

**Board of Okanogan County Commissioners**  
**Tuesday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 1:30 p.m.**

*"These notes were taken by a County Watch volunteer. Every attempt is made to be accurate. Notes are verbatim when possible, and otherwise summarized. Note taker comments or clarifications are in italics. These notes are published at HYPERLINK "<https://countywatch.org/>"[https://countywatch.org](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 the Okanogan County Commissioners' website at HYPERLINK "<https://www.okanogancounty.org/>"[https://www.okanogancounty.org](https://www.okanogancounty.org/) ."*

**Present:**

Chris Branch (CB), BOCC District 1 (*via Zoom*)  
Jon Neil (JN), BOCC District 3  
Laney Johns (LJ), Clerk of the Board  
Kent Kolenko (KK), Solid Waste Manager  
Josh Thomsen (JT), Public Works Director  
Dave McClay (DM), CEO, Okanogan Behavioral Health Care (OBHC)  
Dennis Rabidou (DR), Chairman, OBHC  
Jake Santisteven (JS), Audit Manager, regional branch  
Kiana Dixon (KD), auditor for the State

*An AV Capture archive of the meeting on this date is available at: HYPERLINK "[https://okanogancounty.org/departments/boards/live\\_streaming\\_of\\_meetings.php](https://okanogancounty.org/departments/boards/live_streaming_of_meetings.php)" \t "\_blank" [https://okanogancounty.org/departments/boards/live\\_streaming\\_of\\_meetings.php](https://okanogancounty.org/departments/boards/live_streaming_of_meetings.php)*

**Summary of Important Discussions:**

- Solid Waste manager announces 1) upcoming grant application opening for air monitoring equipment 2) need for  
*new liner costing upwards of \$40,000 to remedy leach pond leak*
- County Engineer gives progress on Cecile Creek road work, discusses road-vacation petition, gravel crushing; Twisp  
*River Bridge rehabilitation project to start soon*
- Behavioral Health CEO pleased with staffing gains, medicaid increases; opioid settlement money could finance  
*crisis responder at jail*
- State auditors say Accountability Audit to test for deficiencies, examine grant spending
- Planning director ready to hire consultant for Copperstone development, "considerable changes" being required;  
*Milltown property annexation to Twisp approved; review of Mazama advisory group candidate scheduled for  
Commissioner Hover's return*

*(CB follows meeting while driving home from an eye operation in Spokane.)*

1:31- Solid Waste/Roads Maintenance Update - KK: A PM 2.5 Grant (*to enable monitoring for air particles less than 2.5 microns in diameter*) will be open to submit July 5th. It's a competitive grant so I don't want to air it but I'll talk to the commissioners via email about the plan. Pond 1 may have a leak. Leach A pond three years ago cost \$15,000-\$17,000 to repair. The 30 year-old liner can be replaced for \$40,000-\$50,000. It would probably be over \$35,000 in repair vs. buying new.

JT: Road Maintenance is going normally. We had Cecile Cr. Open for the weekend but we're still doing work on the Red Man Creek crossing through that. There's a debris field to clean up. We received a petition to vacate a platted road in Manson (*confusing Manson with Monse?*). There's no county road on it. It's on the outer edge of an old plat... The RCW says I have to report it to you. They're finishing paving old 97 today. We finished Twisp River Road last week, did striping. The contractor doing the striping is two weeks so it will be slow, buttoning up the project. The contractor finished crushing Gavin pit. We're moving to the Wauconda Pit. Landfill is moving forward pretty well. Construction starts July 7th on the Twisp River Bridge rehabilitation project.

JN: What is the process for vacating a road?

JT: It (*depends on*) who initiates it. Usually there's a petition, and they pay a fee. We make a resolution, determine if the road is useful. I submit a reply, there's a public hearing and the commissioners decide whether to vacate. ... This one should be pretty simple. One of the down sides of the process is that I write my report before any public comment. We're looking at early to mid August so once (*the petition*) is posted we can look at comments. The Monse boat launch access goes through the far side of the property. We showed them the RCW information before they submitted. (*It sounds like he's referring to the afore-mentioned project.*) They leave.

*JN tells CB that Brian Bose has applied for the vacant position on the Board of Equalization and that he has no problem with that. They go over the agenda, then recess until 2:00.*

1:57 - Behavioral Health Update - DM arrives, comments on JN being alone, how all his different positions have prepared him for this job. JN: Still, it's been a real eye-opener. DR arrives. CB tunes in again from his car.

2:00 - DM: I sent the numbers to the BOCC las week. We're starting to categorize into north and south to protect clients' confidentiality. These are services we are providing. Most of them are in the most populated areas but services are provided throughout the state. Regarding staffing, not including Shove House and on-call, we have five open positions, (*including*) Crisis Manager, a Master's level therapist. It's an improvement since the last time, due to internships. Staffing voluntary turnover has decreased to 15% from 30%. We have one or two people out there that we can hire. JN: Entry level? DM: New. Some are interns, with some experience. A House Bill allows for a Bachelor's level with five years of experience to operate as a Master's level therapist. ... The Governor's budget included an increase in Medicaid of 15% so \$267,000 added to medicaid rates for mental health and substitutes. It will impact OBHC and its ability to pay staff. That increase also did touch... crisis services and American Indian/Alaskan Native rates. ... We'll continue tracking 988 (*the new crisis line*) questions around that... It functions

through a tax on the telecom system... Things are unfolding with that. We can give more answers later.

CB: Crisis services are only as good as our ability to get staffing.

DM: Correct. We're in preliminary talks with (*opioid settlement administrator*) Beacon about re-allocating some of the funds to pay for a person to provide services in the jail as needed. It's on our radar. ...I don't know what is required for someone to become a DCR (*diagnosed crisis responder*). We're licensed and able to do that but I don't know all the ins and outs with that. It may prove challenging.

CB: Often we don't understand all the details (*of this conversation*). What are the expectations? I'm not sure everyone understands what people are talking about.

DM: I think you're right. Counties (*like ours*) that still have Behavioral Health and substitutes under the county—it's easier to roll out DCRs and county positions to that end...

JN: Complaints about the lack of mental health are nation-wide.

DM: We can produce a culturally good place to work, and reduce that turnover rate...

DR: We were thoughtful of that side. We're starting to see the effects.

DM: When we first got here we would lose a post for every post gained. (*DM and DR leave.*)

*Consent agenda is approved.*

2:19 - CB: This afternoon I'm speaking to the GED graduates. I would like to give them a little pep talk. (*An inaudible conversation follows with reference to the upcoming audit, sheriff deputies in Montana, roads, and a conversation with the Emergency Manager.*)

2:34 - State Audit Entrance Meeting - JS: Our role (*includes*) constitutional auditing of all public accounts in Washington—counties, cities, districts, departments. We are one avenue for stakeholders to have increased trust that public officials operate with transparency.

KD: There are three kinds of audits: Accountability audits for 2021 and 2022—we haven't yet selected the test areas, financial and federal audits for 2022, and grant audits. We've selected three different grants for testing. A lot of risk assessments involved, metrics in choosing test grants. Type A, that is for more than \$75,000, have to be tested every three years. Two that are not Covid-related (the schools and roads cluster and the highway planning and construction cluster) have to be audited this year. ...Exit items are: low items—non-compliance, things to be aware of to improve policies and proceedings, management letters; the next level—deficiencies, any level of non-compliance/ misappropriation; and the highest level—findings, significant deficiencies, material weaknesses. There will be an opportunity to respond. ...There will be a weekly check-in meeting. Also loss-reporting. You have to tell the State about losses that have

affected the organization...

JS: Normally we do an Accountability Audit on a yearly basis. This is a two-year audit; due to increased load from federal funds that came through during the pandemic the amount of work increased and staffing levels went down. Now we are fully staffed so we should go back to yearly accountability audits. When we determine the focus areas, we'll let the BOCC know. *JS and KD leave.*

2:50 - *(Planning Director PP arrives.)* PP: The Mazama sub-unit A requested a member to fill their last open position on an advisory committee of seven. I've forwarded it to Laney for your consideration. We have a draft contract in review with Esther Milner (*EM*) for your consultant to do the planned developments. But I wanted to let you know we received a proposal from the watershed company. About the agreement for the Twisp Milltown property for the annexation—the inter-local agreement that Scott Detro had prepared. EM reviewed that. I have it here for consideration.

JN: Any comments on Bill Craven (*advisory committee nominee*)? *PP passes out the inter-local agreement. CB suggests holding discussion on the advisory committee member until Commissioner Hover comes back. JN consents.*

CB: Copperstone (*proposed development near the town of Methow*) paid their fees—\$15,000. Do you have an idea how much the work with the consultant is going to cost?

PP: I sent it to EM to get a preliminary review started. It's kind of waiting. We put out notice of application. But because there are considerable changes being required in the application and the checklist we did not notice the SEPA (*State Environmental Policy Act*) or make a determination on that yet. We're hoping to have a consultant on board to process that end of it.

CB: Is there any provision in our fee schedule that would transfer the cost to the applicant?

PP: I believe there is, under the development. agreement. ... A 50-50 split of the cost.

CB: Anything else, John?

JN: I'm curious about the Milltown annexation (*a proposal to annex land to the city of Twisp for a development project.*) You want to review the interlocal or go ahead and approve it?

CB: I don't see anything that could be cause for concern. ... *(Inaudible)*

JN: If you are comfortable with it I would move to approve resolution 67-2023. *Resolution approved.*

2:59 - *Meeting adjourned.*