

**Board of Okanogan County Commissioners**  
**Tuesday September 5, 2023 AM**

Present:

Chris Branch (CB) – BOCC Chair, District 1

Andy Hover (AH) – BOCC Vice Chair, District 2

Jon Neal (JN) – BOCC District 3

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 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 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 is looking for an update on last Wednesday's Emergency Management meeting; JN attended and responded was for Emergency Management board and poor attendance. Multi Hazards Mitigation Plan was not discussed.
- Briefly discussed Community Wildfire Plan.
- Finance Report: Treasurer, Auditor, and Finance Manager; discussed Fair finances and other budgeting matters. Board decided to let high school age teenagers in for free on Thursday.
- HR/Risk Manager: fall symposium on risk management will be attended by a jail staff member. Rate change from Public Employee Benefits Board (PEBB) only 2.75%, down from 14% last year.
- Public Works: purchase of DOT property with Methow Conservancy expected to be completed by the end of the year – needs to be sorted out. Solid Waste will have booth at the fair again. Discussion of hours and low usage at Twisp Transfer Station. Interesting discussion of what to do with Lithium-Ion batteries in electric vehicles – highly combustible.
- Meeting adjourned at 11:21, will return at 1:30.

Meeting opens at 9:00 with CB and JN in attendance *AH to come in later.*

JN has heard people complaining about the difficulty of hearing BOCC meetings on AV Capture.

9:15

Public Comment Period: Isabelle Spohn wants an update on last Wednesday's Emergency Management Committee meeting. JN attended, along with Emergency Services Manager Maurice Goodall (MG). The rest of the board or committee was absent, so there was not much discussion. JN – we went over the emergencies in the last year. The Multi Hazards Mitigation Plan (MHMP) was not discussed because of the lack of attendance. JN and MG briefly discussed the Community Wildfire Preparedness

Plan. JN – I will keep you updated on any developments that happen through this committee.

9:19

CB wants to be ready for the Fairgrounds Budget Supplements for when AH arrives.

LJ asks JN and CB whether she should register them for the upcoming November 14<sup>th</sup>-November 16<sup>th</sup> WASAC Leadership Conference. *Both JN and CB express interest in going.*

9:26

*AH arrives to the meeting.* LJ asks AH if he will be attending the conference. AH to get back with her after considering schedule.

9:30

Roundtable finance discussion with Cari Hall (CH) Auditor, Pam Johnson (PJ) Treasurer, and Lisa Schreckengost (LS) Finance Manager. CH states that she has a draft version of budget reporting by departments with clarifications. It has yet to be decided if employees will be able to bid on surplus items being auctioned off. CB asks CH if she is happy with the draft. CH states that she is and feels that it is important to get this out to everyone. There are a lot of items that are really being identified in the list.

9:37

It was moved, seconded, and carried to approve Resolution 116-2023 on the Easton Corbin contract.

The Fair has received \$250,000 the Department of Ag for security and other needed items at the fair.

*There was a lot of discussion regarding how to do the budgeting of items for the fair.*

PJ reports that there has been great cooperation from different departments to help with the fair, but she will need to budget for overtime. CH will take checks and cash to give to the fair manager. PJ will be helping in the office at the fair, which should help with the money.

10:16

It was moved, seconded, and carried to approve fair vouchers in the amount of \$139,592.

CH reports that she has created binders for the fair contracts in alphabetical order and will give these to the office.

10:20

After a short discussion, it was moved, seconded, and carried to allow high school age student in free of charge on Thursday. AH asks whether wrist bands are needed for this grouping and how they might be kept track of.

CB states there will be no meeting on Wednesday JN plans on being at the fair on Thursday and Saturday. AH unsure of when he will attend.

10:27

Shelley Keitzman (SK) HR and Risk Manager gives an update. The fall Risk symposium will be attended by a Jail staff member, which she is very happy about. SK received a notice from Public Employees Benefit Board (PEBB) that the rate increase this year is 2.75%, versus last year's 14%. SK is still waiting for information on the new minimum wage.

10:29

*CB leaves the meeting as he is traveling to Portland.* CB states that he will be available by phone.

Recess: back in session around 10:40

10:51

Josh Thomson (JT), County Engineer arrives.

Reports the DOT is pushing to get the land sale (Mazama) completed by the end of the year. There will be some reimbursement of monies from/to the Methow Conservancy and RPTO, and Salmon Recovery. AH is a bit confused if the Conservancy is paying or getting reimbursed. The title, will apparently, be coming to the County.

JT will sort this out in the next couple of days.

11:00

Ken Kovalchenko (KK), Solid Waste Management update; they will have their normal booth at the fair this year. "come and talk trash" KK-Solid Waste is embarking on another 'Secure Load' campaign with more signs. Some loads have been getting a little crazy.

Washington State Dept of Ag has been in touch with KK, regarding the possible apple maggot quarantine. They are in the process of rulemaking and there will be time to make comments.

AH brings up that some of his constituents have been questioning the hours of operation at the Twisp Transfer Station. KK states that the Twisp Transfer Station is the lowest amount of tonnage of any of the transfer stations. KK -we could expand our hours in the wintertime, but I'm not sure about the costs of doing another day, but I will look into it.

AH asks KK about wholesale roll-offs.

11:09

JT reports on roads and maintenance. Current working on crack sealings and at the fairgrounds with a water truck and bringing a load of gravel.

JT is working with the DOT on the access road – Rodeo Trail, determining urban borders and when to remain rural. It is to the County's benefit to remain rural – not so much regulation.

JT reports on the Greenacres/Johnson Creek project.

JN goes back to Solid Waste KK. JN had been reading an article regarding lithium-Ion batteries being highly combustible. KK – yes, they are a problem. We can't find anyone to accept them as a core.

KK-We're starting to get phone calls. Our outlet in Spokane won't accept them.

JT asks, is there a way to safely dispose of them?

JN read that it needs a special vessel for transport.

KK -they are storing the spent batteries in water tanks for 2 weeks. JN – but what can they do with that water? KK – it is an issue, a problem. Definitely a highly toxic issue. The runoff from putting out the fire is highly toxic.

KK states – Solve one problem, create another problem.

The dealer needs to be the one responsible for taking care of the batteries. KK explained how a container transport full of electric vehicles caught on fire in the ocean and sunk to the bottom.

JT – Battery capacity is what is needed with these new cars.

KK worries about farmers with their heavy-duty vehicles. - a larger problem.

JN -technology will advance. First generation always has problems.

11:51

Meeting adjourns until 1:30