

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday, December 28st, 2021, 1:30 p.m.

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Present:

Andy Hover (AH), BOCC District 2
Chris Branch (CB), BOCC District 1
Jim Detro (JD), BOCC District 3
Lanie Johns (LJ), County Clerk
Cari Hall (CH), Auditor

Department Heads :

Karen Beatty (KB), Central Services
Tany Everett, Risk Management, Human Resources
Robert Grimm(RG), District Court
Larry Hudson (LH), Noxious Weeds
Pete Palmer (PP), Planning Department
Josh Thomsen (JT), Public Works
Tony Hawley (TH), Sheriff
Anne Fagerlie (AF), WSU Extension
Joe Poulin (JP), Maintenance

Time stamps refer to the time on the wall clock. See AV Capture archive of the meeting on this date at https://okanogancounty.org/departments/boards/live_streaming_of_meetings.php

Summary of Important Discussions: *Auditor's office trying new accounting system ; District Court Judge turnover ; jury trials to start next month, new staff for Noxious Weeds ; Planning Dept. « rushing through the Comp Plan », investigating cannabis grows ; Sheriff's office frustrated with Legislative decisions, glad about community's contributions to and success of « Shop with a Cop » program ; WSU Extension short on 4H and Master Gardener volunteers because of Covid mandate but hired new coordinator, will soon present County needs survey results to public ; AH brings up decision to commission a Master Plan ; CB brings up Courthouse security at new « Justice Building » site ; Commissioners discuss redistricting, reservation representation and salmon mitigation strategies ; Capital Improvements Plan hearing coming up.*

1 :33 - Capital Improvements Plan - *Short discussion over whether this is must be informed by the Comprehensive plan or not; a Capital Improvements Fund must be, and is important in seeking money from grants and loans.*

2:00 - Department Heads Meeting *in which everyone gives a report on the best and worst aspects of the year 2020:*

Auditor - **CH**: The financial offices and H.R. Payroll did a day and a half demonstration of Munis, the new accounting system, and were very impressed. AH: Our system is old and needs to be changed. CH: (inaudible) was a nightmare.

Central Services - **KB**: The Know Before (internet security program) has been doing a new campaign of phishing emails which people are identifying more and more. If someone clicks when they shouldn't, they are given automatically a 5-minute training. These emails are sent out at random.

2:07 - District Court - **RG**: Enjoying my last week. The new judge will be starting January 3rd. Jury trials will start next month. We've had none since spring, and we've been suspending them since August.

Prosecutor's Office - (Melanie Bailey?): The best thing is that everybody worked together well. We're still down one deputy; that position is being advertised.

Noxious Weeds - **LH**: The weather was crazy. We got pretty much all the county surveyed, made a lot of progress on weed control. Next year will be better. We're training staff; a new person began in December.

Planning - **PP**: There was an incident where no one heard the fire alarm going off. We took a break from the Comprehensive Plan to do the "in house" thing, did round tables. We're rushing through the Comp Plan. Had a good meeting with the Planning Commission last night and the plan is now being reviewed by David Gecas to move the record of decision. It will be pretty exciting to get that off my desk.

To meet with all the cannabis growers in the county has been challenging. Not many responses at first but now have meetings every Wednesday probably this month and next month. Starting to find discrepancies between state and county records. Hoping by the February 15th deadline we'll have a handle on the compliant grows and illegal grows in the county. **CB** (*recognizes the challenges of the P.C. which has had a "rough go in many ways", with staff and with changes*): I can't believe you got the cannabis operation investigations started. We didn't have a handle on who is permitted and the extent of operations. A lot have a work permits to have a farm but they have multiple licenses. **JD**: It's not a farm. It's a controlled substance, not agriculture. **CB**: They're legal operations and I'm treating them like businesses.

2:15 - Public Works - **JT**: We're almost caught up on the snowdrifts. It's been a year with a lot of change and it's been fun to see people adapt. The best part of this fun weather is we get to fire up our 700-watt snow blower.

Sheriff, **TH**: The worst part of the year was the fires, Covid, and staffing issues. (*Our new*) body cameras will help us in the long run, provide transparency with the public. The down side is the legislature's decisions. It's a tough spot to go out; there's a challenge with that to still serve the public, to respond to things that are not criminal in nature but that people expect of us. **JD**: Thanks for keeping up the outreach to kids. TH: "Shop with a cop", with donations from the community, was amazing this year. We had to expand the program because of citizens' generosity. Wall Mart was better adapted than mom and pop stores for having 21 kids running around. **CB**: Thanks for your work...Yours is the biggest budget item but should be because it's public safety. I had to laugh about arriving at Walmart with sirens and lights. I thought it was some disaster. TH: The kids get a kick out of that. People even gave us donations in the store.

2:26 - WSU Extension - **AF**: The bad thing was losing 4H coordinators just before the fair. Got a

temporary replacement, Angela Shepherd, and papers signed for her to be 4H and Master Gardener Coordinator. Also the vaccination mandate that trickled down to our volunteers. Six or seven of our 4H and Master Gardener volunteers chose to go on leave of absence. One is working on an exemption. We lost a lot. We have eight Master Gardeners and two with emeritus status. There's a year-end deadline to go on or not. The 4H doesn't have a deadline yet. Don't know what their volunteer numbers will be. **CB:** The WASAC did an interaction with the 4H program. A lot of commissioners showed appreciation for 4H. I'm sure that some are going to give ARPA dollars to that program... (County-wide needs assessment survey) - Do you have access to the result of the study? **AF:** The survey will be made public once our calculations are made for regions and not just cities.

Maintenance - **JP:** We have a couple of good custodians. The AC worked in the Courthouse this summer. There are issues with the heat there, a couple of cold spots, but we're working on it. It's a 70 year-old building.

AH: The best part of the year was the candy in the offices. The other was the budget process that went smoothly; we can put it away and not think about it now. We had talked with the architect six weeks ago. We're buying the new building. He brought up the idea of having a master plan. He'll interview all officials and find out what the needs are. That way when we talk about moving the courts down there we can utilize things we have efficiently so we can provide better service for the public. You can phase in (projects). This way future commissioners have a road map.

CB: He's done work around here. I encourage you to work with him; that would help us a lot. The main object is getting Superior Court into the building to do jury trials. I have no preconceived notion, just that "there's a justice building". Courthouse security has always been an issue. It would be nice to have a road map. It's a big expenditure. We're trying to get permitting departments closer together, and to integrate what the Health Department does with what the County does. I encourage you to share ideas.

JD: The best thing might be yet to come. (*The Comp Plan.*) I'd say to Director Palmer, "Good luck," let's hope something good will come out of it. I've been at that Comp Plan for 12 years... It's not regulation. It's a policy document. It would be a crown jewel for you to get that done without litigation. As for the worst, seems like fire season is getting longer and longer.

(2:43) And Covid—I have a tough time when "big pharma" is making billions of dollars when there are simple solutions out there. 2022 is going to be a good year. You're going to get rid of me!

*JD is glad something will be done about money voted 8 years ago for juvy. CG says funding is only a part of what needs to be worked out; he's talked with the architect about a necessary buffer between the juvenile facility and the neighborhood. **AH:** Juvy is not like a jail, or maximum security prison, people banging on pipes. *They talk about a gravel pit that turned out not to be too noisy. **CB** – it's necessary to have a noise ordinance, How Oroville got sued.**

CB: Any comments on the redistricting plan? **LJ:** No. People wanted to know where the information was. **JD:** Someone asked me why we were doing that; I said it's the law, after a census. **CB:** A lot of politicians think long and hard about it. The changes aren't that big... In the city, ethnic groups want to have more voice. **AH:** They should try to get someone in office. **CB:** That's what they're doing. (On district-only voting): Someone said "What do you think? I said it doesn't affect me. **AH:** I have a responsibility to everybody in this county. **JD:** Some would prefer you to me. **CB:** The thing about the reservation is that there is a population mix. You could say the whole reservation is one district but there's a bigger mix. **AH:** They want representation but they have control over what they're doing.

(3:01) What is your role of being a representative if everything on the reservation is out of your

control? **CB**: Because, Indian or non-Indian, I'd prefer someone who was privy to what the whole situation is to someone who was pretty blind to what sovereignty means. In order not to go to court, the BOCC and Tribes decided to make a pact. It's been working for 20 years. Even if their economic opportunities don't contribute taxes in the same way, people say it's saved us.

*AH: (Evoking petitions against salmon preservation) We're trying to get to the point where it's not scary having these fish in these streams if nobody's trying to take something away. Put in solar pumps and tanks (for the cattle, if you have to fence off a stream.) **CB**: The lower court was advocate for heavily vegetating the streams. The cows would go were the streams weren't vegetated. **JD**: My first campaign I wanted a pilot project at Salmon Falls. We could put in fish ladders, and a generator. Not a problem with ranchers, who range up high. (CB talks about getting people together, AH talks about having unscreened irrigation when he was young, having no water for two years when the feds shut it down. How he used to do catch-and-release fishing, getting six to eight steelhead in Pateros, how he can't anymore.*

3:13 - **LJ**: Are you going to (present?) a Capital Improvements Plan? **AH**: We're not ready. Put it on the Monday morning agenda. *She will publish for the public hearing on the CIP and it will appear on the 5th and the 19th.*

3:18 - Meeting Adjourned.