

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners  
Tuesday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 1:30 p.m.

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Present:

Chris Branch (CB), BOCC District 1

Laney Johns (LJ), Clerk of the Board

Jon Neal (JN), BOCC District 2

Stephanie Downey (SD), WA High School Rodeo Association

Luis Rodriguez (LR), architect, MJ Neal (via Zoom)

*Time stamps refer to the time on the wall clock. An AV Capture archive of the meeting on this date is available at:*

<https://okanogancounty.org/departments/boards/livestreamingofmeetings.php>

**Summary of Important Discussions:**

- Stephanie Downey, Junior Rodeo representative, presents long list of disappointments after 3-day event at fairgrounds: bill for unused (but blocked off) electricity-equipped RV sites, un-watered ground, lack of hoses, building locked on morning of prom, feeling unwelcome; commissioners say management is new, trying to run it like a business, contract should be more clear; they'll discuss it at Monday's session when Commissioner Hover is present*
- Letter to Archeology and Historical Preservation for Courthouse renovation grant signed; architect outlines timeline of what must be done before construction can start*
- Meeting adjourned at 2:03*

1:33 - Junior Rodeo Discussion - SD: We had a rodeo at the fairgrounds May 17th to 19th. The Monday after the rodeo I went down to the fairgrounds to pay our bill with them and I about fell over. I've been putting on a rodeo at the fairgrounds for the last five years. A lot changed this year and I'm honestly pretty sad about it. Overall the weekend went pretty well. But I'd like to go over the itemized bill with you. I wrote you a letter on May 20th and emailed it to Jon, giving a rundown on my experience and the bill itself. Line one on our bill was the \$250 damage deposit. Line item 2 was \$200 for the small portion of the arts and crafts building. When I look on the fairgrounds building list I don't see that one on there so I think we were charged for the central building which was the 168 X 49 fee. I think the horticulture building is more of the size of the building we had which was more like 30 X 40 feet, roughly \$100/day. So I'd like to figure out what building we were charged for. The third item was the three-day event rental. When I went to pay the secretary acted a little blown away that we were there for three days but in the contract it said three days, both of the contracts I signed said three days so I'm not sure where the confusion came from that we were only going to be there for Friday and Saturday... The fourth line is the north end campsite which was \$3,150. I wrote "This is where most of the

confusion starts. When our contestants enter a rodeo they have the option to purchase power. This is all done on line. I did limit the power sites because our contestants aren't pulling small RVs. It's not like the county fair where people are parked in there tight. It would never work for our association to do it like that. The contestants who purchase power come to the office when they arrive and they get a tag for their power cord. Their tag is then tied to their power cord at the power outlet, insuring that they've paid for their power. Our RV coordinator goes around several times a day to make sure no one is trying to be sneaky. This system has worked well for us for several years. I have attached a spread sheet of the people who purchased power. It was never brought to my attention that we would be responsible for unused power outlets. I am also unable to locate where it says that in the contract. In the contract that I signed it says all overnight campers hooked up to power and/or water will be charged. Nowhere here does it say we're going to be charged for every single outlet at the fairgrounds. We had two people on Thursday night plugged into power and we got charged \$1,325. This is a non-profit organization... When I get this bill, it's like—I never took this money in. So we took in, for our camping for the weekend—so junior high and high school competes on Saturday and Sunday. So a lot of the junior high people don't even spend the night on Friday night. We took in \$675 for the whole weekend in power and we were charged... for unused power that nobody was hooked up to. And we got charged \$825 for the north end campsites. We got charged \$75 for a camper parked next to an electrical outlet at the grandstands. Norm brought this to our attention Friday afternoon and it was not plugged in for the rest of the weekend. Norm was fabulous to deal with at the fairgrounds. He took up a lot of slack for things that should have been done prior to us getting there. We didn't have any garbage cans set out, we didn't have any picnic tables set out, all things that (I had arranged to have). We turned out the cows in the arena to get the weeds down. We were told the grounds would be worked and watered and we showed up to moon dust (*ten inches*) deep. There was a load of water put on the arena but not in any shape or form to put on an event there... I've never felt unwanted at our fairgrounds, and this year I felt we were a complete pain in the butt. Anything we asked for it was like— we needed hoses for the stock contractors. It's always been there. We show up, no hoses. And I asked to make sure they were going to be there. So we were going around the fairgrounds. Norm was busting his butt because nothing that we asked for prior— this stuff should have been done, it was just chaos. You have 40 beautiful stalls and no water. It's craziness... I'm not here to be mad, I'm just sad, I guess. A, that it's not reasonable to charge for extra power that's not being used. I called Jon in a panic. The prom door was supposed to be open Saturday. I'm calling Jon Saturday morning because the door's locked and nobody's answering their telephones. People are trying to get in to decorate. I had Norm's number from the year before... It was very frustrating.

1:42 - JN: First I would like to address the campsite part of it. It's my understanding that you requested nobody else be allowed to be down there except your group. Yes. That eliminates anybody else using it, that potentially being a renter.

SD: There's all the other (*inaudible*) and I felt like, if you filled those up, and somebody said, hey— We have a bunch of kids. We're trying to protect these kids (*from outside campers*). It's a safety issue for kids.

JN: I'm not trying to argue that. I'm just trying to get clarity on both sides. Fairgrounds probably should have been more specific that if you're wanting that entire end, somehow you're going to have to pay for that entire end, or something needed to be said or worked

out. Everybody over there is new. They are trying to do what they feel is best for the county, and I understand it get's painful at the other end. I'm not saying we're not going to adjust that but I'm not at this point saying we are. I'm just one of three.

2:44 - CB: Thank you for coming, because it always comes out differently when those affected are explaining what's going on. I'm not arguing one thing or the other, the observation— and it's one that we had when we had an initial discussion when Jon wasn't here, you look at this thing from a distant view and you block out rooms at a hotel or spaces at an RV park and there is that expectation that, Jon made this point, when you rent a whole block you get a discount... But there's some things that aren't real clear and the contract is clearly missing some things. There's a communication issue that requires a real good understanding of what we're doing here when we're renting space and certainly the folks who are working for us are trying to run it more like a business than you normally would. But you find yourself acknowledging that there are some differences at the fairgrounds. So I think that, taking into account what you've said, I think we need to have a rigorous discussion about it, with Andy's backing. ...There's a lot to this. Even down to the hoses. I was over there a couple years ago, and walking down by the beef barn there were hoses all over but they were rotten from being left out there a long period of time, so we'd scoop most of them up and throw them away. Then there was conversations of people bringing their own hoses, but you'd have to know that.

SD: I was told that they would be there.

CB: I don't know about that part of it either, but there's more to that conversation. But I think a real understanding of what the Junior Rodeo's needs are and what we're willing to provide, clearly in the contract. The way it worked this time was we're running it like a business and here's the response and I'm sorry you had that experience.

SD: People didn't feel like, really welcome there. Like, Naomi, I think, took pride in having that many people show up at the fairgrounds—

CB: We're not here to evaluate that.

SD: We felt like a complete inconvenience. There was a possibility we'd come here in November but now nobody wants to come. It's sad for Okanogan County.

CB: It's especially sad for the participants.

SD: And for every business that's making money from all these people coming to town. It's a big generator for our community... I went to a barrel race at the fairgrounds last week and they had to cancel the second half of it because the ground was supposed to be worked and ready for the event... It was terrible. It was unsafe. If the fairgrounds is going to tell people it was going to be prepped and ready for the event, there needs to be a sense of pride in making sure that it's done. Not one load of water. That ground needs a lot of water. Don't say it's going to be ready because it's not... Now people aren't going to want to go there. You have a beautiful facility that should be used. I wrote this letter hoping to get something back. I'd like to get it all wrapped up... Do I need to come back when Andy's here?

What are you thinking?

JN: I think we can relay this to Andy, and discuss it on Monday, give you an answer then.

SD: Perfect.

JD: I definitely appreciate the input. *SD leaves. 2:36:53*

1:51 - CB: It's always good to reserve opinion, decisions, until you've heard an opinion, which we don't always get a chance to do. *JN agrees that it's nice to hear both sides. CB suggests making an agenda item for the following Tuesday to discuss this. He hands a letter to JN. Understanding that you had the time to look at this letter to Archeology and (inaudible) Historical Preservation, I make a motion to approve signing the letter to the grant program. Motion carried. This is presumably for the restoration of the courthouse. Approval of notice of intent for the courthouse project proposed and seconded. LJ asks architect Luis Rodriguez, present on Zoom, for the timeline.*

LR: This intent to abort sets the timeline for the contractor to submit the required documents, then they would submit their team of sub-contractors, their chain of command, their preliminary schedule of work, then sign the contract and we'll have that ready for them so we're just waiting for this to be accepted and then we'll send them a copy of it so they can submit their payment bond and performance bond as well. The other thing would be to set up a date for the notice to proceed. That can also be the pre-construction meeting, to go over any of those requirements, and then signing of the contracts. Motion carried for approval of notice of intent.

2:03 - *Meeting adjourned.*