

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, August 7, 2023 AM

JN—Jon Neal, BOCC, District 3
AH—Andy Hover, BOCC, Vice-Chair, District 1—Arrives at 9:30
CB—Chris Branch, BOCC, Chair, District 2
LJ—Lanie Johns, Clerk of the Board
CHa—Crystal Hawley, Deputy Clerk of the Board
SK—Shelley Keitzman, Human Resources and Risk Management
CH—Cari Hall, Okanogan County Auditor
NP—Naomie Peasley—Fairgrounds Manager
PP—Pete Palmer, Director of Planning
MG—Maurice Goodall, Emergency Management

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Summary of significant discussions:

- Naomie Peasley and the BOCC discuss how to fix the water situation at the Fairgrounds—both in the long and short term. The Stampede is next weekend and the well no longer produces any water. They also discuss necessary repairs not included in the budget that must happen before the Fair.
- Maurice Goodall, Emergency Management updates the BOCC on the recent fires and road closures and the Court House emergency.
- BOCC adjourns for the day at 11:00.

AH is not present.

01:10—Pledge of Allegiance

SK and CH present a resolution for the Commissioners to approve because some employees were required to take time off when the Court House was closed for an emergency from 4 PM on Wednesday, August 2 through Friday, August 4. Resolution 100-2023 approves administrative leave for the hours that employees were scheduled to work. Employees who had scheduled time off before the emergency were not eligible for the administrative leave. Resolution passes 2-0.

CB says the water situation over the weekend at the Fairgrounds will be discussed today.

Sheriff Budrow was present to answer any questions the commissioners might have about the emergency situation at the Court House.

CB and JN discuss the jake brakes and where they're use is banned. They discussed the issue once before in an earlier meeting.

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14:10—We got the notice from Treasury that says we can apply for the second half of the LATCF (Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund). I'll do it today.

No public comments.

22:00—CB—We can continue the public hearing for the Methow Valley EMS supplemental until tomorrow because Commissioners Hover isn't here.

CB—Given the water situation, I'd expect NP to be here for the staff meeting.

CB—The well situation has gotten lots of opinions over the years as to what's wrong. The neighbor there grows alfalfa. I don't know if he's got a well or pulls water out of the river. And I don't know if they've got a well at the Sports Complex or not.

NP arrives.

CB calls Sean at the Sports Complex to learn if it's had trouble lately with the well.

NP—The alfalfa field doesn't have a problem with its well.

30:10—CB—Did you see what was left in the Goat Barn?

NP—I'm Naomie Peasley, Okanogan Fairgrounds Manager.

NP—You were just talking about the water issues. The Department of Ecology certified our irrigation system as also good for domestic, so we're trying to get them tied together to get us through this week. The RV park is full for the Stampede this weekend.

NP—On Wednesday, they're going to do a water level test on the irrigation water. We had one done last Friday for the domestic water and it's only able to produce 5 gallons/minute.

AH arrives.

NP—It's O'Connell Drilling doing the tests. They're the only ones I could get last week. Our domestic well has no water and we won't know until Wednesday if the irrigation well has any water. I asked if they can do an emergency screen cleanout to remedy the situation temporarily but I was told by three well people that we need a new well.

CB—Do they have sand filters?

NP—Last year it was supposed to be fine and it wasn't an issue.

CB—How would they clean it out?

CB—What do you have to say, Commissioner Hover?

AH—Don't know. It seems to be remedied and then it isn't. One guy said we didn't need a new well.

NP—I saw Hubbard Drilling was hired to drill a new well but it didn't happen. Don't know why.

AH—Because he told us we didn't need to.

CB—Is there a schedule to clean/change the filters? When I talked to Sean Davidson just now, he said they were having problems like we are and they had to clean the screens every couple of weeks.

AH—Maybe the screen in the bottom of the well casing is packed up with stuff.

NP—My plan is to get an emergency repair this week with O'Connell. And then we'll get the irrigation well tested this week. I have two other well companies who can help before the Fair. We can get two quick emergency bids to fix it so we don't have to cancel the Fair.

CB—What did O'Connell say?

NP—O'Connell says we need a new well. Fogle said the same. They read all the reports and looked at the camera footage and that's what they said. They were unable to come because they're in Colville. I've also talked to MBN (?) who also says we need a new well.

CB—I believe it's true but I'm wondering what we're going to do in the short term. We're not going to get a new well in the next two weeks.

NP—We'll get the well blown out and hope that gets us through the Stampede weekend.

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CB—I'd like to get O'Connell. They're the most responsible. Have them talk to us. If they can call us, we can have a conversation. We can ask about their view on the well.

AH—Do you think they'll get the well working for the weekend?

NP—That's all I'm trying to do right now.

CB—We're just trying to help, but I'd like to have a conversation with them. I'll call them.

JN—I totally agree that we should see what they're doing before we get it done.

AH—As long as they get some water going before this weekend.

NP—I reached out to the Department of Ecology to get an emergency well permit.

AH—Do we have to decommission the old well if we put a new well in?

NP—Yes. But not right now. I just want to get through the weekend.

AH—How does the irrigation well seem to be doing?

NP—Not well. It'll get tested on Wednesday. Only eight sprinklers can run at one time.

43:25—Along with water issues, there's the horse barns that were just delivered.

Discussion of getting horse barns constructed before the Fair. Ground work estimates are between \$12,000 and \$36,000. Only one bid for construction has been received so far. AH would like to get the ground work going this week and decide about construction Tuesday. The county will pay for the work and the tribes may want to reimburse them. NP says the money is already allotted. NP will send the bids she's received to the Commissioners.

49:35—NP—Can I move forward with the new air-conditioner in my office? I've received three or four quotes and I'll send them to you.

NP—Fair Advisory Committee (FAC) and Fair update. NP gives the commissioners a data sheet with the Fairgrounds update she gave to the FAC. It lists things that need to be repaired, etc., for the Fair, but aren't included in the budget. I'm allowing space for four new spots for food vendors at the grandstands.

CB—To AH--Did you know about these items? They need to be discussed.

JN—What about the lighting the PUD was going to sell to us?

AH—We're still planning on buying them.

NP—It turns out the Public Works doesn't want to buy them, but maybe Emergency Management would.

AH—MG is here. Do you want them?

MG—Maybe. I can go and look at them today.

CB—What about the area lights?

NP—Waiting for a price for the four bulbs that need replacing.

CB—The pig barn lights blew up?

NP—Yes, earlier this year. I think I talked to you earlier about this year. Three fixtures need to be replaced. Hoping to get a grant for new LED lights. I'll get this done, but I wanted you to know what I'm doing.

CB—The Horticulture Barn is going to be worked on this week? Is it a budget item?

NP—No.

CB—Contractor is hired to bury the cable? Not a budget item?

AH—What happened?

NP—Someone was mowing and the wire was hidden in the weeds and grass.

AH—What's the Horticulture door?

NP—It won't close because of winter damage.

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AH—There are only a couple of things on the list....

CB—Water supply being upgraded to meet state requirements before the Fair? How are you dealing with that?

NP—Explains the planned fix.

CB—I know it's a frustrating time, but I'm concerned that we get flat up against the Fair and then the investments are decided.

AH—Most of this is related to food vendors and we put money from current expense. Maybe we'll just take it out of there.

CB—This meeting is our approval for these expenses?

AH—Let's see. AH goes down the list.

AH—Pig barn. Just the lights.

AH—Horticulture barn getting new lights and ceiling removed.

NP—I requested this in my budget and you guys said we'd talk about it later.

AH—We've already done some of these. Beef barn bathrooms?

CB—Near the Beef barn. To make sure they don't plug up.

AH—Vendor water supply upgraded.

AH—Can you just make sure we get all the bills. It all needs to be done. The electrical at the grandstand needs to get done sometime.

NP—I pushed for that because it was the reason I was blamed for food vendors being denied.

AH—I don't care about blame. They can come and talk to me. We won't do stuff just because somebody isn't happy.

CB—We need a strategy to get it done. Lots of things were ignored for a long time. And we get blamed for spending money, too. I'd love for the Fairgrounds to get everything it needs today, but it looks like it's going to get some new stuff. Any comments?

JN—We try to be as fiscally responsible as we can. There's only so much we can spend. Spending on health hazards and what's required by legislation is OK. For the want list—do we have the money?

CB—All those requirements take away from our ability to make what we want happen. The water, you've pursued it diligently. I wonder if we're all in touch with a plan.

NP—the majority are safety or health issues except the grandstands. But AH told the FAC it'd be done.

CB—In the short term, I want to talk to the well driller.

CB—I'll call Mike (of the FAC).

1:13:40—NP—One last issue: At the RV Park. The sheriff's deputy said I should talk to you about it. There's an RV trespassing in a spot that's not paid for. The person is in jail, but the camper and tent are still in the spot, and the spot is rented out for next weekend.

CB—Haul it away.

JN—Tow it. It's posted that unauthorized vehicles will be towed.

CB—To the impound yard? Will that cost us?

JN—I'll call Randy's Towing and find out.

CB—Email the answer to LJ and CHa. When we get an answer, I'll work with the sheriff to get it fixed. It's gone on too long.

NP—That's all I've got.

1:17:35—PP—I'm Pete Palmer, Director of Planning. Just a few couple of quick announcements.

PP—I was invited to a meeting on August 28, with the Department of Transportation, to talk about traffic control issues and the high amount of pedestrian-vehicle accidents along Hwy 97 at the casino pull-out. So I'll see what they're talking about and report back.

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CB—I'd really like to know how many accidents involve people walking along the highway vs people crossing the highway.

PP—OK.

PP—Also I was nominated to sit on the Economic Alliance Infrastructure Committee, so I met with Roni (Holder-Diefenbach, Executive Director of the Economic Alliance) and she explained what it would entail. Doesn't sound like an all-year thing. We'll review projects and application submittals for only about 90 days. It uses the .09 funding process. I'm pretty excited about it.

PP—I was asked to schedule 30 minutes on the agenda this month to talk about the Methow Watershed Foundation contract.

PP—I talked before about the illness happening in the office. Increase of complaints of headaches and nausea. We've got air purifiers in every office now. I called Michael in Public Health about air quality testing. He doesn't have the equipment to do the testing and he's researching who does.

AH—Didn't we tell Joe to put filters on the...

CB—I talked to him this week and I'll talk to him again. If there's an air quality problem, it needs to be looked at. If the maintenance guy says he's got it covered as best he can, I don't know what else we can do. I haven't heard any other departments complaining, but when I went into Building with him, they had a make-shift filter on one of their supply vents. They say they feel OK. I don't know why they put the filter there.

PP—I believe what drove the filter was Dan (Higbee, Building Department) coming to work one day and found sticks and leaves floating all over the office.

CB—It was just a furnace filter.

PP—This has been going on from before the fires. Mike is looking into it. The tribes had air quality testing equipment.

CB—If they've got the equipment and are qualified to use it, let's do that. Maybe we could also ask Sarah Walker. She's got a doctorate in it. I'll call her.

PP—Thanks. PP leaves.

1:24:10—MG—I'm Maurice Goodall, Emergency Management. Any questions?

AH—Was there a fire on the reservation?

MG—Yes. Yesterday, a lightning storm came through. They got fire bosses, helicopters and the crews on it. They did pretty well. Just on the northern part of the fires they had last year.

AH—How's the fire up there?

MG—Doing well. I don't know about the Canadian part of the fire. They're about to transition to local crews.

CB—Who's the local crew?

MG—Nate Townsend (?) is the IC. The DNR leads it.

MG—There was a person who supposedly was trapped and ended up in the hospital. He was in Facebook, but the story was recanted later. I finally talked to him. He was down on Hwy 97 by the Smoke Shop when the fire started and drove up there and got trapped. He asked for aid. They dropped borate, but not for him. It just happened to be where his house was. The fire crew couldn't come up because there was fire on both sides of the road. Very narrow road. I drove up there and had to back down ½ mile so another vehicle could drive down. He made a choice to drive up there. Do the people on Facebook really know what happened?

CB—And there are the standards that would apply (which is none) when the subdivision was done. I've driven up roads that are straight up and down.

MG—I got a flat tire going up there.

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MG—It's a private road. Nothing for us, but the Blue Lake Rd and another one, Public Works are watching them. All the roads are open.

MG—Hwy 20 is closed from Newhalem and Rainey Pass. Closed for safety for the Sourdough Fire.

JN—Initially, the report I got said there was a lot of debris falling on the road from the fire.

AH—But they're going to go look at it?

MG—Yes.

1:34:05—MG—The Court House situation—the Sheriff's Department will do an after action report.

There are a lot of things to look at. Let's look and see what happened. See what we can do to improve.

CB—Good job in handling it. You got ahold of us quickly, and closing the Court House was necessary.

MG—I think it went well.

MG—I'll go look at the generators.

CB—Are they portable.

MG—I hope so. I'll see what they've got. It's better to have something on hand than to have to track one down in an emergency.

MG leaves.

1:36:30—BOCC holds the public hearing for the Methow Valley EMS district budget supplemental appropriation.

There is no public comment.

They adjourn as the BOCC and convene as the Methow Valley EMS District. Pass resolution 2-2023. Then they adjourn as the MVEMS District and reconvene as the BOCC.

1:42:35—Briefing among commissioners—discussion of individual weekly meetings and schedules.

CB—I went to the quarterly meeting of the Forest Health Collaborative. Central Washington has a lot of initiatives that the Forest Service is moving through the system. We're looking for forest resiliency. The Forest Service was challenged on FACA—basically a claim that the Forest Service favored a group and didn't have disclosure and transparency, but they dropped part of their lawsuit.

CB—The rest of it was about what projects are going forward. Plus a tour of a congress person from around Entiat—(Kim) Schrier. All is well in objectives of the FHC—increasing pace and scale of treatment of the forest to keep it from burning up.

CB—I went to the Fairgrounds. The chairs ended up in the garbage. The goat barn is cleared out.

CB—This week, I've got Aging Adult Care. I'll be talking to Kevin Overbey (Chelan County Commissioner).

CB—I talked to Josh (Thomson, County Engineer) about traffic numbers about Rodeo Trail so we can apply for funding.

Discussion of the area, vehicle-pedestrian fatalities and possible improvements to the roads in the area.

JN—I've got OGO (Okanogan Council of Governments) tonight. Anything you want me to bring up?

CB—If anyone from Omak is there, float the Rodeo Trail concept. From north of Omak all the way down to Okanogan, there are pedestrians walking along the road. There was an off-road walkway proposed once, but it never went anywhere.

CB—If there's no other business, I'll go make my phone calls.

JN—I'll call Randy's Towing.

Adjourn at 11:00 until Tuesday morning.

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