

**Board of Okanogan County Commissioners**  
**Tuesday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 3:35 p.m.**

*"These notes were taken by a County Watch volunteer. Every attempt is made to be accurate. Notes are verbatim when possible, and otherwise summarized. 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 the Okanogan County Commissioners' website at <https://www.okanogancounty.org>."*

**Present:**

Andy Hover (AH), BOCC District 2  
Chris Branch (CB), BOCC District 1 (*via Zoom*)  
Jon Neil (JN), BOCC District 3  
Laney Johns (LJ), Clerk of the Board  
Sarah Carlberg (SC), Board of Equalization  
Sally Bull (SG), Board of Equalization  
Lary Gilman (LG), Assessor

*An AV Capture archive of the meeting on this date is available at:*  
[https://okanogancounty.org/departments/boards/live\\_streaming\\_of\\_meetings.php](https://okanogancounty.org/departments/boards/live_streaming_of_meetings.php)

**Summary of Important Discussions:** Assessor and remaining two members of Board of Equalization, which arbitrates appeals to property appraisals, debate strategies for future; to avoid BOCC having to take on hearings, AH accords pay of \$160 a day, four days a year, up from \$75; newspaper and radio appeals will hopefully bear fruit.

*SC and SB present a 4-minute video explaining how of Boards of Equalization work. SB:* This board assists people in contesting the Assessor's amount. It's a venue they can access for free. People can find properties similar to theirs and compare. They submit evidence 21 days prior to the hearing. The decision takes 10 to 30 days. They can appeal to the State—it's (*currently*) a two-year wait. They're open hearings, people can attend. ...There's a training session coming up so new members can be on board to certify as of July 15<sup>th</sup>. Last year there were there were 33 hearings over four days. We were able, thanks to Crystal, to give decisions before the 45-day limit.

It's a long term problem getting people to be on the board. **LG:** The last couple of years it's been terrible. There are four cases. 1) (*Those appealing*) don't take the time to call us, they just appeal. 2) We just can't help them. 3) There's something there they're not willing to tell us. 4) They've paid more than the assessed value. We're never going to lower (*an assessment*) below the purchase price. We help them as much as we can. (*Only*) 30 appeals out of 26,000 assessments. The best is if they can come before the Board of Equalization, not a hearings examiner. *He evokes the Board of Commissioners as in that case serving as the Equalization Board.* **AH:** I would rather pay them more than sit on that board. **CS:** The Department of Revenue audits us. We're doing a top-notch job. The department says if you have zero appeals you're overruling, that's a problem. We have maybe 10% on average. Some are significant. ...We have one full-time board-member and two to three alternates. **LG:** I think more pay would make a difference. **AH:** Let's take minimum wage: that's \$128 a dday. **CS:** We get \$75, travel and food. We need to put something in the newspaper. We need someone form District 1. You have two months to get someone trained. **AH:** So basically, advertise, up the pay and get more people. **SB:** You can get something on the radio, say what you need. Make that plain. The hours are 9 to 4 plus travel.

*AH says they could pay \$160/day plus travel. CB says people seem to prefer to be reviewed by their peers rather than someone from government. He talks about unpaid Planning Department positions. CB: It's nec to settle these things without conflict. It's my district. I should be out there beating the brush to get someone. SB: I agree. LG: In case you got up to four board members for four days a year, that's \$2,560 a year. CB: It's a lot of studying. Statute doesn't say you can't pay them. You can't pay a Planning member. Has anyone (been deeper into that)? SC: The (State law) says the Board of Equalization can set its own budget and pay for help. AH: It even allows hiring outside appraisers. SC: Lanie (Johns, Clerk of the Board) did benchmarking in 2019. We were some of the lowest-paid. They discuss if it's meant to be pay or compensation for costs. The commissioners approve AH's motion for \$160/day. AH: Should Lanie put out a news release? They talk about having a board member and the Assessor go on the local radio, and sharing the interview with other radio stations.*

*LG: I really appreciate these two ladies, and the others. ...CB: Ask people coming in to appeal if they are interested in helping. I can't guarantee I'll find someone but I'll talk about it. They clarify that the ideal number is a 3-member board with two alternates. CS: ...Most of the people go away thanking us. They appeal a rate to the State one board every two years. ...Crystal is there during the appeals. She's been outstanding. CB: The last thing you want is to have the BOCC as the Board of Equalization.*

*LG talks about his new fancy fishing kayak. There will be no Wednesday meeting—all three commissioners have meetings. CB mentions difficulties with the local government and Tribal Consistency Board, complains about it not working, paying out "piecemeal". He's waiting for the rest of a payment.*

*4:30 - Meeting adjourned*