

**Board of Okanogan County Commissioners**  
**Monday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022, 9:00 a.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  
Shelley Hawley, Assistant County Clerk  
Maurice Goodhall (MG), Emergency Manager  
Pete Palmer (PP), Planning Director  
Naomi Peasley (NP), Fairgrounds Manager  
Darla Schreckengast (DS), District Court Administrator  
Charles Short (CS), District Court Judge

*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:***

- *Emergency Manager recounts multitude of minor snowstorm-related incidents*
- *Planning report: more non-permitted Septic tanks installed; take on a summer intern?*
- *Fairgrounds manager presents state funding application for signature, grant received from state to upgrade bathrooms, sewer problem fixed*
- *Hover ponders County's median income figures*
- *District Court budget features falling revenues from lack of jury trials, not writing tickets, the pandemic; Hover asks why District Parole Officer is necessary.*

9:20 - **AH** says to someone on the phone he's getting complaints from people about the rise in property taxes. He admits his home value just went up 36%. Says the levy rate will go lower in proportion to the rise in property taxes, and that people are used to property values being low compared to elsewhere.

9:24 - **Emergency Manager updates on the fallout of the snowfall** - **MG**: Methow is anticipating needs but is in the best shape. The (Okanogan) PUD was hit the most. They're running thin on people, dispatchers getting tired, a lot of outages. *He says a man phoned, stranded at the end of a long driveway. They instructed him to reach out to his neighbors for help, and facilitated that. AH has learned that in the Methow they were waiting for truck parts and that a truck was provided them by Oroville.* **MG**: I'm without power at my place. We're going to lose more trees, secondary lines. There are a few power pole fires, a few accidents—one fatality up north but not sure of the reason. *AH describes Rte. 153 as the worst he's ever seen—it took him four hours instead of six to drive to Coulee City. CB's tree branches have been breaking loudly; he considered putting up a "free firewood" sign. MG reports a (Courthouse?) security audit, security cameras going in, tests on the generator that caused fumes to go into the Courthouse, and someone running over a conduit to the main power pole which was PVC instead of metal.*

9:33 - **Planner's Report** - **PP**: There were 13 trees down on Disautel Pass. Had to drive around some.

We've received a request from a Western WA University undergraduate to do an internship this summer. They have grants for salaries. If we're closer to sub-area planning—we'll see with the staff... Last summer I had sat in on an Environmental Planning class and they critiqued our comprehensive plan. Eight septic systems without permit were put in last month; they've been averaging six to eight a month. We've had this discussion, but for them it's income. We've talked about putting zoning in front of other things. *(A site inspection is supposed to be part of the building permit process.)*

9:38 - **NP** (via Zoom): Couldn't get out on the road. State Fair Commission confirms we'll have \$20,700 instead of \$15,000 for the RV bathrooms upgrade. We've filled out the grant application. **AH**: We'll get it back to you with signature. *She reports that the Fair brought in \$176,116 while operation costs reached \$213,248, AH says that's why Current Expenses filled the gap. There's also \$100,000 in (infrastructure) grant money.* **PP**: The sewer got fixed. The cleanout was shattered, tanks had settled below the piping. *They have been waiting eight weeks for a tractor loader.*

9:24-10:24 - Recess

10:34 - **AH** (reading): The county's average median household income is \$48,500. In the city of Methow it's \$65,000. But that's orchards, gross farm income. Mazama, \$69,000, with 68 inhabitants.

10:47 - *Looking at the 2023 Fair Budget's revenue report CB wonders at the combining of concessions and vendors with organizations, parties. AH checks with NP by phone. It's all booth and space rental. CB: ...She said "your auditor". (It's about) "our auditor". He doesn't want to sign what he doesn't understand but says he has no reason not to sign. Application for state funding of fairs approved.*

10:55 - Budget Hearing, District Court - **DS**: We have grant money to go into the Therapeutic Court position. **AH**: Administrator of Courts, salary and benefits: \$40,625. *They agree on a hike in the travel budget, administrator training is now required, and slashing the Witness and Jury Trials envelope from \$38,000 in 2022 to \$15,000 since no jury trials yet this year. CS attributes the reduction in jury trials to the pandemic, and instability in the Prosecutor's and Public Defender's offices.* **CS**: There's an increase in dismissals. It comes down to who's in (these) offices. Several years ago we had jury trials all the time. It's easier to predict when you have stability. *Other revenues on the decline: filing fees, city court services, traffic infractions—"They're not writing tickets".* **CS**: It may be the pandemic. For people who are indigent we may see more fines being waived. Changes with the criminal side a few years ago. **CB**: And State Patrol? **DS**: They're writing like crazy still. DUI fines and fees are down, non-traffic conviction fees. *Someone asks what the criteria are to have a Public Defender. Some people not qualifying as indigent pay a capped rate of \$300.* **DS**: There's an increase in people who've become indigent in the last five years. For a fair portion it's been an administrative change but some represent an increase.

11:33 - *Still on the court's budget AH questions the lack of revenues from probation charges. Again it's*

*people not writing tickets.) AH: Do we have to have a Parole Officer? CS: The more monitoring you do, the more you can prevent. The District Probation Officer has a more "hands on" policy, can get people on track, it's a carrot and stick.... (without one) there would be consequences for the public. AH: It's wise (for next year's budget) to have reports of what the Parole Officer has done. He's concerned that the position doesn't pay for itself. Is there a legal way to use more*

Therapeutic Court funds for that? **CS:** Part of it's funded by Therapeutic Court, tied to the time spent there. That could potentially increase. ...We couldn't even have Therapeutic Court if we didn't fund a Probation Officer. **AH:** I'd like to know what kind of crimes the Parole Officer deals with. How many are mental problems? It behooves us to maintain a Parole Officer. But when we look at all the expenses the judicial service puts on our county... **CS:** It's prevention. Spend now to spend less down the road. **CB:** And you're going to have victims. **AH:** The report! **CS:** I can do the numbers on mental health, alcohol treatment. **AH:** We give between \$600,000 and \$800,000 to *(Behavioral Health)* plus other money. We need to split this equally because all different pots of money are reserved for doing different things.

*11:45 - The Court has received external funding which will run out mid-year. AH reminds everyone that they will have to find a new judiciary committee member to replace Commissioner Detro, when he retires.*

*11:58 - Meeting adjourned until 1:30.*