

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, March 8, 2021 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
PP—Pete Palmer, Director of Planning and Development
MW—Mike Worden, Okanogan County Dispatch Center
JT—Josh Thomson, Management

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The time stamps refer to the times audiotape of the meeting on this date at <https://www.countywatch.org/> .

Summary of significant discussions:

00:00 PP gives the Planning Department update. She addresses concerns from Isabelle Spohn. She and the Commissioners discuss how better to use the county's website to inform the public about upcoming hearings.

20:20 Her presentation is interrupted for the discussion with Mike Worden and Josh Thomson of Senator Murray's request for a list of priorities for infrastructure funding. "Shovel ready" projects are preferred. The commissioners discuss the communication center, broadband internet in the county and rebuilding the bridges on Hwy 153 as high priorities.

53:10 Commissioners and JT discuss the appeal of someone whose bid was rejected because of a minor error. Since that bid was the lowest, the Commissioners would like to accept it.

1:03:45 PP resumes her update. Commissioners discuss and adopt a motion to approve Ordinance 2021-4 adopting interim amendments to several portions of the Okanogan County Code.

1:17:10 Commissioners discuss the resolution to join a Pest Control District with Chelan and Douglas Counties. After much discussion, it's decided that AH and LJ will work on the wording more and the resolution will be introduced again at a later meeting.

00:00—PP—Planning Department update.

PP—First up, some concerns from Isabelle Spohn and I'll try to address them. Basically a response to her email of March 3 concerning the Methow Valley plan of 1976 and the 2014 Comprehensive Plan update that adopted the Methow Valley More Completely Planned Area (MCPA) Ordinance 2014-121.

- On page 53 of the 1976 edition, Perry Huston (former Planning Director) referred to the need for a new advisory committee. We'd talked about these advisory committees that we have—one in Oroville and a couple in the Methow. I compared the 1976 plan to the

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2014 plan. I found that it was retyped and reformatted and that changed the page numbers. Perry added the part about advisory committees.

- There was a blank spot under a study area map, and talked about School District 350. The GIS team printed out a copy of the Methow Valley School District 350. It's an irregular shape of 200 square miles. I think if we ever do another draft I'll suggest that the map be updated and not just carried over from 1976.
- Current edition has a discussion about the Alpine ski resort, but because it was never developed, it's not included in the new update.
- Page omitted listed BOCC, Planning Committee, Planning Department and Board of Adjustments from 1975. It belonged in the 1976 plan but not the 2014 plan. Another page omitted talked about the speakers at the meetings in 1975, and again, not needed in the 2014 version. But it was important to document that, so people could see how the 1976 plan came into play.

So I wanted you to know that as Isabelle makes these inquiries, I research them.

AH—I'd ask that we don't talk about that anymore until we need to discuss this and move forward with the plan.

CB—I'm going to bring something up anyway. I agree, but there's another letter that went out to all the Planning Commissioners. And that one I was a little more concerned about. It's about a statement in plan relying on input taken throughout the region—the citizen involvement part of it. That work was done quite a while ago and the plan says the EIS was a result of that information. But that can come at the hearing. The other part is all that kind of stuff can be fixed by the Planning Commission before it's shipped out.

PP—I had Craig Nelson's contract extension on the agenda, but I haven't received the signed copy yet, so I'll talk about it next week.

PP—I have the updated draft ordinance to readopt interim control.

AH—Did you email it to the clerk?

LJ—Is this what you emailed me already? Is this something the board would consider adopting today?

CB—Interim Control Ordinance? Be preferable if we adopted it today.

LJ—I don't have the Word version, so I'll need it.

PP—I'll send it as soon as I get back.

LJ—And we'll need a public hearing.

AH—Here's what I want to bring up and really stress: We've got a lot of emails lately about notifying the public of public hearings. We've got a legal obligation to do it at a certain time, and we always follow those requirements as necessary. However, we should go a step beyond that. Any hearing that comes before the commissioners would be on a list of upcoming public hearings. Commissioner Branch?

CB—It would be pure suicide for me to object to that. I think we should give better notice.

AH—No change in our noticing requirements, but also have a list. Not just with Planning Department, but any group where we have to sit at a hearing.

PP—I think we've got that straight. Morgan has a tickler on her calendar to notify Lanie if we need the hearing room, WRIA meetings, etc. Hoping now with Morgan full-time the scheduling problems won't happen.

AH—I think the issue is that it's good for anybody who comes to our website, at least after it gets nice and done, sees our agenda where she has our list.

CB—We've talked about this in the past, and that has to do with the website having a section for public hearing notices. People would get used to it.

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AH—We can bring this up when we get closer to the final website—that we need a place for these notices.

CB—We have a lot on the front page right now. And there are other things that maybe should be there.

AH—Don't want to get it too full.

LJ—We're having training on the new website next Wednesday and Thursday. For the departments that will be managing their department sites.

AH—So for our home page, there's the burn ban, etc, but the public hearing section is important.

LJ—I don't know exactly what it will look like until we have our training.

AH—There's stuff on there that I think could be moved elsewhere. Like "Report Non-Emergency Wolf Activity". That's been there for a long time.

CB—I think everyone is anticipating having a new website.

PP—They told us not to change stuff for a while.

AH—So that's why I'm saying—right now on the agenda and later, on the front page.

CB—A news release will put it in the body of the newspaper.

LJ—Right now it's on the bottom of the agenda. Just the ones for the county commissioners.

PP—So I'll go email LJ the Word version of the ordinance. Should I come back afterwards?

CB—How about 3:30?

AH—We'll have time before that. 2:30 instead.

PP—OK. I'll be back.

20:20—JD—The Pest Board was trying to make a determination for adaptive management request for WRIA and they asked me to stay over.

AH—Hello (to MW)

MW—Patty Murray sent a survey about infrastructure priority funding.

AH—Josh (Thomson, County Engineer) should have been here, too, to discuss county infrastructure.

Asks LJ to call Josh to see if he's available.

MW—Mike Worden, Okanogan County Dispatch Center. Mayor of Pateros forwarded this to me from Sen. Patty Murray's office. An infrastructure priority solicitation I'm sure was sent to cities, counties, non-profits, etc. My interest is to make sure the Board of Commissioners is aware of this. And I've got stuff that could be on the list.

CB—I've seen it, and I thank you for bringing it up.

MW—Things we'd like to address, if this is the time. There's the communications effort that should be on the list.

AH—There's a tax to fund the communications projects. And I understand your wanting to get things done more quickly. However, I'd like to hear the other things, too. Because this could be funded via a tax, so it's low on the list of things we need to find funding for.

MW—At some point we'll need a new dispatch facility with more space. IT has limitations in its current space. The jail we're talked about. Those are three things on our radar.

AH—We've been talking about the Forest Service facility and the juvenile facility moving there. I've never been inside the juvenile detention facility and have no idea what it looks like. Would it work for an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and IT?

MW—I think likely it's a sound structure and it just depends on the quality of retrofit you need. So yes, but is the space enough for your needs in 10 or 20 years? It's smaller than this room and we fill it up when there's an emergency.

AH—Smaller than this room?

MW—I think so, but we'd have to look it. And see if we could open it up. If you're expecting the public to show up, you have to consider the parking situation. But something to think about.

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AH—Some things that have cropped up on my radar for infrastructure, specific to my district—all the bridges along Hwy 153. \$150,000,000 worth of infrastructure.

AH—Here's Josh, so I'll start over. We're talking about the infrastructure solicitation from Sen. Patty Murray. Talking about the communication aspect of it—the EOC & dispatch and the jail. Public Works we've talked about is the bridges on 153. Not county infrastructure (*because 153 is a State Highway*) but very important to the county. And then there's the condition of Hwy 20—the road's coming apart. Another thing brought up, and it would be the board's decision as to whether I sign my name to it, is the Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board. The tribal fisheries want to get federal money to remove the sea lions. I brought it up in passing but I'm not going to sign anything before we talk about infrastructure here.

CB—This has to be in by March 15, next Monday. So prioritization process would be better to see the merit of each project. Some haven't been vetted and I don't think I'd put them on as a priority, especially ones that would take a lot of coordination. Shovel ready is important. But we know that the communications system has been a priority for a long time. And we know we can finance it through taxation, but that's a big bill. I'd put it as a higher priority than some other projects. But most other people don't. It's the completion of a federal project that's already been funded partially. Not as exciting but it's a project in Oroville. We had Sen. Murray's support for the first part. And there are other projects in our Capital Facilities Plan. Maybe talk about it tomorrow.

AH—Another one is the internet within Okanogan County. Maybe close to shovel ready. It's in the \$80,000,000 range to get both sides of the county.

MW—I don't think we're limited as to how many we submit. I think this is just to get it on her radar.

CB—Discussing how these priorities work for us. Read a list of projects from the Northwest Area Foundation (nwaf.org) had to do with job creation and included infrastructure. Just a format to evaluate your priorities.

AH—I'm willing to rank our list.

CB—None of our projects are exactly shovel ready, but that project (internet) is really close. We have a whole series of improvements that are identified. The fact that we passed a tax to support it speaks well. And there's a couple of others—the court house that we can't seem to fund. Just my opinion, but maybe just 6-8 projects. If you submit too many, it looks like you don't know what your priorities are.

AH—I brought up the sea lion thing because they're going to push for support from the Salmon Recovery Board, and I don't want to be double dipping with county priorities and Salmon priorities, too.

CB—and the Salmon Recovery Board should be submitting that. I don't see it as infrastructure.

AH—I don't either.

CB—I think it should be seen as a salmon recovery issue and I don't see this form pertaining to that. I'd try to focus on the projects in the Capital Facilities Plan for infrastructure and anything we've done with the Economic Alliance.

AH—I don't want to lose sight of those bridges. Not county infrastructure.

CB—That might do better as something collective. I don't know if the DOT is asking for money.

AH—to JT—could you ask if DOT has a solicitation form from Sen. Murray about infrastructure funds, and get back to us with an email?

JT—OK.

MW—Do you want us to prepare a list?

AH—Can you make a list of projects for the Sheriff's Department and rank them?

CB—How many do you have?

MW—Two or three, depending on how you count. Dispatch stuff by itself or part of the jail extension.

CB—Are they well enough defined in scope to make a submittal?

MW—I think we can submit for this. Depends on shovel ready.

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CB—If we get funding for some things, it frees up more money to do feasibility studies, etc.

AH—We've got concepts but no real feasibility studies. If you do them, they sit on the shelf, but you do them to understand how much money it'll cost.

CB—This one—you've developed it. It's a county project that we know and we've been talking about quite a long time. Seems like it would rise up to (?).

AH—If you plug it in with internet—Yes, bridges are important. I won't let them fall—but internet in this county is really, really important too. We submit those reports we were given (about broadband) because they have what we need to do.

MW—The Broadband Action Team, a county is a formal (?), the (something one?) and the Methow one, the county could submit as priorities and what departments those projects could be involved with. They're close to shovel ready.

CB—Hope the next phase of this survey is—Well, we like these projects. Your priorities are important to us as well. Tell us more about them—and if we can't do that in a definitive way, I'd be embarrassed.

AH—I think Roni (Holder-Diefenbach, Executive Director, Economic Alliance) and the two broadband action teams together could make a very good presentation.

CB—I agree because they've got a pretty good plan already.

MW—They've scoped the costs and defined project areas including costs.

AH—We talked about breaking it down into chunks that were \$5,000,000 to \$6,000,000 chunks instead of the whole \$80,000,000 and prioritize the areas.

CB—This is very popular and the other communications project is popular because of our disasters.

AH—Just tying it together just saying fund this and this. But saying here's a priority because of emergency services, but with funding internet helps communications during an emergency. See notifications better, for example.

CB—Josh, do you have particular projects?

JT—The way I read this, seems more like a list of state highway projects. I went through the list of county road projects.

CB—You're going to check with DOT. If they can't get the bridges funded in a reasonable time, then if they were to confirm that, I'd be excited to see those projects submitted.

AH—They can't. They took the Transportation Commission on a trip to see those bridges. They can't get funding because the ADTs (Average Daily Travel) are so low, they can't get any play over stuff going on in Seattle like electric ferries and other things. But if one of those bridges goes down, there is no way around them. If one breaks, it causes a lot of disturbance.

CB—Affects the economy.

AH—It would really halt transportation.

MW—We'll submit a list of projects that affect us.

AH—We'll prioritize, but who will submit the list?

CB—I suggest that if you have a project that we prioritize, that we submit the form.

AH—And will you get back to us, Josh, on the DOT?

CB—We had to go to DC that time, to talk to Sen. Murray about that project in Oroville at the intersection—to keep the railway working.

CB—So we have the Capital Facilities Plan...

AH—I was just working on it. Did you email that piece to me?

CB—Yes.

AH—We can go through that.

CB—The bridge projects are really important and ...

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53:10—JD—Josh, so you'd agree that I should have Shelly or Joel (*JD seems to be talking about bids recently submitted to the BOCC.*)

JT—I think at this point, it'd help with the schedule.

JD—Here's two more things that I've thought about. Okanogan County is an economically distressed county. That hasn't been brought up. We need to save every single dollar we can. If the work goes to Granite, those dollars leave the county. If the award exists as it is, they're buying their rock from David Freil (sp?) who's a resident of the county, the money is staying here. On that bid award, it's been kicked up to the... and it'll take five weeks. I want to get Shelly and Joel and Jacqueline to push these guys and tell them this means something in Okanogan County.

AH—Can we do it in a way that's not pushing for a particular person or company, but pushing them on the process. Say something like—Look. You guys made a decision on this and now someone is challenging that decision because of an administrative error. We need to get this stuff done.

JD—But I want to throw in those two facts.

AH—That's fine.

CB—I've got a question because I didn't get a full report.

AH—Josh sent me an email about it.

JT—Josh explains the administrative error. One bidder used an older DOT form and that was the problem. The difference between the two bidders wasn't very big. The apparent low bidder has asked for the process to be review. Takes a week for them to assign someone. And they then have 30 days to interview the contractor to make a determination.

JD—I think because of the disparity between the two forms, shouldn't be considered non-responsive.

CB—Any concern about our preference? Aside from being the low bidder, is there something else there?

JT—Not in my opinion.

JD—But look at the economics for the county.

CB—From the perspective of the lower bid?

JD—The lower bid, plus the next higher bid, the dollars would go out of the county.

CB—I'm concerned about that being the reason because that's not a consideration in the bid process.

AH—Commissioner Branch is right. The major consideration, or the consideration we should be discussing, is that it's the low bid. We need to save as much as we can on road projects, and it's the process we should be talking about. There was a low bidder who made an administrative error on a form that's not consistent.

CB—Pushing them is important too, because it delays our process.

AH—It'll save us money to get the low bidder so they should speed up the process.

JT—and local preference may not be legal at the state level.

1:03:45—PP is back.

PP—I think I sent what LJ needed. Interim required R-1 CUP (Conditional Use Permit) multi-family units not allowed in R-5 and R-20 zones.

CB—R-5s and R-20s are also in other parts of the county?

PP—Yes.

CB—That raised some concerns in Tunk Valley and sometimes you start to see the real impact of Campbell and Gwinn, which allies all over the county. There's a moratorium in the Tunk Valley and you'd be hard pressed to make a subdivision in the Tunk Valley.

AH—I agree.

CB—Concern about what the zoning allows.

AH—In the Methow, you say you can only build one house, but you're permitting multi-use, up to 25.

Campbell and Gwinn argument, I don't disagree. If you put a bunch of wells in one place, you'll create a

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withdrawal greater than exempt use. Scientifically, I believe that. But the thing we're running into over there is not using more than 5000 gallons; it's doing it, period. Places where they put in 100 20acre tracts, you have to look at physical water availability.

CB—The reason I brought this up—I was at the Economic Alliance the other day, and a representative of the (?) industry asked the question—will what's happening in the Methow going to come over to the Okanogan. And I thought it's not going to come over. It's always been here.

AH—It's between legally available water and physically available water. They had adjusted to lot sizes and regulations a long time ago. We don't have many giant lots. Whereas, over here...

CB—Some of those were actually exempt subdivisions.

AH—At some point you have to look at your available water to serve those people. And what about infrastructure. A winding, narrow road is not a place to be taking....

CB—You get it.

AH—But it's trying to understand it. You have to develop to the infrastructure. How do you quantify how many people you serve? What's the bulk density in a given area? If you have 20 acre tracts, we can zone down to one acre, but we're never going to go over the number of people who'd fit on the 20 acre tracts. That's a certain amount of people. It's relevant because that's the point we have to get to with land use.

CB—There's that side of it, plus the qualitative side, too

AH—Of what you want it to look like. You have to take those individually and say what can the infrastructure support, what qualitatively do you want it to look like.

CB—And what kind of infrastructure are you willing to build out.

CB—So that's where we are in the Comp Plan. And that's why the issues have been brought up with past meetings. Theirs is a visionary thing.

AH—I want to make sure, because the visionaries have the time to be visionary. If we're talking about qualitative analysis, we need good data gathered to do it.

CB—OK. We're almost there.

AH—I move to approve ordinance 2021-4 Ordinance adopting interim amendments to OCC17A.40.060, 17A.50.060, 17A.60.060 and 17A.220 (Okanogan County Code (codepublishing.com)) and setting public hearing as required by RCW 36.70.795 .

JD—I second.

AH—I don't see the date for the public hearing so we can do that after this.

Motion passes 3-0.

AH—Set a hearing within 60 days. Set it out a ways.

LJ—May 10 is in that time frame.

AH—Works for me. A Monday.

LJ—1:30?

AH—Move to set the public hearing for May 10 at 1:30.

Motion passes 3-0.

1:17:10—JD—We still have the Tri-County Interlocal Agreement. Resolution 26-2021

CB—There's a resolution prepared for Chelan Co we can use as a template. I sent it to you both.

LJ—Will Carpenter also sent on in pdf form.

(Commissioners spend the next hour trying to tweak the language in the template resolution to reflect the correct verbiage. In the end, it's decided that AH will work with LJ to correct the language and the commissioners will vote on the resolution tomorrow.)