy Brooks invited meeting participants to review the draft Comp Plan Update.

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Geoff Soderquist discussed a resolution to accept a bid on tax title property off of Airport Road in Chehalis.

Geoff Soderquist discussed a resolution to accept a bid on tax title property off of Taylor Road, Chehalis.

Grace Jimenez discussed a resolution to extend the existing interfund loan from REET II fund no. 3120 to the Homeless Shelter Capital Fund no. 3500.

Becky Butler discussed a resolution to execute a contract with the State Department of Commerce to fund Engineering and Design for the Proposed Fair Equestrian Facility project, located at 1909 South Gold Street, Centralia, Washington, 98531.

Rieva Lester discussed a resolution to appoint members to the Distressed Counties (.09) Fund / Rural Economic Development Public Facilities Advisory Committee.

Ryan Barrett discussed a resolution to approve a personal services agreement with Lewis County Community Health (a.k.a. Valley View Health Center) for project management services.

Commissioner Pollock made a motion to move two consent items and six deliberation items to the Feb. 25, 2025, BOCC Business Meeting agenda. Commissioner Swope seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Wednesday Workshop / announcements

Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update: Mindy Brooks urged Directors to review their sections within the proposed Comprehensive Plan.

Meja Handlen reviewed challenges Public Health and Social Services faces due to cuts to state and federal funding.

Pac Mountain vacancy: The commissioners directed staff to draft a resolution appointing Marika Bertolini to PacMtn.

Economic Alliance funding for flood mitigation: Commissioner Pollock made a motion to renew flood mitigation funding for 2025. Commissioner Swope seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:54 a.m.