

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners

November 18, 2024 AM

JN—Jon Neal, BOCC, Chair, District 3
AH—Andy Hover, BOCC, District 1
CB—Chris Branch, BOCC, District 2—absent
LJ—Lanie Johns, Clerk of the Board
SM—Stacy McClellan, Deputy Clerk of the Board
NB—Nick Bates, Fairgrounds Manager
ES—Emily Sisson, member of the public
Ms. J—Ms. Jackson, member of the public
MW—Mike Worden, County Dispatch Center
PP—Pete Palmer, Director of Planning
RR—Rocky Robbin, Planning Department
TM—Tim Meadows, Maintenance Supervisor
SK—Shelley Keitzman, Human Resources and Risk Management
KK—Kent Kovalenko, Solid Waste Management
CH—Cari Hall, County Auditor
PJ—Pam Johnson, County Treasurer
LS—Lisa Schreckengost, Financial Manager

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

The time stamps refer to the times on the AV Capture archive of the meeting on this date at https://www.okanogancounty.org/departments/boards/live_streaming_of_meetings.php. To locate items in real time, the clock on the wall in the AV Capture screen can be helpful.

Summary of significant discussions:

- The commissioners hear routine updates from Nick Bates, the Fairgrounds Manager, Maurice Goodall, Emergency Management and Tim Meadows, Maintenance Supervisor. Bates describes the arrangements for the Commissioners' public hearing regarding the Zone Code Revision at the Agriplex on Monday Dec. 2 at 5:00
- Pete Palmer, Planning Director, tells the commissioners that the Zone Code update has received over 130 public comments, mostly from the Methow Valley. The Commissioners will hear more comments at its Dec. 2 meeting at the Agriplex. Also, Planning has learned of a new grant source that could be used for flood hazard management.
- Shelley Keitzman has prepared resolutions for raises in salaries for various exempt and non-exempt county employees and elected officials. Many of the raises are required by law. Also, Keitzman, Esther Milner, Chief Civil Deputy Prosecutor, and Commissioner Hover will meet on Dec. 2 to discuss plans for hiring Public Defenders instead of contracting for their services. The contract the county currently operates under expires on Dec. 31.
- Commissioners hold Budget Work Sessions for the Auditor's and Treasurer's Offices.
- Meeting adjourned at 12:54.

-3:50:15—Commissioners decide to move the consent agenda's time to 11:50 instead of 4:00, and that they won't meet on Wednesday because they won't have a quorum.

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-3:48:24—NB—I'm Nick Bates, Fairgrounds Manager. I talked to the Colville Tribe guy about excavations at the Agriplex. He said they've dug around there so much, there shouldn't be any problem.

AH—Just get a letter from him, saying it's OK.

NB—I'll send him an email asking for permission.

NB—He just wants to know if we find any bones.

NB—I sent you an email about rules and procedures updates.

NB—We've got two more paying events at the Agriplex, and the two have waivers.

AH—Any prices on doing the dry well, yet?

NB--\$4,500 on the dry well. The other idea is a gutter along the side. Put the down spouts into the pipe. Then the slope won't be so steep.

AH—It'll help a ton. But can you get any grade, even a ditch, between it and the parking lot?

Discussion about how to make this trench filled with drain rock. Also talk about how to make gutters that won't be destroyed by snow sliding off the roof.

Discussion about subleasing a contract with the Agriplex.

NB—There are 19 weekend rentals left for the Agriplex in 2025.

AH—Please tell me the RV folks have already got their slot for the spring RV show.

NB—Yes. We did them first. Now we waited until we got our new contract written. We put all the repeated events on the calendar—Rocky Mountain Elk, Ski the Loop, RV show, etc.

NB and LJ discuss arrangements at the Agriplex for the Planning Commission's public hearing about the Zone Code changes. 300 chairs, 4 microphones (two for BOCC, one for the Planning Commission and one for the public). The BOCC will be on the stage, too, because then they will be able to see better. The meeting won't be recorded.

NB—That's all I've got.

-3:31:48—Public comments:

ES—I've got a comment today. I worked on the ballot processing for the recent election. One observer told us that she hadn't been to Okanogan for several years and that she thought the Court House looked really nice. I thought you'd want to hear that.

JN & AH—Yes. Thank you.

Ms. J submitted a comment via the chat box:

"I will be typing my comment here.. Please put in minutes... Thank you

What you can Learn at Okanogan County Commissioners Board Meeting.....

For an Okanogan County Elect Commissioner that has Hundreds of Thousands of dollars in land and many businesses and is not in office until after December 31, 2024, but just happens to be going that way for other business endeavors....

Should We The People be paying for someone's way to be educated?

That claims "he knows" "What works and doesn't work"

What doesn't work is that Our County would be paying for someone's travel business that was already in his plans?

Is that in Good faith of We The People's Money?

When loving to Serve, We invest in Ourselves and in more training...

Even taking time out to go to the Okanogan Country Commissioner Board Meetings would be an investment...

I personally do not believe in conspiracy theories, some occur to be the truth, though.

Sometimes Rumors are True too.

Bringing Awareness is the Key to All Good and Bad Things..... Thank you."

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JN—(aloud) We've read your comment and considered it. Also, every commissioner has the opportunity to go to these conferences. We can always learn stuff. Everybody has the right to go no matter what his standing in the community is.

-3:28:20—MW—I'm Mike Worden, Okanogan County Dispatch. I'm working on the storage building. They're ready to grind up the old foundation to mix with the subsoils. There needs to be an inspection. It's a minor cost but required. There's another round of independent inspections for occupancy. I need you to review the contracts for that. Now I learn that there may be a third round of inspections. I'm trying to learn that that will include.

MW—We discussed impervious surfaces before. We don't know if we'll have to move our rigs for hydroseed spraying. Things are progressing. Any questions?

AH—No, but thanks for coming.

-3:25:12—JN—Maurice?

MG—I'm Maurice Goodall, Emergency Management. Last week there was a lot of smoke at Libby Creek.

AH—Last week, you got kudos from the Forest Service.

MG—It was a matter of Public Health.

MG—I just submitted the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). I need your signatures on the signature page.

AH—The Fire District in the Methow is looking for takeout points for water—either from the river or from a hydrant. We can just add those things as the BOCC to the plan, can't we?

MG—Yes.

MG—I'd like to get the signatures ASAP. Today we'll ask the state. They know who at FEMA needs to receive this. I'll send you an electronic version of the Okanogan County CWPP. It's 300+ pages.

AH—I move that the commissioners sign the plan. Motion passes 2-0. Commissioner Branch will either sign it or not sign it when he returns.

JN—You'll have a hard copy filed somewhere?

MG—Yes, after it's approved by the DNR and FEMA.

AH—How about the bomb cyclone that's coming?

MG—A bomb!?!

AH—Explains bomb cyclones.

-3:19:11—JN—Tim?

TM—Tim Meadows, Maintenance Supervisor. Discussion of carpet samples. The carpet squares for the Prosecutor's Office and lobby will cost \$64,000. Also discuss stucco repair and installing the new blinds for the new windows in the Court House. They opted to do the installation themselves and have found it takes only 15-20 minutes per window, and they're glad they're not paying a contractor for the installation.

-3:12:27—PP—I'm Pete Palmer here with Rocky Robbin. She recently sat through a webinar about FEMA grant money availability.

RR—It's through Department of Ecology about floods, flood preparedness. There were few people in attendance. It was about the [AFCAP](#) (Air Force Contract Augmentation Program) and developing and implementing your Comprehensive Flood Management Plan. It might fit better in Emergency Management, but we got the notification, so I joined the webinar.

RR—There are three categories they give the grant for:

1. Developing a new CFHMP (Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plan).
2. Updating an existing plan.

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3. Completing the plan itself.

RR—There's only \$1,500,000 and maybe only \$250,000 available for any one place. It's a match and we'd have to pay 25%.

RR—There's an intent-to-apply deadline—December 31, and the application itself is due by February 1, I think. Pretty soon, anyway.

PP—Just wanted to share that. Let us know if you'd like us to apply.

JN—Maybe levies like communities are talking about?

PP—Another topic—I met with the Watershed Foundation. Discussion of an invoice sent by the Watershed Foundation in December to be paid in January and how this will affect the budgeting for this year and next. AH explains that the Watershed Council exists to implement the drought mitigation plan.

PP—A few more announcements—We've got the Lake Management Rolls on the website. Sent to Oroville. LJ has a copy and it's on our website.

AH—to LJ—When we set the rolls, we also need to set the budget.

PP—The notices will go out for Wednesday's newspaper for the Zone Code Public Hearing—5:00 PM on Dec. 2 at the Agriplex. We got 130+ comments and the majority from the Methow Valley talking about the Dark Skies and other things. They were happy to see it, how when it printed, it makes it look like it only applies to inns and lodges. So I propose that it becomes a stand-alone thing. There were maybe four agency comments, including MVCC and Futurewise who did a combined comment. Maybe two from people in Omak or the Okanogan Valley. I think we're sitting pretty good.

AH—One question about your budget. \$200,000 for professional services. Any for water banking?

RR—A little for Aspect Consultants for water banking.

PP—I've got a list here.

AH—Can you just read it to me?

PP—Hearings examiner--\$60,000

Misc. for \$20,000. Unknown projects that get thrown our way through the year.

Map facilitator for \$10,000. For the subunit advisory committees.

Modus (*inaudible*) for \$10,000. For archived records.

Legal fees for potential code amendments for critical areas, flood plain development, clearing and grading.

Water banking.

AH—So no grant funding sources associated with them?

PP—No.

AH—Thanks. PP leaves.

-2:56:35—SK—I'm Shelley Keitzman, Human Resources and Risk Management.

SK—I sent information about proposed raises for exempt and non-exempt employees. Discusses getting salaries above the threshold (between exempt and non-exempt employees). The Fairgrounds Manager position went to the threshold. The Finance Manager has a salary at the threshold. The paper with the impact includes non-exempt employees, too.

SK—Everything is on total cost compensation, so you'd know how much it's going to cost.

JN—It's not a pretty picture.

AH—A lot are mandatory by the state. It adds up to \$180,000, on top of the \$580,000 that we already know about. I have a plan of action, but it's not sustainable. We have to figure something out next year—where we're going to cut.

AH—We're counting on a \$5,000,000 carry-over.

SK—LJ has resolutions to get the Chief Deputies' salary to 90% of the elected officials' salary to get them above the cap for exempt for the next couple of years. Also LJ has a resolution for the Sheriff's Admin Insurance cap and the non-bargaining insurance cap.

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AH—The only thing that’s not in there is the proposed salary for Tim.

SK—I haven’t done that one yet. Waiting for direction.

JN—I think he’s done a lot, so please proceed. We’ll find money somewhere.

SK—Another thing—I’ve found office space in the Building Department for my public records coordinator who starts Dec. 2. It’ll be \$43/month or \$516/year that comes the Building Department’s bill. It’s a nice space for her. Plus, the Building Department gets a significant number of public records requests, so she’ll be there to help.

AH—Another thing—We have to figure out ASAP what we’ll do with Public Defense. Anna (?), SK and I have a meeting set up. Want to learn how many people work how much FTE, to see how many people we’d need, plus staff. Find a place for them in the Justice Building. We have to get people hired.

SK—All the people she currently has—their contracts expire Dec. 31.

AH—We need to have you and the prosecuting attorney here.

SK—Esther Milner, the Civil Deputy Prosecutor, will get information from Douglas County about how many felony attorneys they’re using and how many contract attorneys they’re using for District Court cases.

SK—The key will be finding someone to oversee the process, who could find contract employees when needed.

AH decides Dec. 2 would be a good day because they’ll be here after the regular day ends but before the Commissioners meeting at 5:00 regarding the Zone Code Revision.

SK—OK. And I’ll go do the resolution for Tim. SK leaves.

-2:40:55—JN—It’s 10:15. Time for a public hearing about a budget supplemental for Superior Court for \$170,000.

AH—The money is for professional services, interpreter coordinator, law books and postage.

No public comments.

AH—I move to approve [Resolution 160-2024](#). Motion approved 2-0.

-2:36:03—JN—It’s 10:20. Time for a public hearing about a budget supplemental for Fair Fund #112.

AH—It’s for B&O taxes, and to add money to the Royalty because of donations brought in. Total of \$22,073.

No public comments.

AH—I move to approve [Resolution 161-2024](#) for \$22,073. Motion passes 2-0.

JN—to Kent Kovalenko, Solid Waste Manager—I had a gentleman call me on Friday about plastic bags. He had a bunch of leaves in plastic bags, but we wouldn’t accept the bags.

KK—I figured he was going to call someone.

AH—We’ve said “no plastic bags” already.

KK—We’ve said it from the beginning.

Discussion about how the county needs to keep plastic bags from going through the shredder because they get all shredded up and compost shouldn’t be contaminated by plastic shreds.

-2:30:30—JN—It’s 10:25. Time for the public hearing about a budget supplemental for the Solid Waste Budget #405 for \$175,000.

KK—We need the money for a new heater and furnace for recycling. The furnace is budgeted for next year, but it was such a good deal, we bought it now.

AH—I move we approve [Resolution 162-2024](#). Motion approved 2-0.

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Josh Thomson, County Engineer, arrives to ask the commissioner if he can get reimbursed for mileage for a conference in Vancouver instead of taking a car from Motor Pool. The commissioners are fine with that idea.

-2:24:21—Budget work session for the Auditor’s Office and Misc. Funds.

AH—On the consent agenda today are resolutions for changes to increase the non-bargaining insurance cap. Salary increases for elected officials’ chief deputies, and increasing the Sheriff’s Office Administrative Insurance Cap. Discussion of how those costs will affect the budget. It takes us to \$750,000 in the red. We’re also going to revamp the Public Defenders office because the current contractor is leaving. Discussion of interest payments in long term investments and shorter investments.

-1:33:22—Budget work session for the Treasurer’s budget.

-18:12—AH—Do we want to do meeting minutes, or wait until Chris is back?

AH—Let’s wait.

AH—I move to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion passes 2-0.

AH—I move to approve the vouchers and payroll for \$2,000,364.38. Motion passes 2-0.

AH—to LJ—Anything else?

LJ updates the commissioners on items.

AH—I move to approve [Resolution 163-2024](#), changing the salary threshold for certain exempt employees. Motion passes 2-0.

AG—I move to approve the Homeless Housing Grant agreement between the county and the Community Action Council for \$27,500. Motion passes 2-0.

AH—Anything else?

JN—I met with Loraine Rawlston from the Semiquincentennial in 2026, celebrating the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration. The Feds and state aren’t putting any money in, and I told her the county doesn’t have any money. Anyway, she’ll update us.

AH—We could put some money into the Omak fireworks display.

Meeting adjourned for the day at 12:54.