

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, Nov. 20, 2023 AM

JN—Jon Neal, BOCC, District 3
AH—Andy Hover, BOCC, Vice-Chair, District 1
CB—Chris Branch, BOCC, Chair, District 2
LJ—Lanie Johns, Clerk of the Board
CF—Chuck Ford, Fairgrounds Manager
PP—Pete Palmer, Director of Planning
JT—Josh Thomas, County Engineer, Public Works

These notes were taken by an Okanogan County Watch volunteer. Every attempt is made to be accurate. Notes are verbatim when possible, and otherwise summarized or paraphrased. Note takers comments or clarifications are in italics. These notes are published at <https://www.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

The time stamps refer to the times on the AV Capture archive of the meeting on this date at https://www.okanogancounty.org/departments/boards/live_streaming_of_meetings.php. To locate items in real time, the clock on the wall in the AV Capture screen can be helpful.

Summary of significant discussions:

- Several times during the meeting, the commissioners discuss the issue of funding the Sheriff's proposal for two new deputies for traffic control.
- Pete Palmer, Director of Planning, met with five employees of the Department of Ecology and discussed applications for water rights files years ago but never acted upon. DOE will review them and most likely they will be denied.
- Meeting adjourned at 11:26

09:00—Pledge of Allegiance

Discussion of the Auditor's and Assessor's Offices plan to close at 2PM on Wednesday, the day before Thanksgiving. Commissioners are willing to allow this because the offices have posted the change in times in advance. Also, since Christmas falls on a Monday this year, no offices will close early on Christmas Eve.

09:09—No changes to the agenda.

Commissioners discuss a constituent who has trouble finding adequate housing in part because the person has issues with electromagnetism. JN notes that since September 11, it's almost impossible to block wireless connections.

09:15—No public comments.

Commissioners discuss the Sheriff's proposal of last week that two new deputy positions to be dedicated to traffic officers. The sheriff suggested the money for the positions come from money currently budgeted for roads in the Public Works budget. However, there is currently money in the Sheriff's budget for several positions he can't fill. They commissioners discuss the possibility of training one of the current deputies to be able to write reports on traffic accidents and also ticket speeders.

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09:42—CF gives the Fairgrounds update. The lights for the arena have arrived. CF thinks the Fairgrounds staff can install the lights, but they'll need to be aimed correctly. He's looking for a vendor who can do the job.

PP gives the Planning Department update. Several employees of the Department of Ecology visited her office for a meet-and-greet session. DOE will revisit old applications for water rights in the Tunk Valley but they won't be permitting the water rights because the creeks are all drying up. DOE will then move south in future years. Some of the applications are 10-20 years old. In 4 to 5 years DOE will finished reviewing old applications in WRIA 49 (Water Resource Inventory Area 49—The Okanogan River drainage) and will being on WRIA 48 (the Methow River drainage).

PP—The DOE group will speak at community groups if we want.

PP—The DOE group went to visit the CCT (Colville Confederated Tribes) after leaving the meeting with me.

PP leaves.

10:00—CB tells AH and JN about the Clallam County policy for Irrigation Districts because the BOCC has a meeting in the afternoon with the Aeneas Lake Irrigation District to try to sort out their budget deficit problems.

10:17—CB to JN—Anything interesting at the timber counties conference?

JN—Not really. King County has a Forestry Department. Also, their growth cycle is much faster than ours.

10:19—BOCC approves a budget supplemental for the Oroville EMS District for approximately \$103,000.

10:30—BOCC discusses Title III budget, budgets number 137 and 124.

10:57—JT arrives for the Public Works update.

CB talks about a discussion at last week's WSAC (Washington State Assoc. of Counties) conference he and JN attended. There were some disagreements over voting at the conference and dues paying between the three largest counties and the other smaller counties. JT said that at the Count Engineers Association conference the size of the county wasn't such a big deal. The engineers mostly concern themselves with funding issues rules for culverts.

JT—Here's my update: We're ready for the snow, but none is in the forecast. In years past we've spent between \$215,000 and \$220,000 for November and December. Last year, we spent \$240,000 because of the early November snow.

JT—Most of my focus this week will be on getting the budget completed.

JT—The USDOT's STBG (Surface Transportation Block Grant) has a pilot program we're looking into. A lot depends on what Winthrop decides to participate in the program or not.

JT—We saw a presentation by the MRSC (Municipal Services and Research Center) about changes in purchasing procedures that begin on March 1. We'll have to update our procedures for the small works roster.

CB—We talked about the levy shift for providing more money to the Sheriff's Department, but we don't want to shift much out of your budget.

JT—Policing is an option for road funds, but it's not a responsibility.

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JT—We can fill all of our truck driver positions and some counties can't. We have trouble filling the more technical positions, but that's hard for everybody. It's also a struggle to find mechanics. We're trying to work with Spokane Falls Community College.

CB—Maybe also try job fairs for veterans—people leaving the service.

JT—Will do. That's all for me.

JT and commissioners discuss the upcoming football game on Nov. 25. Liberty Bell plays Neah Bay in the semi-finals of the 1B WIAA football championships.

Adjourn for lunch at 11:26.