**LWVSJ Observer Corps\*: County Council April 10, 2023**

The Council Proclaimed April as volunteer month and **recognized the hundreds of volunteers that support the county** on advisory boards and commissions and in direct service with many departments.

The County Council was briefed about a well in a **class A water system in Hannah Heights that was found to be contaminated with PFAS.** The well has been shut down and the system is operating on a much lower capacity uncontaminated well. **The state Department of Health is managing the response and oversight to the crisis along with the Department of Ecology,** including disposal of the contaminated water**.** The county is communicating with those in the affected area surrounding areas, going door to door. They will hold a meeting with those impacted on April 19. **They have an e-mail** [PFASquestions@sanjanco.com](mailto:PFASquestions@sanjanco.com) **to answer questions**. Healthcare providers have been notified.

Emergency Management Director Brendan Cowan briefed the council on their role in county emergencies. Including the in and outs of a **disaster declaration** and the **Incident Command System.** He said **earthquake/tsunami and wildfires were the two most likely natural disasters** to affect the county. He listed the kinds **of help available to the county** in an emergency. An **after-action review** has been done of the handling **of the Covid Emergency** and a report with lessons learned will be forthcoming.

**Washington State Ferry staff** briefed the Council on prospects for addressing ferry issues faced by county residents. The **San Juan Route** with no alternative travel option **is the first priority for service**. **Vessel issues will continue to affect service.** With only 21 vessels and 19 needed for full-service schedule, there are simply not enough boats to run t routes and do required maintenance. It will be four years until new boats come into operation. **Staffing shortages** are a major challenge but are being addressed and **will improve over time**. The options for getting Sydney service back before 2030 are slim. A task force will develop **a new schedule for the San Juans**. It will include the ferry Advisory Committee and have 25 public members**. Riders are evenly split** on prioritizing **on-time sailings vs. more sailings**.

The Council set a public hearing for May 16 on a **2023 budget amendment** that update final 2022 numbers and add in new grants and other funding and the projects they will be used for. REIT and retail tax income is down from last year so far.

Several members of the public spoke regarding the **Argyle Lots RFQ.** The Council voted to direct staff to **open negotiations with the Home Trust.** Council member Wolf thanked Favor 34 for their submission and expressed the need for the community to be open-minded as we work to solve the housing crisis.

\*The **League of Women Voters,** a nonpartisan organization encourages informed participation in government. The Observer Corps attends and takes notes at government meetings to expand public understanding of public policy and decisions. The notes do not necessarily reflect the views of the League or its members.