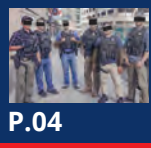
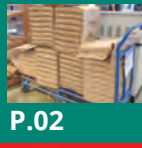


LYNNWOOD

TIMES



Snohomish County's VOTF - real life crime fighters
P.04



Consumers to be charged statewide 8-cent bag fee starting Oct 1
P.02



China's looming financial crisis as Evergrande misses debt payment
P.07

Real News ⚡
Real Impact

Second shooting of store clerk in just over a year claims the life of beloved family man



Memorial for Tejpal Singh at the Chevron station in Lynnwood where he was murdered in the early morning of September 26, 2021. Source: Mario Lotmore/Lynnwood Times.

By **BO JOHN BRUSCO**

Tejpal Singh was a 60-year-old husband and father who was murdered while working a shift at a Chevron station in Lynnwood, WA. The gunman has yet to be identified as the community mourns its loss.

LYNNWOOD, Wash. – On Sunday, September 26, the city of Snohomish lost a dear member of its community. Tejpal Singh, a Snohomish city resident, was going about his opening routine at the Chevron station in Lynnwood where he worked when a masked gunman took his life. Singh, 60, left behind his wife and their three children.

The Snohomish County Sheriff's department is still investigating the case. They believe the gunman was attempting to rob the store before fleeing the scene. The Sheriff's Department obtained a photo of the suspect and shared it on Twitter, asking anyone who can identify the individual to call 911.

Remembering Tejpal Singh

While the tweet has been shared over 45 times, a comment about Singh speaks to the loving person he

was and how his kind demeanor had a positive impact on his community.

"He didn't deserve this," wrote a Twitter user who claimed to have worked with Singh. "He was the most wholesome man I've ever met and I worked with him for about a year."

Further evidence of Singh's lasting impression can be seen in the Go Fund Me campaign for funeral services. Within the first 24 hours, the "Funeral Services for Tejpal Singh" fundraiser raised over \$55,000.

"He was [a] very gentle and cooperative person and always ready to help [a] needy person," wrote one of the more than 420 donors. "This is [a] very very irreparable loss to us. May God give his soul peace in heaven."

For 21 years, Singh worked at the Chevron station at 148th Street and Highway 99 in Lynnwood, WA. Inside the station, the location's owner set up a memorial with a photo of Singh surrounded by flowers and balloons.

Kelly Johal, who was Singh's employer, told the

Lynnwood Times that those who wish to see the impact he left on the community should come to the candlelight vigil tomorrow, Wednesday, September 29. The vigil will be held at the previously mentioned Chevron and begins at 6 pm.


Snohomish Mayor John Kartak also commented on the tragedy and how it is felt throughout the smaller city. "My heart goes out to Singh and his family and those who knew him. It's always a tragic story when someone gets shot down like that," he told the Lynnwood Times. "And something like this always hits close to home here in this small community."

A similar tragedy a little over a year ago and twenty-minutes away

A similar tragedy took place in May of last year, at a 7-Eleven in Edmonds. Nagendiram Kandasamy, 64, was shot and killed during a 16-hour shift. Kandasamy was also a loving husband and father.


The suspect was described as "only a white man in his 20's" according to King 5's report. Security foot-

Continued **PAGE 06** >>



I ask for your **VOTE** for Mayor of Lynnwood

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Christine Frizzell
for Mayor of Lynnwood

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Consumers to be charged statewide 8-cent bag fee starting Oct 1



By **MARIO LOTMORE**

OLYMPIA, Wash. – During the 2020 legislative session, the Legislature passed a statewide ban on single-use plastic bags to reduce plastic pollution. The law was to go into effect on January 1 of this year but was delayed in December 2020 by Governor Jay Inslee due to pandemic-related supply issues and then delayed again on July 13. To view the RCW in its entirety, click here.

The law will prohibit single-use plastic carryout bags and charge a minimum 8-cent fee to consumers for all recycled paper carryout bags and reusable carryout bags made of film plastic. This would apply to restaurants, re-

tail stores, small vendors, festivals, markets, and grocery stores. Starting January 1, 2026, the fee is scheduled to increase to a minimum of 12.6 cents per bag. Consumers can bring and use their own bags.

The minimum 8-cent bag charge is for any bag provided to the customer, regardless of whether it is at pickup or point of sale. The bag fee is subject to an additional sales tax since stores are selling the bags to consumers. Below is a list of sales tax rates as of 4Q21 from the Department of Revenue of major cities within Snohomish County:

- Lynnwood: 10.5%
- Mill Creek: 10.5%
- Mukilteo: 10.5%

- Edmonds: 10.4%
- Mountlake Terrace: 10.4%
- Snohomish County (unincorporated): 10.4%
- Everett: 9.8%
- Marysville: 9.3%
- Monroe: 9.3%
- Snohomish (city): 9.2%
- Lake Stevens: 9%

According to the Department of Ecology, Washingtonians use 2 billion single-use plastic bags per year which poses both physical and chemical threats to the marine environment. When the law becomes effective on October 1, it will:

- Prohibit single-use plastic carryout bags in all retail and grocery stores, restaurants, takeout establishments, festivals, and markets.
- Require an 8-cent charge for all recycled content paper carryout bags and reusable carryout bags made of film plastic.
- The fee may not be collected from anyone using a voucher or electronic benefits card issued under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Temporary Assistance for Needy Fam-

ilies (TANF), or Food Assistance Program (FAP).

- Require a minimum of 40% post-consumer recycled content and meet composting requirements in all retail-provided paper bags.
- Require that a reusable bag made of plastic film contain 20% post-consumer recycled content and be at least 2.25 mil thick.
- Require compliant paper and reusable plastic film bags to be labeled with the above specifications
- Create consistent policy and fees across the state.
- This ban does not apply to food banks and food assistance programs; however, those programs are encouraged to take actions to reduce the use of single-use plastic carryout bags.

Plastic Bag Ban Enforcement

When the plastic bag ban goes into effect on Oct. 1, 2021, The Department of Ecology established a reporting form for the public to submit an observation of businesses not in compliance with the new requirements. Repeated non-compliance by businesses may result in penalties up to a \$250 fine.

Mukilteo City Council allocates over \$1 million to four ARPA programs

By **KIENAN BRISCOE**

MUKILTEO, Wash. – Mukilteo City Council motioned to move forward with the Community Outreach, Utility Assistance, Lodging Tax, and Business/Nonprofit Grants programs utilizing American Rescue Plan Act funds during the meeting held Monday, September 20.

The meeting was held entirely virtually after a recommendation from the Health District, September 10, which stated, “The Health District also recommends everyone consider delaying or moving non-essential events and meetings to a virtual format. If it does not need to happen in-person, it is in everyone’s best interest to reschedule or hold gatherings online for the time being.”

“It’s just a smart, safe thing to do. We are joining nearly all (I would say all, but I haven’t confirmed it 100%) other cities in our county who are holding meetings virtually,” Mayor Gregerson told the Lynnwood Times regarding the switch back to virtual.

“Another upside of holding it virtually

is that in the last two months, the vast majority of residents viewing the meeting are doing so from home, online; and if all Council members are virtual, we can all be unmasked and more easily visible to the audience,” she added.

Councilman Joe Marine advocated for a hybrid approach of in-person meetings with an option for community members and council members to attend the meeting by Zoom. Councilman Marine also shared that schools are allowing in-person attendance and school board protocols state students to be at least three feet apart.

Vice President Bob Champion reminded council members that there is not a gubernatorial mandate prohibiting in-person meetings and that the state still allows thousands to gather at Husky games. He advocated that the council vote on the issue of the hybrid approach.

“The science says if you’re masked up, if you’re vaccinated, if you’re following normal hygiene... The likelihood of contracting the disease or virus is low,” Champion said.

At his September 14 meeting, Dr. Chris

Spitters, Health Officer for the Snohomish Health District, stated that the rise in COVID cases have plateaued.

“The good news is the rapid increases that brought us to this point seem to have leveled off over the last couple of weeks,” Dr. Spitters said.

The council agreed to discuss the issue further at its September 27 meeting.

Community Outreach

\$20,000 of funding used for public engagement services (consult and/or software program).

The goal is to engage the community (residents and businesses) to better understand how to promote a quick recovery from the pandemic.

Councilman Louis Harris motioned to

move forward with the Community Outreach program but with a full plan that would be adopted by the council at a later date. The motion was seconded by Councilman Joe Marine. Councilmember Richard Emery motioned to increase the Community Outreach amount to \$40,000 but it was not seconded.

The original motion passed 6-1 with Council Vice President Champion abstaining. Council Vice President Bob Champion was concerned that the funding lacked a concrete plan.

Business/Nonprofit Grants Program

\$200,000 of funding to be used to assist businesses or nonprofits with various COVID-related expenses.

Continued **PAGE 06** >>

LYNNWOOD TIMES

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LYNNWOOD TIMES

CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS

What questions would you want us to ask the candidates?

Lynnwood Mayor • Lynnwood City Council • Mukilteo City Council
Edmonds School District • Mukilteo School District • Mukilteo Mayor

By LYNNWOOD TIMES STAFF

The Lynnwood Times will be conducting in-person video interviews for the following upcoming General Election races and seeking questions from the general public:

- **Lynnwood Mayor:** Christine Frizzell and Jim Smith
- **Lynnwood City Council Position 1:** Shirley Sutton and Nick Coelho
- **Lynnwood City Council Position 2:** Naz Lashgari and Patrick Decker
- **Lynnwood City Council Position 3:** Joshua Binda and Lisa Utter
- **Edmonds School District No. 15, District Director 2:** Melissa Stepp and Keith Smith
- **Mukilteo Mayor:** Jennifer Gregerson and Joe Marine
- **Mukilteo City Council Position 1:** Louis Harris and Peter Zieve
- **Mukilteo City Council Position 2:** Kevin Stoltz and Tom Jordal
- **Mukilteo City Council Position 3:** Alex Crocco and Steve Schmalz
- **Mukilteo School District No. 6, Director District 2:** Judy Schwab and Peter Swardstrom

- **Mukilteo School District No. 6, Director District 4:** Charles Hauck and Jayme Lee Vail

COVID protocols will be followed in accordance with the Snohomish Health Department guidelines. General election ballots are due Tuesday, Nov. 2.

General Election questions and submissions

Debate questions will be developed from questions by our readers; Lynnwood Times Reporters Bo John Brusco, Kienan Briscoe, and Olivia Thiessen; Lynnwood Times Publisher Mario Lotmore; and General Election candidates.

Send your questions to editorial@lynnwoodtimes.com no later than 12:01 a.m. Monday, October 4, 2021.

The Lynnwood Times Editorial Staff will compile the questions into General Election categories/topics for discussion. Candidates will be given the topics of discussion at least 24 hours ahead of their October 6 interview. The

topics of discussion for the mayoral, city council, and school district races will be descriptive and accurately reflect the specific question to be asked.

How will the General Election interview be conducted?

For each interview segment, candidates will be asked at least four questions, with possible follow up questions by the moderators, Lynnwood Times Reporter Bo John Brusco (primary) and Lynnwood Times Publisher Mario Lotmore. The moderator will read a one-minute biography of each candidate. Candidates will be allowed to rebut each other during the discussion; however, comments must be respectful, professional, and relevant to the topic of discussion. Each candidate will be allowed a one-minute closing statement.

Each candidate may bring a guest to the undisclosed interview location. This event is not open to the public.

Each interview segment will be posted on all of Lynnwood Times' social media platforms and on the Lynnwood Times website starting October 11, with the last group of videos posted no later than October 15.

If your business would like to help sponsor this event, contact Michele Mitsuuchi-Stork at sales@lynnwoodtimes.com or call 425-308-8371.

Meet Your Lynnwood Times Editorial Staff

Mario Lotmore is originally from The Bahamas and for the last eight years has called Mukilteo, Washington his

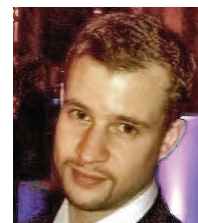


home. Having lived in every region of the United States has exposed him to various cultures, people, and approaches to life. Lotmore created the Lynnwood Times to represent the character of a diverse and growing Lynnwood. Mario's talent is finding "that recipe" of shared destiny to effectively improve the quality of life for others.



Olivia Thiessen graduated with her master's in Curriculum and Instruction in English in 2020. While completing her degree, Olivia worked as a college

grammar and composition teacher and wrote for various magazines and websites. She spent the last year writing secondary English and history textbooks but has recently shifted gears to focus on writing for the media. She believes journalism is the greatest tool within a free society and is passionate about bringing truth to local citizens.



Michael Kienan Briscoe (referred to by his middle name 'Kienan') has a BA in Journalism from Arizona State University and has worked as a free-

lancer for a variety of publications and organizations throughout New York City and Seattle. Journalism, to him, is one of the most important public tools

Continued PAGE 04 >>

Vote Jim Smith

Public safety, fiscal integrity and the well being of all our people are my top priorities

Public Safety

Your safety has to be our #1 priority. Without public safety, nothing else matters. Small crimes have increased substantially, leading to more serious crimes. We need to address this immediately so that our families are safe in our parks, streets and homes. Within two years we will make Lynnwood the safest city in Snohomish County ... but we will start on day one.

High Taxes

I will back off the maxed-out taxes that overburden our seniors, young families, and most vulnerable. Lynnwood taxes used to be the lowest in the state. Now they are among the highest. Unfortunately, people that can least afford them are hurt most. The city's coffers are full, while residents suffer. We must find solutions to reduce car tabs, utility taxes, and other financial burdens.

Traffic

Lynnwood has tolerated horrible traffic congestion for years. Traffic in Lynnwood is already congested. With the light rail coming, it will get much worse for us here in the city. I commit to proactive urban planning and transportation management.

Growth and Development

Lynnwood's population is proposed to grow substantially in the next few years, having far reaching effects on established neighborhoods. Long term residents are the most affected, as outside developers are grabbing property and pushing up prices. We need to keep our eye on our quality of life.

Homelessness

Street homelessness and drug use continues to rise and is part of the drug/mental health epidemic. Associated crime is getting worse. Together we will compassionately offer alternative solutions.



Jim Smith
for Lynnwood Mayor

"There are many important items we need to address in Lynnwood, but the three urgent priorities are: 1) Enhancing our public safety 2) Reducing high taxes 3) Addressing the homelessness and open drug use.

I have known the heart and soul of Lynnwood for over four decades and promise to serve, and care for, all of our Lynnwood residents."

---Jim Smith

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Snohomish County's VOTF – real life crime fighters

By KIENAN BRISCOE

MARYSVILLE, Wash. – The Pacific Northwest Violent Offender Task Force (VOTF), an A-team cast of officers from across Snohomish County, arrested a 48-year-old male outside his Seattle residence for the 2004 murder of 31-year old Hoang V. Nguyen, Thursday, September 9.

On the morning of October 23, 2004, Everett police officers responded to a disturbance at a home on Hardeson Road where Nguyen was found with a stab wound to the chest. He was transported to the hospital but later died from his injury. The suspect was invited to the homeowner's house to help with a project, but upon growing intoxicated late in the evening, engaged in an argument with Nguyen which became physical.

In 2004 the suspect denied stabbing Nguyen, but while reviewing cold cases this year, Everett Police Department Major Crimes Detectives through interviewing and investigation, developed new information that led to probable cause for the suspect's arrest 17 years later.

VOTF Morning Brief and Arrest

VOTF Detective Tim Leo called for a briefing at the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office in Marysville to develop a plan for an arrest. After informing his fellow task force officers of the details, the VOTF departed for Seattle in several vehicles.

The VOTF surveyed outside the suspect's location for two hours, receiving no cooperation from hotel staff where he was staying, before spotting him leave his vehicle outside the building.

The suspect was calmly approached by VOTF members notifying him of the reason of his arrest. He did not resist and was immediately booked at the Snohomish County Jail for probable cause for murder.

"Not everybody VOTF deals with is truly a bad person; but they made a bad decision in a moment of their life that's going to affect their lives for a long time – not only theirs but obviously the victim's lives and their family's lives," Deputy Luke Robinson told the Lynnwood Times at the site of the suspect's arrest.

What is the Violent Offender Task Force

The VOTF is cross commissioned by the U.S. Marshals Service (USMS) Western District of Washington and includes twenty seven federal, state, and local law enforcement partnering agencies. The task force specializes in locating and arresting violent fugitives for offenses such as homicide, assault, sex crimes, failure to register as a sex offender, firearm violations, and federal probation violations.

Since its inception in 2013, the VOTF has made 2,090 arrests, 611 of them sex crime related, and recovered 315 illegally owned firearms.

"I think without law and order you would have chaos around here,"



Snohomish County's Violent Offender Task Force, the A-Team in crime fighting. Source: Kienan Briscoe/Lynnwood Times.

Detective Leo told the Lynnwood Times. "I enjoy our freedoms, and I enjoy protecting our freedoms."

Leo's biggest learning experience with the VOTF happened just a couple of months after joining the force. After working a case for an attempted homicide in Oregon, Deputy Luke Robinson, the lead on the case, learned that the suspect frequented a Renton bar during early evenings. Leo and Robinson set up surveillance at the bar and spotted the suspect within 15 minutes of their arrival. They called for backup but the suspect drove off before backup could arrive. Although the force had been working this case for six months, Leo had to let the suspect go because the "timing wasn't right."

"It was rush hour, downtown Renton. . . . You get in a pursuit with this guy, he hits somebody, he hits a car or a kid crossing the street. . . . How can we minimize risks, not only to us but more importantly to the people that are not invested in being police officers? I signed up to be a police officer. I understand the risk, but a mom and her kid walking down the street didn't sign up for that," Detective Leo told the Lynnwood Times. "This unit prides itself on making good decisions."

Deputies and officers assigned to the VOTF are referred to as Task Force Officers (TFO). TFO's are deputized as Special Deputy U.S. Marshals, which grants them the authority to seek and execute arrest and search warrants supporting the federal task force under Title 18 authority.

The dream team of full-time detectives includes members from the U.S. Marshal's Office, Snohomish County Sheriff's Office, Everett Police Department, WA State Dept. of Corrections, Mountlake Terrace Police Department, Mukilteo Police Department, Arlington Police Department, Lake Stevens Police Department and Lynnwood Police Department.

Having a variety of officers representing different cities benefits both the task force and their respective cities by creating a large range of coverage.

"The benefit for the city of Arlington, with me being on the team, is if somebody is wanted in the city of



Arrest of 48-year-old male outside his Seattle residence on September 9, 2021 for the 2004 murder of 31-year old Hoang V. Nguyen. Source: Kienan Briscoe/Lynnwood Times.

Arlington, sometimes we don't have the resources to go after them, but it makes it essentially a force multiplier for the Arlington force," Luke Adkins, Arlington police officer and part-time member of the VOTF, told the Lynnwood Times.

Luke Adkins works full-time patrol with the Arlington Police Department and part-time with the VOTF. He hopes to one day join the force full-time when staffing allows.

Detective Mike Atwood retired from the force on September 10 to pursue a new sergeant position with the Everett Police Department.

Although there is currently an open position with the VOTF, Detective Leo told the Lynnwood Times that the competition is fierce. When considering bringing someone onboard, the VOTF looks for patrol officers that not only put in the work with arrests but write

good reports, are intelligent, and demonstrate the maturity Leo attributes to his unit.

from page 3 QUESTIONS

to ensure an educated and aware society of events surrounding them. When he is not reporting he enjoys writing fiction and poetry, playing guitar, reading classic literature, and getting outdoors. He lives in Seattle with his two dogs.



Bo John Brusco earned a BA degree in English Education and is a former public school teacher. Currently enrolled in a Master's program for New Media Journalism, he is expected to graduate in October 2021. Brusco values local news stories and believes they play an integral role in maintaining a healthy community.

Is the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine FDA approved?

By **BO JOHN BRUSCO**

On August 23, the Food and Drug Administration granted approval for a COVID-19 vaccine. But the jab in question is called the "Comirnaty" vaccine. The labels for vials of Pfizer-BioNTech are still marked for "Emergency Use Authorization."

The Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) approval of a COVID-19 vaccine has encouraged elected officials to move forward with vaccine mandates. Many government employees must now choose between vaccination or termination.

While Gov. Jay Inslee enacted his proclamation for state employees before the FDA's approval, President Joe Biden recently expanded vaccine requirements at the federal level. Before issuing the new mandate, President Biden noted how some Americans have been vaccine-hesitant because the FDA hadn't approved a COVID-19 vaccine until recently.

"Many said they were waiting for approval from the Food and Drug Administration," he said during his September 9 address. "Well, last month, the FDA granted that approval."

What was and was not approved

On August 23, the FDA did grant its approval for a COVID-19 vaccine, but potentially not a labeled FDA-approved vaccine that is currently available for distribution. While news outlets have reported as though the Pfizer vaccine received FDA approval, like the New York Times' headline, "F.D.A. Fully Approves Pfizer-BioNTech's Vaccine, a First for a Covid-19 Shot," the vaccine that is officially approved is called "COMIRNATY® (COVID-19 vaccine, mRNA)."

This information is publicly available. The approval announcement on the FDA's website reads, "On August 23, 2021, the FDA approved the first COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccine has been known as the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine, and will now be marketed as Comirnaty, for the prevention of COVID-19 disease in individuals 16 years of age and older."

Concerning this new marketing change, on August 23, the FDA stated in a letter to Pfizer that "the licensed vaccine (Comirnaty) has the same formulation as the EUA-authorized vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech) and the products can be used interchangeably to provide the vaccination series without presenting any safety or effectiveness concerns."

In other words, a pharmacist is permitted (depending on the laws of a state) to substitute an interchangeable product (Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine) for the reference product COMIRNATY® (COVID-19 Vaccine, mRNA) without consulting the prescriber—a practice commonly called pharmacy-level substitution.

While the document claims that the two vaccines share the same formulation, the letter states in its footnotes that "the products are *legally distinct* with *certain differences* that do not impact safety or effectiveness" (emphasis added).

It is also clear that while the FDA states that the two formulations can be used interchangeably, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine remains under the Emergency Use Authorization while the COMIRNATY® (COVID-19 Vaccine, mRNA) is FDA approved.

This fact is reiterated throughout the FDA's documentation. In their fact sheet for recipients and caregivers, for example, it reads, "The FDA-approved COMIRNATY (COVID-19 Vaccine, mRNA) and the FDA-authorized Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine under Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) have the same formulation and can be used interchangeably to provide the COVID-19 vaccination series."

This is further emphasized with the statements "COMIRNATY® (COVID-19 Vaccine, mRNA) is an FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccine made by Pfizer for BioNTech" and "Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine has received EUA from FDA" in Pfizer's latest press release announcing collaboration with Brazil's Eurofarma to manufacture COVID-19 vaccine doses.

This press release by Pfizer went on to state that, "This emergency use of the product has not been approved or licensed by FDA, but has been authorized by FDA under an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) to prevent Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)..."

In a September 6 press release announcing a submittal to a request by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) to update its Conditional Marketing Authorization (CMA) for a booster dose, BioNTech, Pfizer's co-partner in the production of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, clearly states, "The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine has not been approved or licensed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), but has been authorized for emergency use by FDA under an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) to prevent Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)..."

This fact is also indicated in the product's labeling. In FDA's previously mentioned letter to Pfizer, it states that "The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine vial label and carton labels are clearly marked for 'Emergency Use Authorization.'"

The Lynnwood Times reached out to the FDA to clarify why the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine is being marketed as the Comirnaty when, according to the FDA's own letter to Pfizer, they are legally "distinct" and appear to be two different vaccines. The Times also questioned why the vaccines can be used interchangeably when the

"COMIRNATY® (COVID-19 Vaccine, mRNA)" is FDA-approved and the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is only authorized. As of Tuesday, September 14, the FDA has not responded to these inquiries.

Do Americans have access to the only FDA-approved vaccine?

Perhaps the most consequential difference between these vaccines is their current availability. "Although COMIRNATY (COVID-19 Vaccine, mRNA) is approved to prevent COVID-19 in individuals 16 years of age and older, there is not sufficient approved vaccine available for distribution to this population in its entirety at the time of reissuance of this EUA," reads one of the footnotes on page 5 in the FDA's letter.

Hence, this is a possible reason the FDA is allowing the FDA-authorized Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine under Emergency Use Authorization to be used interchangeably with FDA-approved COMIRNATY® (COVID-19 Vaccine, mRNA).

Admittedly, the language is vague; it is difficult to say for certain what specific population the statement refers to and what "sufficient" exactly entails. Seeking clarification, the Lynnwood Times reached out to the FDA for comment regarding the availability of COMIRNATY® (COVID-19 Vaccine, mRNA) to American citizens. As of Tuesday, September 14, the FDA has yet to re-

spond.

In a response to Lynnwood Times' inquiry to when Washington state can expect to receive its first shipments of COMIRNATY® (COVID-19 Vaccine, mRNA), Shelby Anderson, Public Information Officer for the Washington State Department of Health, shared that the vaccine is currently available for use.

"The vaccine is available now in Washington, as it is the same formulation as that under EUA. Providers will continue to use and order the same stock as always so they already have it in their freezers."

Yet, it is unclear if the re-ordered vaccine will be labeled with FDA-approved COMIRNATY® (COVID-19 Vaccine, mRNA) or the FDA-authorized Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine. Vaccines that are currently labeled in freezers being administered to Washingtonians are the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine, Moderna

Continued **PAGE 08** >>

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from page 2 **MUKILTEO ARPA**

The staff envisions working closely with the Chamber of Commerce to develop the business grants program. For the non-profits, a focus group will be formed to help shape an appropriate grant program. The results of the Community Outreach effort will provide useful information for these efforts. Staff will engage the council at appropriate points along the way to scope out various grants, funding criteria, etc.

Harris motioned to move forward with the Business/Nonprofit Grant program within the anticipated amount of \$200,000, seconded by Councilman Marine. Council Vice President Bob Champion attempted to amend the motion to an amount of \$100,000. However, the council unanimously approved the original motion.

Lodging Tax Funding

\$162,600 of funding to be used to supplement the Hotel/Motel Lodging Tax fund.

Funds collected in one calendar year are used for events and programs for the following calendar year. The 2021 budget anticipated \$245,500 being collected, while estimated actuals are approximately \$119,650. Using allowable reserve, a total of \$130,000 in funding is available for 2022. However, the 2022 Lodging Tax Grant process saw \$292,600 in funding requests. Staff proposed to allocate \$162,600 of the ARPA funding to make up the difference.

Marine then motioned to move forward with the Lodging Tax Funding, seconded by council member Khan, which also passed unanimously.

Utility Assistance

\$681,000 of funding to be used to pay outstanding utility bills with Mukilteo Water and Wastewater District, Alderwood Water and Wastewater District, Puget Sound Energy, and Snohomish County PUD.

At the August 16 meeting, staff informed Council that paying the outstanding bills with Mukilteo WWD and Alderwood WWD would require approximately \$110,000. Staff was asked to investigate the outstanding debt with Puget Sound Energy and Snohomish County PUD. Those amounts are \$117,465 and \$402,518, respectively.

Council President Sarah Kneller motioned to move forward with the Utility Assistance pending an executive work plan awaiting final approval by council, seconded by council member Harris. The motion also passed unanimously.

HOA Delinquency

Staff is aware of \$10,600 in outstanding HOA dues for Mukilteo residents. The Council may wish to consider allocating additional funds to assist with these housing-related expenses.

After hearing public comments on this issue, with a list of specific residents and their outstanding debts, council members expressed they would need more information on the subject and will likely revisit the issue at a later date.

Public Comment of ARPA-funded Programs

After the discussion held by Council, the public had the opportunity to offer their comments on how the council should consider spending the ARPA funding.

“There are thousands of people in this area that lost their job at Boeing and other aerospace companies. The intention of using the American Rescue Plan funding was not to bail out former Boeing employees; it’s to assist with people that have difficulty with finances caused by COVID,” said Mukilteo resident Charlie Pancerzewski, who had reservation about the Utility Assistance Program.

“We can’t lose sight of the value of offering our businesses a lifeline at a di-

rect level, allowing owners to personalize and individualize grant requests that would impact their ability to do business on a daily basis,” Everett resident Kandice Barnes said in support of utilizing the ARPA funds for business grants.

Council President Sarah Kneller responded to these comments by agreeing with Marine’s concerns of keeping administrative costs low and balancing the Lodging Tax. She commented on Pancerzewski’s comments about Boeing layoffs by noting that while many people in the area may have lost their jobs due to layoffs from aerospace companies, their ability to find new work may have been stunted due to COVID and therefore the ARPA funding would be justified in assisting them.

Future ARPA Programs

In addition to these four programs, the Council is considering other options to utilize ARPA funding which include an Embedded Social Worker, Body Cameras and IT Support, Expanded City Communications, City IT Infrastructure, Rehiring of Rosehill Staff, Resource/COVID Navigator FTE, Local Currency “Muk Bucks,” and Direct Community Stimulus.

Out of the \$5,985,212 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds awarded to the city, these programs would allocate \$4,089,600, leaving \$1,895,612 unallocated for future purposes.

The next steps of the city are to work on implementing the four approved programs while continuing to work on the other funding ideas.

Land Use Acknowledgement

In addition to passing the four ARPA-funded programs, Council discussed adopting the use of a Lands Acknowledgment Statement at the beginning of each City of Mukilteo public meeting. The statement would be currently phrased as follows:

“First, we want to begin by acknowl-

edging that we are on Indigenous land; the traditional territories of the Coast Salish People, who since time immemorial have taken care of, hunted, fished, gathered and buried their ancestors on these lands. We respect their sovereignty, their right to self-determination, and we honor their sacred spiritual connection with the land and water.”

If adopted by the council, it would now be read at the beginning of each city council meeting, Planning Commission, Parks and Arts Commission, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commission meetings, and any other similar meetings such as an open house or town hall meetings.

The public issued comments suggesting that the word “sovereign” be dropped from the statement as “sovereign” assumes a supreme power or monarch, to be more inclusive to the founders.

“The land of Mukilteo does not belong to the Coast Salish people; it is part of the United States of America and the state of Washington. . . . If you wanted to say the Coast Salish People once lived here, that would be true, but that is not what the statement as currently worded says,” Sharon, Mukilteo resident, said.

Marine recommended that the statement be revised and reintroduced to the council at a future date. Council President Kneller agreed with revisiting the statement after holding more discussion so the statement could be “workshopped a little more” after receiving feedback from the public and tribes.

Councilmembers Harris, Emery, and Crawford believed the language, albeit strong, should be kept as is.

The DEI commission ultimately decided to review the language of the statement and revisit its adoption later this year.

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from page 1 **TEJPAL SINGH**

age captures the gunman running into the store, jumping onto the check-out counter, and firing his weapon.

A year later and the investigation is ongoing. What’s more, the 7-Eleven where Kandasamy was killed is just about a 20-minute drive down Highway 99 from where Singh was murdered.

Regarding the investigation, Edmonds City Police told the Times that “No charges have been brought forth at this time. But our detectives continue to very diligently work that investigation.”

As King 5 reported last year, a 23-year-old man and his 24-year-old girlfriend, both Enumclaw, were arrested in relation to the case. However, Edmonds police informed the Times that the woman has since been released while

the man is currently in custody on unrelated charges.

Anyone with information regarding Tejpal Singh’s murder can click here to leave a tip or, per the Snohomish County Sheriff’s tweet, call 9-1-1.

Anyone with information regarding Nagendiram Kandasamy’s murder can contact Edmonds Police via their Tip Line at 425-771-0212 or their email at Polictips@edmondswa.gov.

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China's looming financial crisis as Evergrande misses debt payment

By **GEORGE FTIKAS, JR.**



Xu Jiayin, founder of Evergrande

China Evergrande Group, one of China's largest real estate developers, has been plummeting toward defaulting on its debts—negatively impacting global markets. The

company aggressively expanded with reckless abandon and is now the “most-indebted property developer in the world,” owing more than \$300 billion. Should the default occur, it would be one of China's largest.

Evergrande is incorporated in the Cayman Islands and headquartered in the Houhai Financial Center in Nanshan District, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, China. It was founded in 1996 by Xu Jiayin. It directly employs 200,000 and an additional 3.5 million contractors annually.

Earlier this year, Chinese regulators under General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, Xi Jinping, made efforts to combat financial risk and debt, as China's debt-to-GDP ratio has risen by roughly 45% in the last five years, which now sits around 270%. They began enforcing what was known as the three red lines, capping a company's various debt ratios. This meant trouble for highly leveraged companies like Evergrande, which suddenly found itself unable to borrow.

Evergrande attempted to recover by hastily liquidating assets and cutting back operations, but the damage was done. Unable to meet its interest payments, Evergrande's share price dropped by almost 80% this year, resulting in a loss in their market capitalization: from around \$40 billion last year to under \$4 billion. This forced the company to almost unilaterally halt construction across China, resulting in suppliers and employees protesting in front of Evergrande headquarters demanding payment. They also began paying investors with property as they struggled to find cash.

This move to pay investors with property only exacerbates another problem for Evergrande: it owes over 1.6 mil-

lion apartments to people who have already paid cash deposits. These folks would likely lose their deposits should Evergrande go under. This coupled with the potential of unfinished construction highlights Evergrande's gross mismanagement, which prompted the second-largest shareholder in the company to announce it would sell their entire stake.

The situation with Evergrande has continually changed over the week as it has negotiated a deal over a \$35.9 million domestic bond payment last Wednesday, but it is still in a predicament. Foreign investors are in limbo as a Thursday deadline passed on a \$83.5 million interest payment for a \$2 billion bond that's due to mature in March 2022. Evergrande has yet to provide a statement and now enters a 30-day grace period. It will default if that passes without payment.

According to Refinitiv Eikon, a \$47.5 million dollar-bond interest payment is due September 29 on a 7-year U.S. dollar-denominated \$1 billion bond maturing in March 2024.

China finds itself weighing between potential economic disaster or rewarding reckless corporate behavior. It is important to note that the property sector in China accounts for nearly a quarter of its GDP, but many believe the Chinese government is unlikely to act.

“Beijing would only be compelled to step in if there is a far-reaching contagion causing multiple major developers to fail and posing systemic risks to the economy,” S&P Global Ratings analysts wrote. “Evergrande failing alone would unlikely result in such a scenario.”

So the general agreement among analysts is that while China will experience some economic disruption, this shouldn't cause another global recession. This hasn't stopped some from questioning if this is China's equivalent to Lehman Brothers—whose collapse became a symbol of the 2007-2008 financial crisis.

Of the \$305 billion in liabilities by Evergrande, some \$20 billion of Evergrande's debts are owed offshore—that

is less than 10% of its total debt. The offshore exposure for Lehman Brothers was 40% for foreign investors.

“There seems to be a broad consensus that while bad, this isn't China's Lehman moment,” Economist and Nobel Laureate Paul Krugman said in a series of Tweets. “Of course, broad consensus have been wrong a lot these past 15 years. The financial disruption of 2008-9 was fairly brief — but the economy stayed depressed for many years thereafter.”

While cautious in tone, Krugman does add that the Chinese economy is “wildly unbalanced.”

The People's Bank of China injected \$71 billion last week into the banking system soothing fears of imminent contagion from the debt-laden property developer. It is the largest weekly sum by the Chinese Central Bank since January of this year.

The Wall Street Journal said, citing unnamed officials, that authorities asked local governments to prepare for Evergrande's downfall and distress is already evident among Evergrande's peers.

On Tuesday, September 28, Chinese developer Evergrande announced it will be selling off a \$1.5 billion (9.99 billion yuan) stake in Shengjing Bank to Shenyang Shengjing Finance Investment Group, a state-owned asset management firm.

For the rest of the year, Evergrande has interest payments due each month in October, November and December.



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from page 5 **PFIZER**

COVID-19 Vaccine, and the Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen COVID-19 Vaccine, all of which are currently under an FDA Emergency Use Authorization.

Vaccine Interchangeability

The FDA repeatedly states how the Pfizer-BioNTech and Comirnaty vaccines can be used interchangeably. According to the FDA’s website, for a product to be interchangeable with another, it must be “biosimilar to a reference product” and “be expected to produce the same clinical result as the reference product in any given patient” with “no additional risk or reduced efficacy if a patient switches back and forth between an interchangeable product and a reference product.”

AstraZeneca, whose vaccine has been issued for use in other countries, explains on its website that “the steps within the production of similar vaccines, that have the same mode of action, may vary between manufacturers. This may mean that vaccines could contain different concentrations of their active substance, different preservatives, or different stabilisers.”

An online database called “Purple Book” by the FDA contains information on FDA-licensed (approved) biological products regulated by the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, including licensed biosimilar and interchangeable products, and their reference products.

Of all the COVID-19 vaccines we queried, COMIRNATY® (COVID-19 Vaccine, mRNA) is the only one to produce a result. According to the Purple Book, there is no FDA-licensed

(approved) interchangeable product for COMIRNATY® (COVID-19 Vaccine, mRNA). This adds further evidence to the fact that the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine is FDA-authorized, meaning it is under Emergency Use Authorization.

The Lynnwood Times is awaiting clarification from the FDA if an FDA “approval” for one vaccine is transferable to another vaccine if that other vaccine is under an EUA status, deemed interchangeable, and states to have the same formulation.

Emergency Use Authorization and Vaccine Mandates

Liberty Counsel, a national nonprofit litigation public policy organization, stated in an April 2021 memo that FDA-authorized COVID vaccines cannot be mandated nor required as a condition of employment because of its Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) categorization by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

In a memo from Liberty Counsel, it states, “COVID vaccines are in a special category and cannot be treated like FDA licensed vaccines. None of the COVID vaccines are FDA licensed; nor have they received full FDA approval. Rather, their approval is under the special provision noted above as EUA. This means that there is not enough data (which includes duration of testing) for the FDA to render a final approval. More importantly, no one, including private employers, may coerce individuals (by threatening their employment or otherwise) to take an EUA vaccine. Federal law requires full and informed, voluntary consent.”

The memo further states that under

21 U.S.C. §360bbb-3, individuals — whether employed by religious organizations, or not — have “the option to accept or refuse administration of the product” and that the “FDA has an obligation to ensure that recipients of the vaccine under an EUA are informed... that they have the option to accept or refuse the vaccine.”

In an August 2020 meeting by the Centers for Disease Control Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, Executive Secretary Capt. Amanda Cohn, MD, confirmed the non-mandatory nature of an EUA vaccine: “under an Emergency Use Authorization, an EUA, vaccines are not allowed to be mandatory.”

Employers are prohibited by federal law to single out employees by questioning their COVID status or requiring screening unless there is reasonable belief the employee has the disease. The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has also stated that employers cannot inquire about family members of an employee who may have COVID or COVID-like symptoms.

According to the FDA, EUA “may allow the use of unapproved medical products, or unapproved uses of approved medical products in an emergency to diagnose, treat, or prevent serious or life-threatening diseases or conditions when certain statutory criteria have been met, including that there are no adequate, approved, and available alternatives.”

Dr. William Moss, the executive director of the International Vaccine Access Center at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, spoke about

some of the differences between EUA and full approval in an interview with ABC News.

Moss told ABC that while “both authorization and approval are rigorous processes that look at the safety and efficacy of a vaccine,” time is a key factor. Authorization requires “at least two months of follow-up data from Phase 3 clinical trials” whereas approval needs at least six months of follow-up.

Transparency and Trust

The linguistic ambiguity surrounding this subject is pervasive. As the Comirnaty and Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines are both made by BioNTech and Pfizer, conflating the EUA vaccine with the approved one is concerningly easy. According to Pfizer’s website, the Comirnaty vaccine is “made by Pfizer for BioNTech.” Both could be referred to as the Pfizer vaccine or even BioNTech’s vaccine.

Going back to Biden’s remarks and the FDA’s official statement of approval, the language is careful to state that a COVID-19 vaccine has been FDA approved without directly connecting that approval status with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

The increasing polarization among political tribes is coinciding with a rapid decline of trust in government entities. While arguments surrounding collective safety and individual freedom are essential, their ability to be constructive is predicated on clear answers and transparent communication.

With this duty to truth in mind, the Lynnwood Times will continue to follow this story and report new developments as they come.



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