SPECIAL MEETING of the EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Thursday, May 28, 2020
11:00 a.m.

The 300 Building
311 North 4th St, Suite 204, Yakima
And via Teleconference: chime.aws/2996722448

YVCOG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS:
Jim Restucci, Chair, City of Sunnyside,
John Hodkinson, Vice-Chair, City of Union Gap
Janice Gonzales, Council Member, City of Zillah
Brad Hill, Council Member, City of Yakima
Norm Childress, Commissioner, Yakima County
Bill Moore, Council Member, City of Grandview
Sherry Raymond, Member-at-Large

❖ CALL TO ORDER – The May 28, 2020 special meeting of the YVCOG Executive Committee will come to order at 11:00 a.m.

❖ PUBLIC COMMENT POLICY – It is the policy of the YVCOG Executive Committee to accept public comment on agenda items at the time the item is being discussed. Public comments regarding items not on the agenda will be heard at the end of the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS
Letter of Support
• Background – Chris Wickenhagen, Executive Director
  May 12, 2020 Letter to Governor from 19 Boards of County Commissioners

• YVCOG support letter (sample draft?) – James Restucci, Chairman
  Action: Discussion and Authorization

  Action: “Motion to authorize the Chair to sign a letter supporting the 19 Boards of County Commissioners.

  OR, “Discuss and approve Executive Committee recommendation of Letter in Support of 19 County Commissioners to the General Membership for approval.”

PUBLIC COMMENT

ADJOURN

YVCOG ensures full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by prohibiting discrimination against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, or sex in the provision of benefits and services resulting from its federally assisted programs and activities. For questions regarding YVCOG’s Title VI Program, you may contact the Title VI Coordinator at 509.574.1550.

If you need special accommodations to participate in this meeting, please call us at 509.574.1550 by 10:00 a.m. three days prior to the meeting. For TDD users, please use the state’s toll-free relay service, 800.833.6388 and ask the operator to dial 509.574.1550.
May 12, 2020

The Honorable Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Honorable Governor Inslee,

We are living in unprecedented times. The effects of COVID-19 could not have been predicted, and we recognize the strong early response efforts you initiated in light of unknown consequences and dire forecasts provided by health experts. However, we are now seeing the unintended effects of these measures that lack any solid termination date.

Washington State Commissioners are, and have been, on the front lines working with community members. People from every corner of the state are suffering. Businesses are closing, unemployment checks are not being received - and our citizens need help now.

As Governor for our State, you declared an emergency on February 29, 2020. The “Stay Home Stay Healthy” order was enacted on March 23, 2020. It is now May 12 … 50 days … getting close to 2 billing cycles for rent/mortgage, utilities, insurance, car payments and payroll commitments. Property taxes are due. The list goes on and on. Most of these businesses/unemployed work force have nothing coming in to pay these obligations with. The hospitals are bleeding money because the flood of virus-stricken patients that was predicted did not materialize so they are sitting with empty beds and furloughed employees. Farmers of every kind are looking at dumping and destroying crops because all the restaurants are essentially closed and the market is backed up. This is true for the meat and dairy markets as well. We, and they, have been patient, but this can only last so long. We need solutions to salvage and restore our crumbling economy as we watch the people in our communities lose everything they have worked for.

You stated in your launch of the “Safe Start” plan last week that you “fully recognize the impact this is having on families, workers and businesses but we have not yet won the fight against the virus”. If you do, in fact, truly understand the impact on your citizens you will realize that the glacial speed of this process is killing the citizens of this state in ways the virus does not. It is killing them financially, emotionally and through undiagnosed other physical conditions not attended to due to fear of or inability to see a doctor or go to the hospital.

We collectively urge you to alter the current narrative to allow us to launch a tandem effort to halt the spread of the virus while simultaneously allowing our businesses to start to re-open. We have been receiving plans from our businesses. Detailed plans that cover how they intend to open to the public but still observe heightened cleaning methods and adequate distancing and personal protection to discourage close contact. By all means leave the emergency order in place so that people remain aware and vigilant, but remove the arbitrary restrictions of essential and non-essential businesses and services to allow our counties to actually begin to open up and operate again. Show us, and the people who have empowered us to serve them, that you not only hear these issues but are actively working to rectify this
situation.

You, under the emergency powers entrusted to the Governor, have the ability to turn this around. Please do so. As elected officials, all of us serve the people, and we need to lead them in a way that preserves not only their physical health and safety but their economic health and safety. We believe this can successfully be done in tandem at a more rapid pace than is being done.

We implore you to allow us to take local control with the help and support that the State can give. COVID-19 is real and it is serious, but it effects every county differently. We strongly hope you will work with us and allow us to create plans within our individual counties that address our individual county needs.

We stand ready to assist you in getting all of Washington back on the road to desperately needed economic recovery.

Respectfully,

Yakima County Board of Commissioners
Grant County Board of Commissioners
Lewis County Board of Commissioners
Douglas County Board of Commissioners
Chelan County Board of Commissioners
Walla Walla County Board of Commissioners
Benton County Board of Commissioners
Cowlitz County Board of Commissioners
Franklin County Board of Commissioners
Pacific County Board of Commissioners
Lincoln County Board of Commissioners
Kittitas County Board of Commissioners
Wahkiakum County Board of Commissioners
Stevens County Board of Commissioners
Asotin County Board of Commissioners
Grays Harbor County Board of Commissioners
Klickitat County Board of Commissioners
Skamania County Board of Commissioners
Ferry County Board of Commissioners