

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday, September 19th, 2023, 1:30 p.m.

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Present:

Chris Branch (CB), BOCC District 1
Andy Hover (AH), BOCC District 2
Jon Neil (JN), BOCC District 3
Laney Johns (LJ), Clerk of the Board
Shelley Keitzman (SK), Risk Pool Manager, Human Resources
Craig Nelson (CN), Executive Director, Okanogan Conservation District
Becky Drummer and two others, Okanogan Conservation District
Larry Gilman, Assessor
Assessor's office staff member
Kyle Pomrankey, DNR, concerned citizen (*via Zoom*)

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Summary of Important Discussions:

- Three employees' salaries re-evaluated in light of additional duties : Anna Burika, Lanie Johns and Beth Barker,
- Elmway surface to ground water project discussed, drinking water to improve
- Zaga Construction approved to do Courthouse annex re-roofing and elevator shaft work
- Funds allocated for Nespelem water tower replacement
- Emergency Manager to be compensated for temporary assignment of fair administration duties
- Disaster emergency funds sought to reimburse Cedar Creek Fire damage
- Additional \$360,000 granted to Dispatch for multi radio band installation on Pitcher Mt.; Lifeline being connected to system
- Commissioners informally discuss accessory dwellings, will add topic to forthcoming agenda
- Second part of public hearing with Conservation District head backed up by Assessor yields approval of rate and fee hikes; public participant points out financial crunch for those grazing livestock; Commissioners Hover and Neil laud

- group's innovative practices and visible results
- Commissioners bite the bullet and vote to pay a particularly expensive plumbing bill from Mark's Plumbing.

1:29 - *Public Hearing to discuss budget supplemental of \$21,600 for Lake Management District #1. The 2022 budget did not have sufficient funds to pay for professional services such as the treatment of Lake Osoyoos. Appropriation approved; AH mentions their having had to pay in January for some services provided last year.*

1:38 - Update, Risk Pool/Human Resources - SK: ...The contracted administrator for indigent defense, is asking for, in the near future, an amendment to their contract. Burika and Haas is going to dissolve and become Burika Law, because there had been conflicting cases, limiting the number of cases they could run. The District Court administrator suggested I do a salary survey on that position. ...Her salary is \$55,880. An increase to \$64,000 would bring her up to 90% of her "comps". We rewrote her job description to include new requirements... for that position. *AH mentions that she is one of three employees in this situation.* AH: Beth got changed to reflect hers, Lanie got some stuff added to hers to reflect the grant writing she does. *SK says Beth, the Sheriff's civil deputy, does not have a stepped contract but rather a flat salary, like the other two. They used to have a lead probation officer but now the District Court Administrator does all the oversight for probation, as well as the staff that she oversees. SK will provide the Board a resolution, effective 9/26.*

SK wants to see county fair security guard fees included in the rental agreements. These would be aligned with ordinary county fair numbers: one guard per hundred people, paid 30\$/guard/hour as opposed to the current \$29,50. SK leaves.

1:46 - *LJ brings up the inter-local agreement between the county and the city of Okanogan for the Elmway surface to ground water project.*

LJ: It has to do with the county's allocation, and amends the original contract's scope. I also have Community Action's request for reimbursement from ARPA (*American Rescue Plan Act*) for equipment.

AH: (*referring to the first item*): What was the scope amended to?

LJ: I believe that... phase 1 included "drilling a new well in the Elmway corridor to increase system capacity and resiliency... Subsequent to grant award... the scope will include...testing an existing well and... extending the existing municipal water main 1,650 feet from the current terminus to a point just south of Shellrock Point..." *The project will improve the service to people living outside the city limits and support economic development as well as improve the drinking water quality.*

CB: The project did come through at that location because the (*Salmon Creek*) water had too much arsenic... That project serves the county too.

LJ: The Water Crest Spring source will be retired. ...And the senior right assigned to the Water Crest Spring source will be transferred to one or more of the city's existing wells. *CB tells AH the city will still have to do an evaluation of that well.*

1:57 - LJ: The third thing is the small public works agreement with Zaga Construction (for courthouse roof and elevator shaft renovation). We also have Resolution 124-2023 that authorizes ARPA funds to the town of Nespelem for their water tower (inaudible) replacement (inaudible). And then we have resolution 125 that authorizes compensation for temporary assignment of administrative duties to Maurice Goodhall... to prepare for the county fair.

LJ : This doesn't have to be done today but it's regarding the *(inaudible)* for the Cedar Creek Fire that Emergency Management is processing for the reimbursements, and it includes a letter authorizing Maurice Goodhall and Lauri Caswell to obtain federal or state disaster emergency funds... The Commissioners are the authorizing authority. *AH moves to approve this resolution (F22-404) as well as the Elmway water project, the courthouse renovation, Nespelem's water tower and compensation for the emergency manager's temporary fair duties. All motions carried.*

2:04 - Sheriff Dispatch Coordinator Mike Worden arrives for a public hearing on a budget supplemental for the Emergency Communications fund. Improvement have been approved for the Pitcher Mountain site. We're going to bring one agency, Lifeline, onto the emergency system. The budget for that was \$390,000 but we have some unused funds so we're only asking for \$360,000. The work will be done this fall. *AH asks about using two radios while the work is being done. MW talks about putting in multi-band; AH says they'll have a redundant system while the work is being done. MW: We'll just swap 'em out and go, since we're live with the Grant Co. system today. Some cost is for the mountain top, some for the Dispatch center so we can talk... Motion carried to appropriate the funds under resolution 122-2123.*

AH: You're very diligent.

CB: Persistent.

MW: You're welcome. It's not easy but it's not going to be done unless someone owns the issue. We're making progress. I can deal with going slow.

2:16 - Public Hearing for a Behavioral Health/Criminal Justice System appropriation within current expenses. Resolution 123-2023 for this year's portion—\$60,340—of a two-year allocation is passed. It deals with CDTA (Collaborative Drug Therapy Agreements). *CB calls this a "pass-through" to Behavioral Health.*

AH asks to put a discussion on accessory dwelling units on the following week's agenda.

AH: I can put a house with 20 bedrooms and 10 bathrooms but I can't put a 4-bedroom house with an apartment 100 feet away. I wanted to figure out where we're at with that. *JN says in New York City they limit the number of people you can have and require that the owner live on-site to alleviate the lack of housing.*

AH: That's our capital system. Why are you limiting the money I can make, just because they won't let contractors come in and build big housing developments?

CB:...The cost of rentals is sky high. Now they're limiting that intent. They're changing the requirements as well. You really got to tighten it down because with the amount you make, you can do a lot of improvements—you can get up to \$500 a night... That would

be my only concern as well because the enforcement part is difficult... Years ago they called it "double density". Affordable housing could do something for this problem.

AH: My daylight basement has full kitchen, full bath... What's the difference?

CB: That's a tricky one, the distance thing.

AB: It's so you can't make two houses out of it.

CB: With the water situation, don't see how you can do it anyway in the Methow. ... (Accessory dwellings) are going to happen anyway. We should have enforcement, even if there's pressure.

14:32 - Public Hearing, Conservation District (continued) - CN: ...Larry Gilman has helped me go through this. There was some talk about codes, some language of concern, community parcels, but they're few and far between. The homeowners associations we're working with, when money comes through for fuels reduction work, one of the first places they want to do work is those communal areas. Obviously they want them on individual parcels too; we'll be able to pick those up. Also the rate went from \$4.95 to \$4.94 (*an acre?*) because of a computer thing. *CB opens discussion up to the public.*

KP: (*Inaudible, especially at first because his laptop is closed.*) ...*(With assessments up 24%, weed board 17%, fishing...)* things are getting tougher for people who lease land. Grazing costs are going up for everyone and going up for (*those who lease*).

AH: I understand what Kyle is saying. The state has to pass on their rates... I heard from a family who owns a lot of land. They want to do it. Rates go up but we've got to find ways to do things. The Conservation District helps to find innovative ways to keep cattle on the range...

JN: I can see definite results. The resolution to raise rates and charges is approved.

AH (*to GN*): Can you help on state land?

GN: Depends on the source of funds... We've done some fencing, troughs, planting. CRM (*customer relationship management*). You take a livestock producer—they want to manage grazing on several kinds of land, from Fish and Wildlife to DNR to private. The CRM meetings are set up at least once a year; managers come together with producers. What are the issues we want to take care of? They often find creative ways to reduce conflict, to reduce ways livestock ends up on highways. A lot is done by the CRM process... *AH asks about when fire burns fences on state land.*

2:45 - GN: Often it's on Forest Service land. The State has been doing a better job at providing (*help?*).

CB: The Forest Health Collaborative is one way we're trying to avoid the forest burning up. They've been active participants here and in Chelan Co. *CN says the best way to help watershed problems is to improve the "forest stuff". CN leaves with his three colleagues.*

3:00 - Executive session with Planning Director Pete Palmer and Chief Civil Deputy Prosecutor Esther Milner for potential or on-going litigation.

3:28 - AH: We have this invoice from Mark's Plumbing for \$5,590.74. I think it's too much but to dispute it would probably cost a bunch.

CB: If we feel still that they were not true to what they do, then we should think about not hiring them again.

AH: I looked at video footage of what they were doing... We can choose as a county who to call. *He moves to pay the bill. CB seconds and directs the Clerk to pay the "disputed" bill to Mark's Plumbing. They are tempted to use stronger language but take note that they are being recorded.*

3:30 - Meeting adjourned