

**Board of Okanogan County Commissioners**  
**Tuesday February 27, 2024 AM**

**Present:**

Jon Neal (JN) – BOCC Chair, District 3  
Andy Hover (AH) – BOCC Vice Chair, District 2  
Chris Branch (CB) – BOCC, District 1

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 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:

[https://okanogancounty.org/offices/commissioners/commissioners\\_proceedings.php](https://okanogancounty.org/offices/commissioners/commissioners_proceedings.php).

Time stamps below are in real time. To locate specific topics, a click 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:**

- Discussion of fee-waiver policy at the fairgrounds,
- Public Comment: Mrs Jackson having problems with her Grade A well water system and wants to know who to complain to. There are 117 hookups on this Suncrest System LLC, and numerous problems that need to be reported.
- WSU extension office brings Memo of Agreement concerning the Master Gardeners demo garden at the fair – approved.
- Fairgrounds Manager's last day is March 1<sup>st</sup>. New manager to start on March 5<sup>th</sup>.
- County Assessor Update: Assessed values have increased 16%, but the levy rate went down. Would like to change policy on pest acres assessment – will discuss with the pest board, there is an opening for a personal property clerk, assessor doesn't understand the State School rate.
- Finance Update: Discussion on funding and logistics regarding the Water Conservancy Board in relation to county bookkeeping, auditor and treasurer will talk with their Chelan counterparts to see how it is done there.
- Solid Waste Update: Manager regarding grant for air quality – for green waste, also farm slaughter/butchering waste business.
- County Engineer Update: Road maintenance, dirt roads are drying up. Waiting for comments from WDFW on some newly possible WATV routes. Progress on Cameron Lake Road project – problems with eminent domain with Colville Tribe.
- Meeting adjourned at 12:00 noon.

9:00

Meeting opened.

JN brings up a couple requests of waivers for rental fees at the Fairgrounds. A rodeo group wanted a

waiver, but needed track watered and tilled, then they would maintain. AH states he is inclined to say no because other rodeo groups would want the fees waived also. JN notes that Team Okanogan wants to put on a spay & neuter event at the fairgrounds on May 5<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>. BOCC is likely to waive fee for them. BOCC feels they are already subsidizing the fairgrounds and not inclined to waive fees, and certainly not to businesses.

CB brings up discussion about Public meeting (*on the re-zone*). This would be good time to have a dialogue with the public – informational. AH notes that for another reason, it seems like when we are in a public meeting we may need to limit the public input to minutes, depending on the amount of people there. AH also notes there are no new fees for wells.

9:11

AH – we will go through an informative session – questions and answers.

(*AH leaves the meeting*)

JN brings up that weekly rentals at the fair at \$1500. \$4200 for Sunrise Chevrolet. JN did not suggest a limited price for a business rental.

9:15

Public Comment: Mrs Jackson reports that she has been attempting to get ahold of someone who might have some oversight on her Grade A well water system from the Suncrest System LLC. I need to find out where I can find codes for the health department. There are many problems with leaks, chlorine levels, pipes are breaking. She has been talking with people at the Health Dept and at the state level, but has not found anyone who cares about this water system in Omak. There are 117 hookups on this well. Who do I give the complaints to? CB will give Mrs Jackson a call back. Mrs Jackson states she has been giving her concerns to top people but without any resolution. She is on the Suncrest Plat Water System.

9:28

JN states that he is fine with the \$1500 concession at the fair; \$500 per day for 3 days.

9:30

Kayla Wells-Yoakum,(KWY) WSU Extension brings in a memo of agreement (MOA)between the County and the Master Gardeners in regard to their demo garden at the fair. KWY has been working with the Civil Deputy in drafting the language for the MOA. KWY is concerned with who needs to be the signer.

9:38

BOCC approved the MOA with the Master Gardeners.

9:48

CB received a suggestion from a community member about the Commissioners Role

JN reports that Chuck Ford's last day as fair manager is the 1<sup>st</sup> of March. The new guy will begin on the 5<sup>th</sup>.

10:00

Larry Gilman (LG), Assessor and other staff member, to give BOCC an update. LG – the levy rate last year versus this year. 2023 & 2024 assessed values; The assessed values increased 16% but the levy rate went down. LG – We have no control over the state levy rate increase. LG went on to explain the TCA (Tax Code Area).

10:06

LG wanted to make a change to the Pest Code # 1 & #2 with trees. A historical orchard that is taken

out. I don't think we should take the Pest fee off during the period of rest. LG will attend the next pest board meeting.

CB – You should definitely discuss this with the Pest Board.

LG – It's not clear in the Resolution. You could update the Resolution to clarify this.

LG goes on to explain how dates are very important to the Assessor's Office. We expect to get our Change of Values sent out by May 31<sup>st</sup>. We have had problems in the past with our timelines, but we are on time now. It's helpful to have the new Assessor position. We also have an opening for a Personal Property clerk position.

LG – This is huge; we work hard developing the levies and there is a new mechanism in our new computer system. We haven't received any kickbacks. This is very unusual, but a good thing.

LG notes that he has a hard time understanding the State School rate, that increased. I have broken down the Districts into type of District.

10:24

JN – We will probably re-do the Resolution to make this change if it is recommended. LJ will work with the Assessor's Office for the language in the Resolution.

10:30

Discussion – Water Conservancy Board Fund 139 – with the Auditor, Cari Hall (CH) and Treasurer, Pam Johnson (PJ)

CH explains this meeting is in response to my request. Having read the RCW's, it doesn't appear that the County should be doing the accounting for the Water Conservancy Board. They need to do their own accounting.

CB notes that the people doing the water transferring should pay for this service. They are an independently funded entity.

CH – My office is not going to process vouchers as we are not required to do this.

PJ states that we will formally take off the 139 fund and roll it into the current expense fund.

LJ – The secretary asked if the money could go through the County. LJ acknowledges that Mike Port(MP) – President of the Conservancy Board and Lisa DeVera,(LDV) Clerk of the Conservancy Board are on Zoom and asked for their input. LDV - Explained that she is the Clerk for both the Chelan and Okanogan Conservancy Boards. She has been with the Chelan Board since 2001 and with the Okanogan Board since 2013. In Chelan, the accounting goes through the Chelan County. These questions have come to light due to an audit. Should we continue as before? We have been submitting vouchers but have kept 2 accounts. LJ explains that Ok County has been paying vouchers also, and the County has added money when it was needed.

CH and PJ will talk with their counterparts in Chelan County and see how they do this, then decide if and how Okanogan County will do it. LDV worries that now bringing it to light, maybe Chelan County is doing is wrong. LDV – a Memorandum of Understanding would be a good idea. I'm not a County Employee. I receive a 1099. Only a couple of years, have I gotten paid by Okanogan County. The service we provide is pretty valuable. We work with applications – which is where we get the majority of our funding. Okanogan County has also committed money to the Conservancy – approximately \$10,000 yearly.

MP notes this was set up as a drawdown account. It never really makes it up to \$10,000.

CH reports to the BOCC that due to elections I won't be able to talk with the other Auditors until the

end of March.

11:00

Ken Kovalchenko (KK), Solid Waste Manager reports that good paint dropped off at the landfill goes to a separate place – special program.

KK reports on the new program for air quality regarding green waste. Disposal of green waste won't cost anything. This is all geared up for residential, not commercial.

JN asks if we have made any progress on the possible need for rendering waste from farm slaughter/butcher operations? KK explains that there is a new business in Ellesforde that is addressing this County problem. It is strictly for organics. The tipping fees are waived. KK will also talk with CH regarding this.

11:18

Josh Thomson (JT), County Engineer reports the roads are drying out well, but more moisture is expected tonight. The Cameron Lake Project hasn't made any progress, not getting calls back.

The Tribe felt threatened when the Federal DOT wanted papers with eminent domain before doing the work. Eminent Domain is not appropriate for Tribal property.

JT also reports on awaiting comments back from the Wa Dept of Fish & Wildlife on the proposed WA TV routes. There are 17 sign locations.

JN asked JT how the County Shops are going. JT – the shops are stagnant right now, still waiting for items.

11:33

LJ expresses that she has some items for the afternoon, Resolution for the Sheriff's Office.

11:34

CB was thinking about Eminent Domain. This is a big deal and needs to go government to government. It is something the feds need to consider.

BOCC reviews previous proceedings.

12:00

Meeting adjourned until the afternoon session.