

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday January 23rd, 2024, 9:00 p.m.

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Present:

John Neil (JN), BOCC District 3
Chris Branch (CB), BOCC District 1
Laney Johns (LJ), Clerk of the Board
Luis Rodriguez (LR), architect, MJ Neal Associates
Justin Borst (JB), architect, MJ Neal Associates
Korrine Mouchon (KM), project designer, MJ Neal Associates
Larry Gilman (LG), Assessor
Cari Hall (CH), Auditor
Tim Meadows (TM), Maintenance staff
Charles Short (CS), District Court judge
Susan Speiker (SS), Clerk, Courts

Time stamps refer to the time on the wall clock. An AV Capture archive of the meeting on this date is available at:
https://okanogancounty.org/departments/boards/live_streaming_of_meetings.php

Summary of Important Discussions:

- *Asbestos removal in courthouse hallways, slated for summer, will bring altered circulation and relocated offices*
- *Windows in annex to match courthouse's*
- *Either polished concrete or something else for courthouse flooring surface, depending on historical preservation group's recommendation*
- *Five resolutions signed affecting funds for housing (resolution 5-2024), Search and Rescue, hiring nurses to cover jail, and un-obligated funds certification*
- *Commissioners sign letter supporting broadband connectivity on reservation*
- *No free bottled water-rule to be waived for maintenance workers*
- *Sunrise RV publicized but didn't sign contract for annual event in Agiplex, site already rented out for same weekend*
- *Mini debate on where to put asphalt in 2nd Ave. building parking lot*

1:30 - Asbestos Removal, Courthouse - LR: We talked with Asbestos Central. Some of these areas in the (courthouse) hall would have to be blocked off so they could seal it up and make it completely safe. Need to work out some scenarios for using part of the hallway circulation but closing off others for the removal of the finishes, (doing it) in sections. They need input from users to see if their plan would work

KM - It would be the phase 1. You'd try to leave accessibility so that area from the elevators for each floor—phase one, accessible from that floor, sorry, first floor accessible from the first floor, second floor accessible from the second floor, the third floor you'd have to use the elevator all the way through these three (phases?) and do one stairway all the way up in one phase, and the other one all the way up in the other phase. Finally the corridor split between phases on level two and three but since the elevator's open on the second floor, it's accessible from outside, you can close off the corridor between the annex and the courthouse. So it's just accessibility—the main concern is, are you able to *(inaudible)* entire place during the phases? The last phase is the one where some access will lead to offices (that) are going to have to be closed down; that's a question of *(inaudible) more? Is there a way departments can share space? Is there a way to access those spaces through another space? It's something that has to be looked into.*

JN: This year the auditor's office is going to be an issue most of the time. There are three elections this year.

KM: We don't have the exact department areas; we were going off the old plans.

CB: I thought you were moving us already!

LR (looks at auditor's office configuration): The Auditor does have two doors. Do you think there's an issue if IT has to go through the auditor's office? *CB thinks the door might not exist any more. LG has arrived. Points on the plan to another door by the vault.* If in the last phase the IT people could come in through there, this corner of the hall can be taken care of. *The talk about phases. Some flexibility. JB knew the plans wouldn't be completely correct. KM wonders if there's an office that will have to be shut down. They don't know if the auditor will be okay for IT to use its office to access the hallway. CB thinks the passage goes through the room where they count the votes.*

CH: The licensing office is now cut in half. It's election signature processing, and the mail room. The Noxious Weed office is going to be used as the ballot processing room. (It's currently used as County Engineer's office.) *CB suggests they visit the offices. He asks when they could use the licensing room.* The door from the mail room to the auditor's office is locked from the mail room side. You can only go from our office to the mail room. *LR asks if the public can use the staff door for two weeks. CB says create a corridor. It will be a traffic jam. CH says there's not enough room. There will be voter registration as well. But if they move licensing to the Noxious Weeds office earlier than planned, CH says there will be more room and it's possible. They'll have to work around election dates in February, March, April, August and November. LJ asks someone present about a (ballot counting?) machine. They reply that it will depend on how they're doing with the election processing in that room and that now they're doing a trial run. CH says something will depend on how it goes in February and March.*

1:54 - CB: When will this project begin?

LR: Probably summer. *CH says that would be the easiest for them.*

LJ: We also have window replacement happening in the annex during that time frame.

LR: That would be the same contract. Isn't there a new door going into this future licensing space?

TM: Yes... for employees to get in. *That office will also need to be vacated. CB says they had talked about splitting the hallway.*

CB: I would encourage you to work with Tim.

TM: The first floor is the same width but it isn't split like the 2nd floor, which makes it a little easier. *LR asks to TM to identify offices. One office will probably need to be closed because the only other access is the jail. LJ says the former probation office in the Red Cross office could house someone during that phase.*

CS arrives and LJ briefs them on the discussion. The person is concerned with how IT chief Karen Beatty would hook up her computers if she had to move out temporarily. LJ invites her by phone to join them. LR sees that piece of the work not lasting as long since it's not a whole hallway.

JB: We could open some doors up. It's not my preference, but if there's no other option...

2:15 - *They continue to talk about first floor passage possibilities. TM says two windows which are currently blocked shut don't need to be replaced along with the others. They examine the second floor plan. LG shows an appraiser's office door that can be blocked off for a time. CS explains the layout of the court wing, says they're late for jury trials so now only using courtroom 1, says courtroom 2, his own office and another can be blocked off for a two-week period.*

TM: The bridge going down to the parking lot is definitely something I'd like to be addressed. They continue to identify units that can be worked on during the same phase.

CB: They have to decide whether they want to rebuild that bridge. It makes a great escape route. *It will become a primary access for a time. CB says it would be a good opportunity to analyze what to do with that door.*

2:32 - LR: Where did Lanie go? *She comes back and changes floor plans on the screen. On the third floor we're mostly worried that it doesn't have any entrances or direct entrances to the ground. Becomes a little more complicated. (Some employees) will have to be out for two weeks.*

SS: Maybe we'll just not use that courtroom for two weeks. As Judge Short said, it's just a situation of serious scheduling. The problem you're going to face is you've got to schedule it sooner than later because it's already scheduled out years, literally. We could use (the commissioners') room as a back-up. It works.

LR: Where does the jury go?

SS: We just wouldn't have a jury trial. But this room fits a lot of people.

CS: If we timed the use of the court we could better utilize the courtroom space as well. We definitely wouldn't want to lose all the courtroom space at the same time. *LR says they'll have to ask if both offices can be closed for two weeks. SS mentions a superior court office which could be used by the jury coordinator, and another officer in the probation area. She thinks it's do-able, thought they'd need to talk to Dennis Rabidou.*

CS: So we're looking at a six-week window?

CB: Still have the contractor to talk to.

CS: I'm going to talk to my staff.

TM recommends closing one bathroom per phase, making each one unisex for two weeks. The District Court Clerk's office only has one access but clerks could come through the courtroom and through the vault.

CS: Access to District Court would be more secure through the first floor. We have a window that is at the bottom of the stairs and we could temporarily make that a District Court public access where they could interact.

SS: The clerks could possibly work together, if it would expedite my end of the hall. I could use that window. It's not ideal... But if that helps. *LR says yes, a lot.*

JB: We could almost shut down the entire floor if the clerks could work out of that window. Could that whole floor be done at one time?

SS: We're talking 9 people.

CS: We'd lose two courtrooms.

SS: I could displace one or two people and the rest could still use my office to access the criminal section. *CS says they could do half in one phase and half in another. LR would like to notify people. CB says let TM work things out. LR is glad to have some newer drawings to work from.*

2:58 - Annex Window Replacement - The existing courthouse windows have a grid and they're more like a double window. The ones in the annex have vents in the bottom of the window. I suppose it's part of the historical preservation to make them look more like the courthouse? *Yes. LR shows them a diagram showing windows that slide. LJ says she thinks the courthouse windows slide.*

LJ: I do have the original documents from (the courthouse windows).

LR: On the tower, the idea is to replace the trim, the plexiglass in there, refinish it all to be more weather-tight and pretty much work the trim on that.

JB: For the trim we propose going to a stucco that wouldn't rot like the wood. Is there any reason not to?

LJ: It would have to be approved by the DAHP (*Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation*). That material probably just needs to look like the other material. *CB would like to check. Agrees with JB that it's far enough away and like the other materials for stucco to work. TM says it will look better. Says they need to figure something out for one of the metal caps that's "pretty beat up".*

CB: They're sheet metal now, aren't they? *TM says he could make one. LR was wondering if they'd chosen plexiglass for the tower because birds ran into it. TM would use tempered glass. JB talks about ventilation to prevent any damage to the glass. A screened-off roof. A dome vent, says TM, at the base of the flagpole, invisible from the street.*

LR: At this point we're not going to do anything about that door, just focus on the windows above. *Easy enough to change, says TM.* So the corridor in the courthouse is rubber-based. We're thinking more of a hard surface base. We need to check. Either do a wood base or plastic composite base.

KM: Because we're going down to the concrete finish.

TM: So is that what you were planning for the corridors, just a concrete finish? Yes. Because it can be a maintenance nightmare.

LR: One idea was we could polish it. Put a sealer on it.

LJ: Should I ask what's acceptable flooring, if it's just baseboard wood they were walking on? *TM - Not a bad idea. SS worried about putting a rubber base back in the first floor bathrooms but TM has it all figured out. JB says they're thinking about a modern version of a traditional linoleum, folded up to meet the metal trim. As long as you have someone who can weld a bit, says TM. They talk more about flooring.*

LR: Asbestos Central says to take all the sub-flooring off.

TM: Any way to steer away from just doing the concrete flooring would be very beneficial in the long run.

CB: We will consult with DAHP. JB says an advantage to doing a covering would be to allow for a sound mat. CB counts on the DAHP recommendation. LJ is already emailing that entity to ask about flooring. The architects can send her an email.

LR: We'll go through these plans and see if we can come up with another scenario. ...And see if District Court and Superior Court can use that building.

3:20 - CB: The Total Court Complex. LJ has prepared a thumb drive with 100 files on it, updated plans. Maybe they can get the "CAD drawings" from the previous architect, now retired. That would be very nice, says JB. The architectural team prepares to visit the courthouse, wishing to share a floor plan with dispatch deputy Mike Worden. They leave, with TM and SS who will help direct them. (Meeting paused)

4:04 - AH arrives. CB breaks the news to him that in the morning meeting the sheriff, speaking for the courthouse staff, announced opposition to the planned Justice Center in the newly acquired Forest Service building, and that the commissioners had asked the architects to recommend ways to keep the courts in the courthouse and move the other services to the other building.

AH: Great. Awesome. At one point in time, early on, I had talked about it.

CB: It had something to do with Covid and using it for the court, then they began to expect it. He thinks Dennis Rabidou had "higher expectations", hasn't talked to him yet. Mentions Judge Grimm's "softer presentation" but still in agreement. We agreed to have the architects look at the spacial issues and see if in fact—

LJ: And gave them some pdf drawings.

AH: I'm all for keeping (the services) together. I had thought about moving them up here and us going down to the courthouse.

CB: I talked about even Planning and Building moving. We have Public Works down there. So all the public has all this interaction. And we could operate here, with the sheriff's office. He reports on the architects' report on the asbestos removal: They're doing a good job at figuring that out. He mentions staff being present and helpful in assessing how that could happen. I want to make a resolution. I move that we adopt resolution 5-2024, the resolution approving Homeless Housing Fund allocations for 2024.

AH: So those are the same allocations. Lanie, we talked about Westie's (?) designs and that RFP (request for proposal) came in at \$140,000. (Is this in relation to housing?) We had \$170,000 allocated but I want to make sure we're not just throwing money out, so if we can get it done for \$140,000... JN arrives.

CB: We were clarifying the scope of work and seeing that it (fit with) the statutes.

AH: The only concern that Lanie would have would be the RCWs.

CB: We can add that part. But the RFP had some language that she could duplicate, because that's what they responded to. *They vote on and approve resolution 5-2024.*

LJ: We have a resolution setting the Avalara taxes (the total of state and county sales tax rates) for 2024, received from the Assessor's office. Another one is approving up to four nurse positions for jail coverage, and authorizing the current RN Nurse Care Manager to be a three quarter-time/full-time employee. Another resolution authorizing Title 3 funds to Search and Rescue, \$128,000, and, finally the Title 3 expenditure and un-obligated funds certification... CB moves to approve the consent agenda. *Motion carried. Minutes put off until next time.*

AH: Chuck sent me an email after Sunrise sent me an email—

4:14 - LJ: We pulled a number of contracts that were submitted by the fairgrounds

manager over the years and what we found was annual contracts (for Sunrise RV's show), although we didn't find all of them, we found a 2018 contract, a 2020 contract and a 2022 contract.

AH: Every other year?

LJ: I don't think the manager was submitting the contracts for acknowledgement on a regular basis. *Missing contracts might have been filed elsewhere.* I just wanted to give those to you to discuss.

Motions are carried to approve these resolutions.

LJ: This is a request from Economic Alliance (EA) for a letter of support regarding (a broadband connectivity program for the Colville Tribe.) "The project area is largely focused on serving the Omak HUDs (Housing and Urban Development housing) between East Omak and Riverside along Highway 97, south from Okanogan all the way to Bridgeport and Brewster..."

AH: I'm assuming that's in the Broadband Action Team (BAT)'s –

LJ: She's given Ernie Rasmussen's name as the point of contact with the tribes if we have questions. *AH would like the EA to help write the letter. LJ says she's provided sample letters to other agencies. CB says they might ask her about specifics. AH wants "good consistency".*

LJ reads aloud a State Attorney General's opinion that "bottled water is not considered a light beverage, or reasonable and necessary expense." As part of the county's fiscal mission to minimize costs at the time the county did not want funds spent on the purchase of bottled water for employees. The BOCC wanted to set out rules for circumstances under which bottled water may be purchased and who may do so. Water was tested in 2011 and found to be safe in their building as well as administration and corrections buildings. The board proved exemption from the policy for the public landfill, Twisp, Winthrop and Ellisforde transfer stations due to presence of E-coli at the time... Maintenance Dept. has requested purchase of water for staff, to be available down there. They don't have a sink or drinking fountain in the basement. They're outside. They were wondering if they could have an exemption in being able to buy bottled water.

AH: As employers, normally you would supply them with a cooler for water. So I wonder if that wouldn't be more easy for the auditor's office.

LJ: I think the Fair office has purchased water, from Culligan.

AH: The only reason for that was that the well had some stuff. I think that's a health concern. *He's not against buying water, wants to see what makes sense.*

JN: They're finding lots of micro-plastics in bottled water.

CB: Everywhere, too. If that's part of the decision, I'm all for it. When I hear that request I think it's convenience...

AH: If they wanted to get Culligan water and paper cups, that's fine.

CB: Let's make sure they understand fully why, not just turning down something that's convenient for them. *(He quickly removes the empty mini water bottles from the desk.) AH mentions a band coming from out of state, in contract with Sunrise RV for February 23rd, 24th and 25th. "Indoor heated RV show". Eight bands, says LJ. For some reason AH would prefer they play a week later. CB says since they're paying \$1,000 for banner advertising, they should propose that for free if they move the date. The contract hasn't been signed and they don't have it in hand. AH calls it an unprecedented kind of deal. The new fairgrounds management, unaware of the annual Sunrise show, has booked another event. Sunrise has already advertised. JN would, as a business, like a contract. CB points out they've had this every year*

since 2018. That's the justification for offering them a deal to change the date. They will make the decision later to write a letter or not.

AH's absence today was apparently for some negotiations with the Tribe. He would have gladly traded places with someone.

CB: If you want anything from the rest of us, then you will try to schedule your negotiations on a different day! *AH didn't have the choice. CB says he was just quoting another county commissioner.*

JN: It's like they're here talking about all the wants they have for the building. How do you pay for that when you're paying for ever-increasing wages?

AH: You get through this bond, then you figure out if you can borrow some more money and pay for the next bond.

CB: We're going to pave that parking lot one way or another.

JN: Now we've got to figure out what we're doing with the building! *AH asks if they're still planning to move the steel out-building from the Forest Service building to the fairgrounds. JN heard Howard Zozel say it's very hard to re-certify a steel-span building when you move it. You have to re-engineer and determine that it's up to the new codes. The fairgrounds shop is just garbage, so you just put it over there, across the railroad tracks.*

AH: Paving the parking lot, though—we're going to have all along the front ripped up. But I want to look at the drawings for the other ones. If it doesn't make sense to put in new asphalt... Get the utilities trench put in. You could probably pave the whole back.

LJ: They're talking about moving the back hill back. *JN says with the new plan, they might not need to do that, since they might not need an addition to the building, or a sally port. CB is for paving the parking lot now. AH for just paving the trench. CB says there's the existing pavement.*

LJ: I did email (architectural firm) Courtner about that this morning and said that you would like to have a design aspect for that, and that you'd talk about it. *They all agree it's about asphalt for covering the utilities trench.*

4:48 - Commissioners call it quits.