

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners  
Monday, April 26, 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  
PP—Pete Palmer, Director of Planning and Development  
DR—Dennis Rabidou, Superior Court Administrator  
CC—Judge Chris Culp, Superior Court Judge

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:

*2:58:00 The Planning Department update is brief. AH asks for an overview of the Burma Shores project next week because he's received questions about it from constituents. (The Methow Valley News has an article about the development in its March 31, 2021 issue.*

*<https://methowvalleynews.com/2021/03/31/development-near-methow-plans-52-homes/> )*

*3:05:30 Commissioners discuss the recently enacted state budget.*

*3:18:00 Commissioners discuss a change in personnel in the court system and also the plan to remodel, renovate the Court House.*

*3:55:00 Commissioners discuss a possible meeting with cannabis growers about large farms leasing farm lands to smaller farms.*

*4:03:15 Commissioners discuss AH's upcoming meeting with the Colville tribe concerning the race track at the Fair Grounds.*

*4:13:25 CB updates AH and JD about the projects on Rep. Newhouse's list of infrastructure projects. He voted to support the Health Center and the other two agreed that it was the right choice.*

**2:58:00**—PP—I just have a couple of updates.

PP—AH asked about the cost of the permit software. There's an initial fee of \$33,294 or \$11,098 per program. Then there's an annual fee of \$21,183, or \$7061 per program. So for the 1<sup>st</sup> year, it costs \$54,477 and almost \$22,000 each year afterwards.

PP—The Critical Areas Ordinance is out for comments. They're due May 13.

PP—The Senior Planner position is advertised. Applications are due May 10.

AH—We've received comments about the Burma Shores project, also known as Copperstone. Can you give us an overview about this next week? Time line, etc.

CB—Does that project result in a subdivision?

PP—It's a long plat.

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CB—We make a decision on it, so we don't talk to people about it, right? It's quasi-judicial, which means we don't talk to people about it. I mentioned that to Angie last week, that we need to know about what projects are quasi-judicial.

AH—I didn't think about that.

CB—It's because there's so few of them.

JD—Thanks for the reminder.

PP—I'll tell staff to let you guys know if this comes up again.

CB—If you've talked to someone, you can divulge it at the hearing. It's OK to talk about process.

PP—If there are more in-depth questions about the project, I can research and answer them.

AH—Lanie, did you get a new resolution from Dennis?

LH—No. I heard they're revising one, but I haven't seen it yet.

**3:05:30**—CB—Did you see the final budget proviso about water banking?

AH—I assume they're final because they were sent by Sen. Hawkins' office.

CB—And you got the \$5,000,000...

AH—It looked like 4,500,000.

CB—So I got a thing from WSAC (Washington State Assoc. of Counties) about all the bills and it says \$5,000,000. It isn't going to be a rule making thing, to implement it. Very clear.

AH—I'm curious. It's in DOE's budget.

Discussion about budget provisions for water banking.

AH—What if someone from out of state starts one?

CB—Paul can answer our questions.

**3:09:05**—CB—I have a matrix that was sent to me by Melanie. Summary of the bills passed this session.

A budget summary. It's an Excel spreadsheet.

CB and AH discuss the state budget.

**3:18:00**—Discussion of Juvenile Employee Change Request with Dennis Rabidou and Judge Chris Culp.

DR—We have a vacancy for the Dependency Unit Manager/Therapeutic Coordinator. We want to move one manager into the vacant manager position and then vacate the Treatment Service Manager position and change the pay grades.

Discussion about how to accomplish this. DR will have to write a new resolution for the commissioners to act on.

**3:27:00**—Discussion changes to proposed remodel of county building for the courts.

AH—Costs are extensive. We went to thinking about buying another building to thinking the whole project will cost \$50,000,000. Or do we just spend \$750,000 to \$1,000,000 on court house security?

DR—It's not just security. We need more court rooms, etc.

Discussion about scope and price of various remodels, purchases, construction.

Discussion continues between AH and CB after DR and CC leave at **3:49:00**.

CB will email Michael Beaman, the architect who has drawn up plans for the Court House renovation, to ask about the potential for doing the project in phases. It'll cost more.

AH—I'd like to know the time line for the remodel for just the court. And what infrastructure (water, sewer, etc.) needs to be upgraded if we only did that one project.

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**3:53:30**—AH—We need to find out why, if they put all those screws in the roofs at the Fair Grounds, why it leaked when it rained this weekend. Lanie, could you ask Joe (Poulin) about it?  
LJ—I already did. He’s looking into it.

**3:55:00**—CB—There was a request for a meeting by one of the (cannabis?) growers. He wanted to talk about what could or should be done about operations that may not have the water adequacy necessary to do their operation. Pete says that as a requirement dependent on the exemption. They’re required to meter the water. I didn’t know that. How do they police it? I know that what drives Jeremy Moberg’s efforts is that the market is saturated and nobody’s making any money.

AH—I get calls from people complaining about down there. The expansion on old Hwy 99.

CB—You haven’t seen the one on Green Acres. It out weights the one up here.

CB—Maybe the moratorium should be on those with intent to lease their properties until we get a binding site plan in place.

AH—I wonder if we get a moratorium on them all. I’ll leave it up to you how to pick and choose on those because I don’t know how to do it.

CB—My idea was to stop what causes the problem—big farms that are only big because they’re dependent on leasing to other licensees.

AH—How do you stop that?

CB—You say you can’t do that. You can’t lease properties out to have other farms.

AH—My concern is different. I’d say if you can’t do that, why can you lease your farm to another farmer.

JD—It’s what I said in the beginning. It’s not agriculture. It’s referred to in the referendum as a controlled substance.

AH—I’m just playing devil’s advocate. My point is you just stop it all.

CB—What you’re doing is taking a business and saying you’re all our problem. Or if we identify a problem with it, we probably should have a reason.

CB—I was at Home Depot yesterday and talking to the salesman talking to a guy who bought sprinkler stuff. He said they’ve got a lot of inventory. Three different farms bought all their stuff here and so now they stock up on this stuff. There’s the implication for local business. And I heard second hand that this is the situation at North 40.

AH—They buy stuff and generate the economy. And they pay people who buy stuff and generate the economy.

CB—I’d be curious because we had sales tax increases for a variety of reasons, during the Covid thing, too. What does that mean in the larger economy?

JD—I was listening to one of those deals with Bill Gates the other night. He said, “Now, for the next pandemic...” so he already planning another pandemic. And he’s got a one-world alert system, where everybody gets dressed up and you call in on your cell phone. Cell phones can be that sensitive. So this gal is saying, OK, so I’m sitting in church and some gal comes and she’s got a huge overabundance of perfume on and six people behind her sneeze, and some over-zealous person reports this to the alert system. And here they come in and quarantine the people just like they’re doing in Canada right now. They take you physically and put you someplace and you can’t be released until the government says you can. So we’re going to—I mean, these guys are making billions and billions and billions of dollars off this stuff and perpetuate it to the nth degree. Trust me.

AH—I think the increase in CVD (?) awareness will keep this going. I sat right in this room and said “What about when you start having multiple farms together on 300 acres?” And they said that won’t happen.

CB—Never say never.

AH—We need to examine the cost/benefit ration.

CB—I’m into that. Somebody’s got to do the study. Anyway, do we want to listen to him or not?

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AH—To Jeremy? I'm good with that.

**4:03:15**—JD—I have a question. A met a native America friend involved in the race track last week and he aware you're going to meet...

AH—Yeah. On the 5<sup>th</sup>.

JD—OK. They wondered if they're going to be able to make their presentation to you. The council.

AH—What I'm going over there for, is just show what we've been doing, our upgrades. Show them cost estimates of things we think are important—the new bleachers, north end bathroom, race horse barn, revamping of the north end. It costs too much for us to just go out and do it. But we're willing to partner with them. If they want to do races, we contract for in-kind services. If they want to present their ideas at that meeting, that's fine. I didn't want to pit anybody against another within the tribal council. That's not my intent. I'm not trying to leverage something. I'll just go with whatever you guys think is best.

JD—It's not a new concept. But we don't want them bringing betting to the track.

AH—Yeah. It's going to be at the casino.

JD—If the tribe puts in a big investment like they were talking about at the time, eventually, they'd control the race track.

AH—That's why you write it out in MOUs (Memorandum of Understanding).

CB—Yes. Typically, MOUs are honored without the support of the court. You could do a contract.

AH—We're not giving up any of our controlling rights. It's just MOUs and in-kind services for use of the facilities.

CB—On behalf of the tribal membership.

AH—We have a north end rental fee. If they want to have races, in lieu of payment, they could put in infrastructure. All I'm doing is giving information. These are our costs and if you want to use it and make it better. If you want tribal members to race horses...

CB—I talked with Preston Boyd down there. He's running for council and he's got horses.

**4:10:15**—CB—So we're adjourned.

**4:13:25**—CB—we'll reconvene for a few minutes. I forgot to share what happened at the meeting to prioritize projects on Congressman Newhouse's list. We don't anything on the list, but we're on other lists. There were three projects there:

- The north end water system for Oroville.
- The Omak's water tower above Wildwood.
- Health Science Center.

They're all good projects, but there's other money for the water system and the water tower. I voted for the Health Center project because it has a regional impact.

AH—I'm comfortable with that.

JD—Me, too. That would be my choice.

CB—We can talk about it more tomorrow.

Adjourn again.