

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, January 4, 2021 AM & PM

JD—Jim DeTro, BOCC chair, District 3
AH—Andy Hover, BOCC vice-chair, District 1
CB—Chris Branch, BOCC, District 2
LJ—Lalena Johns-clerk to the Commissioners
DR—Dennis Rabidou, Juvenile and Family Services
DMc—David McClay, CEO of Okanogan Behavioral Healthcare (OBHC)

These notes were taken by an Okanogan County Watch volunteer. Every attempt is made to be accurate. Notes are verbatim when possible, and otherwise summarized or paraphrased. Note takers comments or clarifications are in italics. These notes are published at <https://www.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/Commissioners/Minutes%202014/March%204,%202014.htm>

The time stamps refer to the times on the AV Capture archive of the meeting on this date at <https://okanogancounty.org/avcapture.html> To locate items in real time, the clock on the wall in the AV Capture screen can be helpful.

Summary of significant discussions:

CB is elected Chairman of the Board and AH is elected Vice-chair.

Commissioners discuss the questions they'll ask the two applicants they'll interview to replace the County Prosecutor who's resigned.

Dennis Rabidou introduces David McClay, the new CEO of Okanogan Behavioral Healthcare.

03:15—AH is locked out of his computer and asks LJ to get Central Services to help him.

AH&CB discuss AH's new truck.

LJ—Naomi Peasely called to cancel her meeting with the BOCC this afternoon. She's rescheduled for January 22.

LJ—I call the Board to Order.

AH—Commissioner Branch, would you like to be chairman?

JD—I second.

CB—Well, I can't do the job JD did...

JD—Yes you can.

LJ—Second call for nominations for chair...

LJ—Third call for nominations for chair....Hearing none, all vote in favor of CB for chair.

CB—Nominations for Vice-chair...

JD—I nominate AH and move to cast unanimous ballot. Passes 3-0.

17:30—LJ—I'll go down the list of boards and committees each commissioner belongs to.
(Commissioners will check their lists and give LJ a correct copy in a week.)

31:50—The commissioners will interview candidates for Prosecutor next Monday and AH asks LJ to put in on the agenda. *(Note: Because the resigning prosecutor, Arian Noma, ran for office as a Republican, the Okanogan County Republicans is the organization that will receive applications and refer their top*

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three candidates to the commissioners who will make the final choice. They received only two applications and referred both of them.)

The commissioners review questions sent to them by Tanya Craig of Human Resources, to prepare for the interviews.

AH—Maybe we should adjust the questions. AH and CB agree to discard questions #2 and #4.

JD—Doesn't the party make the recommendations?

AH—Yes. They met on Saturday and got only two applications. We appoint one of them. Then that person has to go through a special election this year and the real election in the next cycle. I think that's it.

CB—I'll check to make sure.

AH—Question #9 needs to be reworded. "How do you discipline people?" would be more direct.

CB—Or "What forms of disciplinary action would you use?"

AH—Question #19 is a repeat.

AH--#20—"How do you know you'll be successful" should be "What do you think makes a good prosecutor?"

AH—What kind of managerial experience have you had?

AH—What do they expect the level of contact with the BOCC to be?

CB—Or maybe "What's your view of the relationship between the prosecutor and commissioners.

AH and CB discuss party affiliation, but much of the discussion is not loud enough to hear. CB points out that when someone runs for Prosecutor, he or she declares a party preference. Brandishing weapons, trespassing during hunting season and domestic violence are used as examples where a prosecutor's judgement would make a big difference in deciding to charge someone.

CB—Maybe it would be better to avoid the party affiliation and ask a question about how do you see the prosecutor's job philosophically.

CB—A related question is "What are your priorities as a prosecutor?"

1:02:40—AH—Another question to ask is about how the candidates feels about the county hiring specialty counsels, especially for civil matters.

CB— Land use and employment law for example. Prosecutor's Office wouldn't have those specialties.

AH—Office management, budget.

CB—Right. Lawyers usually don't go into law to be administrators. If I go into office and don't have those skills, I can hire someone who does.

CB—This is a difficult situation because of implications of replacing your attorney and looking at how you want your attorney to be. It's an interesting hiring process because voters decide in the end to confirm or not. If your attorney and issues with you or potential issues it makes things complicated. Do you feel that way? Would it be a different situation if it were the Treasurer?

AH—No.

CB—It is different to me.

AH—(Very faint.) Talks about Treasurer and Prosecutor.

CB—It's different for me is that it's a legal position and litigation is a complicated matter. So many discussions can't be discussed openly.

AH—(Too faint.) You said it was different to you. Where are you trying to go with that statement?

CB—I'm trying to say something that I can't say in an open meeting. It's a legal matter connected to an office that's a legal position and it's complicated.

AH—So we should go to executive session?

CB—The last time we had to replace the prosecutor was when Karl (Sloan) resigned under different circumstances.

CB—Can we do an executive session about developing these interview questions?

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AH—Yes. Developing the questions is part of evaluating the qualifications of applicants. So I move to go executive session using RCW 42.30.110(1)(h)—evaluate qualification of a job applicant for 10 minutes.
1:39:50—Executive session over.

2:03:10—DR and DMc arrive.

DR—This meeting is a “Meet and greet” with David McClay, the new CEO of Okanogan Behavioral Healthcare (OBHC).

DMc—I’m from Cowlitz County, and I’m a WSU alum. I’ve worked in behavioral health and substance abuse for 11 years. I started as an accountant. My family would like to retire here. My daughter is developmentally delayed and will always live with us. Any questions?

CB—You started out on the financial side of things. What started you out in the financial side of in behavioral health? Any other relevant background?

DMc—I was an auditor and worked on an audit with a behavioral health organization much like OBHC. That’s how I got the position as Chief Financial Officer, then Chief Operating Officer and now Chief Executive Officer.

CB—It’s a plus to have someone from the financial side.

DR—His resume is impressive, his circumstance with his family is unique and his financial background is a bonus.

AH—The last person to hold your position was more geared to the actual treatment, so you’re a different kind of director. Do you have any educational background in mental health?

DMc—No.

AH—That’s fine. We always have lots of questions about budgets and contracts with OBHC.

CB—From my point of view we’ll be figuring it out together. We don’t always understand how the funds work from the county’s perspective. Your background will be helpful. If we look at the federal program that’s a pass-through through the state—the HCA (Health Care Authority)—and we’re trying to figure this stuff out. You’ll be very helpful.

CB—And transitional healthcare, from mental health into integration is important to me. I was in a Spokane ACH (Accountable Community of Health) and there were so many technicalities to figure out. The OBHC helped us out. Since you’re from Washington, you’ll know what it’s about. (*Note: ACHs are independent, regional organizations. They work with their communities on specific health care and social needs-related projects and activities. This work seeks to improve the health of people in Washington State.*) Were they an early adopter?

DMc—Cowlitz County was a late adopter. You touch on some good points. Mental health is in health care and we have to be able to provide it. Anecdotal stories are great but we need facts and figures.

AH—(Very faint.) Discusses healthcare issues and RCWs requiring the county to spend money on various health related issues.

CB—You know already about the connection between mental health and jails. We spend so much money because the cost of incarceration is so high.

AH—Also crisis response. Sometimes Okanogan County has only 4 or 5 deputies on duty at a time and if they have to do a crisis response that affects public safety.

DR—DMc and the Sheriff know about this issue.

DMc—Yes. I like the idea of integrating mental health and substance abuse with the Sheriff’s Department. A family friend was sworn in as a deputy in Multnomah County and the Sheriff said that the Department is the biggest provider of health services in the county.

CB—You’ll see me in a lot of meetings and I look forward to working with you.

DMc—I look forward to working with all three of you. We can leverage the money that’s out there and we don’t have to reinvent the wheel.

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CB & DMC discuss a person they both know in Cowlitz County.

LJ—I just wanted to mention that I met with Eric Westerland, CFO of OBHC, on Thursday. We went over invoices and what they should look like on our end and what financial documents the invoices needed for backup.

2:28:25—AH—We'll adjourn until 1:30.

2:48:34—AH—Pete (Palmer, Planning Director) cancelled.

JD—We've got Naomi (Peasley, Fairgrounds) at 3:00.

AH—She cancelled, too.

Commissioners discuss who will telecommute tomorrow. CB will talk to Lauri Jones of Public Health who is concerned that about all three commissioners being together with a rise in Covid infections. They decide that JD will be in the office tomorrow. CB and AH will zoom in.