

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday February 20th, 2024, 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 <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 <https://www.okanogancounty.org> ."

Present:

Chris Branch (CB), BOCC District 1
Andy Hover (AH), County Commissioner District 3
Jon Neil (JN), County Commissioner District 2
Cameron Burnett (CmB), Deputy Clerk of the Board
Karen Beatty (KB), IT/Central Services
Esther Milner (EM), Chief Civil Deputy Prosecutor
Kayla Wells-Yokum, WSU Extension
Angelyn Shepherd, 4H and Master Garden Coordinator, WSU Extension
(ID)- Interim State 4H Director
Shelley Keitzman (SK), Risk Manager/Human Resources

Time stamps refer to Tuesday's AV Capture video. *An AV Capture archive of the meeting on this date is available at:*

https://okanogancounty.org/departments/boards/live_streaming_of_meetings.php

Summary of Important Discussions:

- IT director met with company to equip courtrooms for virtual, portable camera planned for room used for Hearings Examiner and Executive sessions
- Civil Prosecutor announces \$260,000 in recent settlement funds for regional opioid council, Commissioner Branch attended meeting
- Letter of interest for planning position sparks discussion on county politization, zoning code revision misinformation
- Public received misinformation on zoning code revision, Planning Director will have to open that evening's hearing with clarifications and corrections; zoning map's colors and lines could benefit from interagency collaboration
- WSU Extension Coordinator preparing "4H Needs You" campaign to enlist adult volunteers, Okanogan Valley youth may integrate "Family Clubs" in meantime; local Master Gardner/4H Coordinator applying state 4H rules for Fair, prioritizing safety, shomanship, cleanliness, no more "open", only supervised projects exposed in 4H barn; access to and salary for possible regional coordinator discussed
- HR director seeks to fill previously held full-time fairgrounds clerk position, budget must be juggled with to finance this; "re-curring user Sunrise RV had planned event without signing contract, will have alternate Agriplex dates with fees waived
- Motley discussion : Oroville water systems, Group B systems, road problems from subdivisions on Tunk Mt.
- Meeting disbanded at 4:10

3:00:12 - IT Update - KB: We're looking into courtroom equipment for virtual; we went through courtrooms today and talked about cookie cutter set-up so the same for everybody (*with Dimensional Communications, Mt. Vernon*). Talked to Brad in Douglas Co., saw their streamlined courtroom systems. I've hired a desktop person to take Carson's place. He has the flu so didn't come in for his first day. The core switch has been put in. Back-up system in March. It will be connected up here.

CmB: computer will be mounted on the wall (*On executive session room behind the Commissioner's meeting room*).

AH: can we do Zoom in executive session?

KB: I recommend Teams instead. We'll see how it works. I think it will be a more solid connection.

AH: If we want to send s.o. a link?

CmB: Eric and I hadn't walked thru Teams aspect, just actual control of camera, setting up bluetooth phone speaker.

AH: On the scheduled Executive Sessions it would be nice to send a link to our outside counsel.

KB: You can do one off the cuff, start a meeting and send an invitation. KB talks about Teams being able to make changes to documents right away, which would be helpful during budget times according to Treasurer's staff. Asks how much they wanted to spend on the courtroom camera equipment. AH doesn't like that question. KB says he seems reasonable. AH-what would more money get them? KB says they don't need new televisions. Will ask the rep about what's middle of the road. AH - after discussion with Hearings Examiner, wonders about possibility of virtual hearings, putting equipment on a cart. Like the courtroom, says KB. There's something that moves to the voice that's talking. AH wants a "plug and play" for remote testimony. JN says that would be nice, something portable. KB asks how many people are involved. AH - the people testifying. CB says people have gotten in the habit of not coming to the podium to speak. Better to use the podium.

KB: The new courtroom system will be more solid. (*there was a previous virtual system.*)

CB: I'm not sure we couldn't do just like during Commissioners' meetings.

AH: I think it's different, it focuses on the people talking.

JN: I watched one, with the Planning Commission. They had a split screen... *AH likes the system on a cart that Winthrop Library has, that they can use anywhere.*

CB: I would say, before we do that, we watch the Hearings Examiner meetings and see how it's done. *AH prefers having a screen close, not up on the wall like during BOCC. KB will look into a system like the courtroom for the Hearings Examiner. AH thinks there should be a computer for that purpose. KB asks how often the meetings are. AH - it depends. Says it's like a one-on-one conversation. CB - it consists of a staff report, and whoever testifies. The H.E. would be remote. I think people should come here. CB is dubious about seeing something moved around like the cart thing, wonders how long it would last. AH hates having to use the Commissioner's Clerk's*

computer to do set up meetings. He wants the system kind of autonomous that is not someone else's. AH says if everyone starts using Teams that could be practical. KB says logging on to one's email, even without having your own computer, allows you to log onto Teams.

AH: Whatever we're recording we'd have to have a hard drive. CmB - like we do with AV Capture.

KB: There's a place on line to put the Planning Commission meetings, already. CB shows KB something that looks like phishing. KB says don't open attachment. JN shows CB Pasco's Hearings Examiner video site. EM arrives.

3:30:36 - Opioid settlements - CB looks over a document about a settlement. EM: I reached out to the State Attorney General, asked if they were involved in the bankruptcy plan and if there was a preferred position they wanted us to have, and they said they couldn't give legal advice... They have a representative working on this plan, and whether we vote in favor of the plan or don't vote at all we're not getting anything. *This was an international group involved in the opioid suit.* He did have some good news on another settlement coming down—Walmart, Wallgreen, CBS (inaudible) Allergen opioid settlement... We're slated to receive \$260,000, expected in March.

AH: We need to get Dennis (Rabidou, court administrator) up here because he has some ideas on how to spend it. CB mentions an opioid meeting Friday. Chelan Co. Commissioner Overbay had draft of agreement between Chelan Co. and (the opioid fund administrators?). He's waiting to receive the draft. CB has received Chelan County's bill for some surveying work by Connections that the opioid money should be able to cover. ...In the conversation we've had, any of the counties should be able to do what they want with that money.

EM: The council is just so they can show where the money is being spent, to be accountable. CB says Chelan, Wenatchee and E. Wenatchee might want to have common projects different from Okanogan's. CB had attended the meeting in Dennis Rabidou's place. EB doesn't have any more business.

3:39:46 - Some corrections of meetings minutes.

3:49:06 - CB talks about a letter of interest for a planner position, AH says the problem is finding volunteers, says if they were to equate political party to interest, there's a 60%-40% Republican-Democrat division in the county. CB says he doesn't like the partisanship that enters into "that stuff", says he was accused at the Legislative Steering Committee meeting of being a chameleon. ...CB: We need to respond to that because there are accusations we were breaking the law. And that was from a former commissioner who was citing the wrong statute.

AH: How would you like to move that forward? Ask Esther to look through RCWs on Planning commissioners in our own code? ...If you want to argue about something that we're doing and it doesn't matter who it is, they always say we're doing it illegally because we didn't notify people fast enough. Even though they say this is what you're supposed to do. We could go above and beyond and tell people to sign up for Everbridge (mass notification system).

CB: Pete will have to start that meeting (public hearing on zone code revision later that

evening) with a right to response because of all that misinformation. He shows AH the zoning map in his computer with different colored areas, AH says school district lines are misleading because they cross property lines. CB says maps with incorporated boundaries are problematic because these change. He says there's a lot of splitting hairs, it's hard with these maps to make a determination. Cooperation needed between GIS, Planning and Assessor's office.

4:00:17 - 4H Clubs, WSU Extension - KW: I'm here to give an update and talk about what you mentioned at budget time: virtual participation in 4H clubs. She has distributed a chart showing that there has been some growth coming out of 2023 for family clubs, and the number of youth. They have two clubs already for 2024 and two more in the process of formation. Family clubs are limited to those in the same household as opposed to traditional clubs led by volunteers with members from different families.

CB: So that's not hugely popular, it looks like.

KW (To ID): Wasn't there a time in recent 4H history where family clubs at the state aggregate level were trying to be convinced to move towards the traditional club programming?

I

D: The states basic recommendation a few years ago was to get the students interacting more with each other. ...We have half the number of volunteers that we had pre-Covid. It's going to take time. When you get volunteers they recruit the youth.

KW asks if they want to address the question of virtual participation. Yes. She explains that there are youth in Tonasket that are waiting for a club to form. ID says one of the strengths of 4H is the interaction with the adult volunteer and since they are supposed to meet six times a year, meeting virtually wouldn't provide that quality of relationship.

AH: I appreciate that, but 4H is dwindling in this County. So if a person wants to join and can't join virtually, we've just made it so there are less people that are joining 4H. People have approached AH about this possibility. ID repeats that it's not ideal. AS says they wouldn't get the hands-on experience of they attended virtually. She doesn't want to ask the leaders to master this technology when they're dealing with a room full of kids. CB describes the pleasure he's had meeting with people in person compared to meetings on screen, and imagines kids would adapt better to a group if it was in person. AH wonders if they could do as the weed control board has done, going to a regional group instead of a county one, joining with Chelan and Douglas County.

KW says Angelyn has been there for a year and a half and people may start to see there's some stability. They are envisioning a "4H Needs You" campaign. She says the biggest problem is not having enough interested youth but having volunteers who have been trained to lead the groups. AS has seen how in Chelan-Douglas there are more volunteers compared to here where in most families both parents work. In the past WSU have hired regional 4H specialists but there has been a hiring freeze for the past several years.

4:25:30 - AH: Personally I'm willing to pay for stuff but we've got to get something out of it. If our expectation is not being met, when I get a sheriff that needs personnel and that costs as much as the whole WSU extension...I want WSU to see that the path that they're on needs to change somewhat. We need to right the ship and put more

focus on the fact you're a state land grant university... You need to do a little more for these counties that are still actually doing some production in agriculture. KW is glad to hear this, for when they start hiring again. ID says WSU funds a coordinator position in Chelan-Douglas County. KW says there used to be a person who traveled to Okanogan to fill that role. AH says it's frustrating that "they took that away from us". He would agree to pay for travel. He understands that volunteerism is the key but that some people need to be spoon fed. He suggests putting together information for interested people. KW has a "kit" when a club starts, provides the books, the projects, attends first meetings. She's been a volunteer and knows how much work is involved. What is the best use of resources, asks AH. AS says a person, even part time, could be implementing programming, getting volunteers interested. KW says ideally it would be someone from Omak that could coordinate a "4H Super Saturday". AS would be willing to put out an ad and talk with someone local with some influence.

AS explains that the 4H barn at last year's fair had applied the rule of exposing only projects that represented six hours of supervised 4H work and didn't have an open category, which meant fewer exhibitions: Before people were just bringing in just anything they had been doing during the year that wasn't 4H. She put up signs asking for volunteers, but admits she doesn't have the "band width" to be out there in the community doing the job that CB called "volunteer coordinator". She can manage adults in the program but not recruit them. KW wishes for a "rah rah" type of person. Seven years ago they put on a Super Saturday with fifteen volunteers at booths and only two kids. AH suggests putting together a job description. ID admits that at WSU it's tough but there could be conversations and maybe a collaboration... the important thing is what they want from the Extension. CB wonders if retired people would be interested. KW says they're the ones they're thinking of.

AH objects to KW's vision for 4H that it should focus on those who don't go in for other activities, says athletes can also benefit from the "life lessons" of 4H. ...AS says having summer programs (using school facilities) allows plenty of time for kids to get six hours in on their projects. She says she has all the curriculums and info that adult volunteers would need, "all they have to do is show up." CB says the parents can only take on so much when it comes to programming, sometimes kids have both parents taking them to an activity, that the ones KW is talking about don't have that. AS turns back to the question of virtual participation, says there are videos on different subjects on line that can help family clubs get their minimum number of hours in to be able to show something at the Fair. She doesn't want to discount family clubs. "There are a lot of resources. It's not the ideal but it's better than someone joining a club virtually.

AH: Let's be possible on all our options. People who are isolated can form a group—AS says she gets a lot of requests from these people but they're too busy to take this on. AS adds a shout out to the Master Gardeners; when she started there were eight of them and now there are 13. They will be able this year to set up a training in Okanogan Co. She offers volunteers a chance to start mid year so they can be qualified sooner. She encourages her gardeners to become more active in 4H, since these programs overlap. KW lauds AS's success at developing the gardening program into something exemplary.

4:54:46 - AH: My job is to take people's complaints and distill those. People complain about not enough 4H... I would love it if you would put together a job description with *(the hours needed)*, so we can tell WSU "this is what we need, or we can have some of the time of your regional 4H *(coordinator)* to come up here... *AS tells about her deep roots with 4H and the lasting effect it's had on her own children.*

AS: Those kids who go through that program, they're going to be able to come back to this county and offer us more. Last year at fair I heard about, at the open showing, dirty, ungroomed animals, the kids weren't prepared to be in the ring, there were safety issues. The more kids we can get into the 4H the program, learn to show safely, to learn to public speak, about community service, record books that's going to benefit us, and maybe we're not going to need more cops on the street...

4:56:57 - CB :There's some governance being taught here. We don't have that in the schools and so the Fair Advisory Committee *(FAC)* used a 4H presentation to teach themselves Robert's Rules of Order. We have required training we're all supposed to be taking for Open Public Meetings Act, and they brought on their own this video of 4H kids using Robert's Rules of Order. *AS says there are some senior members from the Methow who could do that in person. (She lives in the Methow.) She laments that older kids don't stick around to mentor younger ones, and the existence of a generation gap whereas it used to be something passed on to one's own kids. Those who reach out to her have moved here from other counties and want to be able to continue the program. AS has rewritten the user handbook for showing at the Fair and submitted it to the FAC. KS thanks them for their time. ID will do some follow-up with his boss, the director of Extension. CB talks about the interconnection of associations which make them strong. He gives the examples of animal welfare groups. They have to ship animals out. Maybe 4H can be involved with that. How does Kiwanis interface with 4H?*

ID: There's a Commissioner (I know), Commissioner Whitman, he's a veteran advocate to get people on board to get people involved in shooting sports. ...It takes time to rebuild. ...I mean, just the size of your county. A few challenges for the commissioners. *CB talks about people who have some time to give but can't do something all the time.*

AS: *(In addition to group leaders) you have project leaders who can give day-long workshops, for six hours. You can come in once a year and teach something you're really passionate about... CB mentions retired people again. AS says those leaders don't have to be (official) 4H volunteers: There are a lot of loopholes. KW urges the Commissioners to be on the look-out for people with time on their hands. CB: One of my latest favorite quotes, it's not a quote, it's a song, it's "Turn off the news and plant a garden."*

AS: I think John Prine wrote that *(Spanish Pipe Dream)*. It's my dad's favorite. *The three say good-bye and leave.*

5:09:33 - AH refers to an email they have to act on. *(It has to do with convincing*

someone to change their reservation of the Agriplex in March.) JN: There was some brief discussion. I think they're expecting everything pretty much free. That was not discussed.

AH: They paid the \$500 deposit, which is pretty much refundable. The email shows what they should've. The weekend rental is \$2,000, the week-day rental for three days is \$1,500 and the heat is \$200. I would be willing to look at waiving that week-day rental fee for the fact that they changed the time, they already printed flyers. (It) that should pay for that change. JN was thinking along those same lines. I put all the blame on them for not verifying the availability but they (Sunrise RV) are a recurring user. AH says JN should say they're discussing it and will give their answer next week. AH: Do you want to do a resolution stating why you're doing that? *Their clerk will be back Monday and take care of that.*

AH: What is the "Letter of introduction and agreement, county video tour?"

CmB: It was one of the requirements for the CGI video tour update (*on the county website*).

5:14:35 - SK: I have given Cameron a resolution for adding a full-time clerk position for the Fairgrounds. With the amount of work they're pushing through over there they need to have ... a second full-time person. The current administration secretary is going to need some time away and we have to have someone trained up who can cover. And of course the Fair's going to come around.

AH: It's already in the bars code?

SK: It would be funding a position that we've had prior in that office.

AH: We'd have to figure out where we would fund it from. The Fairgrounds budget doesn't have quite enough in it to fund the position this year.

CB: Do you emphasize "quite"?

SK: Mmm, yeah.

CB: Is there something you can give up? *She'll see.*

SK: Cameron and I have been working on the Local Records Grant and for this year we've identified some things that we need downstairs. We have some wooden shelves that are collapsing under the weight of the records, that are going to have to get replaced. This is a 100% reimbursable grant so we would put in the application by the end of the month and if we get the grant we can purchase tubes and labels for planning documents, start purging records that we don't need. *CmB gives the total: \$11,190.* And the grant's for up to \$20,000. For next year we talked to Dan Higbee. The digitizing grant's available for up to \$50,000. They've got massive amounts that need to be digitized. We don't have enough time (*for that*) this year but it's on our list for next year, that grant...

CB: I move to allow the grant application to be made. *Motion seconded and carried.*

This year there are all kinds of documents, next year they'll do the building ones. CB says the grant seems pretty likely to be awarded. AH is looking at budget funds: training and travel, \$5,000, \$5,000 in Miscellaneous, \$40,000 in professional services for a lot of stuff during the Fair. SK says they'll need a grade 12 full-time. Just above minimum wage. She gives the resolution for the position to AH who reads it. She and Becky will be starting interviews. Motion seconded and carried. SK leaves.

5:26:29 - JN: About the planning meeting tonight, should any of us be there? AH says he'd feel weird. CB told the Planning Director he'd love to be there but that it wasn't their job to do that. CB: I wouldn't be able to NOT say anything.

AH: Especially when people stood up and started talking about were taking their property away by changing from one to two acres. ...I have some thoughts and it's hard because we weren't really sophisticated enough to *(be able to say)* "here's where city expansion area is."

CB: That's one of the things about growth management. Everybody hates it but it has a lot to do with efficiencies, and not having the infrastructure there is what limits you from doing that. Like in Oroville. It wasn't by simply great planning that we were able to have the *(sewage)* infrastructure there. The Eastlake ended up with the infrastructure necessary to do that – The reason the water line went out was something else, it was an economic development endeavor, but the sewage, somebody was going to *(inaudible, someone coughed)* a high density development. You ain't gonna do that unless you can *(inaudible)* it to a sewer system. But the infrastructure's there. When they talk about Urban Growth Areas... It requires that stuff to be there at the same time. ...It created those densities where you could do those things much slower.

AH: If I want to subdivide down to minimum lot size AND I'm going to bring out water and sewer, that should be a *(inaudible)*.

They talk about infrastructure driving subdivision and development, about problems if people do roof solar system.

CB: They often fail. So that's what happened with *(inaudible)*

AH: I would that, more than a group septic, a group B system would be more applicable. If I went to 1 acre developments I wouldn't have to worry about well beds.

CB: One other reality was they were having problems with contaminants and lack of water. They were paying for hook-ups to the city systems because they were out there.

JN: On the East Side they actually paid for connections to sewer. And they paid every dime. There was no match.

AH: Because a Group B system failed?

CB: There was a lot of systems out there having trouble with compliance, with the homeowners associations.

AH: ...When everyone was talking about the J.H. Green mudholes on Tunk Mt. people wanted the county to help them get road access.

CB: I went to J;H. Green and managed to get around the big mudhole. There was a big tractor buried. It's the group going, who's taking care of the road, or they may pay someone to do it. They start to fight. There's one across the the river. They added one more water connection, planned, way up top. The road was kind of there on a hillside and people (below worried what if they fell off the road). Plus that was an added water connection and already water was just trickling out. I know that subdivision has ceased. But they didn't have to deal with it after it was all done and that road is one straight road up there. And they have to fight over it. There are more sophisticated ones.

AH talks about a subdivision on Summer road that "should never have been built to that density: They call it Summer Road because it should only be driven on in the summertime. He remembers driving in the ditch during a lumber job because he didn't want to go over the edge. They talk about treacherous roads where people are on their own for maintenance: "Hippie Hill", Nine Mile by Molson, South Fork of Gold Creek. AH goes out.

JN: Rocky claims he has found an easement out on Kirk Rd. *CB not surprised.* I couldn't find anything recorded so if he can come up with that I'll transfer down.

5:40:52: *They decide they are adjourned.*