

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday, February 21st, 2023, 3:30 p.m.

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Present:

Andy Hover (AH), BOCC District 2
Chris Branch (CB), BOCC District 1 (*via Zoom*)
Jon Neil (JN), BOCC District 3
Naomi Peasley (NP), Fairgrounds Manager (*via Zoom*)
Esther Milner (EM), Chief Civil Deputy Prosecutor
Pam Johnson (PJ), Treasurer
Cari Hall (CH), Auditor

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

Summary of Important Discussions:

- Justice Center utilities design contract awarded to Courtner Architects who will be interviewed along with two other firms for general design contract; Juvenile project evoked
- Conservation District gets \$39,710 in County funding after a year without
- Public records software contract with Next Request to save "weeks of time", cost \$10,788 a year; advertising for Records Officer to start; Over 227 employees to take harassment training
- Commissioner Neil reports to Branch on mileage tax, jaywalking and right turn legislations presented by lobbyists; thinks proposals go too far
- Purchase of Fairgrounds bathroom partitions to cost \$25,000, Hamilton Youth Foundation pledges to cover \$15,000; demolition of horse barn urgent safety issue, grant possibilities discussed
- Resolutions passed to distribute ARPA funds to Community Action (*\$50,000 for 17 months warehouse rental*) and Public Health (*\$1M over four years*)
- Commissioners and Deputy Civil Prosecutor speculate over opiate settlement distribution process, await clarification

1:30 - *AH questions LJ about an email concerning the Red Cross building, part of the Courthouse renovation project. LJ says they've been getting money for it. It doesn't have a restroom. The second floor is used of storage and the interpreter's room.*

CB tunes in on Zoom, asks about the awarding of the contract for the utilities part of the Justice Center project. AH says they made a selection of qualified applicants, choosing Courtner Architecture who had submitted a proposal. Now they have to narrow the much bigger Justice Center design contract down to two or three applicants, based on scoring. (One company only had geo-tech services and was ruled out.) AH: Jon scored 76 for DOH Associates and I gave

them 99. For Courtner it was John, 64, me, 87. MJ Neil was Jon, 74, me 76. So I had DOH and Courtner, Jon had DOH and MJ McNeil (*as top contenders.*) *JN said he should have given bonus points to Courtner because they're doing the utilities. DOH has already done engineering analysis for the Courthouse but the project was scrapped because too expensive. Both DOH and Courtner have experience with Courthouse-type renovations.* **AH:** All we need is design engineering. Construction has to wait awhile. *CB asks about the entry point for utilities, if it's going to change. AH goes to find the pre-design.* **CB:** We need a decision based on experience. Then we have the cost factor. Then the approach... I hate to get competing engineers on the same project. **AH:** The architect has given all the utility vaults and lines in the right of way of the city. **CB:** We don't know yet if it's going to require anything? **AH:** The juvenile facility that's in our 20 year Master Plan is going to run into permitting issues. If the other bill goes through we're going to have more kids in there. **CB:** critical issues, then. ...We could kick that permit process into motion like we did with utilities. **AH:** bigger pipes would be a good thing. *CB moves to interview DOH, Courtner and MJ Neil for this selection process.*

1:54 - *LJ says the Conservation District needs a budget supplemental (Res. 25-2023) since December invoices came out of January.* **AH:** We didn't fund them last year. We're basically moving payment to this year. (*The \$39,710*) was already in the ending fund balance.

BOCC passed Resolution 26-2023 which takes \$183,179 from LTAC (Lodging Tax Advisory Committee) to settle 2022 invoices for the OTC (Okanogan Tourism Council) and the Merc Theater, last year's ending fund balance being short by \$31,868 to cover these.

2:00 - Human Resources Update - **SK:** I have Esther (*Milner*) and Cari (*Hall*) with me. We've been working with different providers (*on public records software*). Next Request charges \$10,788 a year. There's a \$1,500 set-up fee. It comes with 10 administrator licenses and you can buy more at \$43 each. The service cost will not increase until 2025. *SK describes the services of Gov. Q and A and Laser Tech which are more costly and not as well recommended.* **CH:** ...It's going to save weeks of time for me, the Sheriff's and a lot of other departments. **SK:** Looked at office space (for the Public Records Officer) in a room in the Red Cross building. The IT department is going to get it set up. We'll start advertising by the end of the week, and Next Request can start next month. 227 people have signed up for the anti-harassment module, and additional people are attending. Corrections deputies can come up (*and use our computer*).

Vouchers signed for Community Action's warehouse rental, \$50,000, and for Public Health ARPA (American Rescue Fund) allocation.

2:20 - *CB asks about the BOCC's meeting with the Legislative Steering Committee.* **JN:** Interesting. Spent a lot of time on the mileage tax proposal. The biggest concern was, they're looking to impose that but not remove the fuel tax until 203. There may be some concessions but... **CB:** Will there be a rebate? **JN:** That was in the discussion. They have some work to do. If your vehicle was one ton or more, there (*would be*) no fuel tax. *AH remarks that a lot of "low mileage trucks" are coming down from Canada.* **JN:** There was a lot of discussion about the jaywalking and right turn stuff. (*The Legislature is considering dropping the charge of jaywalking, as it may be discriminatory. Another proposal would limit the right to turn right at a stop sign or red light.*) If there's no jaywalking (*rule*) it negates the thought process. (On the right turn rule) there are extra fines for larger vehicles... It's for all roads within certain areas. The gist was, every controlled intersection. It makes sense on paper but there are so many variables. **CB:** Do it at site-specific locations that look like they need it. **JN:** It said if you eliminate jaywalking, it eliminates the issue of a controlled intersection because people are walking everywhere... It's not limited to municipalities. I get hit, it's their fault. **CB:** No matter what color the clothing. Too many people walking down the highway wearing dark clothing... **JN:** Sounded like the WSAC (Washington

State Association of Counties) was in support but then pulled back. **CB**: Lobbyists are pretty good. When they see it's going to pass they try to get as much sense as possible into it. **JN**: Ferry County was quite vocal. He said pretty much what I was going to say, a bit louder. **CB**: People listen more to someone who takes a quieter approach...

2:29 - Fairground Bathroom Partitions - **NP**: There were not enough for our visiting event this week. We had an offer from the Hamilton Youth Foundation (to pay \$15,000 toward a total bill of \$25,000). I request permission to purchase the partitions for the Business Week event in two weeks. *AH would rather the foundation buy them and the county reimburse them.* **PP**: We don't have time. **AH**: ...We need to be very, very prudent with the money we spend over there. We're going to need to go out for a bid to tear down the horse barn. It's a safety issue. ...When is Business Week? Can we get these by then? **NP**: March 6th-10th. Yes, we can order them. *NP has \$30,000 in her budget for miscellaneous expenses but will be asking for a supplemental. They have 60 days to pay. She assures the BOCC that the Youth Foundation is eager to contribute. AH moves to buy the partitions for no more than \$25,000; the foundation will reimburse the Fairgrounds.* **AH**: For years people have complained about the partitions. *NP suggests a disaster relief grant for small businesses to pay for the horse barn. AH says Fairgrounds no longer an enterprise. Some talk of again asking the Berg Trust Fund, NP must write a whole proposal. AH says to come in for discussion before applying for a safety grant, and provide the three quotes for the partitions.*

(AH, who had left during the voucher approval for Community Action (OCCAC) and Public Health, is brought up to speed. The rent money must be paid up front; it's for 17 months. The ARPA Public Health allocation, is \$250,000 annually for four years. AH (addressing the Treasurer) : Pam, should we put ARPA under restricted budget funds? PJ: I'm not the budget person but I'd say yes, they're earmarked. AH: I want to make sure we restrict that line item so we don't over-allocate. PJ: The State Auditor would approve of that. AH: In June we should look at the outstanding ARPA contracts... CB: We should go through projects we've talked about, projects we've signed.

2:58 - Opiate Settlement - *AH had received some message about an opioid settlement; he suspected it of being a phishing scheme, sent it to IT. CB thinks it was just a notice for a direct payment that didn't concern this county, but worth checking out.*

3:00 - **EM**: We're finally going to get together all the commissioners from all the counties (*in the North Central Accountable Community of Health, a new regional authority*) to keep you in the loop. Grant County is proposing a 7-member board with counties (*Okanogan, Chelan, Douglas and Grant*) and cities (*East Wenatchee, Wenatchee and Moses Lake*). They're proposing that the board contract with an entity, have funds come to each member and we'd be reporting back to the NCACH. ...There will probably be some discussion on who they'd be contracting with. Chelan has been having conversations with Beacon (*a private administrative entity*) but they weren't so excited about that in Grant. **CB**: The NCACH would have to have a committee and we send a representative to that meeting. **EM**: We need to be hammering out how the money will be handled, if one entity going to receive it and have control over how it is used. A lot of them want the money to come to their local area. (*Okanogan will receive \$46,000 a year.*) **AH**: Then why have an administrator? I like the idea of a board. **EM**: There's a reporting requirement. ...**CB**: I see. Either Beacon or NCACH would serve as the administrative organization and within that, the committee of representatives would approve the process. We would be entitled to allocate the money minus 10% for the administration (*who would do the monthly report for the committee*). ... I was asked to be the representative of Aging Adult Care to the NCACH ... Through the state authority there's a new system of integrating behavioral health with health care.

EM: as long as you're on the same page. **CB:** This firm must be the one who gets all the settlement together. Looks like it's all lawyer talk. **EM:** It would be nice if we heard information from more sources, make sure this is official. **CB:** I've looked at (Beacon's) website. This is the kind of thing they do. **EM:** It makes sense they would have to appoint a company to do it, but a little due diligence...

The commissioners go with EM and Jenna Mendel Rice into an executive session to discuss a potential litigation.

3:30 - Meeting adjourned until Monday.