

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday, March 12, 2024 AM

Present:

Jon Neal (JN) – BOCC Chair, District 3

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

Chris Branch (CH) – 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/commissioner_proceedings.php.

Time stamps 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:

- Discussion about Community Action Council having a huge shortfall – needing \$300,000.
- No Public Comment.
- Zak Kennedy – Counties' lobbyist reports on end of Legislative Session – what initiatives passed, which did not, and what next year may look like. He is hopeful the Cap & Trade Tax, along with the Capital Gains tax will be repealed next year.
- Public Works: County engineer reports on road maintenance – some road restrictions are ending due to weather warming up. Road crew began their 4 X10 schedule this week, Cameron Lake Road project is not going to happen – never did hear back from the Tribe.
- Okanogan Wildlife Council (Buck Workman and Mike Ferrens), which owns the shooting range up by the landfill request permanent road easement to access the shooting range. This road is shared with the County's rock crushing access. A survey would need to be done in order to give official easement to go longer than 2037.
- HR/Risk Manager and Juvenile are doing a salary survey for staff – hoping to hire two new staff members.
- Dispatch purchase of a tech van for the new Radio Tech position. BOCC approves purchase from only bid from Wendle in Spokane for \$71,321.
- Need to organize trail easements for the new Trails position.
- Work session/Discussion regarding Opioid Abatement monies designated for Okanogan County projects, and how to work the with Opioid Abatement Council.
- Meeting adjourned at noon. Public Health @ 1:30 and BOCC back in session at 3:00.

9:00

Flag Salute

LJ has been communicating with Rena Shawver, Director of Community Action. (CAC) regarding shortfall of funds for food program and other projects such as needing help with the Community Housing

Grant (CHG). Looking into funds for a match to purchase some land. \$300,000 needed.

AH comments that we (the BOCC) has thrown a lot of money into their food program and our own law enforcement needs funding.

JN comments that Riverside is requesting ARPA funds for bridge work.

AH – It's possible we could loan money and/or maybe we could partner with USDA.

Some discussion regarding putting heat exchangers in the detention center. LJ – the design for the Detention Center needs to be reviewed.(a closed loop system)

AH – we need to have them sit down with us.

9:32

Zak Kennedy (ZK), lobbyist for County/Counties(on Zoom) gives end of legislative session report. Initiatives that passed: parents bill of rights, reasonable police pursuits, no state personal income tax. Initiatives that did not pass: carbon tax, Cap & Trade tax did not get repealed, Capital Gains tax not repealed, nor the Long Term Care fund. What the Democrats have done is tie projects to these taxes so that if they get repealed, these projects would be at risk. This will create problems in next year's budgeting. ZK also noted there is a 'fire risk map' that he has seen, from the State Building Code Council.

JN and AH are both concerned about the Carbon Tax being a burden on farmers, who are helping reduce carbon, rather than producing it. “The \$30 million received should go back to reimburse alfalfa growers as they are carbon negative” states AH.

AH also suggests that a look at the fuel sold before and after the tax began should be good data.

AH to ZK – Do you know anything about District Representatives?

ZK – There is the open House of Representatives seat being vacated by Cathy McMorris-Rodgers. ZK believes Jacqueline Maycumber and another Republican woman will be in the running for that. ZK also notes that there is a pay cut going to the State Legislature, but would be better pay federally.

10:00

Josh Thomson (JT), County Engineer reports on maintenance and road conditions. Some of the road restrictions are ending. AH – are they grading dirt roads now? JT – not until the potholes from the moist dirt is gone. Road crews are starting 4X10's this week. Crews are currently cleaning the Similkameen Trail.

Also, will not do the Cameron Lake Road project as have heard nothing back from the Tribe. This is the 3rd time this project has been attempted starting in the 1970's. JT has confirmation they (the Tribe) is not interested in this project at this time. JT will be shifting the federal dollars allocated for this project to Chip Seal Projects.

JT will be attending a meeting today in Ephrata with the CRAB board. This is a study meeting.

JT – we will be doing another phase of the old Hwy 97.

10:15

Mike Ferrens (MF) and Buck Workman (BW), representing the Okanogan Wildlife Council – non-profit for maintenance of Okanogan's shooting range by the Landfill on B&O Road. BW – We are concerned about not having a stated easement for future access to our range. Without an easement, we can't shoot. We would have to change the road to go by the Cat Shelter. JT – We just need to make sure they are covered to continually use the road. AH wants to know what the life of the gravel pit is. JT states there should be 2 more crushings – approximately, 15 years. AH – How do we protect their access? Can we give a public easement? JT – Yes, we can do an easement. We'd just need to do a survey. MF asks if the County has something in their record? Per JT, there is an existing easement that goes to 2037.

AH – Have we been paying for the pit? JT – Yes CB – It's essentially a paper survey. JT – We need a survey. The County would require a survey. It's the right thing to do. (*Apparently, the road does not have*

a name or number) AH – we aren't able to use public funds for that survey. Maybe you (Okanogan Wildlife Council) can pay for the survey. AH – asks how wide an easement? JT - 40 feet – 20 feet from the center of the road on either side.

AH – I have to figure out the process for this.

JT – We can use Prescriptive Use rights since this has been used for over 10 years.

CB asks BW about the Wildlife Council non-profit status and what they do besides the shooting range.

BW – We do youth education projects, with 4-H groups, and FFA. CB – I think we can definitely help with the survey. AH – There needs to be some sort of agreement as this is a mutually beneficial and non-exclusive right of way. CB – we will pick this up with the Civil Deputy. CB – Is there an annual fee for membership? BW – Yes, \$35 per year. CB might want to join. BW – Application is online.

10:28

MF and BW thank the Commissioners for their support. *They stated earlier that they wanted to get this taken care of before new commissioners were in place – as they felt this BOCC was more receptive.*

10:30

Shelley Keitzman (SK), HR/Risk Manager and staff member from Juvenile in to notify BOCC they are doing a salary survey for Juvenile Staff. We're looking for your 'thumbs up' and then we'll get you the numbers. We are hoping to hire 2 new staff members.

AH – Let's see if we can offset some of the funding. We've got to try to reduce the Labor burden on our budget overall. We have to talk about funding the Judicial Branch.

SK – We'll get the numbers from Dennis (Rabidou) and then we'll get back with you.

AH – Is it policy to look in-house first or outside first for the hiring?

SK & other staff member state they would like to give promotional opportunities within first if possible.

10:43

Executive Session for 10 minutes with HR – SK regarding mediation process under RCW 42.30.110(B)

11:00

Mike Worden (MW), Dispatch Deputy - Bid Opening for purchase of van for the new Radio Tech position. Only 1 bid – Wendle Ford of Spokane - \$71, 321 delivered. MW states that he could go through the state motor pool, but this would be a 4–6-month delay and we could maybe save \$5000. MW – I recommend that we go with the bid. Then, we will have it right away and we can get it into the ER&R program.

11:03

Moved, seconded, and carried to authorize the \$71, 321 purchase of the Tech van.

BOCC continues to work on prior minutes throughout the meeting

11:17

BOCC discusses the need to get all trail easements together for the new Trails position.

There will be no Wednesday session.

11:32

Esther Milner (EM), Chief Civil Deputy with Dennis Rabidou (DR) brings a draft proposal for agreement between Okanogan County and Opioid Abatement Council. EM – I don't see any risks but wanted you to review to make sure this is what you wanted.

AH – I wanted to receive the Opioid Abatement Funding. Is it coming directly to the County Treasurer?

DR – Yes, we're just sending info to the Abatement Council. AH – I'd rather just send our 10%

administrative fee and identify projects here in Okanogan County.

11:35

JN – We have to pay an annual lump sum fund for admin fees AH – we just need to know that we are doing correct projects.

AH asks what the deliverable will be on this project. CB – explained project, and is a little nervous about your question.

EM states that it looks like it could run through us. CB – we just an agreement between us and the Council. Of course, the County will need to have its list of priorities. CB – crisis response is only a small part of the Opioid \$\$\$. (*Notetaker -I presume meaning there will also be money for prevention*)

EM-You are going to want to put this on your agenda for a priorities list.

11:52

DR – I want to phase out of the Opioid Council. CB will continue. DR – I have to get off to another meeting.

AH – we have to sign to be a part of the council. CB – Commissioner Overbay (Chelan or Douglas Co Commissioner – whom the Opioid partnership is with) is going to send me their agreement.

CB to EM – explains the previous conversation with the Okanogan Wildlife Council, re; road easement. Requests her assistance in this matter.

12:00

Meeting adjourned until Health Dept at 1:30, and then back in session at 3:00 to complete work.