

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday October 29, 2024, AM

Present:

Jon Neal (JN) – BOCC Chair, District 3

Chris Branch (CB) – BOCC, District 1

Lanie Johns (LJ) – Clerk of the Board

Andy Hover (AH) – Vice Chair, District 2 (Not in attendance)

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.

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:

- No Public Comment
- Economic Alliance Director requests County to sponsor grant application for technical assistance grant – Board to wait until Commissioner Hover is in attendance to make this decision. A consultant will be talking with community leaders utilizing town halls. Grant discussion.
- HR/Risk Manager reports wage increase requests from the Sheriff’s Office and Public Works. Department of Enterprise Services contacted about energy audit. \$25,000 - \$75,000 estimate
- Approved utility franchise to Ziplly Fiber
- Public Works update: Dec 3 informational meeting with EPA; Homeless encampment cleanup efforts-Hwy 7 bridge, along Similkameen trail.
- Adjourn at 12:25

9:00

Pledge of Allegiance

LJ reports receiving correspondence from Okanogan County Transportation & Nutrition (OCTN) program asking for an increase in County funding to \$15,000. They have provided over 24,000 meals to county residents.

9:12

LJ references correspondence from Dept of Ecology (DOE) regarding air quality. EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) will be meeting with the BOCC on December 3rd.

9:15

No Public Comment

CB shares that he messed up his ballot and will be requesting a replacement. He used felt pen and the

ink ran. Also, CB will be having a retirement party at the Okanogan Grange on November 30th.

9:30

Roni Holder-Diefenbach (RHD), Director of Economic Alliance updates on current projects. RHD has been working with various organizations in the County regarding funding and grant applications. In working with the Irrigation Districts, she has learned that the Bureau of Reclamation also has some funding that can be utilized for Irrigation Districts. They (*the Irrigation Districts*) have a difficult time collecting fees to cover costs and it is so important because people's livelihood depends on this. RHD has been reaching out to other sources for funding.

9:35

RHD- Last time I was here I spoke with you about wanting to apply for the CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) for technical assistance. I cannot apply for these funds; it has to go through the County. I will do the needed reporting. This grant goes for up to 3 years and \$250,000 is the maximum we can ask for.

RHD – post-Covid, we utilized some of the ARPA funds to expand Latino technical assistance. She explains about the grants from the USDA. RHD – Also, we have to keep up with competitive wages and benefits in order to keep staff. I learned from Craig Nelson of the Conservation District how to inform my employees that their positions are grant funded. RHD- We could sure use some grant writers. CB suggests contracting for this service.

CB prefers to wait until Commissioner Hover gets back to approve of the Technical Grant application, since he is on the Board of the Economic Alliance.

RHD will wait till AH gets back. I can always answer questions. I will wait to hear back.

RHD reports that Representative Kretz had sponsored some legislation that passed, designating Frontier Counties 1 & 2. Okanogan County is considered a Frontier 1 County. Now, we are having some discussions about problems specific to rural counties. We have a consultant that will be coming here to talk to the leaders in the community.

RHD – It's time to do our annual contract with the County. We will be working with LJ on this and continuing to look for other funding sources.

10:05

Recess

10:27

Shelley Keitzman (SK), HR/Risk Manager, reports that both the Sheriff's Office and Public Works budgets have wage increases (4%) in them. SK is working with the Unions. SK attended a risk symposium that had a lot of information that was helpful.

SK- We are doing some Corrections/Deputy testing of candidates right now.

SK -I've also reached out to the Department of Enterprise Services about the Energy Audit. I'll let you know what I learn from them. So far, it looks like it will cost between \$25,000 & \$75,000.

10:42

LJ goes over different grants with JN and CB. (*There was some discussion about the cost of gun transfer, apparently, for the Sheriff's Office – funding is needed for this.*)

11:00

Public Hearing Franchise for Ziplly Fiber – JoAnn Stansbury, Public Works

Ms. Stansbury reports this is the 3rd time this hearing has been continued. Public Works has been working through the Civil Deputy and has just received a signed agreement with Ziplly. There are no public comments. The Board approves Resolution 151-2024 granting the franchise to Ziplly Fiber LLC.

11:03

JN reports there will be an informational discussion on December 3rd with EPA, hopefully there will be a question-and-answer period also.

Josh Thomson (JT), County Engineer to update on Public Works:

JT reports there will be an air quality discussion Tuesday of next week.

JT-We are coordinating with Solid Waste on the Hwy 7 bridge encampment clean up. JT acknowledges there are quite a few camps along the Similkameen trail. *(JT shared a picture of the encampment with CB that Jodi from the Sheriff's Office took. CB was surprised at the size of it. JT has a follow-up meeting with the Sheriff's Office for policy discussion/creation. We want to get it cleaned up before the winter.*

JT – The CRAB Board accepted our request to not have to pay back money already spent on the Cameron Lake Road project. We now have 12 years to get this done. They suggest we re-apply for funding in 3 years, after working with the Tribal Council and getting their consent. This is more like an interest free loan.

JT – The Town of Conconully is setting up a meeting with the County for maintenance changeover. *(Once again, there was discussion about gun transfer that was inaudible.)*

12:16'

\$3,000 approved for Tonasket EMS District

12:17

Dispatch fees of \$1508.17 approved for the Oroville Rural EMS District.

12:18

Consent agenda approved as presented:

1. Resolution 150-2024 Budget Amendment – Current Expense State Examiner Budget
2. Agreement Amendment – ARPA funds – Public Health

(Discussion between CB and JN regarding different boards to be on once CB is retired. Also, some discussion about the Water bank changes needed.)

12:25

Meeting adjourned