

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners  
Wednesday, August 9, 2023 PM

JN—Jon Neal, BOCC, District 3—via zoom  
AH—Andy Hover, BOCC, Vice-Chair, District 1—via zoom  
CB—Chris Branch, BOCC, Chair, District 2  
LJ—Lanie Johns, Clerk of the Board  
CHa—Crystal Hawley, Deputy Clerk of the Board  
EM—Esther Milner, Chief Civil Deputy Prosecutor  
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](https://okanogancounty.org/offices/commissioners/commissioners_proceedings.php)

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Summary of significant discussions:

- Rick Balam of the Sheriff's Department updates the commissioners about last week's Court House emergency. The postal inspectors, the FBI, Cari Hall (County Auditor) and the Sheriff all agree that it was probably an accidental event and to continue to investigate would be a waste of resources.
- After an executive session including Esther Milner, Chief Civil Deputy Prosecutor and Shelley Keitzman of Human Resources and Risk Management, the commissioners accept the resignation letter of Naomie Peasley, Fairgrounds Manager.
- Meeting adjourns at 4:52.

**07:00**—Meeting is scheduled to begin but LJ is experiencing computer problems she can't begin the zoom meeting.

**12:10**—CB—The well is pumping 120 gallons/minute. Prior to cleaning.

LJ—Rick Balam (Chief Criminal Deputy, Sheriff's Department) is here to relay some information before the executive session.

AH—We need to add clearing the ground for the horse stalls to the agenda.

CB—We can add it.

RB—So you have all the information about the Courthouse situation, we've got the final report on the material. Again, it's benign. Speaking with the postal inspectors, the FBI, Cari Hall (County Auditor) and the Sheriff, based on what we've found, or lack of what we've found, we think we won't continue to investigate. We think it'd be a waste of resources.

AH—So we won't be able to find out who sent it?

RB—At this point, if we don't continue with the investigation, that's correct. If we try to obtain that information, it'll take a lot of leg work, including DNA and fingerprints. Would it be worth all those man-hours when we all feel it's probably an accidental incident? Everyone is in agreement with that.

AH—OK.

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**16:45**—CB—Executive session. 15 minutes.

AH—Move to go into executive session for 15 minutes under RCW42.30.110(1)(i)—*To discuss with legal counsel representing the agency matters relating to agency enforcement actions, or to discuss with legal counsel representing the agency litigation or potential litigation to which the agency, the governing body, or a member acting in an official capacity is, or is likely to become, a party, when public knowledge regarding the discussion is likely to result in an adverse legal or financial consequence to the agency.*

Inviting EM and SK.

CB—SK is the risk manager and that's what we're managing right now is risk.

Off they go.

**37:25**—CB: JN and AH are back on zoom?

CB—We're back in session.

CB—Do we want to take formal action on this? We're back in session.

Some problems with AH's zoom connection.

CB—Do we want to take formal action on the letter of resignation?

AH—I move to accept the letter of resignation from Naomie Peasley.

JN—I second the motion.

Motion passes 3-0.

CB—We'll communicate that via email and another form tomorrow.

**39:55**—AH—Can we take action on the land clearing for the horse stalls?

CB—Since we did convene as a regular Wednesday meeting, and it's not a special meeting, I guess we can discuss other issues beyond what was on the agenda.

AH—Public Works can do it for the least amount of money.

CB—Yes. Their estimate was \$12,500. (*inaudible*) Excavation was \$14,000 and (*inaudible*) Excavation was \$43,290. They'd start this week and it sounds like they were bothering her over getting started.

AH—I move to accept Public Work's bid for ground work at the fairgrounds for \$12,508.

CB—Motion passes 3-0.

AH—to LJ—Can you email that to Naomie and Gary Jordan (?).

LJ—Yes.

LJ—I've got a couple of things to relay:

1. From Jim Cortner. He's our on-call utility engineer for the Justice Building. He's got 65% of the construction drawings prepared and he'd like to go over those with the commissioners. If it's OK, I'll get him scheduled.

2. I received an email from Room One. They are putting together a magazine-style publication for their community in celebration of their 25<sup>th</sup> year. The magazine will be a combination of reflections from founding and seminal moments of the organization, as well as stories from the staff, board and the amazing community members they've worked alongside. It will also plant seeds for the vision of the future. Since Okanogan County was a critical part of their journey, they want the county to be included. They'd like to honor the county support and partnership in their work and use the county's logo in the magazine.

AH—They're part of the coalition, so that's fine.

LJ—They're also having a community block party and the BOCC will receive invitations. It's Saturday, October 14.

AH—Oh! The first day of hunting season.

LJ—We haven't received the invitations yet.

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CB—Well, it's where some people spend opening day anyway.

AH—True.

3. For next week, I've got a resolution prepared by Chief Worden (Okanogan County Dispatch Center) about the fire hardening on Tunk Mountain. It concerns the additional funds for the BOCC's consideration next week.

AH—He sent an email about that. Can you include it in the resolution?

4. A head's up—on Tuesday, August 15, we have Mark O'Neal's firm coming to talk about the Justice Building proposal after he's talked to some of the department heads. It's a noon meeting. That was the only time Superior Court could attend.

5. We also have a separate meeting, not including the BOCC, with M. J. O'Neal, Mike Worden and Dave Rodriguez (County Coroner) so they can relay some of their ideas for the Sheriff's Building and Coroner's Storage.

LJ—And that's it. Really.

**46:50**—JN—I received an email yesterday at 2:51 showing an executive session next week?

LJ—It was for today.

CB—Some good news.

- They cut some big limbs off of trees and now they've got connectivity across the RV Park.
- The well is about 120 gallons/minute. The static level was 35 or 40 feet. They're still going to blow it out.

AH—If sprinklers run 3 to 5 gallons/minute and if they're running 30 of them, they're maxing out the well. This is the irrigation well. Did they look at the other well?

CB—They looked at it the other day. They're recommending not even using it. He's going to send us a report. But I wanted to watch. Maurice (Goodall, Emergency Management) was there, too. The results of the test were relatively consistent with the meters we have installed on the pipes outside.

CB—Right now, drilling a new well before the fair seems too exciting for me.

AH—With all the irrigation shut off, we can use the well with the 15 horse (power?) in it because we're allowed to.

CB—They'll come and blow it, too. There's water there at least.

CB—And the electrical is well underway. They might be done by the end of the day.

AH—OK.

JN—Sounds good.

AH and JN leave zoom.

Meeting adjourned at 4:52.