

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
April 23, 2024 Tuesday AM

Present:

Jon Neal (JN) – BOCC Chair, District 3

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

Chris Branch (CB) – BOCC, District 1

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 below 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:

- Public Comment: Ms. Jackson comments on the Planning Commission meeting, found it interesting and long. Surprised they only meet 1X monthly for all there is to do. Ruth Hall comments that it is good to have a full Board of Equalization (BOE) now – all three districts.
- AH notes the ARPA fund is \$80,000 over-allocated, then confers with LJ throughout the meeting to get the figures straight.
- Solid Waste: Twisp Transfer Station summer hours will begin earlier this year; composting business interested in wood chips from the County.
- Public Works: County is still in process of determining which departments will be moving where with the new building. Letter of Re-Commitment for Forest Collaborative participants.
- HR/Risk Manager: Grant funded Outreach Specialist position for the Sheriff's Office to be finalized; then begin the hiring process.
- Board discusses needing to get the Planning Commissions process back on track.
- Meeting adjourned at 11:44

9:04

Pledge of allegiance

9:15

Public Comment: Ruth Hall asks if BOCC meeting this afternoon and expresses appreciation that there is now a full Board of Equalization (BOE), with all 3 districts represented. Ms. Jackson commented that she found the Planning Commission meeting interesting but long. She was surprised they only meet 1X per month as there is so much work to do for “We the people”.

9:23

AH brings up that by his calculations they have over-allocated ARPA funds by \$80,000. LJ would like to get together to reconcile this as her figures don't match this. CB asks how much money was there to begin with? \$8.6 Million. LJ states \$9 million. *LJ and AH attempt to reconcile this difference all through the morning meeting.* AH goes over the many different things that have been funded by ARPA.
9:27

CB would like to hear back about the different expenditures that have been utilized so far of the ARPA funds.

9:30

Ken Kovalenko (KK), Solid Waste Manager reports that they will be opening the Twisp Transfer Station earlier than normal. Will be opening on Fridays in May, rather than June. This will be a benefit to the people and contractors who are already beginning to gear up with their work.

KK-B2G Compost is asking for wood chips from the County that could be utilized in their compost operation. This will be a benefit to the County and the business. AH is a little leary with this as it is possible that the County could be utilizing this at the Fairgrounds, and also does not want to give preferential treatment to one entity without offering this to all the taxpayers. Any surplus chips we have would go to the compost outfit. *(Previously the Solid Waste Manager reported that there is a State mandate to composts as much as possible in all counties.)* KK reports there is only 1 county in the state that has a compost facility. We, the County, would have to deliver and pay the tipping fees.

AH would like to have more conversation around this. CB notes that the City of Okanogan puts their chips in a pile for anyone to haul off. AH – we need to be fair to all taxpayers.

CB – BTW, did you get rid of the poles salvaged from the fire? KK – some but not all. There is still some for anyone to take. They do have creosote on them.

9:36

KK reports that he has been asked to speak at the Washington State Recycle Organization on the 3rd weekend in May, and he has accepted. They are interested in how the apple maggot quarantine works. KK – We are still taking green waste and waiving the tipping fees. Everything is still going as planned. Some people want the chips back and we are still working with the Conservation District on their program.

9:39

Josh Thomson (JT), County Engineer – reporting on the road and maintenance side, we are finishing up with the stabilizer and getting ready for chip seal. Area 6 is working on the Oroville-Loomis Road. JT- On the shops, we are still waiting for the contractor on the waste oil system.

JT-5-6 weeks ago, we heard from the Wildlife people that they are wanting to talk about access. *(Not sure if this is in regard to atv use on WDFW land or not).*

JT-We still have one designer position vacant and the Capital Projects Manager is moving so will have that position to advertise for also. Of course, our Traffic Counter position is just getting advertised. We should not have a problem filling that. We are having problems filling mechanic positions due to low pay.

JT – We need to do something with the parking lot at the Public Works Office building but are waiting to see if it will be dug up for a waterline or not. JT – BTW, what is the latest with the different County agencies moving around with the new building. Are the courts ending up back in the Courthouse after all? AH – The latest we've got going is working to see if the church would do a land swap. The court system doesn't seem to work well in the courthouse, certainly not for the future. AH – We're trying to decide to do something for the long haul or not. We need that discussion on the agenda. LJ has an idea – allowing the court to stay in the courthouse by giving them 2 rooms each, plus the jail courtrooms.

AH – I think the problem becomes when we need a single point of entry. We'll need to run this by the architects to see if LJ's suggestion is feasible. CB – we are still working on different ideas.

JT – It's been interesting looking at some documents from 1888 when the County Seat was moved from Ruby to Conconully, and now here.

JT – Public Works building needs some maintenance. Also, we will be needing a budget supplemental for changing the federal funding to chip seal project.

9:54

CB asks KK about the poles that are still available for people to take. KK – they are different sizes as they have been cut up and yes, they have creosote on them.

CB reports that he talked with a person about a wolf complaint in the Monse area, but he believes that was resolved.

10:02

The Board approves the Consent Agenda as presented:

1. Interagency Agreement – Molson Hill Site Lease-Ok Co Fire Protection District #11
2. ARPA Request #3-Slope Stabilization – Town of Nespelem
3. Culvert purchase – Awarding contract – Pacific Corrugated Pipe Company

LJ has a couple of extra items: There is the letter from Commissioner Branch Re-Committing to the Forest Collaborative. Approving the Wa. State Public Defense Spar Grant. LJ – Also, we have a request from Fire District #2 for ARPA funds. There is a small voucher on postage for the EMS District for Methow Valley.

10:04

Board approves the \$568,980 vouchers. CB explains the reason for the re-commitment letter for the Forest Collaborative. He will remain on that board, but the letter is spelling out how they will continue to do business as a collaborative. Since CB is representing the BOCC, a letter of support is needed from them.

10:29

AH moves to authorize CB to sign the support letter for the Forest Collaborative.

10:32

Board approves the \$23,448 invoice.

10:33

Board approves the \$6.72 invoice for the Methow Valley EMS District for postage.

10:36

LJ – there is a maintenance position authorized but unfunded.

10:44

Shelley Keitzman (SK), HR/Risk Manager following up from the week before. We have a grant-funded outreach position in the Sheriff's Office, that we'll need a budget supplemental for because it will be a reimbursement. We can move forward once the resolution is signed. SK- This is not a DCR (Designated Crisis Response) person (*as in mental health*) but someone who helps in a crisis. CB asks "is there any certification for this person?" SK states no. CB – Has the Risk Pool seen this? CB has concerns about an uncredentialed person in this position. SK – This person is more of a liaison for the Sheriff's Office. CB – more like a communication liaison that might identify when a DCR is needed. SK- Yes, this is modeled after the City of Omak, which has this position also. CB still has concerns about getting a 'qualified' person for this position, but the vote is unanimous in support of Resolution 63-2024 hiring an Outreach Specialist. CB – This concerns me.

(LJ and AH continue to collaborate on ARPA \$\$ numbers)

11:23

BOCC approved the April 15th & 16th meeting minutes.

CB brings up the need to discuss TD&H at the fairgrounds. What do you think of a conversation with them or put out another request?

JN – They will try to extend the grant.

LJ – They would have to extend the grant for 5 months. LJ is scheduling a time for negotiations.

AH- We just received the grant this year, and it is a 2-year calendar cycle.

LJ- The grant agreement ends 5/31/2025. If we want to expedite it and get it done this year, it would cost considerably more.

CB – We need to know what the scope of the work is.

11:30

CB – On another matter; the issue with the Planning Commission. We may need an executive session with the civil deputy, but we'll leave that up to her.

CB notes that looking at a video of the Planning Commission, one member doesn't read the information.

JN- Heard that the documents kept changing before having a chance to review.

CB Wants to get the process back on track.

LJ – Department of Commerce is looking for agencies that would divvy up monthly stipend funds for folks in need. CB would like to have that e-mail forwarded to him.

LJ – I am working to schedule a meeting with the Homeless Coalition for every other month.

11:44

Meeting adjourned.