

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday July 30, 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.

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

- Public Comment: Isabelle Spohn educates BOCC on history of the creation of the Sub Area A in the Methow Valley and also expressed concerns about Emergency Services communication during a catastrophic event.
- Economic Alliance Director and other board members request additional allocation monies from the County, more in line with other counties. BOCC authorizes another \$50,000.00 to be included in next year's budget, bringing annual total to \$150,000, and with BOCC request for more tracking of monies.
- Economic Alliance discusses possible new Block Grant for the Micro Enterprise Program
- MJ Neal & Associates, Architect consultant's report on plans for Courthouse rehabilitation and also changes to the Public Works/Health Department building.
- Public Works: project updates, and authorizing more training for GIS staff.
- After executive session with Sheriff, Civil Deputy, and HR, BOCC to have Civil Deputy send a letter of termination of County Sheriff services to City of Tonasket.
- BOCC considering the need for survey to put up sign in Loomis area, will discuss this next week.
- Meeting recessed at 12:15, to reconvene in the PM.

9:03

JN discusses a letter that the Board received regarding ATV use on snowmobile trails, AH suggests that they have DNR come in for a meeting to discuss this with them.

(All Board members discuss the headliner for the Waterville Fair coming up; Clint Black.)

9:15

Public Comment Period:

Isabelle Spohn (IS) attended yesterday's BOCC meeting and thought maybe she should educate the Board on the history of Sub Unit A in the upper Methow Valley. This was formed in response to the RW Beck study of the aquifer in the Upper Valley. DOE requested that either a ULID(?) be formed to protect the water resource or form a group (sub unit A) to handle the population effects on this watershed/aquifer. It used to go down to Gold Creek – the same as the School District lines. IS goes on to suggest, since the Methow Valley is all one eco-system, that the Methow Review District extend to the Columbia River, especially if having 3 subunits is a cost issue. IS – The Lower Methow Valley should not be added to the rest of the Okanogan Valley. I suggest you consider just extending it. That would be the simplest.

IS – Secondly, I overheard the session with Pete (*Planning Director*) and Mo (*Emergency Management Services Director*) discussing the problem of communication with the Tribe during fire response. IS- I don't think this is a problem with only the Tribe. We had the same issue with the Poorman Fire. People saw it happening, but no one was alerted by EMS. So, it is not just an issue with the Tribe. It is very confusing, and I want to support Pete's concern with communication.

9:35

Roni Holder-Diefenbach (RHD), Director of Ok County Economic Alliance in attendance with other Board Members; Mary Lassila & Anna Marie Dalby- business owners.

RHD – Over the last couple of years, a lot of our ADO's (?) have been discussing the money coming in. We have learned that the Chelan/Douglas Economic Alliance gets \$150,000 annually. Since 2008, we have not asked for more money. We did get some extra money through the ARPA funding.

AH – So, you want \$150,000 instead of \$100,000?

RHD – Yes

AH – I have no problem with that. For the extra money, I would like to see some other tracking of the monies – a more comprehensive financial review of your plan.

RHD- I get monthly financial review from the Auditor. I could work on getting a detailed report. We want to be able to tell our story.

9:39

JN- I would like an overview. How does your money compute into dollars coming into the county?

RHN – September 11th, we're having a special meeting with the people who help fund our programs. We can tell our story better then. We have an intern from Western Washington University to help with data collection. Pateros got a huge appropriation to work on their downtown.

AH – When I look at my draft budget, I can't tell if we've done budget supplementals or not.

(LJ responds)

9:44

RHD – We have an opportunity through the Block Grant Program to utilize the Micro Enterprise Program, which would allow us to give loans or forgivable grants. We've never applied before.

LJ states the County had applied for this before. 15+ years ago.

RHD – Only 1 County gets the grant per year.

LJ – We applied through the Dept of Commerce before and there were problems with Commerce, and we also had our own problem. The County decided not to do that grant.

AH asks LJ if it would be feasible to do a line item (on the budget) for County sponsored projects?

LJ – That is a good idea, but I do have a spreadsheet, so I am prepared to do that.

AH – We have \$300,000 for projects

9:49

RHD – Going back to the Micro Enterprise Programs. I will contact John Gallows of CDBG to see about applying for this up to \$250,000 for a 3-year time period. Clallam County got it this year. The County would need to be the applicant and they only fund 1 per year. We'll bring information back on that, especially regarding reporting requirements.

RHD – I also want to comment; Since Covid, there are businesses who are really struggling. We have hired a Spanish-speaking developer. Businesses are really feeling inflation right now.

RHD – I want to keep and keep growing our staff. You can't have a good economy without a healthy one.

CB – I would like to include the \$50,000 in the budget – bringing the total up to \$150,000,

AH to LJ – Do you do the infrastructure line item in the budget? LJ – Yes, I work with RHD, and I will submit.

CB made motion to approve the \$50,000 increase to the Economic Alliance but abstained from voting due to being the Treasurer of the Economic Alliance.

CB – One other thing I didn't think about; I think it would be good to look into a sewer project The CDBG could be used to pay a direct benefit to households.

CB-& btw, the previous BOCC had extended a loan, but CB would like to get that paid so there is more borrowing power. I would like to pay off the Public Works Trust fund.

CB to RHD- It is a good idea to come back with CDBG application.

LJ – Maybe early October.

BOCC approves an e-mail response to the Department of Agriculture for the \$22, 820 for emergency food program, and wants the funds directly deposited in the County account.

10:00

Luis Rodriguez and John Borsch from MJ Neal and Associates bring in their draft drawing of the Courthouse rehabilitation. *They shared their sketch on Zoom of what they are envisioning. Susan Speiker from the Court and Judge Kathleen Burke in attendance as there are major changes with the Courts. The biggest concern is where they are considering moving the bailiff – further away from the Courts.*

10:48

AH thinks the plans look good and appreciates that the architects are not considering moving the bathrooms. *This would be very costly.*

The architects also put their sketch of the Public Works/Health Department building changes.

11:33

Public Works, Josh Thompson: So far, the fires on the Reservation have only burned 2 County signs – not too much damage.

JT – The crews are finishing up the chip seal today. They will be putting a weight restriction on the Sawtell Road in Oroville. 15-ton limit. They will be fixing it next year when they have time to ask for funding.

JT – we have a GIF staff person that we would like to send to training which will cost \$4000 altogether between the training cost and the 4 certifications. Not sure if we need to modify our apprenticeship

program to accommodate this.

AH – This should just go under trainings.

BOCC approves authorizing the PW Director to contract with the Engineering Tech Assistant to utilize this training opportunity. JT states this is a one-time thing, will not be an ongoing apprenticeship program.

JT – We have paving in Mazama on the consent agenda – to send out for bids.

CB states he is having trouble with the (Loomis) sign location as it needs to be surveyed.

AH – Could be put this on next week for discussion?

11:50

*****Executive Session under 42.30.110 1 (I) for potential litigation with the Civil Deputy, HR and the Sheriff's Office Staff*****

12:05

AH – After discussion with City of Tonasket and the Sheriff's Office, I think it be that we terminate our leased public safety services with the City of Tonasket and I direct the Civil Attorney, Esther Milner, to send the letter of termination to the City Clerk of Tonasket.

This is approved by the BOCC.

12:09

*****Executive Session 42.30.110 1(i) *****Possible litigation, with HR and Civil Deputy.

12:16

Recessed until the afternoon session at 1:30.