

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday August 1, 2023 AM

Present:

Chris Branch (CB) – BOCC Chair, District 1 (not in attendance until 10:44)

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 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 specific 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:

- Due to requirements under the ARPA Program, the Lower Goat Creek bridge project may need to be paid for out of different funding.
- No public comment.
- Staff from Information Systems Department requesting purchase of a databank back up service through Dell Computer to alleviate the load on current system – approved for \$59,024. This will help for future growth also.
- Finance Committee – Scheduled future meeting to discuss fairgrounds expenses that have increased in the last 10 years. County getting ready to start work on the Sheriff's/Coroners building and still awaiting Opioid Settlement monies.
- Update from Communications Chief Deputy: conditional use permit approved by City of Okanogan for Sheriffs/Coroners Bldg. Working on dispatch budget and staffing. Emergency Services Manager: report on Eagle Bluff Fire – still 2 hot areas.

- Update from Solid Waste: upcoming grant-funded recycling project.
- Public Works update: Some discussion regarding participating in an Intercept Program with the Homeless.
- Meeting adjourned 11:49 until 1:30 pm

9:00

Meeting opened (JN and AH in attendance, CB away)

9:01

Executive Session under RCW 42.30.110 (1)(i) for 20 minutes with Shelley Keitzman, HR and Albert Lin, Prosecuting Attorney. **

9:19

LJ brings up concerns for the Lower Goat Creek bridge project regarding payment. The ARPA funds have a lot of requirements, such as prevailing wage, and LJ wonders if James (the person with Methow Trails Association, in charge of the bridge project) is prepared to follow these requirements. It may be quite a burden on them. Maybe the funding should come from a different source such as Parks and Recreation.

9:20

AH states that we are the ones who put these requirements on the ARPA agreements. LJ states she had a conversation with the Auditor and also the finance manager regarding the prevailing wage concerns.

AH – We need to have a conversation with James.

9:25

Cari Hall (CH), County Auditor speaks to the ARPA fund requirements and wonders whether we should be paying out of the Trails fund. CH would be happy to call the State Auditor for guidance. She and Pam Johnson (PJ) Treasurer will do some research on this. PJ – We need to determine if Davis/Bacon rules apply.

9:30

No Public Comment

AH just wants to talk with James about the prevailing wage then and maybe we can 'up' the amount.

9:40

PJ starts off the Finance Committee roundtable by introducing herself, CH, and Karen Beatty (KB) and Eric Fritts (EF). KB and EF are from the County Information Systems Department. KB explains that they are having issues with the backup system for data. We have been looking at different databank systems and have been talking with Dell on a possible databank solution. EF explains the stress on the current 2 servers. 50% of the time, the servers are working 11-12 hours processing a day of back-up data.

AH wonders whether we just need to purchase another server, to have 3.

EF talks about the need for a complete system that protects while backing up data. It will also shrink what we must store.

AH asks cost

KB explains that it depends on how much data we have. The first quote was \$81,000, however, if we get an approval by the end of the week, they will charge \$59,000. A server is only good for 5 years.

AH discusses how they could pay for this.

PJ explains that with this new package, there is room to grow. EF continues that the expansion will cost us more, however. We have a lot of outdated data.

9:57

It was moved, seconded, and carried to approve the purchase of the Dell system for \$59,024.09.

10:05

Both CH and PJ acknowledge that today is election day, but the returns are slow on this election.

AH- The fairgrounds is an expensive beast for the last 10 years. There are a lot of costly items that need to be put on the agenda for the finance meeting. CH – maybe we could schedule at a different time and have Fairgrounds Manager here also.

AH-We're going to start working on the Sheriff's new building. We need to have discussions about the money. We're still waiting for the \$6 million (*from the Opioid settlement?*) PJ states the need to do maintenance on the new buildings as she notes this wasn't being done. AH acknowledges the need to pay for maintenance and operation of the building and stresses that we need another maintenance position unless we are going to outsource. We need another full-time maintenance position to keep up on things.

AH explains that we have \$9 million that we are trying to prioritize projects.

10:21

CH – We've been having an on-site audit and we have 2 items that we need to respond to; ARPA funds – need to coordinate with CB and Schedule 6 which has to do with being able to balance. They are also asking about the revenue loss to Public Health.

CH – We will be getting together with CB about this.

10:30

Mike Worden (MW), Chief Communications Deputy in the Sheriff's Office in to give update for Dispatch Center.

In mid-July, MW and Pete Palmer, Planning Director met with City of Okanogan. They (have approved our conditional use permit for the new building (Sheriff/Coroner). We will be meeting with the architect in mid-August so we are moving forward on this.

MW – Our staffing is okay, but we do have 3 positions open. We've had more interest

since the radio ad but no actual applications. MW – Currently working on our budget – getting ready to submit. MW – Also, we'll be working with the legislature for some more funding. MW – we'll be drilling down on funding in the first and second quarters of next year.

MW – The bids closed on Friday for the fire hardening of the Tunk building. So far, there is only 1 bid, and it is about double what we expected. I wonder whether we could use some ARPA funds if they are not already spoken for.

JN states that he has been out of town since the fire began in Oroville area.

AH asks if we still have the pilot program for Lifeline? MW – yes, equipment is ordered.

JN asks MW whether he could send some data that he could use for figuring. MW – we are in the process of designing numbers. We are working on this.

10:44

CB *joins the meeting.*

LJ talks with CB about the need for supporting documents for the ARPA fund spending.

10:54

Maurice Goodall (MG), Emergency Services Manager – gives short update on the Eagle Bluff fire – south of Oroville. There are still 2 hot areas; Ellemeham and near Nighthawk. MG reports the roads are back open and will be reducing the level 2 evacuation order to level 1. There are some water trucks on the scene and they have been using helicopters at Tonasket airport. MG – people have been reported trapped by the fire, but on investigation, they want to stay where they are. There have been 4 structure/outbuilding losses. We received comment during our briefing with the people that we use local contractors to clean up. MG states there was a level 3 (firefighter) team to begin with and now a type 2 team. MG will get his pictures of the fire downloaded for the website.

11:00

Ken Kovalchenko (KK), Solid Waste Manager updates about grants applied for. The grant to reduce organics opens next Monday. KK wants to purchase a horizontal grinder and trommel, and asphalt pad to get ready for the future of composting. We could do wood chips and other items that could be marketable. Ecology wants some major change. We'll need a commitment from the County. KK suggests that we would like to waive the tipping fee for organics – this will give us some idea of how much material we'll be getting. We'll be doing this only at the Central Landfill and only residential organics – not commercial. Moving forward with organics. CB states we can call it a pilot project. KK anticipates more grant funding in the future.

11:10

Josh Thomson (JT), County Engineer – On road and maintenance side, we are finishing

up chip seal on Brewster Flats and won't do Omak until after the Stampede. We're estimating about \$150,000 to \$200,000 for clean up and fix things after the fire. Regarding the Similkameen Trail – the PUD thinks we should close it with the hot spots that are still nearby. The whole hillside above the trail is burned, so expecting some sloughing in the future. On the downstream end of the tunnel, there is lots of smoke from wood burning, but there is none on the upstream side. CB asks if there is a blockage on ends of the tunnel. Isn't there some BLM ground there? JT will look into this.

JT states the trail is gated and blocked before the dam or tunnel (*unsure which they were talking about*)

Regarding construction, JT reports there is some steel on the Tonasket Shop, and the Twisp River Bridge has been tested. JT got a letter from a different safety grant with the DOT. We have been awarded double the amount anticipated and this is state dollars. JT finds CRAB monies easy to use, but it gets more cumbersome when dealing with the DOT.

JT to CB – I couldn't find any noise ordinances about unmuffled brakes. However, there are new rules coming out on road stripping.

11:28

CB to forward Wade's (*Gebbers*) response to JT regarding road access. (*I'm wondering if this road access has something to do with the Monse Road vacation*)

11:30

KK reports that he can transport the surplus electronics to Twisp recycling. Unable to accept printers.

There was some discussion regarding burning vs chipping for orchardists.

LJ has set up a meeting with James DeSalvo, Methow Trails, (Goat Creek Bridge project) this afternoon when the hearings have completed.

AH – *begins conversation regarding homeless situation.* It's hard to go to the parks when there is a homeless person there. It is a bad situation. CB states the problem comes when people are misbehaving. The intercept thing is difficult. (*Apparently, there is a program that the BOCC has been asked for their interest regarding meeting with the homeless people to ascertain problems – The Intercept program.*)

CB states that we could use some of the Opioid Settlement money for this.

AH wants to know what the thought process is. We have a problem that we are trying to solve. CB – it's not about making places more attractive. When trying to determine who is responsible, you can't put it all on Mental Health organizations. Do we want to participate and ask folks what is going on? AH – there is also the costs of lawsuits and liability.

11:49

Meeting adjourned until this afternoon at 1:30