

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners  
Monday, Nov. 27, 2023 AM & PM

JN—Jon Neal, BOCC, District 3  
AH—Andy Hover, BOCC, Vice-Chair, District 1--Absent  
CB—Chris Branch, BOCC, Chair, District 2  
LJ—Lanie Johns, Clerk of the Board  
TM—Tim Meadows, Head of Maintenance  
CF—Chuck Ford, Fairgrounds Manager  
PP—Pete Palmer, Director of Planning  
CH—Cari Hall, County Auditor  
JT—Josh Thomson, County Engineer  
PB—Paul Budrow, County Sheriff  
DY—David Yarnell, Undersheriff  
RB—Rick Balam, Chief Criminal Deputy

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Summary of significant discussions:

- Commissioners finalize the 2024 budget for many departments.
- Pete Palmer, Planning Director, updates the commissioners on her schedule for updating the zoning code.
- Commissioners and Sheriff Budrow discuss creating new positions for a Search and Rescue position, an Animal Control Officer and two deputies. The sheriff is concerned that if the department is not fully staffed, the county is opening itself up to lawsuits.
- Adjourn for the day at 5:03.

**09:00**—Pledge of Allegiance.

LJ—Just a reminder: We meet on Wednesday this week for Budget Work Sessions.

LJ—Our access to Laserfiche is down for the next couple of days.

AH—I won't ask you to look anything up for us.

**17:45**—AH—Discusses budget for the Economic Alliance. Shares his screen with the Infrastructure Budget #117. Closes budget document.

**22:15**—CB—There's an issue we need to discuss (concerning the 117 budget?)—the understanding that Omak wasn't eligible but apparently they paid their debt off.

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AH—2023 was the last year Omak was getting money. It got \$40,000 from 117. I thought there was an agreement.

CB—reads a question someone has written concerning whether Omak is eligible for 117 allocations.

AH—We have to read the agreement.

LJ reads the agreement out loud.

AH—Reads from another section of the agreement. Too bad Laserfiche is down. We can't look it up. Look at Ordinances 98-7 and 99-2.

Commissioners continue to discuss this issue.

**34:05**—TM distributes a document to the commissioners.

TM—The two documents clipped together are complete quotes from KaTom's (a restaurant supply company). It's for the jail kitchen remodel. I recommend going with Bargreen's. It's more but they've been way more responsive and got things right the first time. The walk-in cooler is a big one. With the (*inaudible*) one, you see his drawing on the back. The door was on the wrong side. I told him he needed it on the other side and I haven't heard back. With Bargreen's, I texted him while he was on the road and he texted me back with the answer I needed in 30 minutes.

AH—So with tax and freight with Bargreen's, it's \$92,004. The other one is \$79,112. \$13,000 difference.

TM—Joe originally requested the quotes, but I've been in touch with the salespeople. I tried to get other quotes but they're mostly web-based and it's hard to talk to someone.

TM—We'll put the equipment in ourselves because it's all cut and dried.

AH—Will the \$250,000 cover the entire project?

TM—I think so. (He lists items he still needs to buy.)

AH—Make sure all the remodel expenses comes out of the jail fund—160. And we should reduce the amount for next year if we pay some of the bills this year.

CB—Why isn't this a public work?

AH—It's less than \$300,000.

Discussion of rules for bidding for public works in general.

AH—Be sure to document trying to get three quotes for everything. If you can't get three, document why—like they didn't answer your request or whatever.

AH—So you recommend getting the stuff from Bargreen's?

TM—Yes.

AH—I move to concur with TM's recommendation to buy these items for the jail kitchen model from Bargreen-Ellison's for \$92,014.52. Motion passes.

AH—Recommendation was placed with the most responsive bidder, not the lowest one.

TM—Thanks. TM leaves.

AH—I was just doing Canvas Board stuff and we were talking about drivers' licenses. You need to complete that (remodel?) before next year. Also, she's (Cari Hall, County Auditor?) concerned about the mail room?

TM—I'll talk to her about it.

**48:40**—CB—We had a public meeting advertised for 9:30 and we're opening it up at 9:40. The hearing is for a supplemental appropriation for District Court for \$7040. No public comments. Motion to pass Resolution 174-2023 for the supplement. Motion passes 3-0.

CB—We have another public meeting for a supplement of \$42,000. No public comments. Motion to pass Resolution 175-2023 for the supplement. Motion passes 3-0.

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**52:20**—CB—Time for staff meetings.

CF—Chuck Ford, Fairgrounds Manager.

AH—We received the grant for...

CF—approximately \$237,500.

AH—There are five questions that need to be answered.

CF—I can do it.

AH—Then we need to know the scope of the work. CB has a lot of that in his head. It's about the new well and the water lines. To do our DHP (Drilling Hazard Prevention?) we need to tell them the elevations, depths of the trenches, etc. Then follow it up. They're really nice. If you hit something in the drilling you'll need to stop.

CF—I'll do the five questions and then give you the document to sign. I'll start getting quotes. I'll try to get as much as possible within with the grant.

Discussion of bidding process for a well providing potable water, and designing the water system. Some of the designing will be done by the on-call engineer and will concern cross-connection contamination.

CB—We want to get this done ASAP, but we want to be sure we observe all the Public Health requirements.

AH—Start from scratch. Start with the Department of Health.

CB—There's a guy in Spokane in the Department of Health and we're in his region. He's the guy you want to talk to.

Also discussion about providing irrigation water. The two remaining wells may not provide enough water for adequate irrigation.

CF—I'm building a list of priorities and hope to have it done this week. It's by building and also has the top three priorities you guys mentioned before. All the safety stuff will be in red, but there aren't very many of them. I've been trying to find out if the Commercial Building is condemned or not.

CB—I'll provide what help I can with the water, but I think you talk with the health official about what is really needed for a transient facility (the RV park?) and then see what we have to do to get there.

Maybe we can get some money from health to do it.

CF—Next week, I'll be finishing up a project with my former job, but I'll try to stay in touch. By mid-January I'll have a plan to move forward. In February, I'll get quotes. Does that plan sound OK?

AH—Get a generalized cost after the engineers say what we'll need. If it's under \$300,000, we can get semi-formal quotes over the phone. If it's over, then we have to get formal bids.

CB—The main thing is we have something speced out. I'll send you the engineer's name.

CF leaves.

AH—to CF—another good thing to do in winter time is try to draw plans for the Beef Barn and the south end of the Horse Barn to be able to get costs to replace them.

CF—I'll do it. Thanks

**1:14:10**—PP—I'm Pete Palmer, Planning Director.

PP—Couple of quick things. There will be a resolution coming up on your agenda to approve the job description for the Compliance Person. We discussed earlier about taking the empty Senior Planner position that's vacant and turning it into a Compliance position. The person would do enforcement and site evaluations. Esther Milner (Chief Civil Deputy Prosecutor) is working on the compliance section of the County Code.

AH—We're not going out and looking...

PP—No. We're still compliance driven. Have you looked at the code Esther is proposing?

AH—Not yet. My dad in this position with the compliance officer. People were off the chart about—we don't want backhoes in the backyards! I want to make sure we're not doing that.

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PP—This new enforcement will give us the ability to work with people instead of immediately dragging them into court.

PP—The other thing to talk about is scheduling the Zone Code amendment. We're already almost two months behind. We're scheduled on the agenda on Dec. 6 for two hours. I'd like to keep it to what's in the code now. What we've worked on already to get to this point. If there's anything in the code that causes you heartburn, now is the time to address that and get it changed. If there are other big things you'd like to add, I'd like to carry that over to the next amendment so we can keep it moving forward.

PP—Dec. 6 is a Wednesday. Then take Thursday and Friday to work with Ferdouse (Oneza, the county's consultant for zoning) and get a final draft. Monday, Dec. 11 would be a scheduled special Planning Commission meeting for them to see the code. We can go through it then. The Public Hearing would be Dec. 26 or Jan. 2.

PP—That's my schedule. I want to make sure you guys are OK with that so we can start getting notices ready, etc.

AH—If we're only looking at red-lines in the draft, and that causes heartburn, then the code will stay what it was?

PP—Yes. It'll be added on to the next time we amend the code.

CB—So the intent is to have what we've got out for review. New stuff would have to wait. That one section of pre-existing non-conforming uses would have to wait?

PP—That would be up to you. I'm researching some changes with the home occupations. I looked at what Spokane and Chelan Counties and the city of Omak are doing.

Discussion of home occupations and Conditional Use Permits (CUPs). With CUPs, neighbors would be told of what business were being considered so they wouldn't be caught unaware of changes.

PP—So are you OK with me tightening up the schedule?

CB—Yes.

PP—The last thing—The Planning Commission meeting that was scheduled for tonight is cancelled because I don't have a draft to share with them yet. We're waiting for the code draft to move forward. PP leaves.

CB—I think it's important to say that when they went after the code enforcement officer thing, they were going after the code enforcement office which went way outside of zoning... They had meeting that attracted people that... and additionally cannabis was illegal at the time. That probably raised the biggest issue—that somebody would be showing up at all these illegal cannabis operations.

AH—I think there were other issues. There was a meeting in Tonasket that was brutal.

CB—That was probably the biggest reason for that.

*(AH and CB continue the conversation but note-taker couldn't hear it over the chatter of the Public Works people getting ready for the next budget work session.)*

**1:42:30**—Budget Work Session for Public Works. Budget 501—ER&R (Equipment Rental and Revolving fund)

**1:52:45**—Budget 123—Solid Waste Reserve

**2:05:40**—Budget 205—Solid Waste

**2:30:45**—Budget 102—Road Fund

**3:01:25**—They quickly work through:

Budget 114—Paths and Trails

Budget 116—Flood Control

Budget 122—Sewer and Water

Budget 125—Parks and Recreation

Budget 402—Liberty Woodlands

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Budget 406—Mazama Water Quality Fund

Budget 407—Conconully Sewer Enterprise

Budget 408—Edelweiss Sewer System

**3:13:10**—AH—Anybody else? No. Thank you everyone for all the work you've put in the budgets.

CB—Adjourn for lunch at 12:06.

**3:17:20**—Budget Work Session for the Sheriff's Department budgets. Budget 124—Sheriff's Special Projects.

**3:46:40**—They quickly work through:

Budget 106—County Drug Control

Budget 143—Therapeutic Court Fund

**3:57:25**—Budget 017—Registered Sex Offenders

Discussion of the Drug Task Force budget (132). Sheriff's Department says they pay for their own expenditures, sign their own vouchers and nothing comes through the Sheriff's Office.

AH—Don't they (the Drug Task Force) normally come down with the Sheriff's Office.

CH—Usually, yes.

LJ—If they knew about it.

DY—They knew about it.

Discussion returns to the Registered Sex Offenders budget.

CB leaves at 2:16 to attend an Opioid Council meeting until 3:00.

**4:15:30**—AH—OK, so we're back to Budget 124?

CH—132. (Drug Task Force)

Josh from the Drug Task Force joins the Sheriff and DY at the table.

AH—Josh, how come the grant went way down?

Josh—They changed the grant cycle. The grant is done in July. The state tried to put something in the current budget. We think they'll be a one-year fix but we don't know how much. The state allocated the money for other programs, but they'll try to come up with the money from somewhere else.

AH—You've got line items that don't exist in this year's budget. And you can't go over the bottom line.

Josh—Correct.

AH reads the budget items. If you get that money coming in, we'll need to do a budget supplemental and then pay the expenses out of that.

Josh—OK. I assume we'll know by the end of the year.

AH—Anything in the Sheriff's Department Task Force—does it look good?

Josh—I'll double check with some of the lines that are blank.

AH—Is everybody good with that? Green tab.

Josh—All done with the Task Force? Yes. Josh leaves.

AH—What's our interplay with the Task Force? We're a member.

PB—That's it. We're a member of the Executive Board.

AH—So who carries out the operations?

PB—The Executive board is made up of the police chiefs and the sheriff. We make the decisions. The commander now is Chief Brown from the Colville Tribe. Josh is the supervisor. If they need to do something, we OK if they can do it. But we don't sign off on funding or anything like that.

DY—Previously, Aaron Culp was the commander of the Task Force. Steve Brown was commander under Frank Rogers. So that position was always maintained in the Sheriff's Office, but that's no longer the case. That's why this year has been totally different from past years.

AH—Gotcha.

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DY—He (?) is just a voting member of the board. Everything else in command of the Task Force is done by Steve Brown.

**4:22:50**—AH—OK. Green on that budget. Anything else you want to talk about?

DY—Not about budgets. Let's talk about people.

DY—First let's talk about Search and Rescue and flextime. Your thought is to pay a portion that's done on the Forest Service with Title III money and pay the remainder of the hours with...

AH—If we all agree. Let's talk about this. You guys just throw it out that you need this, but there's a lack of clarity. Right now Rick is SAR (Search and Rescue) head. He's not going to be doing that any more, correct?

DY—He's the one that will take over if we get this position; he'll take it at the flex level.

AH—So you want us to pay an employee to oversee SAR.

DY—Yes. Part time.

AH—When you say part time, do you mean we're paying somebody but he's not an FTE? That means less than 32 hours/week, on call?

DY—Yes.

AH—How much do you think it'll cost.

RB—We looked at it and came up with the figure of (*inaudible*) half time or less. We're looking at \$35,000 tops.

AH—That's \$35,000 that includes wages...

PB--\$30/hour, no OT, no benefits.

AH—You're just talking about a position, not a specific person. This has got to go beyond just Rick. Somebody who'll come in when there's the need, long term. I agree it's a big job and we'll have to pay somebody to do it. Can you get us information about location of the calls?

RB—95% is in USFS land.

PB—Didn't you read the little book we sent?

AH—Probably not. We get sent lots of little books. (Asks LJ to read the Title III information to make sure the funds can be used to pay for this.)

LJ reads it out loud. Search and Rescue performed on national forests qualify.

RB—A good deal of this expense would be training, record keeping, etc.

LJ continues reading. Training is covered.

AH—So you couldn't pay for the paperwork, but you could pay for the actual searching and also training. There would have to be a chunk paid by the county for the day-to-day stuff.

PB—Title III is a moving target.

AH—We can appropriate money for two different things—SAR and Firewise. So the Conservation District does Firewise projects. If we get the wages out of there.

PB—We're asking for \$35,000. We took \$20,000 from Title III and \$15,000 into the paperwork for this year. We can adjust it as we go along in the future.

AH—So you're asking for \$15,000.

DY—We're got a mission and we have complete the paperwork to complete the mission.

AH—It says routine.

PB—I think the routine part would be taking care of the snowmobiles and other equipment.

AH—We need something that says—this is what we're doing.

AH—OK—So a \$15,000 ask for SAR.

**4:35:10**—AH—Next on your list is an Animal Control Officer (ACO). About \$250,000?

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DY—We were talking about not using a fully certified deputy which would decrease the amount substantially.

AH—About \$72,000/year you were taking about.

DY—A high end corrections deputy wage. They'll be limited commission.

AH—Plus a vehicle outfitted with stuff.

DY—We're hoping to get a vehicle donated to us. If not, maybe we can get a vehicle out of our fleet. As one of our trucks gets to 100,000 miles, we turn it into the ACO vehicles.

AH—I look at another fund, like LACTF (Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund).

DY—We're trying to save money.

AH—I know, but I'd rather have line vehicles.

AH—So you're probably looking at \$175,000 for gear, etc.

JN—Special training?

PB—There's some training they'll have to go to. Also, look at the cities to contract animal control services.

JN—You also want to make sure all the municipal ordinances are parallel.

**4:38:55**—AH—OK. What about patrol officers?

PB—Big need for patrol officers. Our crime rates are skyrocketing. Lots of things coming on-line. Elmer City and Nespelem have reached out for us to do enforcement. Conconully.

PB—A lot of stuff goes on in the north end. The laws are changing to de-escalation. We're not allowed to go one-on-one. If you go to domestic violence, you're supposed to have two officers. The state mandate has caused us to get into a position where...Can we do it with what we have? Yes. Will it burn the guys out with OT? We're putting more liability on the county by not getting more bodies. It's scary.

AH discusses the cost of two more patrol officers vs other county expenses. We get beat up with people saying "fund the Sheriff, fund the Sheriff", but if we funded the new positions, the county would have \$0 in the contingency fund.

AH—We have to come up with the priorities and what we can get. Do we need the ACO or one more patrol deputy? We've also got asks from the Prosecutor's Office.

PB—We've got the highest liability in the county. If we don't fund to the right amount, we can say that's all we have. But if we get a multi-million dollar lawsuit—Spokane just had a \$46,000,000 suit against the Sheriff's Office. People just want to add another zero on the end. They should have known to have done that. I just want you to understand we can only do what we can, and you can only do what you can, but if we don't fund across the board, we're in a deeper liability hole. *(Note: I emailed Sheriff Budrow, asking about the \$46,000,000 lawsuit and this was his reply: If I said a \$46 million dollar suit I misspoke.. They have had numerous suits in the past year or so and the numbers just keep getting bigger. I was trying to make a point that not being able to fund legislative mandates does not let the county off the hook for not funding appropriately.)*

AH—But then the county wouldn't be able to get anything else done. I understand where you're coming from.

PB—And I understand where you're coming from.

CB returns.

AH—With higher wages, limited increases in funding, eventually, what are we going to do. So you're asking for two new deputies?

DY—At least two. And get an agreement from the BOCC that we entertain an agreement with the cities for ACO money. If we can a mayor to come on board, I'd like to see a meeting to put together a plan that won't freak the Auditor out.

AH—I'm happy to talk to the cities about Animal Control issues.

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DY—I think cities want it but don't know how to get it. The county needs to take control.

JN—ACOs would be an easier sell than the Task Force to the public.

AH—Also, do we have a dog pound?

PB—There are places but they're overloaded. They could get divvied out all over the state.

DY—Educate the public on how to care for the animals. That's where the officer would come in.

PB—80% of our animal calls are for things a trained ACO would know about—what's wrong with the horse, etc.

DY—People need to know that the county is willing to spearhead the issue, but cities have to help pay. If they won't pay for it, we ask them again next year.

PB—Can we add a position after this budget is complete?

AH—Creating a position is not a big deal. It's getting everything in line to get it done. Where will the money come from? What portion should come from what source? I imagine it's mostly in towns.

DY—In my experience, the most need for an ACO was in the north end of the county. The Methow had few problems. Mid-valley wasn't that bad.

PB—We'll reach out to the cities and start the process.

CB—Does Omak have an ACO?

DY—They've got one, but he's a code enforcement officer.

**4:52:45**—AH—Can you fill the positions you've got open?

PB—We've got two positions right now and we've got 12 applications to look at. We'll interview two in December.

Discussion of improved advertisements and hiring new deputies.

**4:59:40**—AH—OK. Our stuff.

CH—Could we look at 005 which is the Planning (*inaudible*)? Discussion of planned hirings included in the 2024 budget.

**5:07:00**—Budget 007—Commissioners' budget.

**5:09:05**—Budget 015—Non-departmental.

CH—That's a huge one.

**5:41:00**—Budget 710—Berg Trust Fund.

**5:43:35**—Budget 621—Lumbering Employees Trust

**5:48:50**—Budget 201—GO Bond Fund—CH—Let's wait until Pam Johnson (County Treasurer) is here to confirm the numbers.

Budget 198—Current Expense Reserve.

**5:52:10**—Budget 193—Jail Improvement Fund. The budget is no longer active.

**5:52:50**—Budget 410—Eastlake Construction.

**5:58:30**—Budget 171—Capital Expense Bond

**6:03:30**—Budget 170—ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act)

**6:05:45**—Budget 146—Liability and Property Insurance

**6:19:00**—Budget 139—Water Conservancy Board

**6:22:20**—Budget 137—Title III Projects

**6:23:35**—Budget 134—Capital Improvements

**6:29:35**—Budget 119—Pest Control

**6:50:50**—Budget 109—Jail Commissary

**6:53:50**—Adjourn at 5:03