

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday July 25, 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 and 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 records 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:

- Discussion with WSU Extension and County Auditor regarding changes in billing year for WSU invoices.
- No meeting on Wednesday.
- HR/Risk Manager reports on Risk Pool Conference: 40% increase in liability premiums, 4%-10% increase in property insurance. In spite of bad news, our county is doing much than others. Also, organizing safety/security committee with all departments represented. Would like to have a building-wide PA system to notify all people when needed, and smoke alarms needed. Group to meet quarterly (next meeting is October 2023) and will bring draft of changes back to the Board. Budget Supplement public hearing to use \$85,000 in ARPA funds for the Lower Goat Creek Bridge repairs. - part of the Methow Valley Trail system.
- Public Works update by County Engineer: Landfill construction moving along, Tonasket shop is beginning steel work today, landfill construction project contract issues got worked out. Chip seal is the main project. Working on Barnholt Loop speed reduction request by 11 people who signed a petition. BOCC wants more information and would like to schedule an informal meeting to get affected people to give their opinions. Engineer expects he might need to continue the research on

the Monse Plat Road Vacation as some issues have come up that have made it difficult, also working on the OCOG/Trail position. There is one GIS position open, Solid waste and the road have some open positions.

- Adjourned at 11:54. No afternoon session.

9:00

LJ lines out business actions needing attention.

9:15

No public comment

9:30

Kayla Wells-Yoakum, WSU coordinator, Kelli Conn – Extension Office Assistant, and Cari Hall, (CH) Auditor in to discuss changing billing year to facilitate the billing change with WSU. *Considerable discussion regarding ins and outs of pre-paying invoice for December or just changing the billing year.*

9:42

It was moved, seconded, and carried to make WSU's reimbursable payments in the billing year December to November. They already have a year to year contract with WSU.

9:45

CH stays to discuss other issue with the BOCC. CH got a call from Beth in the Sheriffs Office regarding the need to do a budget supplemental for the salary upgrade. CH not sure that's what the BOCC wants to do at this time, so she's asking if this is correct. AH asks if the Sheriffs budget is spent out. CH just state that we normally wouldn't do a budget supplemental at this time of year. What do you want me to do? AH notes that the wage difference might be enough to do a supplemental out of contingency reserve. CB asks if they are over budget? CH – I will reach out to the department heads to do this. Now or later? CB & AH suggest later. AH – since we have granted an increase in pay outside of the budget, it may be difficult to absorb that. CB says typically this is not enough money in the budget. AH – that bothers departments when they can't cover the increase in their budgets. We'll do the supplemental later.

CH notes that she likes to keep \$100,000 in Contingency Reserve at the end of year going into November and December. There are more expenses at the end of the year.

9:51

BOCC going over the proceedings for July 17 & July 18

There will be no meeting on Wednesday. AH will be in union negotiations.

10:20

Moved, seconded, and carried to approve July 17 & July 18 proceedings/

10:28

Moved, seconded, and carried to approve consent agenda:

1. Cattleguard franchise renewals
2. Public Works purchase 88 plow bits – WSDOT \$48,504
3. reimbursable work request -chip sealing, road fund 102 City of Okanogan.
4. Appointment letter – Oroville-Tonasket Irrigation District – Hector Maldonado
5. Interlocal Cooperative agreement with Elmer City and Okanogan County, Fire District 6
6. Resolution 91-2023 Allocation ARPA/SLFRE funds -Ok County Fire Dist 12

10:30

Shelley Keitzman(SK), HR/Risk Manager in to report on the Risk Pool Conference. No good news here;40% increase in liability premiums, property renewal is 4% -10% increase in the next year. Our risk is not as high as other counties. We're trying to get an extra reserve.

SK states one of the changes in the lookback period increasing to 10 years, which works best for us

10:34

Esther Milner (EM), Civil Deputy and Larry Gilman (LG), Assessor, along with SK SK explains that Kim Coleman from the Risk Pool will be touring the jail tomorrow. SK to let BOCC know how that goes and what suggestions come from that. The risk pool is offering more training.

10:38

SK and EM to discuss the security/safety committee and this being discretionary. We will have the same goals but can tailor to our own needs.

SK states the committee talked about the need going forward with Justice center and Courthouse. SK-We talked of having subcommittees, but I think this might be too hard to keep track of. LG states they are trying to make some changes, but not doing large changes – starting small. Such as, there is no fire alarm system in the Courthouse. We would also like to have a PA system that could address everyone at the same time. We're doing short term stuff. SK states this is what we're working on and we'll get back to you once we have the cost.

LG asks do you want us to come up with a draft? AH states yes, I think so.

10:50

Public Hearing for Budget Supplemental Appropriation of \$85,000 for the lower Goat Creek Bridge Repair. Staff statement by Josh Thomson (JT), County Engineer. Public Comment; Emily Sisson stated this project is very important to the Methow Trails System, especially being able to go to Mazama or back to Browns Farm etc. It didn't matter how they chose to do the payment, but she felt this was a worthwhile project. AH would like to use ARPA funds.

10:55

It was moved, seconded, and carried to approve budget supplemental 92-2023 with ARPA funds.

AH asks LJ to send an e-mail to James to let him know the money is available.

10:56

Back to the Security/safety committee

LG explains that the safety/security meetings will be quarterly, with the next one being in October. We'll be having a conversation with JT and others before the next meeting – will have representatives. CB tells the group to go forth and do the right thing.

11:03

Moved, seconded, and carried to approve payroll vouchers in the amount of \$1,038,122.

11:04

JT to give Public Works update;

the steel work is beginning on the Tonasket shop today. Work is proceeding on the landfill construction project – contract issues have been resolved without legal intervention. Chip seal is happening on roads right now – Bonaparte Creek road just completed. Will be moving on to Omak flats, Chiliwist Road, and North Star.

JT reports continuing to work on the speed limit study for Barnholt Loop Road. 85% of the drivers on this road go an average of 32 MPH, which shows that people are adjusting for risky curves. CB asks if using this information would be reason to decrease the speed. Will there be a hearing? JT states there will be if they decide to decrease the speed. However, the RCW's are not very clear. CB states that he would like a public meeting (not hearing) to discuss the reasons for changing the speed and get other stakeholders input on this. 11 people (1 doesn't live there) signed the petition to lower the speed limit. This is only 1/5 of the people that live on Barnholt Loop. JT states there are 40-50 people who live there.

Both AH and CB are all for a public meeting. JT states we could send out postcards announcing this meeting, and people could tell us their comments if they are unable or unwilling to come to a meeting. CB requests that postcards be sent to all parcels touching the road.

CB - a side comment – at 2:00 in the morning – pretty consistently, there is somebody who is just squirreling around in a vehicle – pouring it on, hot rodding at the same time everyday.

Also, CB asks JT if there is a Jake brake ordinance. JT will check into this. CB wondered if the older fruit company trucks have Jake brakes.

JT brings up the difficulty he is having with the Monse Plat vacation of roads. He states there are some weird property owners that he needs to look into and the RCW;s are vague. There is a triangle piece he is not sure of. Somebody bought a building on an easement. JT is continuing to look into it and may need to continue to timeline.

11:25

The trails/OCOG/Planning position has been approved and JT is working on creating the budget together for this position.

Also, there is a GIS position open as the person moved to Wenatchee. Solid Waste has some positions open and they may have one road crew position – driver position
JT is hoping to get his budget in by next week.

JT and CB discussed how there are quite a few little towns that have been platted historically but are used differently now; Chesaw, Ruby, Carlton, Malott to name a few. JT notes that they had big dreams that never materialized.

CB asks JT if we have any traffic counts on Rodeo Trail Drive lately? JT will check.

Moved, seconded, and carried to approve the Redline contract between the County and EC Touring (*entertainment at the fair*)

AH wants to correct his previous statement about County Employees not being able to get into politics. They can on their off time.

AH also wanted to know what the other BOCC members felt if he got on Zoom, rather than come in when they have a light schedule.

CB stated, we have the technology.

11:54

Meeting adjourned