

**Board of Okanogan County Commissioners**  
**Tuesday August 15, 2023, AM**

Present:

Chris Branch (CB) – BOCC Chair, District 1  
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](https://okanogancounty.org/offices/commissioners/commissioners_proceedings.php).

Time stamps below are in real time. To locate specific topics, a click 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:

- Opening discussion of Maintenance Department helping the fairgrounds staff to get ready for the Fair.
- Public Comment: Isabelle Spohn had questions/comments regarding long overdue updating of the 2013 Community Wildfire Protection Plan and promised yearly review of the 2022 All Hazards Mitigation Plan (AHMP) for Okanogan County, especially in light of the devastation and breakdown of mitigation plans in Maui, Hawaii. Ruth Hall asks if the Staff Report for the Monse Road Vacation request is available, with the hearing scheduled for August 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Central Services: Discuss computer upgrades.
- Fire by Wannacut Lake.
- Transfer of DOT property in Mazama to County ownership, working with the Conservancy and considering shoreline policy.
- Finance Committee: (Treasurer, Auditor and Finance Manager) Cash on hand, expenditures, and receipts from July.
- County Engineer: maintenance and road condition, status of current projects, guardrail repair from Eagle Bluff Fire going out to bid. Staff report for Monse Road Vacation should be available this Thursday. Public Records Request needed. Barnholt Loop speed limit change. Meeting is scheduled and residents notified.
- Meeting adjourned at 11:37 for lunch, working lunch with consultants.

9:04

The meeting opens with discussion of the Maintenance Department going to the fairgrounds office to

assess the needs of the fairgrounds staff in getting ready for the upcoming Fair.

9:15

Public Comment Period: Isabelle Spohn (IS) questions/comments on the recent tragic fire in Lahaina, Maui, Hawaii and how their mitigation plan broke down. IS asks about the status of the Okanogan County All Hazards Mitigation Plan and whether it is being updated. She stresses the importance of a plan with these catastrophic weather events. IS also comments that the media did not know the terminology around mitigation planning.

AH states that the fire in Maui is truly devastating and around 93 people dead but doesn't think this compares with our County. IS -back when Commissioner Detro was on the BOCC, the board committed to reviewing the 2022 AHMP yearly with departments, and I stress the importance of the plan, especially in light of being right in the middle of fire season. IS notes that many things went wrong in Maui with lack of planning for the electrical outages, notification systems, etc. I haven't heard anything about the long overdue update of our 2013 County Community Wildfire Protection Plan either. I just want to be sure that we are up to date and that we have adequate planning. AH wants to talk with Emergency Services Manager, Maurice Goodall.

Ruth Hall (RH) asks if there is any new information on the Monse Road Vacation request. RH is waiting for the Staff Report and has visited the Monse area recently and hasn't seen anything posted. The hearing is scheduled for next Tuesday August 22<sup>nd</sup> and she would like to be prepared for the hearing. CB and AH stated they will talk with Josh Thomson when he is in this morning for his report.

IS asks once again, since the BOCC is obligated to update the AHMP or MHMP yearly, would like the board to respond.

9:30

Karen Beatty (KB), Central Services got her budget proposal just in time. KB states the backup appliance has been ordered and is expected to arrive on September 18<sup>th</sup>. We are expecting onsite help if we need it when that arrives. She is also working with Mike Worden of the Dispatch Center for some other updates. KB-we are setting up replacement servers for Public Works, the Assessor's Office, and the Treasurer's Office. We'll have all our Adobe products in one area.

KB – Next year, we hope to focus on learning and teaching users all the capabilities of the new programs. Also, we will be making changes in the Multi Factorial Authentication process – fingerprint identification. KB is looking for security grants to help pay for these changes as it is costly. CB asks questions as to whether the BOCC will be included in this.

KB – otherwise, we are just busy keeping the County running. Oh, and we also have the UPS – backup for the computers. They are about \$100 a piece and I will need to place an order for these backup appliances.

9:40

JN reports there is a fire by the Wannacut Lake, which is odd because it is usually so wet in that area. It is now around 20 acres.

AH asks whether the other BOCC remembers the DOT property by Mazama Bridge that we have been working on with the Conservancy. CB asks if they are planning to transfer the property to County ownership. Are we buying it to conserve it? Is this through RCO?

AH states yes, and it is also part of Salmon Recovery.

AH and CB continue talking about whether fishing is open in that area or not. AH- fishing is open until the end of the month.

CB states this might be an opportunity for us to set some shoreline policy.

10:00

Pam Johnson (PJ) Treasurer, Cari Hall (CH) Auditor, Lisa Schreckengast (LS) Finance Manager are in for the Finance Committee meeting. CB stresses that this finance committee also includes BOCC.

PJ goes over the handouts about the case on hand from July and how the investment fund is doing. Currently, 4.75% interest rate for short term investments. AH asks if a portal has been opened for LATCF? (Local and Tribal Consistency Fund) Yes, but not quite ready to be accessed.

CH states that the current expense and cash on hand looks great. PJ notes that sales tax is up, but not as much as it was in the last couple of years. People are getting out more. PJ asked about the Opioid Settlement monies. She is not quite sure about the figures, but believes we got about \$80,000.00 in April and another \$40,000.00 in August is expected. Will check those figures. PJ reported that she did hear back from the State regarding a couple of our projects going over cost. Bond proceeds are up to costs incurred. LS notes that county budgets are pouring in. Will be bringing to the BOCC in September, after going to the Auditor. CH states the report goes to her first. CH has not heard anything from the State Auditor regarding the Federal finance reporting. CB states we were caught in the middle of their rule change.

10:20

LJ reports that she asked Josh Thomson (JT) to come early.

10:36

JT, County Engineer to give his report. Some discussion with AH regarding the carbon tax (gouging) thing. It's not really a tax but is difficult to keep track of.

JT states they are digging out after vacations. He figures it will be about \$110,000 to repair the damaged guardrail from the Eagle Bluff fire. He would like to send out for bids.

10:40

It was moved, seconded, and carried to authorize Public Works to call for bids on the guardrail project. JT – we'll bring back a recommendation once we get the bids. We are putting steel in all the guardrails now, rather than wood.

JT – we're still working on the Foster Bridge Repair project – working through the aquatic permitting.

JT – we've received some odd public comments that don't make much sense. CB asks if they can be resolved.

JT – Twisp River Bridge should be completed today. The Landfill project is done. The Tonasket shop structure is up, and Twisp shop is also moving along.

JT – Regarding the Monse Road vacation – there are some weird things when looking at this. There hasn't been coordination with the neighbors as this is involving a sale and we are currently, having Erlandsen to do a survey. The neighbors got involved once they saw the posting. JT states the areas have been posted, but not allowed at the boat launch.

*(There was quite a lot of communication between JT and BOCC regarding the process of road vacation, especially when it involves historically platted roads. They also commented on the Three Devils Road Vacation that went to the Hearing Examiner.)*

Also, AH was wondering when the Public would have access to the information so they could be prepared for the hearing. JT will have the staff report complete by this Thursday and it could be

available by public record request. CB compares road vacation to land use decision.

JT reports that the letters were mailed to the Barnholt Loop Residents for a scheduled meeting regarding changing the speed limit. He can't remember the date.

JT brings up the book "Fireweed" regarding Ok County history. How old towns were platted such as Loup Loup and Ruby.

11:37

Adjourned for lunch, but will be resume meeting at noon with the architects, MJ Neal and department heads.