

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, July 12, 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
CM—Craig McDonald, Chair, Methow Watershed Foundation
SL—Sarah Lane, Administrator, Methow Watershed Council

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>

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Summary of significant discussions:

AH and CB discuss a funding request for \$9,000 from the Methow Watershed Council to pay for administrative support. The BOCC first heard this request at its May 17, 2021 meeting and they are supportive, but they need to figure out a way to provide the funding that fits with the relationship between the county and the Council. There is much discussion about what the exact relationship is.

2:19:20—Discussion of Methow Watershed Council funding request. Craig McDonald, Chair, Methow Watershed Foundation and Sarah Lane, Administrator, Methow Watershed Council. (This funding request was previously discussed by the BOCC and the Methow Watershed Council during the May 17, 2021 meeting of the BOCC.)

CM—I'll make a 5 minute comment. (Reads from a prepared text.) I'm the new Methow Watershed Foundation chair, as of four months ago. We've already requested \$9,000 for administration support. I like to communicate the urgency of that request. The administrative work is critical. Two arms—the foundation which does the fundraising to support the Methow Watershed Council and the Council itself. The council has 6 representatives for the valley's public, plus three representatives from governments—one from the county (Commissioner Hover), plus one each for Twisp and Winthrop.

CM—The mission of the Council and Foundation is to actively assists in managing water supplies for a sustainable balance between human and ecological needs. The Council endorses the development of voluntary strategies for optimizing water use and provides ongoing community outreach and education on valley-specific water issues.

CM—The Council is the successor to the Methow Basin Planning Unit formed in 1999 under RCW 90.82 empowering local citizens to have maximum possible input in regard to water resource management within watershed to the development of the watershed plan. The planning unit completed the watershed plan which addressed WRIA 48. The plan approved by the county in 2005. The plan charged the county with creating the Council and the Council developed the initial implementation work plan and then issued the final detailed implementation plan (the infamous DIT) in 2009.

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CM—The Council and Foundation recently updated its strategic plan to reflect the changes in the community and emerging water concerns. The priorities are addressing the water needs of the towns, agricultural, and instream flows.

AH—We just did that. When you say “recently”, we’re taking just recently.

CM—In February. So just recently and used the input from 2066 (*Editor’s note: Water 2066, Final Report Water 2066* [Water 2066 | methow-water \(methowwatershed.com\)](http://methow-water(methowwatershed.com))) to summarize and bar-chart the information to come up with those specific areas—the ag, the town and river needs for the water.

CM—Council also does public educational outreach and is involved in community management of water resources. Priorities for water involved in climate change effects were identified in 2066 also. And by the Resilient Methow effort. They align with the strategic goals and work plan, also.

CM—But the Council doesn’t have the authority to directly receive funds for its work. As a result the Foundation was formed. Incorporated in Washington as a 501 c(3) as a non-profit in 2013. Its purpose is to obtain funds for purposes and projects identified by the Council. The Council and Foundation are both volunteer organizations that meet monthly, and the Council’s subcommittees meet monthly or possibly more often. Investment of the volunteer’s time can’t be overstated. Cash value of the volunteer hours is over \$10,000. The Council and Foundation are supported by one part-time administrator. Currently .25 FTE and provides continuity between the Council and Foundation. Administrative support role insures a well-functioning Council and Foundation so we can best serve our constituency, the community and provide the best possible information to local governments. The administrator leverages their valuable contributions through efficient planning, reporting, organizing and coordination the meetings. I said all those nice things and I know Sarah is in this meeting.

CM—The Foundation and Council are at a critical stage where we’re doing a lot of input and planning and if we can keep the momentum going, we can move smoothly into the action phases which would be a great benefit.

CM—That’s it. That’s my short spiel. Any questions or thoughts?

2:28:05—CB—I have a few. We’ve had this discussion before about establishing what the relationship between the County and the Council is. When it comes to implementation of the Watershed Plan as put together by the Council, who’s doing the implementation, especially in the areas of land use where the county is the only one with authority to do that. I don’t ask this from a perspective of wanting to make sure the county controls things, but that has to be something that goes on forever. That relationship is important for implementation because some things only the county can do.

There follows a long discussion about what the relationship between the county and Council should be and how to establish the relationship. AH says he’ll speak to the Civil Deputy to find out how to fund the watershed planning moving forward. AH will also ask the Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC) and the Department of Ecology about how to fund a position where the person won’t actually be working for the county. He asks SL to ask Mike Kaputa (Director of Natural Resources for Chelan County) how they fund different things like watershed management. SL will do that and also ask the Council’s facilitator.

AH—If the funding isn’t tied to an Economic Development District, we can’t fund just a regular non-profit. If I look at purchasing requirements for personal services, we have to do a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a scope of work (administration for the Council) and see how can fill that.

CB—At the same time, you make sure you define the relationship with the county. The Council is an outgrowth of the Watershed Planning Act. Council provides recommendations to BOCC on watershed related issues. The council describes the scope of work and the BOCC approves the scope of work. And we’ve decided we don’t want to commit our staff in the Planning Department to do the supportive

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work, so we want to contract that part of the work out. There's the relationship. How the Foundation works, I don't know, but we could think of the fact that they do get money but they make donations to a county endeavor. That's the part that needs to be defined. The Council advises the BOCC on watershed related decisions. So they're part of us like the Planning Commission. There's the definition. We could do it in a resolution. Make that relationship happen, unless the Council decides that it doesn't want to be a part of the county. If that happens, then they'd become a non-profit and we'd contract with them to do watershed planning work, like we do with the Conservation District. But the Conservation District has no control over the Watershed Planning Unit. They just do the work.

AH—Yes.

CB—If I say today “let's fund the position,” we're funding it for ourselves.

AH—It would be that we have to create a position and then hire for it.

CB—Because right now the Council doesn't have that authority. What's the entity that's contracting with the staff person? The Foundation?

AH—Yes. Sarah works for a non-profit.

CB and AH—The ball's in our court to figure this out.

SL—And we need to do a little research.

AH—We all want to do this, but need to figure out the mechanism.

CB—Here's a question. Why did the council need to have somebody else administer their staffing needs?

AH—Because nobody else was doing it. Maybe the County was doing it at one time, or maybe not. You have to have a government entity to get grants. Twisp did it for a while, but they didn't have a capacity to do it.

CB—The relationship came apart. The Council didn't wait around. They just went out to do the work they were supposed to do.

CB—We can probably figure something out.

SL—Time is of the essence. I'm technically a volunteer right now.

CB—Shall we meet again next week?

SL—Yes.

CB—Have this same discussion, only more informed.

SL—And maybe we can email back and forth between then and now. And I'll talk to the facilitator.

CB—Get ahold of Laney to put you on the schedule. I think we'll need an hour.

Everyone agrees to this plan. CM and SL leave the meeting.

3:14:15—CB—Talking to people in the audience—You're here for the executive session? We have to wait for three minutes.

CB—Tomorrow during Josh's update, I'm going to bring up the Elmer City sewer system.

AH—Move to go into Executive Session RCW 42.30.110(1)(i), potential litigation. Executive Session for one hour. Inviting Prosecuting Attorney Melanie Bailey, Sheriff Tony Hawley, Undersheriff Aaron Culp and Risk Manager/HR Tanya Everett. Also present is Commissioner DeTro, who arrived at 2:49:00 to attend the Executive Session. Motion passes.

Off they all go for the Executive Session and then adjourn for the day.