

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners

Tuesday, March 28th, 2023, 1:30 p.m.

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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
Pam Johnson (PJ), Treasurer
Lauri Jones (LauJ), Public Health
Paul Budrow (PB), Sheriff
Tom Even (TE), Veterans' Affairs
Josh Thomsen (JT), Public Works
Shelley Keitzman (SK), Human Resources
Albert Lin (AL), Prosecutor
Larry Hudson (LH), Noxious Weeds
Charles Short (CS), District Court
Susan Speiker (SS), Court Clerk
Kayla Wells-Yoakum (KW), WSU Extension
Tim Meadows (TM), Maintenance
Mark Niel (MN), JM Neil Associates

Time stamps refer to the time on the wall clock. An AV Capture archive of the meeting on this date is available at: https://okanogancounty.org/departments/boards/live_streaming_of_meetings.php

Summary of Important Discussions:

- *Seasonal full-time assistant hired for the Fairgrounds*
- *Community Health Director gives instructions for using Narcan to save overdose victims; 16 opioids deaths a year since 2021; Covid still here but "people aren't dying"*
- *Sheriff discusses Brady law requiring injection sites, law enforcement's inability to arrest; department staff of 85 has ten unfilled posts*
- *Prosecutor's office counts successful convictions in murder, robbery, assault cases*
- *Chief Civil Deputy Esther Milner's work praised by Prosecutor and Commissioner Branch*
- *Public Records Coordinator post filled*
- *Some District Court costs possibly reimbursed after Blake decision invalidated drug possession felony; security officers now in courtroom*
- *Superior Court clients now must take a number*
- *State to fund windows for Courthouse annex*
- *WSU Extension seeks volunteers to judge 4-H Fair projects*
- *County's appointed on-call architect learns at meeting it was also selected for current projects—Law and Justice Center renovation discussed*
- *TD&H Engineers to tackle multiple Courthouse projects*

Resolution 45-2023 for a full-time fairgrounds assistant through September 2023 is approved. Solid Waste and Public Works engineers will purchase four 4-foot storage containers from Ritchie Bros. Auctioneers.

Department Heads Meeting

Treasurer PJ, answering CB, says Opioid settlement money will go into the Treasurer's account. Says she has one job opening in her office.

Public Health - LauJ: We carry Narcane nasal spray. Anyone not know what it is? When someone collapses it's hard to know if it's an OD or diabetes. Narcane can't hurt. There are two ODs a week according to Dispatch and in January there were 14 calls to 911... 16 deaths a year since 2021. If (*someone is*) not responding, call 911. Their breathing is shallow, they turn blue. Make sure the chin is tilted up. If it isn't working, do CPR. Sheriff Budrow, have you witnessed this? How long does it take to respond? **PB**: Within seconds. They come up swinging so be careful! **LauJ**: One squirt is usually enough. *She will make a list of those wanting some.* **PB**: You should give it to everyone. There's going to be a legislative session. The Brady law is going to require cities to have an injection site—it's not allowed in public. The judges will send them to re-hab. We have to just let them go... *LauJ says a person overdosed on her niece's plane to Vegas, was revived with Narcane. PB says even expired Narcane will work.*

2:20 - **LauJ**: (Covid) is 211 cases per 100,000. I think it's going down again. People aren't dying like they were We had two senior living outbreaks—even the 101 year-old made it through.

2:21 - Sheriff's report - **PB**: It's going as well as it can be. I'm learning how to peel the onion. The layers of the County. In Twisp, if I wanted to do something, I just did it. Here it's like, "my goodness". *CB asks how many employees he has. Five under me, 85 in all.* **CB**: Vacancy rate? **PB**: five in Patrol, seven in the jail, three in Dispatch, the cook in the jail, one in Control.

2:24 - Veterans' Services - **TE**: If you need to make a claim for a service injury, whether it's Agent Orange, breathing the smoke from burn pits or something in training that's still ailing to this day, send them to Tonasket. We have two employees in the morning, one in the afternoon. **CB**: You have a counterpart at Community Action.

Public Works - **JT**: It's a busy year with the false spring. A lot of road work. Several projects in landfill, construction of a shop in Tonasket starting and three more in the Methow this summer. They should be done by Christmas. *CB says they've done bonding for these projects.*

2:29 - County Prosecutor - **AL**: It's been a year since I was appointed. I have a fully-staffed office. I work closely with Esther Milner (Chief Civil Attorney). She has a good ability to listen and respond to requests from department heads, the commissioners' board and elected officials... Our team has gone to trial on several cases: murder, robbery, violent assaults and sexual assault. We've been able to successfully engage convictions in those types of cases. ...Since January Sheriff Budrow has worked closely with me, my chief criminal (*attorney*) and my chief civil. **CB**: Esther has been pretty amazing to work with.

2:34 - **LH**: Noxious Weeds is ramping up for the season, letters going out to landowners. We're fully staffed regarding full-time employees. **JN**: Applicators? **LH**: We have found three more businesses that want to be on our vendor list.

Human Resources - **SK**: We're rolling with our new safety committee. We'd like to get two to three employees from each department... We've got security officers in place, getting good

feedback on that. The Public Records Coordinator post has been filled by Cathy Tedrick. She's from "the other side" but she has family here. She's starting on April 4th. Her office will be on the first floor of the Red Cross building. ...Each department should appoint a records person to help assemble records and get them to redaction.

LJ: The Fairgrounds Manager can't be here but wants you to know about the surplus auction on May 18th at the Fairgrounds.

District Court - *CS* talks about possible reimbursements following the Blake decision invalidating certain possession convictions. ("If you were convicted of simple possession of a controlled substance...you may be eligible to have your conviction vacated and a refund of any legal financial obligations... paid on these cases.") *Defense costs that may or may not be reimbursed: paper, mailings, office time.* **CS:** It's great to have security officers in the courtroom. The District and Municipal Judges Association has been pushing to request funding for courthouse security in rural jurisdictions. That request was in the Senate budget that just came out and we're hoping it passes the House as well... There's been push-back from the richer counties.

Court Clerk - **SS:** Come take a peek at the Superior Court Clerk's office. Now you take a number. It was needed We're so used to conveniences that we get impatient. But you don't want someone rushing through your paperwork.

AH talks about having their on-call architect go through the pre-design of the single point-entry planned for the Law and Justice Center. **AH:** ...so we're ready to go forward in case money comes in from the state.

JN: I'm kind of feeling my way along. (*Being a new commissioner*) is a bit overwhelming but with the right people around you, you find your way through it. **CB:** I'm glad to have someone familiar with local government. We need cooperation between cities and the county. Jon has been with OCOG (*Okanogan Council of Governments*) for some time.

Auditor's office - **CH:** You're getting a lot of emails from me. There's huge new reporting sections (*on new accounting software*). Beth (*Barker, Civil Deputy*) was able to get documents to me from 20 years ago.

2:50 - **LJ:** We have a grant that's going to be funded. We are one of the top five projects. It's from the Department of Archeological and Historical Preservation. The Senate passed it and we're waiting for the House to pass the second phase of Courthouse renovations. One of these is to replace the Annex windows to match the Courthouse. **CB:** There's been a lot of discussion about replacing jails. WSAC (*Washington State Association of Counties*) is pushing for funding, at least for jail operations. They're real challenges. A regional prison would cost \$40M. Maybe not in my lifetime

The Health Director takes a few seconds to thank those who have helped her since Covid hit three years ago: Maurice Goodhall, Emergency Management; Josh Thomsen and Shelly Keitzman. CB mentions Health Department board members doing trainings, seeking to improve the board.

WSU Extension - **KW:** We're working with the Economic Alliance on Broadband programming. You'll receive an "asset inventory" from the Broadband Action Team. The Master Gardeners are halfway through their training, will be at the Tonasket Earth Day event and the 50 year celebration in Wenatchee. This program started in Washington State. April 28th youth will give public presentations. It will also be virtual. There are judging training courses for judges at the fair. We're looking for volunteers...

Maintenance - **TM**: Getting busy. Doing Cari (*Hall*)'s lockdown button today, and working with Commissioner Hover, designing counters. First priority is the Jail. We're waiting for a new grounds keeper...

CB: I've been moving through medical issues since the beginning of the year. Thanks for bearing with me. (*He is leading the meeting via Zoom.*) *End of Department Heads Meeting.*

3:09 - *Meeting with Representatives from MJ Neil, chosen as on-call architect and architect for Law and Justice Center renovations. They are surprised to learn just now that they have been chosen for the latter.* Renovation Project - **MN**: ...We need to talk about how much to do in what phase. **AH**: ...Come up with generic cost estimates that can put us in different ball parks—renovate the half-building that doesn't need anything added on... *MN wants to know their budget, where they want to go in the long term. AH talks about funding possibilities—funneling money from the Coroner's/Sheriff's buildings if permitting doesn't go through across the river, shifting some ARPA (American Rescue Plan) funds.* **MN**: In the initial phase we do a feasibility study. We need to develop a true understanding of the project up front... understand the (whole sum). *AH lists elements in the pre-design report: the Clerk's office, Superior Court, do the courtrooms need to be that big, are the bathrooms correctly placed?* **MN**: We'll re-evaluate. Is it still valid after user-input? In the past we've scheduled meetings for each of the key users. We'll use 3-D modeling (*to give people a better impression of dimensions*). ...Do you know your budget as of today? **AH**: \$2M. It could be \$7M-\$8M. ...What is known is we don't have \$15M or \$20M to do the whole thing. *MN asks him for incremented costs and to prioritize the order. ...We're going to look at the pieces and may give you (estimates for) half a dozen.* **AH**: At some time you'll need to do design on the single point entrance. So we haven't formally said that's what we want to do but if we had a shovel-ready project we could get money from the state. **MN**: There's money for smaller, well-defined projects from random sources... **AH**: Courthouse security rises to the top pretty quick.

MN: What kind of time line? **AH**: We're supposed to spend the money in three years. We're in year one now. *MN mentions inflation in building costs: The sooner we can get the projects done, the better off. The conversation turns to bridges. They want another bridge across the Wenatchee River, by McDougal Fruit—\$14M.* **AH**: The bridges across the Methow on 153 going to Winthrop are crumbling. What are we going to do if there's a mudslide on the Loup? **JN**: There's money for infrastructure. **AH**: I think those bridges are slated for (*replacement*). **MN**: Multi-family housing is also on the upswing.

...We have some security questions. Have a list of people we should talk to. As far as a single point entrance, when will you start discussing that? **AH**: (*We'll work with renderings and court administrators*) to outline what needs to go on. It's a weird entrance because it's tight. You can't change a historic building. It needs something L-shaped, with an in and out, metal detectors and a gun locker. But it has to look like the rest. **MN**: It's good to know what's coming up. **LJ**: We've got Courthouse projects coming up and will need an assessment before they start (windows, encasements.) **AH**: There are a lot of things at the Fairgrounds. They might need new buildings. **MN**: We can bring in our structure analyst. **AH**: Commissioner Branch and I have been here for six years. You try to re-invent the wheel. You say "let's get a digitalized set of plans, so when (*future administrators are ready*) they can just go out for bids. So when pots of funding come along, we have the plans. *MN and his associate leave.*

The Board has received two offers for providing engineering services to the county. One only deals in geo-thermal; LJ will forward its information to Public Works. The Board votes to approve the second, TD &H, based in Spokane, as qualified engineering services. **AH**: They're going to need to work on the geo-cooling system. **LJ**: Judge Short says we need to look at the

fourth floor for additional space for court needs. I told him we probably need an engineer to look at the floor to see if it is strictly sound. He also mentioned a project to create better flow to Courtroom 2, have better access from the jail. He gave calendars of District Court and Superior Court hearings so the space is not so congested. I asked him for a written request.

4:00 - *Meeting adjourned until Monday morning.*