

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, April 3, 2023 AM

JN—Jon Neal, BOCC, District 3
AH—Andy Hover, BOCC, Vice-Chair, District 1--Absent
CB—Chris Branch, BOCC, Chair, District 2
LJ—Lanie Johns, Clerk of the Board
CHa—Crystal Hawley, Deputy Clerk of the Board
MG—Maurice Goodall, Emergency Management
NP—Naomie Peasley—Fairgrounds Manager
PP—Pete Palmer, Director of Planning
SK—Shelley Keitzman, Human Resources and Risk Management

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:

- Commissioner Neal heard in a radio interview with District 7 legislators that funding for the Omak bridge may not be included in the state budget this year.
- Commissioners hear brief updates from Maurice Goodall, Emergency Management, Naomie Peasley, Fairgrounds Manager, and Pete Palmer, Planning Director. Palmer says George Thornton was elected chair of the Planning Commission at its recent meeting, but will resign from the Commission when he moves out of the area, possibly in six months.
- Commissioners discuss several sewer systems in the north part of the county.
- Meeting adjourns for the day at 10:23.

03:45—Pledge of Allegiance

No changes to the agenda.

CB—I’ve brought it up a few times. There’s property across from the parking lot that’s owned by the County. I call it the “Blight House”. Community Action is taking a more active role in housing, so I looked into it. It used to be rental property. The building looks pretty solid—cement blocks, etc., so it’s got the potential to be rehabbed instead of razed. The kind of housing Community Action is thinking about is with full-wrap around services. They don’t want problematic tenants. The neighbors don’t want that either. With someone to manage it, I don’t know how it will shake out. Community Action is looking for something that provides other services, possible transition housing. It was purchased to be used by the Dispatch Center or just parking.

CB and JN discuss the parking situation around the court house.

CB—So I think we should revisit this property. It’s zoned for residential of some sort. I’ll have to check. The building coordinator went with us on Friday and thought that it was promising for four units. I don’t think it should sit all boarded up.

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, April 3, 2023 AM

CB—Another topic: the Team Okanogan (Animal Shelter) folks. They should do a presentation to the BOCC. They should get on the agenda. Probably a scaled-down version of what JN saw on Dec. 2. They had some interesting statistics about Okanogan County. We talked a while ago about having an animal control ordinance in the county, but the talk never went anywhere.

JN—It indirectly effects every community in the county.

CB—Some places in the county have an animal control officer.

17:50—No public comments.

JN—I heard Shelly Short (State Senator for District 7) and Jacquelin (Maycumber, State House member for District 7) on the radio. Shelly said the Senate budget may not include the Omak Bridge. Funding maybe delayed or eliminated.

CB—Was the Senate Transportation Committee supportive of it?

JN—I think it gets into the thinking about projects on the west side are “more important”. Shelly says the bridge has been an issue ever since she’s been in the legislature.

CB—The bridge is threatening. Could we ask Shelly who the opposition primarily is?

JN—She (?) is wondering when you’ll be back in person.

CB—Well, This week, (cross your fingers) I’ve got a surgical procedure and I hope I’ll be back after that. Would she like to see me there? In April, I have a procedure for my heart. I wouldn’t have known I had a-fib (atrial fibrillation).

CB—Being on zoom, I’ve gotten a great view of what the public is viewing. And the delay with the AVCapture.

JN—We’ve all gotten used to the virtual meeting glitches.

CB—I think I told you before, WSAC (Washington State Association of Counties) had some invaders. It was their first time. It was a lot tamer than what we’ve had.

JN and CB discuss the legal notice about the Similkameen River.

JN—I had to drive a guy up to Palmer Lake and he was making lots of comments in most all the places where people can comment.

CB—One guy talked about what floats when the lake level gets high—things like 55 gallon drums. I wonder if they put the roadway farther away from the lake and make more room on the lots.

JN—Some of the lots are unbuildable because of setbacks.

CB—On Wednesday’s agenda, I’ll have trouble making that meeting because I’ve got a medical appointment in Wenatchee.

JN—I think it’s just if you had concerns about the red lines in what PP sent us. I read a little bit last night but that’s as far as I got.

30:50—JN—MG is here.

MG—I’ve got a travel (voucher?) to be signed. It’s for travel when I went to the Search and Rescue class. Went with (County Assessor) Larry Gilman and a deputy. Just claiming the per diem and no motel because I stayed with family.

MG—Weather person I talked to say it’s going to be colder than normal in April, so the snow pack will be melting more slowly.

JN—Next Monday, it’s supposed to be in the 70s.

MG—The rivers will come up a little.

MG—I’m trying to get the Fire Advisory Board together for a meeting. Talk about getting a code for the dates for burn restrictions and burn bans. We need to do education about the difference.

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, April 3, 2023 AM

JN—Can you educate people to call the dispatcher when they're going to do a controlled burn so we don't get calls for that?

NP—via zoom. I didn't come over to the meeting because we're doing locates for trees that will be planted Tuesday morning.

NP—Did CB contact Reinhold re: the Lumber trust?

CB—I contacted Ted.

NP—I think we're good to go, then. I'll contact Esther (Milner, Chief Civil Deputy Prosecutor).

CB—I advise you to go. We have ample documentation to move forward.

NP—There's an FAC (Fair Advisory Committee) meeting on Thursday.

NP—The RV park is open to self-contained vehicles. The bathrooms aren't done yet. Hoping it gets warm enough to paint.

NP—We're getting another security camera put up because we're getting damage in the parking lot—people doing wheelies, etc.

NP—Human Resources hopes we're moving forward getting a third maintenance person.

CB—How's the equipment situation? Is the leaf picker-upper working?

NP—Yes. Our maintenance people are fixing lots of things. They're real go-getters! That's all I've got.

40:10—PP—Good morning.

PP—Just a few quick things. Do you have time Tuesday or Wednesday for an executive session about potential litigation and large lot segregation?

JN—2:00 PM tomorrow?

PP—That's fine.

CB—20 minutes, with Esther?

PP—The legal notice Isabelle (Spohn) emailed everyone about this morning has been corrected.

PP—About Wednesday's zone code discussion... Basically, it's just a platform about the changes you'll give back to me about the red line version, and specific areas I need to pay attention to. I'm flexible with the time and I think it's important that CB be there.

PP—After elections for the Planning Commission took place, I realized that George Thornton was elected as Chairman, but he's moving out of the area. I emailed him to see if he wants to stay on the Planning Commission.

JN—I think he's willing to carry on until they actually move. That'll be six months or so.

PP—Going into this zone code change, I don't want any hiccups. Get all my ducks in a row.

PP—That's all I've got.

JN to CB—When should be change Wednesday's meeting?

Meeting is changed to the next Wednesday—April 12 in the afternoon?

PP—That works for me. Have a good day.

47:35—CB—No other staff members there? What about Joe (Poulan) and the Building guy?

JN—LJ says Joe has to be at home because of an emergency.

JN—On the 13th, I'll meet with the city or Oroville and Lifeline.

CB and JN have a long discussion about sewers (east of Oroville?) and also a sewer system near Champerty.

1:01:25—CB—Could you get onto WSAC (online meetings)?

JN—No.

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, April 3, 2023 AM

CB—Even the big western counties have some things in common with rural counties. Also, coastal counties are very rural and have some of the same issues we do.

CB—The people tend to be in little groups, but a lobbyist advised us to meet other people. That can help you pass your agenda. There are some go-to people over there who are sympathetic to us. Example—regulating RVs in mobile home parks. I explained to Springer (?) what was going on. RVs make a real difference to transients who have no home except the RV. He didn't know that. He apologized. Said he didn't realize it because of the manufactured home lobby.

JN—If the RV is your primary residence, you can park in the Right of Way.

JN—And on the Similkameen, people are camping on BLM land.

CB—Do people care?

JN—I hear from lots of people about it.

CB talks about people who living in RVs in land owned by the railroad.

CB—Did you check with the BLM? Call Curt (?). It might help. And we can send a letter to the BLM, saying they're not managing the land.

JN—I worry about what they're dumping in the river.

11:15:00—JN—Shelley (Keitzman, Human Resources) wants to talk to us. Is this a good time?

CB—Yes.

JN—I'll go tell her.

SK—I'm hoping to get a clarification. On March 21, the BOCC signed an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) for double-time pay over 16 hours as an incentive. The other parties didn't sign until the 24th. But the 21st starts the current pay period and that makes it a lot easier to calculate for payroll. Do you have an objection to putting this MOU into effect of the 21st?

SK—There was no start date in the MOU.

CB—And is everybody happy with starting on the 21st?

SK—Yes. The union didn't sign until the 23rd.

CB—I have no problem with that. Is that OK with you, Jon?

JN—I'm fine with it.

SK—OK. Thank you very much.

SK—Tomorrow at my update, I'll talk about my conference and all the great stuff Esther and I learned there.

1:18:05—CB—When I first got involved with Risk Pool, the actual representative for Douglas County was their prosecuting Attorney. But he did mostly civil issues. He was a handy guy to have around.

CB—I'm willing to adjourn at 10:30 unless you've got anything to bring up.

JN—Not at this point.

CB—I got the opioid thing figured out—getting into the portal. We have to do a report by March 31. We haven't spent any money yet, but I did the report. We can spend the money anyway we want, but we have to report it. We have to do an ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) report in April.

CB—And then there's that big public information request. We're responding in two parts and I'm now doing the second part. It was incredibly broad. Anything with the terms WRIA 49, Tunk Valley, conservation. Conservation was a big one because there's Conservation District, Conservation Northwest, conservation easements, etc. I've been sorting through those. One of the things I don't like about laws, it drives the elected officials to talk about things over the phone or in person instead of at a meeting. Maybe the law will change because now the legislature is subject to a lot of it.

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, April 3, 2023 AM

JN—I don't like the fines if you don't fill the request on time. There are so many people playing that game and making a lot of money from it.

CB—They can make those broad requests. I'm glad we're getting someone to help with it.

SK returns. Commissioner Neal has completed his anti-harassment training.

JN—It's amazing how many things I was doing wrong.

JN—I'm willing to adjourn if you are.

CB—OK. We're adjourned until tomorrow.

Adjourn at 10:23