

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, January 22, 2024 AM

JN—Jon Neal, BOCC, Chair, District 3
AH—Andy Hover, BOCC, District 1
CB—Chris Branch, BOCC, District 2
Cam—Cameron Burnette, Deputy Clerk of the Board
PP—Pete Palmer, Director of Planning
SK—Shelley Keitzman, Human Resources and Risk Management
EM—Esther Milner, Chief Civil Deputy Prosecutor
AL—Albert Lin, County Prosecutor
LG—Larry Gilman, County Assessor
MW—Mike Worden, Okanogan County Dispatch Center

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Summary of significant discussions:

- Planning Director Pete Palmer says the Eastern Washington Airspace Extension is asking for comments about its proposal to lower the floor limit to 300' in additional areas in the county—mostly in the Methow and the Reservation. The floor limit is already 300' in parts of the county. Also, the Department of Ecology wants the county to update its Floodplain regulations.
- Commissioners hold a 10 minute executive session under RCW 42.30.110(1)(g) to evaluate the performance of a public employee, with Pete Palmer invited.
- Commissioners hold a 30 minute executive session under RCW 42.30.110(1)(ii) to discuss risks of potential litigation, inviting the Albert Lin, County Prosecutor, Esther Milner, Chief Civil Deputy Prosecutor and Shelley Keitzman, Human Resources and Risk Management.
- The commissioners were updated on last week's Courthouse Security Meeting. They are considering buying lockers for courthouse visitors to store items that aren't allowed in the courtrooms.
- Mike Worden, Dispatch Center, asks the commissioners to consider hiring a new radio technician and buying a new vehicle.
- Meeting adjourned at 11:38

00:20—Pledge of Allegiance

12:00—CB—Has anyone looked at the list of (*inaudible*)? One part deals wildfire risks and insurance companies. It might help those that get turned down.

JN—It's amazing how many companies have pulled out of the state because of our policies.

CB speaks very softly about insurance premiums and a tax on the premiums.

CB—I'm curious to know how insurance companies are doing in California.

JN—That's the thing. We all pay the price—whether it's a hurricane or forest fire.

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CB—It's more interesting when the forest fires start coming to town.

Cam—I remember the Carlton Complex Fire, they evacuated Walmart and upper Omak.

CB—I think the fire department advised people to stay home and watch the situation.

AH—When they built my house in 1915, they were actually thinking about fires and floods. There are no trees around the house, steel roof and concrete siding. Other than smoke, I feel fairly safe from wildfires in my house.

15:10—No public comments.

25:15—PP—I'm Pete Palmer, Director of Planning.

PP—First thing—the Interlocal agreement between Conservation District and the County for administering the VSP (Voluntary Stewardship Program). I've got the agenda bill and the contract for the original agreement, plus the agreement I presented to you a few weeks back. As a reminder, it takes the county out as the middle-man for processing payments. The Conservation District will go directly to the state to process payments.

CB—The county will submit invoices to the Conservation District? They'll be paid and then they'll pay us?

PP—Correct.

JN—Has the agreement been reviewed by Esther Milner (Chief Civil Deputy Prosecutor) and she's fine with it?

PP—I'll verify that with Rocky (Robbins, Planning Department). I think I was told it went through everything and was good to go.

JN—I'll table it until we get verification.

PP—The next thing—The DOE (Department of Ecology) did a community assistance visit here. There were some violations they asked us to address. There were between ten and twelve sites on the river where they thought there was no permitting done for the structures. We sent letters to the people and resolved all but two. What's left from this visit is the revision to the Floodplain Damage Prevention Ordinance—basically our Floodplain Regulation. The DOE suggested several updates to that. Because of all the rezoning issues going on at the time, we weren't able to take this on. I wanted you to be aware of that and as soon as we get done with everything going on right now, we'll pick this up.

CB—Is there standard language they're suggesting we adopt?

PP—They went through our old code and made a lot of redline changes. A lot of the changes are new regulations that are trickling down, and a lot of them are standard across the board.

JN—So now the county has to enforce their rules.

PP—Yes.

PP—The next thing is the reformation of the Lake Management District. We published the results of the election to reform the District. We're now in the 40 day appeal process which ends on February 28. So far, there's no pushback.

PP—Reminder that we need to reform the WRIA 49 (Water Resource Inventory Area 49 is the Okanogan River valley) workgroup, probably sooner rather than later. I think that when we discuss things like this, it should be noted on the agenda rather than be discussed just as a staff meeting.

PP—I received notice from the Eastern Washington Airspace Extension asking for comments on a proposed action that will affect the Reservation and the Methow area under the Okanogan DMOA (Defense Memorandum of Agreement?) and the Mazama Air Traffic Control Assignment Airspace. They're proposing amendments to lower their floor limits and upper ceiling limits. There will be some additional areas where they'll be able to fly as low as 300'. Even though they currently can fly that low in some areas, mostly on the Reservation side, I think people would want to know there's an opportunity

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to comment on this. The county should take a good look at this because it does rattle your windows when they come flying over that low.

CB—We might consider a joint response. A council member in Tonasket brought up his opposition with me when we talked about it.

Everyone tells stories of experiences with very low flying jets.

PP—I have a few other things to discuss in executive session—pertaining to an employee discussion and employment. Just 10 minutes.

AH—Performance of a public employee? Does Shelley (Keitzman, Human Resources) need to be there?

PP—Yes.

AH—I move to go into executive session under RCW 42.30.110(1)(g) to evaluate the performance of a public employee for 10 minutes, inviting Pete Palmer. Motion passes and off they go. Session ends at 9:52 and PP leaves.

49:25—AH—I move we go into executive session for 30 minutes (until 10:30) under RCW 42.30.110(1)(ii)—potential litigation risks, inviting Albert Lin (County Prosecutor), Esther Milner (Chief Civil Deputy Prosecutor) and Shelley Keitzman (Human Resources and Risk Management). Motion passes and off they go.

51:00—Upon their return—AH—I want try to be as helpful as possible, but I also want answers.

JN—Right. When we have no information, it's making the county quite liable.

AH—When Albert says, "by law, I can have these," and they say, "no".

CB—(Just entering the room)—Nobody told me there'd be days like this.

CAM—That's how my (*inaudible*) was. Two hours talking to Esther.

CB—When you get to the point when you're dealing with litigation, potential litigation, it complicates matters.

53:45—JN—I'll open a public hearing for a budget supplemental from current expense contingency reserve to the Election Reserve Fund #199 for \$45,000. There is no public comment. Resolution 10-2024 passes 3-0.

55:30—Courthouse security recap with SK, EM and LG

SK—Last week we had a courthouse security meeting and we presented an updated Chapter 2.84 of the Okanogan County Code. I've got a copy of the draft proposal of the revisions from EM. It's changed to include county security. We'd like to have the public hearing and move it forward.

CB—So the language that replaces all the members is more inclusive?

SK—Yes.

AH—I'm looking at duties—2.84.050—"The committee will develop a plan with appropriate standards, to recommend to the board of commissioners and after its adoption, will monitor and periodically make recommendations." But recommendations for what? How about we say—will monitor the status of the plan?

Discussion of different verbiage.

AH—You have a plan you're following. You monitor its effectiveness and do periodic status review. Is it effective, etc.?

EM—So we'll do a little more clarification for what this looks like.

SK—This is a flip chart I presented to the board a while ago. We suggest each office has a posted copy of this chart.

AH—What if it doesn't apply to other buildings?

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SK—We know there may be modifications for each office. This is the bare minimum.

AH—You should get comments from people before we adopt it.

SK—I also sent the active shooter information from Homeland Security to the department heads, and I asked them to review it with the staff.

AH—What about blizzards? Do they get paid if we sent them home for safety reasons? Union vs. non-union.

CB—I don't see a problem with eliminating blizzards from the list of emergencies. It's not something that you have to take immediate action on.

SK—That would be the easiest.

CB—The rest of it is pretty relevant to emergencies.

1:08:05—We also discussed getting smoke detectors and fire detectors in the Courthouse and getting the PA system incorporated in that.

AH—Make sure IT is in the loop. They always want to be informed what's going on. And talk to ADT to see if they can upgrade our system to include it.

Discussion of who should operate the PA system and if the announcements should be preprogrammed.

SK—We also learned that individual court rooms can't lock their doors.

SK—We want to get wands to wand people's bags.

AH—What about the pylons in front of the Auditor's Office for elections? Can we get them for courtrooms, too?

LG—The ones for the Auditor's Office are only turned on for Elections. If there's no one manning them, what happens when one goes off?

AH—We've got security guards there.

SK—There's another issue. If someone comes to the courthouse with a weapon, we need lockers to secure the weapon.

LG—I was at Boeing and they've got them. It only works for honest people who see the signs that say—"No weapons beyond this point".

SK—A lot of people who come in with big backpacks walked to the courthouse, so they can't secure the backpack in their car.

SK—Mail security. I've looked into scanning machines for mail. This might be something down the road. But the mail would all have to be in one place to be scanned and then distributed to the different departments. Hand held scanner is \$32,000 and the cost goes up to \$200,000 to \$300,000 for a big one with a conveyor belt.

CB—In the other buildings, can people carry guns there?

SK—Just in the court system.

SK—We'll see what they're doing in Chelan and Douglas Counties.

AH—We need an assessment of the technology we need in the building, so we can put runs of big conduit put in all at once. Save money and be proactive.

JN—We've got a public hearing scheduled at 11:00.

SK—OK, then. We're done.

1:23:10—JN—We've got a public hearing scheduled for the Lake Management District (LMD) 2024 Rolls correction.

PP—Back in December, the BOCC approved Resolution 185-2023 certifying the rolls for the LMD, the last one for that time period. Right after that the Treasurer's Office said there needed to be a correction to the roll. We needed a public hearing to correct the error. I advertised the hearing on Jan. 4th & 5th, and

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Jan 11th & 12th in the paper of record and the public hearing was scheduled for today to hear objections to the rolls. Basically, the correction was consolidating two parcels and adding one.

JN—There's one written comment.

CB—The comment is from Diana Hartvig. She's asked to be exempted from this tax before because she believes it's damaging to her and her property.

PP—Dec. 29 I emailed you the draft of the resolution. Also I note that the hearing today is limited to objection to or support of the correction of the roll.

CB—I move we approve Resolution 9-2024 to make the correction to the roll.

AH—The BOCC certifies the rolls? The LMD doesn't?

PP—Correct.

Motion passes 3-0.

1:29:00—CB—Zak (Kennedy, County lobbyist) was supposed to arrange a meeting for me and Mike at the legislature, but I haven't heard anything from him yet. Maybe it has something to do with the report about legislators not wanting to meet up with anyone. Since they were legislating so much, they might not want to meet with anyone from the counties.

1:31:20—Discussion with Mike Worden of the Dispatch Center concerning a Radio Tech and the purchase of a used vehicle.

MW—I'm Mike Worden, Okanogan County Sheriff's Office Dispatch Center.

MW—We have an opportunity to hire a person as a second radio technician. Our current radio tech plans to retire in about five years. This opportunity would be great if it were two or three years from now. There's a technician who works in the area and he's looking for a new employer and I'd like to pick him up as a second radio tech.

AH—That's a non-union position?

MW—Correct.

AH—And he's not someone looking to get more experience and then he'll move somewhere else, is he?

MW—I don't think experience is an issue. They're motivated to leave the current employer. We didn't set out to lure him away, but we can take advantage of the situation.

MW—I think with the new radio system, the job is more appealing. Can we keep the person busy? Yes. Instead of doing maintenance through repair, we'd do preventative maintenance. Currently, we can't go visit the agencies so this person could do that. Some of the agencies don't do preventative maintenance and the new person could do that. We need to fill that gap. With the new radio system, every agency needs a level of radio maintenance. If we can close the gap, that would be globally better.

JN—Also discuss doing installs if there's downtime.

MW—I can't commit to doing installs in new vehicles globally because there will be 800 new radios out there. But there maybe something we could do it occasionally during a crunch.

MW—Costs—including 12 months of salary, tools, vehicle, it would be about \$165,000. After the first year, it'd be about \$95,000. Assuming he hire him at Step 1.

AH—You don't have to hire him at Step 1. You can decide if it's steps 1-3.

MW—Step 1 is competitive.

MW—I believe I have plenty of capacity to take on a new position.

AH—Sorry to interrupt, but I want to ask about that fund. We looked at the carry-overs and one was about \$400,000 short. Fund 161.

MW—I had a bunch of invoices for the early adopter program.

AH—I was hoping that was it. Were the expenses that you had in the 2024 budget?

MW—No. When we re-calculated that carry-over, I didn't think it'd be in the 2023 budget.

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AH—Was Pitcher Mountain in the 2024 budget?

MW—No.

AH—Where were the expenses?

MW—By the time I was going to make the adjustment, you were in the final stages of preparing the budget.

AH—So you knew that was going to happen? All right.

MW—I knew I'd have to do a supplemental if I had to pay it out in 2024.

AH—Gotcha. But the calculation wasn't there for the beginning fund balance.

MW—I've got the capacity for this year's budget. I wouldn't get reimbursement for those costs.

AH—The fund is paying 100% of the cost.

MW—Historically, I've been about 10% under in my budget. I only charge for real expenses.

CB—So partnership building could lead the way to next year's budget.

MW—Yes. We're willing to improve the global condition of communications in the county. The county plus the agencies. We're doing it for we, not me.

AH—Are communications getting better with the stuff we're doing?

MW—It's getting better. We've only installed the one site. We're working out set-up details with DOT still. MW explains problems with radio IDs and how to get them to work with other agencies, even with radios from the I-5 corridor if they come over to help us.

AH—So we're the guinea pigs trying to figure out how to do it.

MW—So bottom line is I'm looking for permission to create this second position and I'll work with SK to create a detailed proposal.

CB and AH—Go forth and bring something to us we can decide on.

1:44:10—AH—The automobile. Will you need a supplemental?

MW—Probably. They're looking for a van. They thought an AWD van would work for them.

AH—So wages, FICA, benefits, small tools and the capital purchase for the vehicle.

AH—Since it's not going to be a vehicle that takes a lot of abuse, would you consider ER&R (Equipment Rental & Revolving Fund)?

MW—Yes. But I've got to get up to speed about how ER&R works.

AH—You purchase it. You pay rental on it for as many years as Jerry (?) figures that vehicle will last for you. At the end of the time, you trade it in and have enough money to replace it and you start all over again. Planning ahead.

JN—One question. All things being perfect, when do you think you could possible hire?

MW—It's unclear. I guess they need to tell me they're done with the existing employer. They have to tell me.

AH—We're only doing this to take advantage of having this person on board. I'm thinking about the process of advertising, etc.

MW—That's what I'll work out with SK and Vicky (?).

MW—The vehicle we just discussed isn't the one I came to talk about. We got the command trailer. It's great. Nice and sturdy. I'm pleased with the quality. It's got a heavy tongue.

MW—The PUD has a 2009 F 450 Dually. V-10 gasoline. 93,000 miles. It's not a normal crew truck. It has a snow plow. That would help over there where we're building the building. It will handle the tongue weight of the trailer. It's just a good solution.

AH—Can we buy direct from them?

MW—Their board wants to establish the price by finding three comparable vehicles. I think it's a decent price. It's been maintained.

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MW—It'll be infrequently used and gas is better than diesel for that. It's got a flatbed on it and already has the hitch. They've ordered a replacement already, and it should arrive in the Spring.

MW—We'll continue putting the deal together for formalization down the road.

MW—Real quick on the building. We're going to meet with the architects after you're done with them tomorrow. In the work, we're including removing the old tanks, removing the rough wood building and leave just the concrete pad. They asked if we're interested in salvaging the rough wood.

CB—Sometimes you can salvage big dimensional lumber like that.

JN—I'll talk to SK to see what the risk pool thinks.

AH—It might cost a little more to salvage it so we'd know what the extra cost would be.

MW—Can we make that decision through bidding?

AH—Talk with the architect. If it's got a lot of good timber, there are a lot of people who will buy it.

MW—I'll get some photos to show the architect.

MW—Last item. This morning I got a call from our State Senator Shelly Short. She's working to add our \$3,000,000 request for the Operations Budget. No guarantees but she seems positive and motivated. I asked what we needed to do, meet with people or whatever, and she said she'd think about it. Told her we'd have people over there next week.

MW—That's all. I'll be back.

CB—He's five years out for retirement?

MW—That's what he thinks now. Been with us since about 2009 or so.

1:57:10—Adjourn at 11:38 until 1:30.