

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, Feb.29, 2021 AM and PM

JD—Jim DeTro, BOCC, District 3
AH—Andy Hover, BOCC,vice-chair, District 1
CB—Chris Branch, BOCC, chair, District 2(absent during the morning session)
LJ—Lalena Johns-clerk to the Commissioners
PYP—Pam y Perez
PP—Pete Palmer, Director of Planning and Development
DG—David Gecas, Attorney for the county
DMc—Dave McClay, CEO, Okanogan Behavioral Healthcare (OBHC)
DR—Dennis Rabidou, Chair, Board of Directors, OBHC
LD—Lael Duncan, Exec Director, Okanogan County Community Action Council
RH-D—Roni Holder-Diefenbach, Exec Director, Economic Alliance

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:

4:30 AH & JD discuss several issues. Something has been suspended by Columbia Crown, the water banking corporation. AH would like to begin attending meetings of the Eastern Washington Council of Governments along with JD.

1:27:05 Pam Perez updates the Commissions on the Veterans Relief Board. She is leaving and Tom will take her place.

1:56:40 Josh Thomson gives the Public Works Update.

2:55:30 Pete Palmer gives the Planning Department update. AH and CB have a long discussion about reestablishing a subarea committee for the Methow. PP also says she may have to review the AV Capture of the March 22 Planning Commission meeting to be sure what was actually decided.

3:46:37 Commissioners and Dave Gecas plan to go into executive session to discuss pending litigation. DG says it concerns procedural issues in the Ecology case and the Comp Plan case, working on a settlement with the Yakama nation.

(Times indicated are on the second AV Capture video of the day.)

04:45 Update, OBHC (Okanogan Behavioral Healthcare) quarterly meeting. Discussion of recent staff changes, a grant that funds four positions, and the 988 telephone hotline for mental health emergencies.

40:35—Discussion CDBG CV2 grant application by the Okanogan County Community Action Council. Lael Duncan discusses a recent addendum to Community Action’s budget report. Also a discussion of the plusses and minuses of the CDBG CV 2grant opportunities.

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04:40—JD—Did you see they suspended the Crown Columbia Water.....

10:35—JD & AH discuss restructuring the wolf plan.

12:40—AH says he's like to start going to Eastern Washington Council of Governments meetings, along with JD.

21:00—JD again mentions Crown Columbia and the water banking issue. They had suspended the action. Might kick it up to the legislature. AH talks about economics of different crops—alfalfa vs cherries, for example.

39:40—LJ and AH discuss the recent training for the county's new website. It went "really fast", but there are lots of help videos to review.

41:40—Discussion of bids for Legal Paper awards.

56:00—JD says RH-D is applying for a grant and needs support letters by noon today. AH discusses this with LJ.

59:50—AH—That was Keith Goehner on the phone. Today's the last day to ask for a \$500,000 proviso. We're supposed to send the request on a form, which we didn't fill out. He's going to send us the form. We'll complete it and send it back to Mike Steele and him.

1:04:15—LJ gives AH a list of her job duties that could be done by others, giving her more time to deal with administering grants. AH asked her for the list in the February 15 BOCC meeting in the morning session. They discuss hiring an extra person.

1:22:40—David Gecas will be in at 2 PM for the commissioners to sign an agreement.

1:24:30—More discussion of the support letters for RH-D.

1:27:05—Update, Veterans Relief Board

PyP—Things are starting to pick up at the office, due to vaccinations, nice weather, etc.

--Trying to get Tom up to speed so he can slide in without trouble.

--Veterans health issues.

--Seattle regional office is still closed, so no ETA on claims. Turn-around is slow.

--Outreach in the Methow. Room 1 is open by appointment. Brewster office still closed because there's no room for distancing. Maybe be able to do outreach in eastern part of county—out towards Coulee Dam. Change of guard with tribal veterans' service office and hoping to have better rapport with the new people.

--Having a sonic wall installed for better security for their computers.

--VA has been contacting veterans for Covid shots, for those under VA healthcare.

--Tom says he's ready to take over.

AH—how has Covid and lockdown affected veterans in Okanogan County?

PyP—People got sick of lockdown pretty quick. Fewer people come in. Concern for people who may experience mental health issues. Community in Tonasket and rural areas, people are looking after each other.

AH—We appreciate you being VSO (Veterans Service Officer). We'll see you next time, Tom.

1:43:50—AH discusses proviso language for DOE. \$250,000 per year for two years from general fund to discuss water and land use issues and mitigation in the Methow watershed.

1:48:05—LJ—Are there any anecdotes to relay in the letters of support for broadband? AH—Just that during the pandemic the lack of broadband infrastructure in Okanogan County has become apparent. It's important we have reliable broadband to support working class families, businesses, school children.

1:56:40—Public Work update--JT

Start with Public Works item on tomorrow's consent agenda. Bid award Driskell to Verestar Rd Project—Grant Construction Company.

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--Maintenance and road conditions pretty normal. Not much damage from the wind storm last night.
--Old 97 project done.
--Rendezvous Road will get chip sealed this year. The first ½ to ¾ of a mile from the West Chewuch Road. We'll do some chip sealing in Chiliwist next year.
--Area 3 and 5 shops got an estimate for them. Approximately \$102,000 for the two shops to get the bid packages ready. About what I expected.
--Snowmobile grooming is about over. Then they'll start clearing Hart's Pass for a ways so snowmobilers can drive up higher and snowmobile longer.
--Grant opportunity –SRS funds to add to grooming and sno-park plowing. And maybe get a bigger truck to transport the groomer.
--Employees went to Mexico and so have to quarantine for 10 days, per CDC. Lauri Jones consulted. Another employee tested positive, but he hadn't interacted with co-workers so no one else has to quarantine.
--Several items coming up on the consent agenda.
--Waiving tipping fees for fire debris.
--Gravel pit discussion. ER&R fund (Equipment Rental and Revolving Fund) pays for crushing.
--JT will be gone next week.
--Looking for future pit purchases.
--Crushing in Miller Pit is up and running. Going well. Only complaint has been dust on the road.
--JT asks about WDFW purchase. AH will ask about it.
--JT asks about state budget regarding carbon. Carbon fee seems to be on hold. Discussion of capital gains tax, sales tax, income tax.

2:33:00—AH will be gone next Tuesday.

LJ is working on the letters of support that are due at noon (30 minutes).

2:44:00—LJ—Does the board support the RBDG (Rural Business Development Grant) for the Business and Technology Center? And if so, do you have any comments?

2:47:20—LJ—I've got the letters done (for RH—D) and approved for signatures.

2:51:5---Adjourn until 1:30.

Afternoon session begins.

2:55:30—CB is now in attendance. Planning Department update.

PP—Methow advisory committees. Would like direction from BOCC about getting them reestablished and moving forward in updating their comprehensive plans. Most of the comments we received on our Comprehensive Plan would better fit into the subarea plans. Long discussion on how to form a new subarea committee.

3:27:05—AH—Pete, has the Planning Commission come to a final consensus on the draft of the Comp Plan they're going to send to the commissioners?

PP—They finalized an alternative but I'm trying to see what happened by listening to the AV Capture. A lot of us left confused, and we need to run that stuff by David Gecas. We may have to reconvene in a special meeting and lay out exactly what they did and what they meant to do.

3:28:10—PP—a couple of quick items. Have you scheduled a date for the Stennis (?) Road 911 appeal? No hearing requirements, but you guys have to make a decision.

CB—Is there value in having a hearing?

DG—I asked the parties if they'd object to waiving a hearing. Both said as long as the documents they'd submitted were being considered, they wouldn't object.

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AH—Let's put it on the agenda.

CB—I'll look at it like a closed record hearing.

DG—Read through material beforehand. And we can have executive session if you'd like. Both sides have threatened litigation concerning the name of a road.

AH—Can we put it on the agenda? 11 AM on Monday, April 5.

3:36:20—PP—Reminder that we've got the WRIA 49 this Thursday, April 1, 6:00 PM.

PP—I'll be out of the office on Wednesday.

PP—Want to bring it to your attention. Moving forward, we've got five Planning Commission members with expired terms. Discussion about what to do.

3:42:47—DG wants to present Profession Service Agreement by Van Ness Feldman LLP regarding land use cases.

3:46:37—Go in to Executive Session with DG regarding pending litigation—procedural issues in the Ecology case and the Comp Plan case, working on a settlement with the Yakama nation.

Afternoon session continues after the Executive Session, with a new AV Capture video.

Update, OBHC (Okanogan Behavioral Healthcare) quarterly meeting.

04:45—DMc—First Quarter 2021. I'm the new CEO. Also have a new Chief Clinical Officer, Quinn Lontz and a new Chief Financial Officer, Eric Westerlund.

--Quinn and DMc are meeting with stakeholders all over the county.

--We're seeing more people face-to-face as Covid restrictions are eased. Clients can decide how they want to see us.

--Zip code report—to see where we're serving clients in which populated areas.

--Received a Certified Community Behavioral Health Center grant. It will allow us to hire four more people to form an ACT (Assertive Community Treatment) team. Serve fewer clients more intensively. Grant also includes purchase of a van and \$75,000 clubhouse remodel. Grant is through SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration).

--State Legislature has lots of bills concerning behavioral health.

--We currently have six openings, including the four from SAMHSA. We need a case manager in Oroville, and a psychiatric provider who will work in person.

--Big call for children's services. WAIS teams (Wrap Around with Intensive Services) to engage with children.

--Serving as many people as we can in a quality way.

--Looking at updating our electronic record keeping.

--Looking at finances.

--Getting stakeholders and clients involved in how services are set up.

--Crisis services. Seeing a split change. When contracts were created the split was 70% Medicaid and 30% non-Medicaid. Last numbers I saw for Okanogan County was 51-49. This means we lose \$10,000/month or \$120,000/year. Other insurance companies need to pay for this, not us. Not sure what the solution is.

CB—Is there a coding system like in medical field for billing codes?

DMc—Yes.

CB—Discussion about 988 (telephone hotline for mental health emergencies) meeting I attended this morning. Also questions about Certified Community Behavioral Health Centers. CB—So the crux is certified under a federal system opens up the door for more funds for what you need to be doing?

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DMc—Potentially yes.

AH—Last question. Are we squared away with budgeting from the county to OBHC for the three funds we have?

DMc—I think so, but I'll check with Eric, the CFO, to make sure.

39:05—CB—That was good news about the Crown Columbia decision.

AH—Well, Suspended. What does that mean?

CB—But it gives the legislature time to figure stuff out.

40:35—Discussion CDBG CV2 grant application by the Okanogan County Community Action Council

LD—Discusses addendum to the annual report that was presented last summer.

--Covers the money from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Covid grant. Covers from July 1 to Feb.

--Provided over \$47,000 in rent, utilities and mortgage payments.

--Additionally purchased over \$12,000 in food for food pantries. Includes meat from local stores.

--Helped with distribution of food we'd received to pantries. 1,200,000 pounds of food. \$2,126,362 worth of food. This year we're doing better with food grants.

--Help from National Guard.

CB—Volunteers also move food to food banks, too?

LD—Yes.

47:45—CB—Agenda says grant application.

LJ—I think we were hoping to hear if the county applied for the CV 2 grant, what those funds would be used for.

RH-D—We'd access micro-enterprises grants. But it costs more to process those grants because it's hard to find businesses that meet the eligibility requirements. That's what we heard from our colleagues who've received these grants.

LD—We're set us to deal with CDBG because we've been doing public service grants for so long.

LD—We had an opportunity to apply for emergency rental assistance. \$2,800,000 coming from the state. Easy to apply for. And I could see that when our funds were expiring, it'd help with rent, and conserve our CDBG money which can be used for mortgage payments.

AH—Does the 2.8 million include utilities.

LD—Yes. Rent and utilities.

AH—I heard we have a large amount in unpaid utilities.

LD—Money can be used for irrigation bills, too, for residential use.

AH—Been in contact with PUD and co-ops?

LD—Yes. All the time.

CB—Money available for food banks to hire low income people. Do you know about it?

LD—Don't know about that, but there's some money for food banks to buy equipment. \$155,000.

LJ—CV 2 grant opens April 1, and must be completed by April 31. \$172,000. Looks like it ends in June, 2023.

RH-D—You talked about mortgage assistance. Any talk of help to landlords?

LD—T-RAP (Treasury Rental Assistance Program) money can help landlords.

1:07:00—CB—Thanks Lael and Roni.

AH and CB discuss the information sheet about LJ's duties.

Adjourn