

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday May 16, 2023 AM

Present

Chris Branch (CB) – BOCC Chair, District 1

Andy Hover (AH) – BOCC Vice Chair, District 2

Jon Neal (JN) – BOCC, 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 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:

- EMS districts budget discussion.
- Working out details of temporary County/Cities agreement for police coverage – crime is increasing, difficulty of recruitment and retention of deputies in all areas of county – currently 3 open positions in the Sheriffs Dept. Need for additional vehicles – there are 10 vehicles (boat also) included in surplus auction. Sheriff presents request for pay increase/pay grade for Undersheriff – Board to discuss pay overall for County employees.
- Emergency Services Manager update Board on current flood conditions around the county,
- Public Works projects update.
- Meeting adjourned – 11:43.

9:00

Meeting is opened/ flag salute

9:05

Closed session for union strategy – 5 minutes*****

9:09

AH states will need a longer session in the future to discuss Union contracts.

9:10

BOCC has been discussing the Wayne (Lifeline) the need for repair work of the EMS office in Tonasket and Oroville. The Oroville building is 1/3 City, 2/3 County responsibility/ownership.

LJ discusses the EMS budget for Tonasket District. There is \$175,000 in reserve.

AH states the budgets look pretty good. Repairs around \$17,000 – not sure whether that covers the pavement/concrete work or not.

CB has been talking with Wayne(Lifeline) regarding minor maintenance and repair. CB wondered about contacting JR Construction who has been doing this kind of work in the North County recently.

JN will contact them. BOCC considering putting this work out for bids.

9:18

No Public comment

AH has looked at the horse barns at the fairgrounds. A lot of the barn repair is cosmetic. Not sure if it is worth repairing, however he is concerned about the roofs and sinking posts.

9:25

JN notes that the City of Oroville has \$2500 budgeted for repair and maintenance – there is some in reserve but not much. AH – we could reimburse the city (*once again, this appears to be in reference to repairs of EMS office*)

9:30

3 staff from Sheriff's Office: Sheriff Paul Budrow (PB), Mike Worden (MW), and one other (Lenny?) along with Shelley Keitzman (SK), HR/Risk Manager, and Esther Milner (EM) Civil Deputy in to discuss contract services with the Sheriff's Office for different Cities. PB states this is only temporary, until the end of the year. EM looked at the agreement and made a c. per call change but can't remember what that was. She states that she is always looking at the liability aspect and being sure to name the town.

CB wants to stress the 'temporary' nature of these agreements and also notes the difficulty of finding people to serve on the police force.

AH is concerned about not having a chief of police in Twisp as I live in the Methow. We've only had 1 deputy. We may need more deputies, but I don't think there were a lot of calls in the Methow Valley.

PB states there are 4 different squads of officers currently and it is getting super busy, especially in Jon Neal's district.

There are 2 officers in Tonasket. AH notes that we have a hard time getting deputies, and there is a lot of area to cover. JN notes that this agreement would be for \$500 per call. He questions whether this is adequate.

PB says that is a comparable amount, and they are not charging for driving through town. AH – looking at the hourly wages, let's raise up to the current average.

PB states the population is skyrocketing (*I believe he was referring to the Methow Valley*) and crime has really increased. Cities were able to supplant the county (*until now*)

AH asks how many openings do we have in the Sheriff's Office? PB states there are 3 openings. What we are doing is rebuilding our agency. AH notes that it is even harder for Cities to hire staff. It costs \$1/3 Million for Police departments – well it is the same for the County.

PB states there is a limited amount of coverage available – none of us have 24/7.

CB asks who is doing the editing for this temporary agreement? I would like to have in section of Recitals (*this is term they were using for this agreement*) & once again, CB stresses that this is from an emergency/urgency reason. CB also reiterates the question of whether \$500 is enough per call.

PB states that he is learning what we can and can't do. PB – we will run this contract by EM. (*it appears that MW will be the one writing this up*)

PB relates there are 2 officers in Twisp, and we are already in contract with Tonasket at \$13,300 annually.

MW then brings up the need for a car for the Tonasket area. The current car has 145,000 miles on it by the end of the year this will be over our recommended rotation about. MW is asking permission to start looking for a new car. There is only 1 vehicle available – a Dodge truck and this is not what is needed. It looks like we will be needing to go out on bid.

9:55

AH suggests that MW talk with Jerry Paul in Public Works to help find a vehicle. Also notes – there are no budgeted vehicles for Tonasket.

JN asks 'what are you expecting the cost to be? MW- around \$40,000, then will need to add the police

equipment. MW – we are still waiting on 1 Ford truck that has already been ordered.

AH asks “how many vehicles does the Sheriff’s Office have in the Surplus Auction? MW- there are 10 vehicles, including a boat. AH mentions that we need to keep track of the money to go back to the Sheriff’s Office. MW in agreement.

MW also relays 1 additional incident involving a Dodge Durango. There is a problem with the 2020 model – after it hits 80,000-100,000 miles, it begins to pump oil into the intake manifold. He knows of a civilian vehicle this is happening to, and ours is getting into that mileage range. MW states there is no actual recall – that he knows of, yet.

CB – But, you still have to find vehicles.

AH – go ahead and look for vehicles. CB – I can't think of an alternative to this.

MW – if we were able to find a stockpile for what we need, would like to order now as it is taking a long time to get – due to the supply chain issue. CB – and we are competing with other agencies for these and personnel.

AH – SK and I have been looking at the salary request for Undersheriff and 100% is too high, especially when comparing to exempt employees who are earning \$6800 per month in 3 years. We're comparing Sheriffs wages, which are more than elected officials. - \$6700 per month - all elected officials, except the Sheriff.

AH – this doesn't mean that I haven't heard you we just need to more time to research and be thoughtful about this.

SK – we are working on this. AH – just want you to know that this (money you are asking for) is off the table for me. We need more information – more comparisons of different counties and being careful to compare the ones most similar in duties.

10:11

AH – we have some huge expenditures, and I don't want to do anything without being thoughtful.

CB also notes to make sure that job descriptions match the job, especially when comparing to other counties.

PB notes that we want to look at the liability to the county if we lose this gal. She keeps us out of litigation.

10:19

CB discusses how NE counties are managing the weight restrictions with physical notice on signage – Pend Oreille, Ferry, and Stevens Counties.

CB is going to a Diversion program meeting and will bring back information. NCW Diversion Workshop.

10:24

Some discussion of burning bans.

10:27

Wayne (Lifeline) is still running numbers regarding a joint Oroville/Tonasket Station.

JN states that manpower is the hardest issue to deal with.

CB – By the way, it looks like the concrete work is included in the Tonasket bid.

10:46

LJ got letter sent to Grizzly Bear reintroduction

10:51

Maurice Goodall (MG), Emergency Services Manager brings pictures of flooding. Salmon Creek is over the top of the Dam at the Conconully Reservoir.

10:55

Josh Thomson (JT), County Engineer – Yesterday, was up at Bonaparte and it was pouring rain. CB asks JT if he spoke with anyone from NE Region regarding weight restrictions? JT – not yet.

11:01

JT & MG report on the Bonaparte Creek flooding. JT – the road opened last Thursday. There is no big fix yet. Sediment includes good size rocks. We put in 2 36” culverts.

MG has some contact with the Forest Service. The issues are coming after the fire and subsequent flooding. Forest Service is looking to relocate the road in the Lightning Creek area. MG states this won't clear up the issue though. There are 3 houses that are affected by this right now. They gave kudos to the Public Works employees.

Bonaparte Road is categorized as a Minor Collector. Eligible for state grants only.

CB asks if Bonaparte Resort is open. Yes.

MG - This is a major long-term issue.

JT – There is just so much sediment.

11:15

JT reports on Seal Creek – South of Loomis – Redman creek washed out. Culvert was put in Wolf Creek Road in the Methow. They are working with BIA on Owhi Lake Road right now.

June 1st, the gates of the dam will be closed.

11:20

Methow Trails Association is wanting to do a pedestrian bridge over Mill Creek. There is a county easement/assessment. Gold Creek loop road is currently a detour due to bridge work. JT *hasn't seen that in person yet*. JT – Okanogan River is expected to be 1 foot higher next week. JT had conference call with DOT regarding their upcoming projects – Hwy 97 to Crumbacher . Chip sealing in July. Oroville R/R crossing expected to be worked on in August. The Omak 155 spur bridge in Omak will be done ½ at a time. JT notes there seems to be a power struggle regarding SR 153 bridges between the DOT and Administration. Currently, doing speed study on Barnholt Loop Road.

Excavation and crushing is done. Old 97 project moving along. Big opening for Bridge project on Twisp River Road – expecting full funding.

11:38

Trout Unlimited project on Johnson Creek Road @ Greenacres Rd expected to begin in July.

OCOG Administrative Assistant position continues to be worked on. Road maintenance – stabilizer is complete. Crews are helping each other out. There is some chip seal work on O'Neil Road north of Tonasket.

11:43

Meeting adjourned.