

**Board of Okanogan County Commissioners**  
**Tuesday February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 9:00 a.m.**

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**Present:**

Chris Branch (CB), BOCC District 1  
Andy Hover (AH), County Commissioner District 3  
Laney Johns (LJ), Clerk of the Board  
Pam Johnson (PJ), Treasurer  
Esther Milner (EM), Chief Civil Deputy Prosecutor  
Shelley Keitzman (SK), Risk Manager/Human Resources  
Josh Thomsen (JT), Public Works Director

Time stamps refer to Tuesday's AV Capture video. *An AV Capture archive of the meeting on this date is available at:*

[https://okanogancounty.org/departments/boards/live\\_streaming\\_of\\_meetings.php](https://okanogancounty.org/departments/boards/live_streaming_of_meetings.php)

**Summary of Important Discussions:**

- Board rescinds Hearing Examiner's termination letter
- Commissioners clean up previous meeting notes, Branch comments on logging
- Affordable housing grant support letter approved
- Used oil from elevators to be recycled for heat
- Road restrictions lifted, Cameron Lakes road project rejected by Indian affairs bureau
- Public Works next projects: drainage at Bonaparte, overlay near Oroville, Loomis-Oroville Rd.
- Minimum wage going up, budget adjustment necessary
- Letter of support for affordable housing grant approved
- Branch reports on regional opioid council progress, meetings among local actors, prospect of shared treatment evaluation center
- Meeting adjourned at 11:42

5:17 - *In separate motions Board approves rescinding Hearing Examiner Dan Beardsley's letter of termination and waiving notice of requirements according to the 2016 contract. The Auditor sent word that she couldn't come for her update but all she needs is a bars code for a "contract retro pay" budget adjustment.* AH: Like for the Sheriff's— (inaudible)

9:13 - *CB reflects on the criticism and photos he received regarding a timber cut in the Methow: It's hard for me to respond to pictures by landings. ..It's hard to go into that particular area and not turn on a tree (tray?) or something like that.*

AH: The thing is, it's you're getting comment about it from someone who doesn't like logging. I hate looking at catastrophic wildfire. I hate looking at burnt matchsticks. Usually after about two years everything's coming back.

CB has done plot checking, says when you're logging by criteria and not number of trees everyone's bound to do things a bit differently. CB: They all have a bias. From the (North Central Washington Forest Health) Collaborative's perspective we review everything and gather information in the early stages. We hadn't decided that we were monitors... A guy at the quarterly meeting described the relation between the Collaborative and the Forest Service, ...had some suggestions for how to deal with that stuff. I'll send you some pages. Says things can go well with collaboration, "at the speed of trust". He was saying "Go slow, experiment". I don't know how a compliance officer works but they have some understanding of what they're dealing with. If you want to do some production you have to do a little- (inaudible). He talks about people checking to see that surrounding brush isn't crushed. Said in the day they would just take out trees that were in the way. (Now) they take the tree out of the slot. There was a description of (these recent cuts) being clear cuts. They're not, they're shelter cuts. Our role is irrelative to our participation in the Collaborative.

AH: Other than to say, in general, I'd rather have logging than catastrophic fires.

CB: Unless you have a map of the sale, it's really hard to make judgements based on that stuff. *That morning he had got a comment from people up Libby Creek about the muddy roads.* I responded saying they should see the roads washed away after the Bonaparte fire.

22:29 - *In going over the Feb. 5<sup>th</sup> minutes covering a citizen's making a case for the hiring of an administrator to do oversight, AH says the clerk's intern missed the gist when he wrote "Commissioner Hover wants to figure out how to make a position work that would have oversight over elected officials such as the sheriff or the prosecutor."* AH: No way on God's green earth did I say anything like that whatsoever.

CB: We might have an administrator tell us what the impacts of what's going on are ... I tell people we have influence over elected officials, we can find the other side of the story. But that's as good as we can do... They approve of LJ's rewording. LJ: "Commissioner Hover wanted to know how such a position would work. He asked what position she thought would have oversight over elected officials."

27:45 - *CB wants a note added on the website saying the meetings on the bottom part of the agenda aren't always public. (Some had thought the recent Community Wildfire Protection Plan Update meeting was public.)*

31:50 - *They go into executive session with EM and SK for discussion of ongoing litigation.*

46:29 - *2/6 meeting notes changed to say that both commissioners and not just CB were in favor of Maintenance crew filling their water bottles from big bottles instead of receiving individual bottles (there is no sink in their locale).*

54:45 - *CB wants the 2/29 notes "cleaned up" pertaining to the citizen's complaint to the sheriff about a stalker. LJ rewords them: Stalking is a public health epidemic, said Ms. Aea. She felt that the stalking that she and her daughter experienced and the lack of involvement by the county prosecutor and the sheriff handling this situation is a detriment to women."*

59:15 - Treasurer's Update - *PJ says tax statements went out, she's getting some calls, able to stay caught up. They've had payments starting to come in. They are working hard on 2021 or older, which are "subject to foreclosure" parcels. PJ leaves.*

1:01:52 - AH: *...Yesterday Dan (Beardsley, Hearing Examiner) said something about remote stuff. I was at a meeting at the Winthrop library. They have a cart which is a monitor, with a really nice camera that tracks the speaker. I don't know where the Hearings Examiner sits, but if you could just roll over a cart... The person on the other end can track... CB: The main thing is that the staff that is actually doing the hearing knows— so there aren't those glitches. I'm curious how they're doing at the court. AH asked the courts to give their wish list. He also would like to get video conferencing. LJ explains how the room next door is going to be equipped with a 65" monitor and a computer to run it.*

11:12:01 - LJ: *The letter that was prepared by West-East Designs for the Chamber of Commerce Grant (for identifying obstacles to affordable housing, in collaboration with Okanogan County Community Action Council) will be sent once it is approved. There's also a request for re-imbursement for ARPA (American Rescue Plan) funds (for) Elmer City's Fire District # 2, notices for liquor licenses for an Elks event and a Methow Recycling event. And from (Dispatch Coordinator) Worden a U.S. Forest Service Communications road use permit for the Tunk Mt. permit that needs approval, and Resolution 35 authorizing Communications to purchase coffee maker and supplies to outfit the mobile command unit. They agree that a coffee maker is a necessity. LJ mentions the routine every two-year audit for the Methow EMS district. She can give them the letter asking for information.*

1:16:28 - *Otis is changing the oil in the elevators of the Admin building and the jail at a cost of \$19,700. This does not include disposal of the old oil but it can be brought to the landfill which is equipped for this. AH has heard of waste oil burning and that it is recommended by the EPA. The burners are "a little spendy". He says the installation he saw was a little smaller than the commissioners' room.*

1:22:39 - *CB mentions someone in the Methow who proposed that there be an umbrella organization to oversee animal shelters. AH says she was helping with horse rescue during the fires. Wonders if she would be interested in a certain piece of property; CB says they would be but would need money for repairs, said she had some "pretty organized thoughts about it".*

1:24:50 - Public Works Update - JT: We lifted road restrictions down to Brewster and looking to lift them in Tonasket and Oroville. In the Methow it's cold enough to allow people to run (heavy equipment) from 10 o'clock to noon. Some of the high elevation roads that have been a mess are frozen now. *He talks about deep mud in the Chiviliken, and on Cold Springs Road and Circle Road by Oroville which don't usually pose mud problems. AH concerned about roads getting saturated. JT mentions Knox road as well. CB wonders if logging trucks are coming out of Libby Creek. Not enough snow to continue logging, JT says, but they're hauling out what they've got, which should take five or six days.*

JT: *About the Cameron Lakes road project, we had met with the CCT DOT (Colville Tribes Department of Transportation), they were collecting information that they wanted to take back...They were really happy, said everything's been approved. The BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs) in Portland reviewed it, we went through the Yellow*

Book process for right-of-way, did everything right, they said they'd recommend that it go through. CCT DOT reports to the Natural Resources Director (who) said I'm aware of the project, I don't support it, you're not even going to take it to council. So the project's done. This wasn't like a new thing. She's been... watching the project and waited 'til the end to stop it. We're trying to get this in writing. The CCT DOT folks have told us that we're not getting anything. So I actually left a message with (*the Resources director*) saying "Hey, I want to know what we missed on this project, how we can work together better in the future, and try to get a letter for the file.

1:30:41 - CB: She didn't cite what the biggest issue with that was?

JT: No, she just said she didn't support the project. The (tribal) council was pretty upset when it was presented to them, don't know how that happened. I wasn't there but some of our staff went with the BIA right-of-way folks. They were in there three minutes and they got kicked out.

AH: So it wasn't anything the staff said or did at the meeting.

JT: No. I know that the CCT and the BIA don't get along so I don't know if it was because the BIA right-of-way folks were presenting it. The idea of a 20-year lease and paying a lease payment every year and possibly renewing it after 20 years came up a month or two before that meeting.

AH: Would there be the possibility of transferring the county roads on the reservation to them, say "you guys take care of your roads now"?

JT: We have 2012, transferred quite a few roads to them. Kind of an odd deal where the BIA or the CCT came to us saying "we want some of our roads and we want them now", in one week. There was an emergency resolution. We transferred it. I think if they had them by a certain date they would get funding. Now there's an issue with having the authority to do that, but it's between the BIA and the CCT. That was some minor roads. That's been discussed seven or eight years ago but people up there are opposed to it. I've asked County Rd. Administration Board their thought on it, is it legal, and it depends, how you got the rights in the first place and how you transfer back.

1:34:05 - CB: I work with her on the Forest Health Collaborative. I'm curious what the driving force was there. *JT says they've been meeting together since 2018 and everyone seemed to be on board. CB agreed that it's a CCT-BIA dispute. He mentions eventually buying back land. JT repeats that some letter would be good to document this. He was concerned that RAP (Rural Arterial Program,) grant money already spent would have to be reimbursed but someone close to that agency suggested the requirement might be waived as it fell through for reasons beyond their control. \$100,000 had been spent on the design. JT would like the Board to put its e-signature on a letter. LJ says this is possible as long as Commissioner Neil as chairman signs it first.*

1:39:19 - *JT talks about lining up state funding for a drainage project on Bonaparte Lake Rd., a 2R and overlay project on Hwy. 7 just out of Oroville, 3R reconstruction-type projects, Twisp River Rd. project that was federal. JT: It's pretty much designed and ready to go, ...a section of Loomis-Oroville Rd. In pretty rough shape. Also some sections in the east end of Chesaw Rd., but wrong time of year. ...Need to do something about the first portion of Rodeo Trail but now that it's an urban designation*

it actually isn't even eligible. *He talks about it being eligible for TIV funding but that's more competitive and harder to get. AH asks him for a report on "Newby". If that's something they could move forward on to get the road transferred to them. JT says yes.*

AH: We have 50-60 gallons of oil coming out of the elevators. How would that work to be able to utilize that oil in that waste oil burner?

JT: It wouldn't be an issue to mix that in. *This would save them \$2,500 in fuel. JT says 150 gallons lasts them a week. AH talks about the ag expo where he learned that burning is the cleanest way to get rid of waste oil. JT says maybe not for the old burners.*

1:46:69 - *LJ has made up the resolutions for a letter supporting an affordable housing grant, liquor licenses for the April 27<sup>th</sup> Methow Recycling event the April 30<sup>th</sup> Elks Club event, the ARPA payment of \$8,790 to the Elmer City Fire District, a use permit to install a concrete shelter on Tunk Mt., and the Dispatch unit's coffee maker, which AH wants to take up with the Auditor because there's no precedent. LJ says there was a purchase once and the auditor at the time did not approve. He was reading about changes being made to refreshment policy. They move to reconsider this resolution at the next meeting. AH announces that the minimum wage is set to go up 3%. He wonders if they've budgeted the EMS contract with that in mind, LJ said Oroville's contract had that built in. LJ checks. They will need a budget supplemental of \$21,340.*

2:09:45 - *CB presents the invoices for his Legislative Steering Committee meetings in Olympia. Short discussion on which meetings had a ceiling on motel budget. They research what the standard rate is. CB says he always reimburses the difference when there is one.*

2:36:06 - LJ: I scheduled about the Water Conservancy Board request for the 27<sup>th</sup> of February. I asked if they want other agencies invited or just the BOCC.

AH: Is the Carelon Intercept Models the overseer of the mental health stuff? *CB says they act as the BH-ASO (behavioral health-administrative service organizations) and that it's the new name for Beacon Health which administrates their opioid settlement money (shared among other counties in the region). Part of the creation of the regional health districts was putting mental health together with physical health.*

AH: Is that the only entity that we really need at that point in time to talk about—give the overview of how the intercept models work? *CB says they have the contract with the health care authority, and they can come talk to the county about their intercept model. He mentions Carolon intercept models, a group in Chelan Co, called Overbay and says that until they get the Opioid Council going, they won't receive any payment. AH wants to see what Chelan Co's project looked like; CB says they're preparing a contract for them.*

CB: That is the product of three years of conversation about the potential for a regional treatment evaluation center. We were meeting, there was the sheriff sometimes. We (*realized*) we don't have a good handle on what's going on in the system. A group called Connections did that, talked to people, one day in each county, then there was a meeting at Aging and Adult Care in Wenatchee and we went over a lot of that stuff. Facilitation, discussion. A report is what comes out next summarizing all that work we've done with Connections.

AH: What does that lead into?

CB: Where do people go, what's going on here in the system? We're learning about that right now just through an adversarial (?) situation here, and they will find in their report—a lot of IT work here goes to Chelan Co. They're going to-it's in the statute- it's going through their prosecutor's office, the paperwork. Still, understanding completely every detail, that will be Carelan because it's changed quite a bit over the last years. There's a guy with WSAC (Washington Association of Counties) that's going to come with Carelan and make a presentation. We'll also have the Johnson and Johnson settlement coming in...

AH: So is the information supposed to feed back to OBHC (Okanogan Behavioral Health)? Or feed into this regional planning process?

CB: That day all the entities flowed through. Hospitals, OBHC, law enforcement, all gave their accounting of what happens when they respond. ...After that they had another meeting with law enforcement to discuss that. I wasn't at that meeting. That's kind of where we are. There's a lot of glitches in that system. *He talks about the benefits of recovery navigators, recruited while still in jail, former drug addicts who help other addicts upon their release from jail. Tells the story of a friend who saw people near his property arrested for running a meth lab, and one of them was a worker at Shelton prison. On the way home from the peninsula, CB witnessed the overdose of a just released prisoner from Shelton.*

*AH tries to ascertain if they are contracting out for the information gathering. CB says there need to be contracts but for now they are waiting on the opioid council, but in the mean time he'd like to have a small group meeting with regional Health Care Authority and OBHC.* CB: They're all the players that are in control of this mental health stuff. They're contracting with OBHC. They'll look at what's been going on for the last five or six years. *AH asks should they wait until Carelan comes up? They should tell Lanie who to invite. CB says Leah (Health Care Authority) will know who to invite. CB spoke to commissioners in Olympia about building communication framework, he knows lobbyists who've been "tracking these (mental health?) bills".*

2:41:57 - Meeting adjourned.