

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, Nov 13, 2023 AM & PM

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
Tim—Maintenance
CF—Chuck Ford, Fairgrounds Manager
PP—Pete Palmer, Director of Planning
CH—Cari Hall, County Auditor
PJ—Pam Johnson, County Treasurer
SK—Shelley Keitzman, Human Resources and Risk Management
PB—Paul Budrow, County Sheriff
MW—Mike Worden, Okanogan County Dispatch Center
JT—Josh Thomson, 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:

- Before a discussion of the Sheriff's Department's budgets, Sheriff Budrow asks for clarification on several issues.
 - Why there are no insurance benefits for families of non-union employees in the department.
 - Why the sheriff doesn't have the two traffic patrol officers he feels are required.
 - Why the Patrol Division wasn't increased when the Tonasket contract was signed.
- Commissioners discuss budgets for Maintenance and Noxious Weeds.
- Adjourn at 4:45.

Recording begins at 9:07, with the meeting already in progress.

Discussion of an email from Katherine Lee Johnston about an upcoming meeting of the International Joint Commission International Watersheds Initiative, concerning Lake Osoyoos. AH thinks either JN or CB should attend because they're the commissioners who know the most about the lake.

AH asks LJ if they need another public hearing about the MVEMS levy certification. The levy will increase in 2024. The amount the BOCC certified last week was the incorrect amount. LJ has prepared paperwork for a new certification with the correct amount but says they don't need a new hearing because the amount wasn't mentioned when the hearing was advertised.

12:05—No public comments.

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AH—Are we going to consider the Title III Search and Rescue issue today?

LJ—No. The 45 day public comment period isn't over until Nov. 20. No comments yet. The USFS says the comment period is required before the use of the funds occur.

CB—There's a Washington Law Review article about involuntary commitment that's interesting. It talks about DCRs (Designated Crisis Responders) and it goes through the process a little. I found it informative in that regard. The way I see it, if there's going to be a commitment right on the scene before going to court, there has to be a DCR on the scene. It helps explain why we in rural areas, we have trouble placing folks. The name of the article is "Commitment to commitment".

JN—On the last day of the WSAC (Washington State Association of Counties) Conference there's a presentation about counties and cities working together about mental health stuff.

CB—Maybe we'll both go to that one.

JN—We need to discuss the program to make sure someone goes to what we need to go to.

CB—I'll go to the Forest Health Collaborative's session.

22:45—Tim—Distributes photos of the tree removal at the fairgrounds. I used the 32" bar and it was just barely big enough. The hinge was only 1 ½" wide. You heard it snap. There were spires that were that tall (gestures). It was a solid tree. It came down without a hitch. That's it. Mo (Maurice Goodall, Emergency Management) took a video of it.

26:00—CF—I'm Chuck Ford, Okanogan Fairgrounds. I sent two requests for fee reduction or waiver for rental of fairground facilities to you guys. The Okanogan Athletic Boosters and the Kiwanis' Christmas Basket.

AH—We've done a full waiver before for the Kiwanis?

CF—Yes.

AH—and the Booster Club is a school organization? They don't need a waiver because it's a school. Schools are on the fee schedule already with the 50% reduction. So anything that meets the criteria, the fee is what the cost is on that list. But they get no more reduction above the 50%.

CB—Are you busy today at 2PM? Roni (Holder-Diefenbach, Executive Director of the Economic Alliance) and I will be over there then to talk to you.

CF—I met with Sean from the city and Josh (Thomson, Public Works) this morning and walked the portion of the project. I need a little more guidance from you and I'll be ready to rip.

CB—The applications are made to satisfy the criteria, and they grade the projects.

AH—I'm in charge of trying to get the insurance claim put out to bid for the horse barn. I need to determine the scope. Just replacing the bottom roof panels? Can you get the scope from Shelley (Keitzman, Risk Management) and do a little more description of what needs to happen? Then I can put it out for bids on the Small Works Roster.

CF—Yes.

AH—And the LED lights that are coming in?

CF—They're coming in but I don't know kinds of lights they are. Pig barn? Arena?

AH—They got paid for because they're being delivered. Will you look at the vendor? We'll see what kinds of lights they are and we'll be able to see where they go.

CF—The last quick thing. I did a walk-through with the maintenance crew on Thursday. There are a couple of reports of things to be done that was compiled before I got here. Should I forward the list to you?

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AH—Yes. We told Naomie Peasley (former Fairgrounds Manager) not to budget but to prioritize them and do them one at a time. Is that what we still want to do?

JN—Yes. Prioritize using safety.

AH—We need to do it very specifically per project. You bring the projects to us and we'll try to find the dollars.

CB—A capital improvements plan.

AH—Most of the time, projects piled up and then it was an emergency to get it done before the fair. I'd like not to do it that way again.

CB—It's called programming.

CF—I'll prioritize projects by safety and then by how much revenue it brings in.

JN—Here's a subtle hint: the more grants you can find, the more projects you can do.

CF—I'm meeting with Roni.

CF—That's all from me.

38:00—PP—Good morning. I'm Pete Palmer, Planning Director.

PP—Just a couple of quick things.

PP—The Nov. 22 meeting for the code revision was cancelled. Reschedule it?

Discussion of when to reschedule. They settle on Wednesday, Dec. 6 at 1:30 to 4:00

PP—Also, I've got a little bit of a family emergency. My son was in an accident yesterday. He's OK but will have a few appointments this week and I'll be gone for those. Plus there's the meeting about infrastructure in Omak all day tomorrow.

CB—Good luck to him!

48:00—Budget Work Session—Sheriff, Communications, Jail budgets.

AH—SK is going to come in to talk about the city revenue projections are because we're going to talk about your strategic plan.

PB—Perfect!

AH—It's a crystal ball, but we'll make better predictions if we know your plans.

MW—Quick question. I sent a message about generating a letter to Sen. Murray. Is that through the perspective that the funds are fully authorized? (*Sen. Murray notified the county that it would receive \$3,000,000 for the Communications Center. See the County Watch notes from Tuesday morning, Nov. 7.*)

AH—It looks like it.

MW—I heard it passed the Senate and was sent to the House.

AH—She put out a deal that said I got all this money for these things and we were on the list. If she's put it out that we've got it, then hopefully we've got it.

MW—I haven't seen anything formal.

CB—We should ask her staff.

AH—That was for getting radios for all of the different agencies?

MW—That's how it was titled. We still need to engage the state legislature, but we can talk about that later.

54:00—AH—What do you want to start with?

PB—Just points of clarity so I can understand where we're going.

PB—There are no insurance benefits for non-union people. Where does that come from?

AH—Because that's our insurance program.

PB—It's hard to get people to come here in administrative jobs without insurance for their families. And there's a resolution that the Sheriff and his appointees will make a certain salary. In that resolution, it

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says the whole point of that is to stay ahead of everyone else. The problem is that with no benefits for the family--\$2,200/ month is the maximum paid by the county for that—it's decreasing the employee's salary by \$1,400/month which puts them behind the other employees.

AH—My dad wrote that resolution. He wanted to make sure that the sheriff wasn't making less than other...

PB—But if we include the benefits package, they are making less.

AH—That's a union deal.

PB—The others could unionize.

AH—If I'd been negotiating it, I never would have gone to that. They decided they'd pay 85% of the dependents' cost. It's a huge expense. I don't know who did it or when.

PB—I wanted to get the history on that.

PB—Next. Why was the traffic funding taken away? Traffic funding out of Public Works.

AH—It wasn't taken away. Public Works can pay for a portion of the traffic officer (*inaudible*) Josh tells me. In past administrations they've decided not to. All of this is a balance. If we put more money from Public Works into the Sheriff's Office, pretty soon the roads will suffer, but you're possibly not catching speeders. We determine the balance of ticketing vs. fixing pot holes.

PB—So, we're asking for two traffic deputies. When there's an accident on a county road, there's nobody who knows how to investigate an accident. Tony Hawley and I are the only recon and we don't do recon anymore. We get calls all the time from Public Works that we need to change the working in this report because the county may be sued. If there are too many accidents in one spot the county could be sued for failure to take care of a road. The funding is so we can have experts. I see this as something coming to bite us.

AH—I don't know the history of this, but I've never had a joint budget discussion between Public Works and the Sheriff's Department.

CB—I don't remember having that discussion as long as I've been in office.

PB—There are two WACs (Washington Administrative Code) that allow it.

AH—I know it's possible.

PB—It's disheartening for me that we don't have deputies that do county road investigations that put the county liable. We get lots of calls from small towns saying that we need to go there and do traffic control.

AH—We also get the calls that say—you need to plow the roads, you need to do this, etc.

CB—you're not so much asking why it went away. You're proposing that we look at it again.

PB—Yes. Just look at it again.

AH—We can do that, but we'll need Josh in the room. But we're going to get to the point where we cut services and it'll keep happening. Labor force costs have gone up and it's time to negotiate again. We have to balance the budget. Our emphasis is on safety—traffic safety, road safety, but we have to keep up on everything else that's going on.

PB—OK. The next one is the reason for not increasing Patrol Division when the Tonasket contract was signed. We've been at 32 bodies for 20+ years and you stole two from Patrol.

AH—No we didn't. They were unallocated positions. The Sheriff at the time said we could get by with x number of bodies. Two more were put in. Those were extra people who were put in there.

JN—Those were people who went to the Academy to fill the Tonasket positions.

PB—I understand that, but we had two open slots?

AH—Yes. The Sheriff at the time had five person squads and when that contract went through, it was hey—get two more people. Two more positions were funded.

PB—Well, that at least explains it.

PB—The last one is we need to order chairs for (*inaudible*).

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AH—OK, we can do that.

1:03:20—PB—OK. Do we want to start on the one that's easy?
Discussion of Communications budgets 120 and 161.

1:16:05—Jail budget 013. Also discussion of Current Expense Revenue and 160—Correction Facility Fund.

2:23:45—AH—Another question. We've been asked twice about fees for the commissary fund for inmates in the jail.

PB—I get the same questions. The contract gave the company a big cut.

CB—And what about bills that prisoners have?

PB—If somebody has a medical bill, that comes out of their money. We take 40% for the bill and the other 70% goes on the books.(?) They complain, but they have bills to pay. We're not taking all of the money.

AH—We got complaints from people who were giving money to the prisoner. They'd give \$100 but the prisoner only got \$70.

?—If they've got no bills, then the money goes there, but the commissary company has its markup for the phone calls or whatever. If somebody destroys the mattress, the prisoner has to pay for the new one. \$229. When they're released, whatever remains on their account goes towards (*inaudible*).

CB—Our response may be that if you're giving your friend money and your friend has bills to pay, it seems fair enough as long as the folks giving the money to the inmate knows the situation.

JN—Do you know what the AMT fees are?

?—No. Not off the top of my head.

AH—Can you check for us?

Discussion of money for contracted Registered Nurses so they'd make medical decisions instead of the corrections officer. AH wants to bring in Lauri Jones from Public Health to be part of the discussion.

Adjourn for lunch at 11:56. Return to finish up the Sheriff's budgets at 1:00. We'll start with budget 017.

AH—These take a long time.

PB—I appreciate you for educating us.

CB is not present for the afternoon session

3:05:10—AH—OK. It's 1:00. I asked Josh to come in. We can talk about traffic stuff.

PB—We'd like two new bodies mandated just for traffic. Accidents, speeders, accident reports, etc. We need people able to make accident reports.

AH—Two new people and cars would be \$250,000 or so. Josh, what's the budget for maintenance: chip seal, snow plowing, etc. Stuff that's not covered by state or federal grants?

JT—It's hard to break out. Property tax dollars and gas tax dollars. Roughly \$8,500,000 out of \$16,000,000 every year.

AH—If we took \$250,000 out of that, what's the impact on plowing, etc.?

JT—Eliminates OT on snowplowing, or 2.5-3 FTEs (Full Time Equivalents) off our crews. The chip seal rotation is already pushed out longer than it should be.

AH—to PB—You said there's only you and Tony (Hawley) who can do an investigation?

PB—for major reconstruction, we'd call in state patrol. The officers coming out of the academy don't know how to do accident reports.

AH—Is there training they could do from the road fund?

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PB—There's a need for traffic patrol. Lots of speeding in places.

?—It would also help if they're doing chip seal to patrol the area then.

AH—I understand you need more bodies. How many positions do we have authorized now?

CH—29 deputies positions filled in the Sheriff's Office.

PB—We're currently down two positions and we're losing two more.

?—And promotions and retirements.

AH—We need another four guys to get us somewhere.

?—Plus we need another detective.

AH—So five guys. If we're looking at traffic control 1 FTE without a car—about \$120,000.

JT—We're already a few years away from having to lay off people. Our expenses are going way up.

Anything we lose now, we could take in 2024, but it'd be really hard in 2025 and 2026.

?—If we could talk about bodies anywhere else without impacting Public Works, to get people trained in accident reports, could we use \$40,000 in training money.

AH—We're at a point where labor costs are outstripping the revenue. I think the training piece of this is important. Whether the money is earmarked for training or whether it's in Public Works, is for us to work out.

JT—The paperwork for us paying for a deputy is cumbersome. If you determine a dollar amount, it's easier to do a levy shift.

AH—I appreciate your comment.

JT leaves.

Discussion for animal control needs.

3:31:15—Budget 110 discussion.

4:23:25—Budgets in the Sheriff's Department still to do—

Special Contracts—124 AH—That'll be easy

County Drug Fund—106

Therapeutic Court Fund—143

Boating Safety—145

Commissary—

Twisp City Contract—AH—How many people will you need to do that?

PB—Winthrop may do the whole thing. Maybe do a detachment. We're trying to get a number. They'll want to put two bodies in there like Tonasket, and we'll have to hire them.

?—Two bodies won't be sufficient for Twisp with what we can provide.

AH—I know that. Remember, with Tonasket, they just wanted a quick fix.

?—It's not working. That contract needs to be renegotiated.

AH—We offered three people and they took two. The level of service is what they're contracted for. I know you guys take the heat, but that's what they pay for.

PB—We learned from Tonasket. We've got to get a quick 6 months negotiations.

CH—HR does the pay scale before we get it. You should ask her.

PB—Great.

AH—The number for Twisp isn't even in there. But we're going to generate revenue.

PB—Also, why is Riverside and Conconully so low?

AH—So let's figure \$156,000 per year for Twisp.

AH—With Riverside and Conconully—we're responsible for criminal activities. We looked at call logs for each place and apportion it. If they get more criminal activities there, we should charge more.

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AH—Back to budget 017. When we know how much money we'll have and look at our priorities, we'll be able to fill in those numbers.

AH—Reschedule those other ones for an hour total.

Sheriff's Department leaves.

4:47:25—Noxious Weed budget—103.

5:08:00—Planning Budget—006. The budget is already marked green and there is discussion about why Planning was asked to come back.

AH—maybe it's the employee that works for Public Works but is paid 50% from current expenses, 25% from Public Works and 25% from another entity.

CH—I think JT was going to bill current expense for the cost. Maybe Paths and Trails—budget 125.

AH—That's it.

Discussion of this accounting issue.

AH—CB was going to talk to PP about whether Planning would need another Planner.

AH—Can someone make a list of all the new employees all the departments would like to hire, and estimate the cost of them all?

5:15:10—Discussion of Bond Budget—171.

5:19:10—AH—Tim's here. Time for the Maintenance budget—015.

6:14:05—AH—Tim, you're done. Thank you very much. Tim leaves.

Continued discussion of budgets 134 and 137.

6:29:40—AH asks CH for an estimate of what a 5% COLA for non-bargaining employees would cost.

SK—Explains Resolution 163-2023, 164-2023, and 165-2023. They involve raises in benefits for different groups of county employees.

BOCC approves all three after brief discussions.

BOCC approves the consent agenda.

BOCC approves vouchers for more than \$700,000.

BOCC convenes as Methow Valley EMS District. They pass the corrected certification. 1.3343748.

BOCC convenes at the Tonasket EMS District. They approve a voucher for \$300.

BOCC convene as the Oroville EMS District. They approve vouchers for \$3000.

BOCC reconvene as the Board of County Commissioners.

BOCC puts off approving minutes until next week when CB will be back.

CH—My ballpark estimate of what a 5% COLA for non-bargaining employees would cost is \$327,000 to \$500,000.

AH—We can talk about this next week.

Adjourn at 4:43 until next Monday morning.