

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners Tuesday November 21, 2023 AM & PM

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.

Health District Board Meeting via Zoom

9:00

Andy Hover (AH), Chairman of the Board opened the meeting. Introduction of attendees:

Chris Branch (CB) and Jon Neal (JN) Commissioners

John McReynolds, CEO Hospital

Denise Varner, City of Okanogan

Marianne Williams, ARNP, , Board Member

Jill Gates, Health District

Lauri Jones (LJ), Health District Director

Other staffmember

Environmental Health Officer

Jim Wright, Board member (on Zoom)

Mike from OCP (on Zoom)

Medical Officer Dr Wallace absent

Ruth Hall, Public Citizen

No Public Comments.

Minutes from October 10th meeting approved.

LJ discussed the revisions to the County Health Dept handbook regarding vacation days and holidays. LJ explained the use of SHERM for Human Resources & reported grant used to help support people in isolation.

Vouchers and payroll approved

LJ -there is an increase of \$6800 for sanitary surveys in the budget.

Resolution 2023-09 to allow reimbursement of PPE for staff approved

Resolution 2023-14 for reimbursement of professional licensure – the RN's and the Environment Health Specialists approved. Licensure comes up at different times.

Resolution 2023-15 to approve the handbook update -with changes for day off

9:18

AH reports that Ok County offices are closing at 2:00 on Thanksgiving Eve, but staff will need to use their person leave. BOCC is considering administrative leave for Christmas Eve. *Note: Christmas Day falls on a Monday this year;*

LJ gives update on County health issues; there are respiratory illnesses reported with flu or flu-like symptoms, but not a whole lot of it in our county vs statewide. Depending on the travel over the holidays, we may or may not see an increase.

LJ is working on procurement policy. She has spoken with County Auditor and County Engineer. LJ- we are advertising for local emergency response coordinator. There are 2 applications so far. LJ states the Health Department is interested in partnering with Blue Mountain Minds, Maria Hines regarding use of local foods. LJ would like \$10,000 budgeted for this project of surveying producers and purchasers/organizations. AH explained the Maria Hines gave a presentation to the BOCC also. & to the Colville Tribe., and is working with WSU Extension.

CB explains how when Second Harvest couldn't deliver food, it would be good to use local food sources. Denise Varner ask some clarification on this possible project.

LJ reports that Health District did an application to be on the state vehicle list, and did get some quotes from local dealers.

Update from Environmental Health Specialist, Michael. He has been working in this position for 6 months and has received no complaints/comments. Contractors are doing well right now due to the good weather. He has an application through WOSA for an onsite septic application class. LJ has ridden along with Michael 'out in the boonies' and was impressed with his performance.

Next Health District Board meeting is December 12th. CB brought up that Mel Tonasket would like to talk with the health department re; many items, including tribal sovereignty. It was noted that the Tribe is having difficulty keeping people in their land use positions.

Marianne Williams noted there is an open position on this Board of Health, and maybe Mel Tonasket might be interested.

LJ noted that she has reached out to the Tribe numerous times with no response.

There was some discussion regarding enforcement of violations. The Prosecuting Attorney office seems to feel these violations are mostly a poverty issue.

Meeting was adjourned @10:30.

BOCC PM meeting

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

Summary of Significant Discussions or Actions:

Courthouse offices closing at 2:00 on Thanksgiving eve.

Discussion with Okanogan County Homeless Coalition for current solutions and recommendations for spending/focus in 2024.

5% wage increase for non-bargaining County employees.

Budgeting sessions with finance committee and Superior Court and Prosecuting Attorney office – requests for more staff and wage increases.

Cost over-runs on Lower Goat Creek Bridge repairs.

Meeting adjourned 5:50.

1:30

Executive Session with Shelley Keitzman (SK), HR/Risk Manager. **

1:44

SK brings information regarding new dental rate for employees. Suggests a new rate of \$84 that could be locked in for 2 years. It was moved, seconded, and carried to increase \$\$ into dental fund and lock in rate for 2 years.

2:07

It was moved, seconded, and carried to allow departments to do an early, temporary closure on Thanksgiving Eve – with notification.

Discussion with the Okanogan County Homeless Coalition;

Rena Shawver (RS), Community Action

Nancy Nash (NN), Ok Co Housing Authority

Margo Amelong (MA), Womens Support Center

Representative of FYRE

Kat Goering (KG), Room One Twisp

One other coalition member I did not hear his name

This group has been formed by the BOCC in order to deal with the homeless situation in Ok County.

Power Point provided for BOCC and on Zoom, lead by KG. The housing crisis has intensified. There are currently 15 people put up in motels and 30 on the waiting list. The housing authority's current wait list has 300+ people on it – some of that is for section 8 vouchers.

The official head count of homeless in Okanogan County is 290.

KG shared with BOCC their recommendations for 2024. There are short and long term goals. They want to save for a brick and mortar (building) plan. There are 8 proposals from 6 agencies.

\$75,000 -Community Homeless Shelter

\$27,500 -OCCAC (Community Action)

\$14,000 -Room One, Twisp

OBHC -\$45,000

FYRE -\$2,0000

Housing Authority of Okanogan County (HAOC) -\$40,000

West Consultation Firm -\$170,000

\$20,000 stipend reimbursement for staff work. \$20,000

\$521,00 all together

KG states each agency is taking about ½ of need in anticipation of more longer term solutions, such as a brick and mortar building to house people.

AH wants to see a scope of work for stipends before approving that part of the recommendation. AH-I want it spelled out.

KG notes that this group is very dedicated and khas met 2X monthly, with some good discussions.

NN asks BOCC to join in on the planning. KG notes that they have decided to look at the homeless issue as what we are fighting for, rather than against. *Solution based*

NN states that this is rare getting this many people to work together. We are all pretty excited.

MA explains why Support Center has not joined in for funding. She has been looking for funding elsewhere, thereby not depending on this funding, in effect, leaving for the more longer term goal of brick and mortar.

2:36

NN gives overview of housing projects the Housing Authority is involved in and manages. Whether they manage them depends on the requirements of the money source. HUD has changed many requirements and it is difficult for Housing Authority to handle it all. We have contracted with United Properties on some.

BOCC goes over budget with the Coalition to be able to incorporate their recommendations into the 2024 budget.

3:00

Budget work session with Superior Court/Juvenile; Dennis Rabidou & Judge, and the Finance Committee; Cari Hall-Auditor, Pam Johnson-Treasurer, Lisa Schreckengost -Finance manager

3:15

BOCC approved Resolution 161-2023 approving general wage increase (5%) for non-bargaining employees.

3:30

Discussion of possible updated technologies for interpretive services in the Court and also for elections.

Ongoing budget session

4:30

Budget session with Prosecuting Attorney, Albert Lin (AL), Esther Milner (EM), Teagan Levine (TL) – all from Prosecuting Attorney office. Auditor, Treasurer, and Finance Manager also included.

Discussion of increasing County contribution to PA salary. AH states will need a resolution for this.

5:15

TL shares research/comparisons with other counties and is asking for more staff in the office; Administrative Assistant and Investigator, legal secretary, and public records position needed.

AH wants to know how much this will cost. We'll need more information and will require resolutions.

Will need to do this later as this budget session has already gone over time.

5:32 Finished with the PA office.

It was moved, seconded, and carried to approve Resolution 169-2023 cancelling outstanding Treasurers cheques.

5:37

Moved, seconded, and carried to approve Resolution 173-2023 decreasing the Adult dental premiums & locking in the rate for 2 years.

Moved, seconded, and carried to approve SHSP – Homeland Security for \$25,811 CB & AH to sign.

5:38

Moved, seconded, and carried to approve County Vouchers in \$1,381,939.

Also Approved Consent Agenda;

1. Memorandum of Understanding between Ok County & Ok County Search & Rescue
2. Approving Maintenance Supervisor position at a Step 5

5:41

Methow Valley EMS District – approved an agreement for services with the School District

The Lower Goat Creek Bridge repairs overage of \$3900 needs to be dealt with per AH. Will need a budget supplemental. CB suggests that AH meets with the Bridge folks and come back with a suggestion about the overage.

LJ notes that some counties are approving resolutions declaring an emergency for Opioid Crisis and homelessness. JN wonders what the advantage to that is – funding?

AH worries that the processes in place would be bypassed.

CB states it is mostly a statement. BOCC will look carefully at that before utilizing the state of emergency proclamation. AH asks LJ to send the BOCC the information on the other counties.

Meeting adjourned at 5:50