

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday February 28, 2023 AM

Present:

Chris Branch (CB) – BOCC Chair, District 1 By Zoom

Andy Hover (AH) – BOCC Vice Chair, District 2

Jon Neal (JN) – BOCC, District 3

Lanie Johns (LJ) – Clerk of the Board

These notes were taken by an Okanogan County watch volunteer via Zoom. Every attempt is made to be accurate. Notes are verbatim when possible, and otherwise summarized or paraphrased. 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:

https://okanogancounty.org/offices/commissioners/commissioners_proceedings.php.

Time stamps are in real time. To locate specific topics, a clock on the AV Capture video screen at <https://okanogancounty.org/avcapture.html> can assist in finding the correct spot on the video recording.

Summary of Significant Discussions or Actions:

- Board reduces Fairgrounds rental cost for school-related functions,
- BOCC to send letter of support for WDFW penipen(?) removal (Salmon predators), concern of putting PNW Grey Squirrel on Endangered Species list.
- Assessor: all levies rates went down because of increased overall value, market seems healthy but sales have slowed down, hired new Appraiser I, about 5,000 Seniors are in reduced/no tax program due to income, taxpayers have 30 days from change of value notice to appeal.
- Putting together 'policies & procedures' form for new Fair Advisory members.
- Public Works: Solid waste Manager testifying on 'bottle bill' in Olympia, also working with Civil Deputy to draw up agreement for Omak business to take waste elsewhere, considering maintaining Newby Creek Road, ER&R rates have increased, 2 options for WDFW purchase: option to purchase or just compensation – will be on the consent agenda next week. Also another 4 acres of waterfront to sell to WDFW.
- LTAC appointee needs to be Okanogan County resident – definition of Resident? Bilingual pay being extended to non-bargaining positions and Teamsters represented employees.
- Discussion of Public Information Request regarding the Tunk Basin, investigation into Commissioner
- Adjourn at 12:44. No afternoon meeting or Wednesday meeting.

9:00

Meeting begins with no audio, which was eventually remedied.

CB asked whether there would be any business that needed to be taken care of on Wednesday.

Both AH and CB have other meetings on Wednesday, and the Water Conservancy Board will be meeting in the commissioners' room at 1:30.

There will be no BOCC meeting on Wednesday.

9:15

No public comment

CB has some comments he would like to share with other Commissioners regarding the Tunk Re-Zone as we set moratoriums on the Tunk Basin. CB particularly wants to share information with JN. Will do this after Josh Thomson report at the end of the morning meeting if everyone can stay.

AH is working on proposed changes to the policies and procedures for the Fair Advisory Committee.(FAC) AH will send an e-mail to Brock Hires, Chairman of the FAC.

CB reports that he will not be able to meet on Monday as he has a Public Health advisory meeting. There will be some legislators in that group, like Shelly Short.

CB and AH discuss how to do fee waiver or reduction for the Okanogan Booster Club to use the fairgrounds. CB would like the application to cite the low-income criteria/poverty level. JN checks online and finds out that 61% of Okanogan students have free or reduced lunches.

9:21

AH moves to approve a reduction of the fairground's rental to 50% for the Okanogan Booster Club and authorize the Vice Chair to sign. It was seconded and carried.

9:25

CB brings up that a schoolteacher in Oroville has some native seeds that she would like plant along the Similkameen trail. Will talk with Josh Thomson during Public Works report.

9:27

AH has a question for the group. He received an e-mail from the Executive Director of the Upper Salmon Recovery Board and would like the BOCC to send a letter of support to the WDFW effort in removing penipen (salmon predators), utilizing a \$1.5 million grant. AH would like to do letter as the county and send to the legislature. AH will draft a letter.

CB discusses the mouth of the Nisqually River how sea lions go after fish that are caught.

AH states they had a strategy session, and we really need to do more intensive management due to the impact of people on the environment.

AH also is concerned that the Pacific Northwest Grey Squirrel may be put on the endangered species list. He has a lot of them at his place.

CB talked about Forest Service and DNR having difficulty for funding to re-plant after fires. This information came from the Forest Collaborative, which he is a member of.

AH & CB discussed the differences between the east side and west side. CB brought up that the differences are mainly urban and rural, not east side/west side.

CB explains how the Marbled Murrelet is an endangered species on the west side. He wonders whether that is a key species or not. CB also states it is easy to get lost in science methodology and forget what you are actually talking about.

9:44

LJ asks for some direction from the BOCC: she has received e-mail from DOH Associates who are applying for the architect consultant position. How does the BOCC want to handle this? They will do a 45-minute walk through with the vendor and then an hour interview afterward. CB states they can come up with a complex question by 3/15/2023 to find out qualifications – which is the whole focus.

9:53

LJ reports that she sent out call for bids for County legal ads newspaper. They need to be received by March 21st. AH compliments LJ on streamlining this process, which has changed considerably since AH began on BOCC. Will be looking for which paper provides the best value. AH had some question regarding ARPA request for Mobile Command Unit \$29,645, but the total cost is \$400,000.

9:57

Moved, Seconded, and Carried to approve consent agenda as presented.

Consent Agenda:

1. cattleguard renewals
2. Acknowledge – ADT proposal – BOCC
3. Approve- Sunbelt Equipment Rental – Justice Building
4. Bid Award – 2023 Soil Stabilizer – GMCO Corporation
5. Bid Award -2023 Liquid Asphalt – Idaho Asphalt Supply
6. Appointment letter – Alta Vista Irrigation District – Zachary Clausen
7. Intergovernmental Agreement – Cooperative purchasing arrangement – Stevens County
8. ARPA request #1 – Mobile Command Unit –Communications
9. Contract -Courthouse Security Services – Pacific Security
10. Resolution 29-2023 Survey Monument Preservation Policy

Regarding the Opioid Settlement monies, only 3 cities in the NCW area will receive the funding as they have over 10,000 people; Wenatchee, East Wenatchee, and Moses Lake.

10:01

Moved, Seconded, and Carried to approve Proceedings.

10:02

Larry Gilman (LG), Assessor in for his quarterly update. Not much changed. The levy process has been a huge learning curve. They had gotten audited by the Dept of Revenue, and now is smooth sailing between the Assessor and the Treasurer.

All levy rates went down because real estate values have increased.

There is a 46% increase in the market values between 2021 & 2022, but sales went down from 1927 in 2021 to 1526 in 2022.

83 sales already in 2023. 54 below the standard.

Market seems healthy but slower – not a lot of listings.

LG discussed their 2 Ford Explorers. One will be kept, the other sold.

Other news, an Appraiser I has been hired, and upon completion of the beginning course, will move to be an Appraiser II.

10:14

Right now, we're evaluating the Senior Exemptions/ \$40,000 is the income threshold. 65% of county median income. There are about 5000 Seniors in this program.

LG also talked about the Buckhorn mine. He felt they did their best to keep the leaching out of the water.

Lastly, LG discussed the rule for filing a tax appeal. 30 days from the Change of Value notice. He hopes the notices will go out on time this year.

Moved, Seconded, and Carried to approve service agreement a one-time onboarding fee of \$1500, and \$899 per month for \$8,692 for 2023. Contract-Courthouse Security Services-Pacific Security. LJ has some questions regarding Fair Advisory Committee qualifications – Policies and Procedures. A few changes made – removed previous names. Brock Hires is Chairman of the Fair Advisory Committee.

10:43

Moved, Seconded, and Carried to approve Resolution 33-2023 adopting FAC Policies and Procedures.

Recess until 11:00

Josh Thomson (JT), County Engineer for Public Works Update. CB talks with JT about the Oroville school teacher wanting to plant native species seeds along the Similkameen trail. CB will go ahead and approve this but ask her to coordinate with the weed program and Public Works director in Oroville.

11:02

JT reports that Solid Waste is working with Civil Deputy on an agreement with Omak Business to take their waste to another facility. County will charge a percentage of loss of volume – approximately 25% of tipping fee. (\$81.50). Will need to check in with the hauler. JT hopes this is fairly simple.

JT also reports Ken Kovalchenko (KK), Solid waste Manager is testifying and asking questions on the Bottle Bill.

AH asks other BOCC how do we allow staff to do legislative priorities based on our business model? Do we need to go over this? We need to all be on the same page before he goes over there.

CB states that is why we need a Legislative Agenda. Need basic policy parameters. KK has listed all the things he is involved in. AH would like a memo from KK listing what he intends say in his testimony. States that he doesn't want to micro-manage but would like to be sure we are all on the same page.

CB brings up an example of a complaint by individuals on the WRIA-49 Watershed Planning Group to their state legislators that CB did not represent the needs of Okanogan County. Then, the legislators come back to me and check up on that. That puts me in a precarious position. These conversations need to be discussed among us and our own staff. CB states that he doesn't know what our view is on the bottle bill. CB encourages more interaction between the staff and the BOCC on bills in the legislature. JT states that he will have KK write a memo to present to the BOCC prior to his testimony.

LJ brings up the law governing certain activities that a public agency can lobby is on the PDC website. AH thanks LJ.

11:14

JT states the WASAC group is supporting the bottle bill but with some questions.

JT – on the maintenance and road conditions. Now, with new snow our road restrictions will probably be back on.

Some discussion of roads that are dead end and that blue signs are private roads.

11:22

Some discussion about the All Hazards Mitigation Plan and Isabelle Spohn's concerns regarding roads. Maurice Goodall could come in and talk about the emergency planning.

11:28

Newby Creek road – Forest Services is considering plan for dust control. They would like to give the

County the easement so the County can take care of the road. AH not in favor of this.

JT reports some problems with Twisp Road Project.

ER&R rates have increased and need to be approved by BOCC.

11:35

Moved, Seconded, and Carried to adopt Public Works new ER& R rates. Resolution 32-2023.

JT will also need to write up a policy. There is also a problem with NSF checks at the Ellesford Transfer Station. These go to a specific bank in Tonasket that is not where the County banks. We are working on this with the treasurer and auditor.

11:43

JT brings paperwork for the upcoming WDFW purchase of Hunter Mountain Property. There are 2 options; 1 WDFW retains the option to purchase 2. agree to just compensation. Esther Milner, Civil Deputy has read these. This will be put on the Consent Agenda for next week.

There is also another piece of land worth \$53,000 – less than 4 acres on waterfront that WDFW is interested in. AH states our best option is to sell, not give to WDFW.

11:50

LTAC meeting last Friday brought up the issue of the District 2 appointee (LaGrou) may not be a county resident. On December 20th, BOCC sent letter regarding the need to review the appointment. No response, except by e-mail “What's going on?”

LTAC Board vacated District 1 at-large position. CB states that we'd better set a parameter regarding being a resident, and what that definition is.

11:56

Shelley Keitzman (SK), HR & Risk Manager brings a resolution regarding a bilingual stipend for both non-bargaining and Teamster represented employees. She cites resolution 44-2021 governing this. She presents a Memo of Agreement (MOA) between Teamsters and the County. This stipend is on a case by case basis, depending on the job description.

12:03

AH looking for definition of resident.

Moved, Seconded and carried to approve vouchers and payroll for \$1,584,055 and Moved, Seconded, and Carried to approve payroll for Public Health for \$66,057.

12:10

CB brings up the Public Information Request “It's going to be an effort to smear me” They want e-mails, phone conversations, and people who supported me in my first campaign. This is in regard to water and the Tunk Re-Zone. This is a legislative matter and I have no problem with them getting this information but I suspect how they plan to use it. I believe that the Farm Bureau is behind the requests. CB wants JN to hear the history of this problem with water availability in Tunk and also wants everyone to be on the same page. The picture is bigger than water to me. It is about maintaining a rural lifestyle/agriculture. AH stands behind the Tunk Re-Zone decision.

Lots of philosophical discussion regarding agriculture and the rural lifestyle, sphere of influence for Okanogan County. How difficult it is for small farmers.

This discussion lasted until 12:41.

Meeting adjourned at 12:44. No afternoon session and no Wednesday meeting.

