

**Board of Okanogan County Commissioners**  
**Tuesday, September 20th, 2022, 1:30 p.m.**

*"These notes were taken by a County Watch volunteer. Every attempt is made to be accurate. Notes are verbatim when possible, and otherwise summarized. Note taker comments or clarifications are in italics. These notes are published at <https://countywatch.org> and are not the official county record of the meeting. For officially approved minutes, which are normally published at a later time, see the Okanogan County Commissioners' website at <https://www.okanogancounty.org>."*

**Present:**

Andy Hover (AH), BOCC District 2  
Chris Branch (CB), BOCC District 1  
Jim Detro (JD), BOCC District 3  
Lanie Johns (LJ), County Clerk  
Pete Palmer (PP), Planning Director  
Shelley Kietzman (SK), Human Resources, Risk Management  
Brock Hoenes (BH), Regional Director, WDFW (WA Dept. Fish and Wildlife)  
Justin Houk, Okanogan Lands, Operations Manager, WDFW

*Time stamps refer to the time on the wall clock. An AV Capture archive of the meeting on this date is available at:*

*[https://okanogancounty.org/departments/boards/live\\_streaming\\_of\\_meetings.php](https://okanogancounty.org/departments/boards/live_streaming_of_meetings.php)*

***Summary of Important Discussions:*** *Hover and Branch discuss need, or not, to enforce planning code rules which prevent affordable housing opportunities ; brief mention of need to treat eyesore ordinances as civil infractions ; Human Resources update - in light of Public Defense recruiting difficulties, Shelley Kietzman foresees internet capacity upgrade to enable more Zoom meetings, Labor and Industry charges to rise ; Oneza and Associates to receive between \$59,000 and \$70,000 for updating zoning code ; Fish and Wildlife presents two new acquisition projects, gives updates on older ones, sparking discussions on - effect of fires, recreation trails, and two-point permits on mule deer hunting - illegal parking near trails - petroglyphs and buried treasure around McGlaughlin Canyon. Meeting adjourned at 3 :19.*

1:34 - *AH is concerned about a planning code rule on accessory dwellings for family members that says a permit can be pulled if the family partnership is ended.*

**CB:** It's a control issue.

**AH:** I'm interested in what the process is for checking inconsistencies. (*Reads*): "In non-conforming lots, an accessory dwelling unit is allowed for extended family member is allowed only if demonstrated hardship exists." Read that and tell me if you would go and build a house based on that.

**CB:** Your point's well taken. It's a temporary situation, typically. (*But*) any use like that that's established in Okanogan County will continue. We have enough trouble enforcing the stuff that's well worth enforcing.

**AH:** I have this question coming up because of some people I know... If you have a single lot with a house or apartment above it you put a provision that you can't separate. If my garage is so close that you can put a breezeway, it's a single water use. If I can't, it's dual. What's the difference if you build a 10,000 ft.<sup>2</sup> house with 17 bathrooms in it? I can do that but I can't do this. Wrong, because if you want to talk about rural lifestyle, family, you're killing that if you can't have older parents you want to take care of.

**CB:** On the other hand, in the Methow it's going to be abused, and it is. Not saying your reasoning is not legitimate... It boils down to "why do you have zoning if you don't enforce it?"

**AH:** ...Over there, with the work population, if I've got an apartment above a garage, I'm going to rent it out.

**CB:** ...People build because it *should* be allowed. In towns. ...A lot of housing for workers is not legal in the first place—not expensive, in orchards, informal. Most affordable housing is illegal. Been that way a long time. ...When I was manager of the water system they were cheating. There are different base rates for single family and multi-family dwellings coupled with payment to get on the system. When they built residences they'd say they were single family but 15 rooms, and each had its own lock. ...As for the mix of overnight rental, if you can show you're creating affordable housing, I'm for it, even in the towns that resist it.

**AH:** You'd need cops and state patrol. If someone wants to skirt something, they'll do it.

**CB:** So do the best you can, and sometimes it catches up with you. If you want to sell a place with no permit, substandard, the bank won't even give you a loan.

**AH:** Barnhold Loup folks are expressing themselves against zoning infractions. *(Talks about needing to change laws against derelict cars, nuisance properties to civil infractions, to save Prosecutor's time.)*

**CB:** *(If these are reduced to infractions)* ...People are not going to get thrown in jail or get a fine that sends them to court immediately. It's going to be progressive. First a warning, then a \$100 ticket, then increases every day, then finally a misdemeanor. Like running a red light and getting caught on camera. *(JD tells a story of being fined for not paying toll on a bridge on the coast; the fine was less than what the toll.)*

1:55 - Update from Human Resources/Risk Pool - **SK:** - Had a meeting with Public Defense contractors. They're having difficulty recruiting attorneys. They suggested using Zoom more. *(She'll meet with them, Central Services, the Superior Court Judge and Juvenile Court; they'll need to upgrade internet capability.)* - Labor and Industry is proposing a 4.8% increase for 2023... There was relief last two years because of Covid. - My 2<sup>nd</sup> year training will be completed by the end of the year.

2:03 - **PP:** Here's an agenda bill for the selection of the one proposal we received from Oneza and Associates for zone code amendment: \$59,000 if everything goes smoothly, \$70,000 if not. ...It's budgeted over two years.

**AH:** How much are we under budget for the posts we didn't fill?

**PP:** I need to look more...

**AH:** Get with the auditor for projection 'til the end of the year.

**CB:** I move for the Planning Director to go ahead with developing the contract with Oneza and Associates to update the planning code.

**PP:** I think we'll stay within budget because we're working on getting Tunk and Cannabis (issues) off of our plate. Their biggest task is going to be the Methow Review District.

2:12 - *Approval of consent agenda, except for purchase of crack seal machine, vouchers, corrected proceedings and resolution about budget line for two employees' continued training.*

2:28 - WDFW Update - **BC:** Today we're getting input from you on two acquisition projects as part of our Lands 2020 program.

**AH:** The only way we get compensated for WDFW and DNR property is state taxes. So a couple of years ago the state appropriated money for WDFW to pay bills I was hoping it would be put in the Treasurer's office instead of as an appropriation that can be taken away.

**BC:** Don't have an answer. But I anticipate that funding being there. There are discussions about changing from an appropriation. I'll get back with you on that.

**AH:** It's a lot of land. *(JH starts a slide show presentation.)*

**JH:** We're in the phase before public review of the Internal Lands 2020 project. This is a holding donated to the county by the Dept. of Transportation years ago. It rests within the Texas Creek unit in the Methow, 3.5 acres, half riparian, cottonwood habitat, half edge of ag land, shrub steppe. ...It makes sense since it's surrounded by WDFW land.

**AH** *(looking at the slide)* : Is there platted right of way? Get a road vacation to get rid of it.

**JH:** Next, one of the Blue Lakes, near Oroville, owned by different family members with a land trust to do a conservation measure on it; 480 acres, mostly shrub steppe with lots of stringers of aspen, some ponds. It would be critical habitat for mule deer, upland bird hunting, bear. It's currently grazed, in good shape, managed well. There's a trail, a road that comes in; it's two minutes walk from the parking lot, also of fishing interest. People had luck this year with La Hontan cutthroat trout, hard to catch. *(CB says they're in Omak Lake, BH says in Lime Belt's Blue Lake, which JD says is Alkili Lake.)*

**CB:** There's actually some development on the lake, up a steep cliff.

**JH:** Three homes, then a local ranch. It's turkey and mule deer habitat. ...We don't have the money in place *(for the two acquisitions)*. We would get it in the next cycle of funding. The rest of these are updates. We closed the deal on the Rendez-Vous one last month. It's above Big Valley. Drive up Gun Ranch Rd. It overlooks the valley. A great addition.

**JD:** Best mule deer land in the county.

**AH:** Winter recreation trails go through those properties... Isabelle Spohn says a report showed motorized vehicles have less impact than two-legged (traffic). And the amount of large fires has done damage *(to mule deer)*. ...*(After Carlton Complex) there were 200 bucks caught by neighbors' kids. ...I'm thoroughly opposed to trails going through winter pasture.*

**JH:** There was a big spike in deer harvest in 2015 across Eastern Washington.

**BH:** A combination of fires and drought made deer move. *(Discussion on giving permits to kids to get two-point mule deer, BH says it was tried and 95% of hunted deer were yearlings; prones effort to wait for a mature buck. JD touts effectiveness of a Montana ranch asking kids to hunt them all: "They have branch-antlered elk born every year now.")*

**JH:** We have discussions in the Methow on the Wildlife Area Management Plan. Trail closures and winter range are at the top of the list. Public comments we've gotten are a concern. This spot is in the gut of that high-low altitude corridor for those deer going up to the Pasayton. *(He mentions other pieces of property they're closing on: "Gold Doe", Mills Flat, and Hunter Mountain where there's a problem with parking. AH says there are plans to close access to a county pit and enlarge the parking lot.)* The last one is McGlaughlin Falls West, just outside Crumbacker, 330 acres. We applied for funding to acquire the second half. Colville Tribes also want to acquire it but something fell through on their end. Fire burned 80 acres but it's going to come back really well. *(Talks about getting bitterbrush to grow by planting plugs.)* Conservation Northwest had reached out, had money that could only be used for Tribes—A million parcels, a jigsaw. They were focused on cultural sites in the North part. That's how we could ended up with what we have today.

**BH:** We presented it to RCO (state Recreation and Conservation Office) as a two-phased project. With Colvilles acquiring the northern property we decided to position ourselves to acquire the second half.

**JH:** Once it closes, we're planning to meet with the BLM (Bureau of Land Management). There are a number of parcels adjacent to the property in and out from all jurisdictions. If WWRP *(Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program)* is funded, we'll get a small inholding in the Similkameen-Chopaka area between DNR (Department of Natural Resources) and WDFW lands. Further up the list is a State Lands Development project: Green Lake Campground renovation.

On other program updates we have the parking area on Lewis Butte/Riser Lake which should be done by October. Similkameen water access sites will be funded this fall or spring; there are three sites to be improved. We'll probably begin permitting for construction on Patterson Lake next fall. We've got toilet replacements starting at Bear Creek, Boulder Creek and the Chiliwist. This November I'm going to submit two boating facilities projects: Sidley Lake and Spectacle Lake, funded through fuel tax. That brings me to how WWRP is funded. It's basically a part of the State Capital budget. It's increased a lot in three years. Currently the request is for \$135M. If that stays, most of these projects will get done.

**AH:** You brought up at Riser Lake people parking at the side of the road instead of buying a pass and going up to the parking lot. ...It will be interesting to see, once the parking lot is expanded, what the parking will be like. Is it convenience, or people don't want to buy a pass? ...The ATV Club has asked us to open some roads in the Methow Valley, one of them being Gun Ranch. We'll talk about what that does to wildlife. It's crowded up there. I was up on a weekend. Probably eight cars parked from the entrance to the parking lot, up the road.

**BH:** I was up by Leavenworth, Icicle Creek. All those pull-outs say "No Parking".

**AH:** You know some don't want to buy a pass.

**BH:** I do know to use those lands you have to use that (parking lot). It's an enforcement issue. *(AH talks about confusion between need for Discovery Pass and Legal Access Pass, had signs replaced to use same size font for both passes instead of the first being bigger.)*

**JD:** You picked some pristine pieces that need to be (preserved) in our county.

**CB:** And upgrading those ones getting the most use.

**JD:** Follow up on that John McGlaughlin piece. A lot of people think that payroll is buried there.

**BH:** Wish we emphasized the history of more lands we acquire.

**JD:** Some of the better petroglyphs are up there. Five big rocks, maybe a sun-measuring device or support. And pit houses.

3:19 - *Meeting adjourned.*