

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday November 26, 2024, AM

Present:

Chris Branch (CB) – BOCC, District 1
Andy Hover (AH) – BOCC Vice Chair, District 2
Jon Neal (JN) – BOCC Chair, District 3

Lanie Johns (LJ) – Clerk of the Board

These notes were taken by an Okanogan County Watch volunteer via Zoom. Every attempt is made to be accurate. Notes are verbatim when possible, and otherwise summarized or paraphrased. 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:

https://okanogancounty.org/offices/commissioners/commissioners_proceedings.php.

Time stamps below are in real time. To locate specific topics, a clock on the AV Capture video screen at <https://okanogancounty.org/avcapture.html> can assist in finding the correct spot on the video recording.

Summary of Significant Discussions or Actions:

- No Public Comment
- County Assessor: Next Monday, Dec 2, is certification of levies for Junior Districts, 11 of Board of Equalization appeals went on to the State Board of Appeals – more than normal, staffing changes/retirements, assessed values are closer ratio to market value, looking into changing mapping software,
- Sheriff’s Office, Civil Deputy, and County Engineer: Discuss draft policy for cleanup of homeless encampments. Storage & property retrieval problems outlined. Policy does not cover vehicles. Civil Deputy utilized Spokane's policy for a guideline.
- Public Works: maintenance and road conditions; several complaints due to the deep slush after last week’s storm followed by warm temps. Shops utilizing temporary electric heaters – need to adjust/negotiate contractual agreements, continued difficulty with truck purchases within state guidelines of purchasing electric, DOT looking at new wildlife crossings.
- Lunch recess at 11:35

9:03

Pledge of Allegiance

9:15

No Public Comment

(The meeting was exceedingly quiet while all BOCC read their laptops.)

9:53

Larry Gilman (LG), Assessor in with a staff member to update BOCC.

LG -We have until Monday the 2nd of December to certify the levies for the Junior Districts.

AH – Is the levy for Tonasket zero? LG – Yes AH – will we be certifying Oroville? LG- Yes
LG- It is a bit complicated this year. Junior Districts have until 11/30 to make changes, all but one district has already been reported. We get our numbers from you (BOCC) AH- Do we need a Resolution? LJ – Yes

LJ reports on Board of Equalization cases – we usually have 50 -70 boards per year. This year was extremely low, but we have 11 appeals going to the State Board of Tax Appeals. They are not area related.

LG – We will be replacing an employee in January, not an accredited position. We also have 2 retirements that we would like to overlap the hiring. AH – How much time do you need for overlap?

LG – a month would be fine.

LG – Our ratio to actual sales have been more in line. As levy rates go up, then they are dramatically reduced based on newly assessed values. - more in line with market value. (*It sounded like LG stated the worst ratio is on cabins.*) We are wanting to change our software program to Map GEO, which will be more detailed. The good thing is it is Live and therefore changeable in real time, rather than sending a report to be input. The downside is that we'll be doing this in-house, so there will need to be training.

LG – I have spoken with other counties about this. There are only 2 vendors statewide. It would be over \$1million to change vendors, but we'll be able to change data faster. Maps per county are not consistent as they are all in a different format.

LG – Overall, we have \$7.4 billion of assessed value in the County.

LG – We'll be advertising for upcoming appraisal position, and we have another employee that is eligible to retire.

10:24

Some discussion between the BOCC regarding food programs and Trango. AH would like to see more coordination. CB asks if Trango is so well funded, how come we don't see any new routes? AH shares that it is more difficult than one might think.

JN shares that Senior Centers are worried about cutting back on their funding.

10:30

Esther Milner (EM), Civil Deputy, Jodi from the Sheriff's Office, and Josh Thomson (JT) County Engineer to discuss the draft encampment clean-up policy. Sheriff Budrow on Zoom. EM – explains that we have met, and this is what we have come up with. (*Copies handed out to the BOCC*)

EM – We're still trying to figure out storage and how to get belongings back to people. The CORE program will handle it to begin with. JN questions the storage problem.

EM – We are still trying to figure out the storage. EM notes that it's risky to have a policy on storage and returning belongings. AH states that we should only store for up to 60 days.

JT acknowledges that Public Works will be responsible on County Road Right of Ways. For clean up within the road right of way. JT – We need to identify who and when this will begin. AH – Will you be a point of contact? EM – We're still trying to figure that out. JT states they can be a point of contact for however it gets dispositioned.

10:48

CB questions if this will cover individuals living in their vehicles?

AH – Regarding vehicles, are there laws for towing vehicles? Putting on a lien? The Sheriff answers this question. The sheriff states that we will have to auction it off and we are also paying the towing bill. The Sheriff also acknowledges that it makes sense to have Public Works be the point of contact. They have the hazardous waste policy.

JT reports that Public Works has not had to pay towing when they are the ones who call the towing.

EM notes that this policy does not cover vehicles. EM acknowledges that one of the challenges is wanting people to get their belongings before 60 days. Jodi from the sheriff's office does not think it is a good idea to have the sheriff's office do this. AH also acknowledges that homelessness is not a crime. Jodi- Every effort should be made to not give responsibility to Law Enforcement.

EM -In the future, we may want to have a contractor in place for this. (*storage & distribution*) I used Spokane's policy as a guideline, even though we do not have the problem that they do. I also went to MSRC.

AH – Regarding the draft document, I am good with it as it is actually a living document. Jodi reiterated that the retained belongings need to be differentiated from evidence. Legally held evidence is disposed of once the case has been dispositioned.

11:07

Public Works Update:

AH asks JT if the County takes care of the Sno Parks? JT – No, the Sno Park maintenance begins December 1st.

JT reports on road and maintenance conditions; Roads are rough and wet. PW is getting a lot of complaints about the roads.

JT – about the shops, we are still waiting on contract status because we have temporary electric heaters. The contractor states they will have the correct parts this week.

11:11

JT – We have to figure out the liquidated damages for being late to adjust the contract. JT – It will be an agreement/negotiated. AH – You can show the real cost and then negotiate a settlement. The Bond will not cover over runs.

JT – We are still working on truck purchases and may be able to purchase a Kenworth. We need 2 dump trucks and a water truck.

JN reports that he read where the State will be pushing back their electric truck purchase requirement for a couple of years. They are trying to get this done.

JT – I will look forward to that change because there is no good resolution yet. Right now, we can't change road lines or add shoulders. It mostly affects bridges as there is the concern with Fisheries – chemicals that get into the water supply.

11:25

JT -New requirement for road grading & bridges. CRAB has a list for all bridges in the State.

JT reports that JTC is doing a route jurisdiction study – looking at doing wildlife crossings, north of Crumbacher and Twin Lakes.

11:30

JT also reports getting calls about the water running on Kermel Grade again. CB notes this is due to development.

11:35

Recessed for Lunch