

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, Dec. 27, 2021 PM

JD—Jim DeTro, BOCC, District 3
AH—Andy Hover, BOCC vice-chair, District 1
CB—Chris Branch, BOCC chair, District 2
LJ—Lalena Johns-clerk to the Commissioners
MG—Maurice Goodall, Emergency Management

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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:

BOCC conducts performance evaluations for five employees: Karen Beatty (Central Services), Dan Higbee (Building Department), Maurice Goodall (Emergency Management), Tanya Everett (Risk Management and Human Resources), Josh Thomson (Public Works) and Naomi Peasley (Fairgrounds Management). These evaluations are all done in executive sessions. There is another executive session with Dave Gecas (County attorney) to discuss potential litigation.

BOCC also discusses if they should send a letter to Gov. Inslee, recommending Judge Grim for the upcoming opening for a Superior Court judgeship.

Finally, the BOCC discusses what the county's priorities should be for ARPA funds. Broadband tops the list.

2:34:50—AH—I move to go into executive session for 30 minutes. RCW 42.30.110 (1)(g) for the performance evaluation for Karen Beatty, Director of Central Services. Passes 3-0.

3:01:45—Before Dan Higbee's performance evaluation he and JD chat about JD's house being without water today. The problem of frozen pipes in the well house is now solved.

AH—I move to go into executive session for 15 minutes for employee evaluation of Dan Higbee of the Building Department. Passes 3-0.

3:04:25—AH asks LJ to see if Dave Gecas (county attorney) and Mike Worden (Dispatch Center) would be available later for an executive session this afternoon concerning potential litigation.

LJ—OK.

MG—Do you want an update before my evaluation?

AH—Judge Culp is retired and we commissioners have no say in his replacement. The governor will appoint someone. But Judge Grim looks like the best replacement and I wonder if the board would be willing to write a letter to the governor telling him of our belief that he'd be good.

JD—I'm not so sure a letter would be well received from me.

CB—I'd like to think about it a little bit and see what it would mean. I'm curious about the process of how people get considered by the governor. I wonder who else might be named besides Judge Grim.

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AH—I've heard a few names. But Judge Grim is even-keeled and just a good member of the community, lives in the Methow.

JD—Very intelligent.

AH—This is bothersome—The Planning Commission meeting on our agenda is at 7, but Isabelle says it's at 6. Which is it? Can you check, Lanie?

LJ—I'll look in the paper and see what the advertising said.

3:13:20—MG will give an update to the commissioners before his performance evaluation, which begins in 8 minutes.

MG—Cold weather. We haven't made any announcements because there are so many other sources of information predicting the cold. I reached out to a number of towns where the temperatures are coldest. Public Works says they're doing OK, but they should remember the frost is going to keep going down. One call from McLoughlin Canyon where a woman had called to say drifting snow made it impossible for her to open her door. A deputy dug her out and made sure she had the propane hooked up for some heat.

MG—Okanogan River was high. Now it's frozen. There might be an issue if there's a thaw and the ice starts moving. Also, there's an issue with a frozen vertical sewer tower in Okanogan.

LJ—(Speaking of the Planning Commission meeting) I found the paper and it says 6:00 o'clock.

MG—Not sure what an upright sewer tower is, but they said they were taking care of it. No issues besides that. Roads are all open.

CB—People traveling should have what they need in the vehicle because they'll freeze if they have to walk out.

MG—Haven't seen any issues with homeless. PUD had one outage, but not in the Methow.

AH—They missed the winds in the Methow.

MG—It was windier up here, but the Methow was colder.

MG—Don't know what's going on in the Reservation because no one answers the calls, but I don't think the wind hit over there.

AH—I move to go into executive session for 15 minutes for performance evaluation of Maurice Goodall of Emergency Management. Passes 3-0.

3:23:50—AH—I move to go into executive session for 15 minutes for performance evaluation for Tanya Everett of Risk Management and Human Resources. Passes 3-0.

3:37:15—AH—I move to go into executive session for 5 minutes RCW 42.30.110 (1)(i) to discuss potential litigation, with Dave Gecas. Passes 3-0.

3:41:45—LJ—Do you want me to see if the two other folks having performance evaluations today can come early?

BOCC—Sure.

3:50:30—AH—I move to go into executive session for 15 minutes for performance evaluation for Josh Thomson of Public Works. Passes 3-0.

4:04:30—AH—I move to go into executive session for 15 minutes for performance evaluation for Naomi Peasley, Fairgrounds Manager. Passes 3-0.

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4:24:40—CB—I talked with Roni (Holder-Diefenbach, Exec. Dir. Of the Economic Alliance) today and she’s going to come in to talk about ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds. She asked if there’s anything we’d particularly like her to address.

AH—Broadband. It’s the highest dollar amount, if we could learn how much funds we could get. We’ve done studies in the whole county about broadband and everybody knows it’s important. There are also water infrastructure projects.

CB—We haven’t had requests for water systems, but if no one requests them....

CB—And broadband is called out so clearly in the...

AH—Exactly.

CB—Another one is the PUD request. It’s not huge. But we want to make sure people are using the funding that’s available. It’s the easiest money to go after. Approving it is up to the board, but I was probably advocated the least.

AH—What changed you mind?

CB—Covid and ARPA funds can be used for that. It seems to me if we can pave the way to a good relationship with the PUD, especially with broadband coming up, and it’s helping people write off their bills, it helps people.

CB—Roni will talk about broadband but also about another concept she has for business. I’m looking forward to that.

AH—We should look at her ranked list of projects. If the building we purchased remains able to be purchased through that, we only have about 2.2 million in the infrastructure portion.

CB—Let’s look at the list she has. Also, I read one of those newspapers that (unintelligible, maybe NACo, National Assoc of Counties?) sends out, listing their top eleven priorities. One of them is in this next session of Congress—to loosen up on how those dollars can be spent. Maybe it’d be good to communicate to our Congress people to say that’s what they’re pushing and what we’re pushing.

CB—I just heard a little while ago that Lael (Duncan, Community Action) fell and broke her ankle or something. She had to go to the coast to get it fixed and she’ll be out for eight months. They’re interviewing for her replacement anyway, because she was going to leave in five months. They’ve got thirteen applications. Maybe I’ll be on the selection committee.

AH—And the TRANGO Board opened the director’s job to in-house only.

Adjourned.