

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday, May 2nd, 2023, 1:30 p.m.

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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
Ashley Range (AR), Oroville Housing Authority (OHA)
Colin Thompson (CT), Office of Rural and Farm worker Housing (ORFH)
Pamela Johnson (PJ), Treasurer
Cari Hall (CH), Auditor
Shelley Kietzman (SK), Human Resources/Risk Pool
Maurice Goodhall (MG), Emergency Management

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:

- *Housing officials appeal for funds to cover \$750,000 spending gap for Oroville Housing Authority's 16-unit project, due to break ground in June; county can foot half the bill*
- *Human Resources director says Lifeline the cheapest for CPR/defibrillator training: \$5,000 for 100 employees; cost of adding defibrillators (with spare parts) to Courthouse: \$4,500*
- *First opioid settlement received, more to follow*
- *Commissioner Niel not happy about farmers' emergency winter housing ousted to build Oroville's affordable housing development, Commissioner Branch mentions county right of way activity, problems with the State waiving rules,*
- *Water Board member approved*
- *Commissioner Hover's comment letter asking for participant status in grizzly re-introduction plan signed by Whatcom and Skagit counties; Chelan and Snohomish wrote separate letters.*
- *In informal discussion Commissioners Branch and Neil show skepticism over animal management programs; Branch suggests possible BOCC third term.*

1:34 - Oroville Affordable Housing Construction - CT: The ORFH, based in Yakima, works all around the state with farm workers, veterans, and housing authorities. AR: We (*The Oroville Housing Authority*) partnered with the ORFH for this project. We were awarded a grant. We're here to give the County updates, present budgets, and request to fill a (spending) gap, now that the bids are in. AH: Is it low income housing? AR: It's affordable housing. The grant came from the Oroville Department of Commerce. ...We announced the bid winner last week. We hope to break ground next week. It's been a long time since Oroville had a new construction. (*She talks about*

600 homeless who recently went uncounted.) There will be ten single-bed units and six 2-bedroom units, with design adapted to handicapped. It's located at the former Oroville Harvest. These were trailers for temporary farm worker housing. *AH asks about the sewer, AR says it's hooked up to the city.* It's on 18 Sawtells Road. *She says it was hard to make the decision to use the farm workers' winter emergency camp for their building site but they couldn't afford to build on land they didn't already own.* Housing is so desperately needed, especially in Oroville.

1:44 - **AR:** The bid went to JR Construction. There will be a funding gap. OHA has \$20,000 set aside. **CT:** JR's bid was lower because they're local. It's \$750,000 we're requesting from the County. **CB:** That's quite a gap. **AR:** That's why it took us so long. Soil mediation was a hiccup. **CT:** \$289,195 came from Oroville Department of Commerce's Housing Trust fund. The total "hard cost" is \$6,039,946. There's demolition necessary of a cement structure, accessory buildings, site work. The land is former orchard, has arsenic and lead. By comparison, Omak Housing Authority is spending \$9M on 46 units, which makes \$200,000 per unit. Oroville's project is costing \$243,000/unit, not too bad considering the timeline and supply shortages. Prices are coming down.

1:30 - **AH:** Is Affordable Housing 30% of AMI (*Area Median Income*)? **LJ:** I thought it was 80%. (*CT confirms.*) **AH:** ...So the homeless fund had an ending balance of \$950,000 but it's really directed at the homeless. **CT:** What percentage of that housing needs to be targeted towards the homeless to qualify for those homeless funds? **AH:** That would be something you could research with the help of Nancy (*Okanogan Co. Housing Authority*). The Affordable Housing fund has only \$250,000. Take a little bit from that. We've been trying to do a 25% match with ARPA (*American Rescue Plan*) funds, for worthy projects. That would make \$182,000.

CB: I was intrigued by how much had to be dedicated to homeless housing. You'd have to juggle it around, make that work.

AR: We actually designed this project based on a study. The biggest demand was single-unit housing. People were falling through the cracks. ...There's no list, but interest is through the roof.

AH: ...So, hypothetically, if you got 25% from ARPA, 25% from the Homeless fund, depending on the legalities— **CB:** Is the loan for the sewer project paid off? **AR:** We're still paying. **CB:** That was 50% of the whole project.

CT: So is this correct? We can reach out to the County housing coalition and see if we qualify for some funds. **LJ:** The Affordable Housing ending balance is \$141,000. *AH says it will be a combination of Affordable Housing and Homeless Housing funds.* **AH:** You have the components necessary. *He suggests approaching the USDA for funding.*

2:18 - CPR Training, Public Records Progress - **SK:** Following up on the conversation about CPR and AED (defibrillator) training, we chose Lifeline over Douglas and Arrow counties because it's \$50 per person, they take up to 40 people per class and they will do the training on-site. I did the pricing for the AED. We need to have one on each floor. \$4,500 is the cost for all the equipment, mostly for the Courthouse. (*The Sheriff's and other offices have their own trainings.*) It includes pads (\$200 a pair) and batteries (\$85). There should be a couple hundred people. I counted \$5,000 for the training. (*Only half will participate?!*) *A motion is approved to go forward with the training through Lifeline. SK will bring AH the "hard cost" information for the AEDs.*

SK: Cathy, the Public Records Officer, and the Treasurer have prepared questions to ask other counties about the records software. ∴ If it's part of a lawyer's case, are we looping the Public Records Officer in? **SK:** Some (*requests*) will go straight to the Sheriff's Office. I anticipate

people will share everything with her because *(that is how records will be organized)*. She is starting to train on the new accounting/human resources software “Munis”.

Opioid Settlement - PJ: The settlement we’ve received is \$98,428. **AH:** Will it be in a special fund? **CH:** It doesn’t have to go in a special fund but we have to track it and keep it restricted. If there’s money left at the end of the year, it stays restricted. ...**JN:** A smaller amount is to be given each year for 16 years. *AH will share the read-out giving the formulas for this one lawsuit, by county. Okanogan Co. has signed on to six lawsuits. CB suggests sharing the ARPA funds account. Laney reads that successive settlements will be approximately one half the amount of the original settlement, for “opioid abatement approved uses”.* **AH:** There’s the regional administrator. That’s going to be his job, let us know what uses conform. **PJ:** The group of counties will contract with someone to do the recording. The list of uses is very extensive. Some funding can go to DUI Court and District Court. If simple possession ends up being a misdemeanor, we need something in District Court that will help with that, since the whole goal is to not throw them in jail but help with addiction. *CH says they need to draft a resolution, including the uses of the fund, if they want to create a separate fund.*

2:46 - *AH reports that although the County gives Public Health \$165,000 annually, of the \$1M over four years from ARPA, \$32,000 is a grant match that must come from the County and he forgot to put that in the budget. This will make a total of \$1,128,000 in four years. CH will do what’s necessary. CH says they are going to need to meet more than once a month because of “more stuff coming in” that they need to talk about with the BOCC. CH: It’s starting to get complicated. And they back-date stuff on us. They decide to have a “round table” first Tuesday of the month meeting and keep strictly to Finance Committee business the third Tuesday. LJ suggests they include their deputies. PJ: We have an 11-page memorandum on the opioid settlement. We could just put that on the resolution as an exhibit on what the fund can be used for (In the event they create a separate account).*

3:00 - *CB asks for an executive session with County attorney Esther Milner to consider a potential law suit.*

3:20 - Changes in Consent Agenda - *(Regarding an ARPA requirement)* **AH:** Do we require invoices for food we’re purchasing for CCAC (Community Action)’s distributions to food pantries? **CB:** A19 is a request for reimbursement. Should I ask for an invoice? More documentation? *CB moves to remove OCCAC’s food reimbursement request from the consent agenda.* **AH:** Four pantries just show receipts of money but not what it went for. *CB, as member of the OCCAC, abstains.* **AH:** In the consent Agenda there’s a Special Occasion Liquor License for Evergreen Bike Alliance at Loup Loup Ski Bowl and Chickadee trailhead. The location is not clear. *They remove this item, Short discussion on the upgrade to step 3 of a maintenance worker. The department head has this capacity.*

3:28 - *In an informal discussion—AH has left temporarily—JN discusses his dismay with OHA’s building project using land that farmers had been using.* **JN:** As much as our farmers are struggling, I have a lot of angst with that. **CB:** We could carry those discussions a little bit farther. That purchase was made at a time when there was need for farm worker housing and the state was waiving rules as they went along. **CB:** If there was another occasion to mitigate another issue—there’s the location, it’s relationship to the County right of way, and the activity that occurs on that right of way. I can’t make a direct connection. It’s probably not helpful for the development itself, with children.

3:36 - *Virginia O’Kelly is approved to serve Water Board position #1. Signature of 2023*

Affordable Housing agreement between the County and Housing shelters for advanced payment based on purchase orders submitted.

Emergency Manager gives a report on floods. Public Works and the Forest Service have opened an alternative access on Chesaw Road. The situation on Cecile Creek has worsened. MG: There's one out of Mazama. We got sand bags to them. Boulders are rumbling up there. They chose to go somewhere else.

3:42 - *More discussion about the farmers' winter emergency housing camp property. CB:*

So, have you heard from the farmers about that? JN: I know people who used it frequently.

They're not happy. CB: So this means they're compromised. JN: A half a dozen people used it.

CB: I was on that board for a short while... CB brings up a boundary difference a landowner

asked the planning director to make, to extend to the cross street. CB: The owner doesn't have an

easement because the place has its entrance on the county road. Asked why the easement, the wife

said "So the ambulance knows where to go." I understand. They end up talking about firefighting.

JN relates: Got up there on roads where they were mopping up. I'm delivering. Kids have been

working really hard. Guys don't even look like I'm there. Truck drives just goofing around, said

they were there for the good food. They'd let it burn until lunch got served, then they'd fight the

fire. CB: They hired prisoners. He describes his training, seeing documentaries on historic fires,

identifying mistakes. CB: 17 years-old, that was a lot of fun.

4:03 - *LJ (referring to the comment letter AH has prepared for other counties to sign, signaling the desire be consulted regarding a plan to re-introduce grizzlies into the National Park):*

Whatcom and Skagit want to sign; Chelan said where they stood. Snohomish had already sent a

comment letter. CB: I heard (Skagit Commissioner) Janicki talk. One option; if what they located

didn't work, the operation was over. JN: My understanding is that the bears they were planning on

putting there probably wouldn't survive there. The habitat and food sources are so different. CB:

That's the part that bothers me. That you're at the top of the species, in charge of controlling other

species. That's gone for that whole group of animals. And if they're not doing what you told them,

you go out and shoot them. With the wolves they've going around and around. JN: A lot of

wolves they transplanted weren't native anyway. CB: It goes back t the fish thing. The possibility

of them surviving. You've got to keep feeding the system. Might as well have a hatchery and buy

our fish...

4:10 - *CB asks JN if he gets into the timber stuff. (CB serves on the regional Forest*

Collaborative.) JN: Not much. CB: I curious as to your interest beyond my term. JN: You're not

going to run for another term? CB: Actually, there is a possibility I would, depending on certain

family members. What are they going to get out of me if I'm home all the time? I'd probably be

out in my shop working on something all the time.

AH comes back, sees that Chelan has attached their letter to Okanogan's but not signed on. AH:

They're two different things. This is about coordinating, because we have specialized information.

Through (the National Park's) process they have to tell us why if they tell us no. Otherwise we're

on. He or Lanie will ask Chelan about getting their signature.

4:24 - *Meeting adjourned.*