

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners  
Monday, August 2, 2021 PM

JD—Jim DeTro, BOCC, District 3

AH—Andy Hover, BOCC, vice-chair, District 1, via Zoom

CB—Chris Branch, BOCC, chair, District 2 (absent for the TREAD Map presentation)

LJ—Lalena Johns, Clerk to the Commissioners

ML—Mat Lyons, Executive Director of TREAD

RH-D—Roni Holder-Diefenbach, Exec Director, Economic Alliance

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*Summary of significant discussions:*

**2:22:19**—*Mat Lyons of TREAD Map discusses the app with the commissioners and asks for a letter committing the county to a \$30,000 payment to TREAD Map to facilitate the development of a state-wide app for recreational trail use. The commissioners are interested and discuss ways to fund the request.*

**3:26:50**—*CB updates the commissioners about the \$8,200,000 the county will soon receive as its share of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). He talks about the administrative goals of ARPA, the five focus areas to be funded and suggests some amounts to get the discussion started. The commissioners also discuss how the funding decisions will be made and who should be involved.*

**2:22:19**—ML presents information, including a short video, about the TREAD Map app to the Commissioners. (*He gave the Commissioners a similar presentation on April 19, 2021.*) TREAD is an acronym for Trails, Recreation, Education, Advocacy and Development. The app allows users to search for trails in a given area and get up-to-date trail information. It allows land managers (private land owners or agency employees) to post information about trails, suggest alternate trails if the trail selected is crowded, etc. Chambers of Commerce and Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) love TREAD Maps.

TREAD Maps would like each county in Washington to make a \$30,000 payment to TREAD Maps to pay for state-wide development. It would like the County to commit to the payment with a letter now, but wouldn't have to receive the money until June, 2022. Some counties are using money from the Lodging Tax. In other counties, private groups are donating the money. TREAD Map asking for a one-time payment now, but eventually it would be an annual fee because apps always have to be updated.

The Commissioners all think being included in TREAD Maps would be a good thing for the county, and discuss various ways of funding the \$30,000 fee. AH asks LJ about the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee

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(LTAC) schedule, and asks RH-D about the possibility of a Community Development tie-in. Using LTAC money seems especially promising because the app would know how many users are from zip codes outside the county.

**3:26:50**—Using PowerPoint slides, Commissioner Branch makes a presentation to the other commissioners about the funds provided to the county by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).  
(*Okanogan County will receive \$8,200,000*)

CB—This is an overview so we can decide how to allocate the ARPA funds, especially in the first tranche. Everything is a draft except that some parts come right out of ARPA, including the administration's goals for the implementation of ARPA. They're listed on slide #2 as:

1. funding a comprehensive code response plan
2. delivering relief to working families
3. supporting communities that are struggling and
4. protecting against future cyber-attacks.

The five focus areas are (Slide #3):

1. support public health expenditures
2. address negative economic impacts
3. replace lost public sector revenues
4. provide premium pay for essential workers
5. invest in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure

CB—I propose that we start here, in the five areas that are listed. Slide #4 shows the five focus areas with amounts CB is using just as a starting place.

1. Public Health expenditures—20% (\$820,000)
2. Negative economic impacts—20% (\$820,000)
3. Lost public sector revenue—0% until we figure out just what that means with regards to across the board public sector lost revenues. I think it applies within the county, but the PUD's proposal may fall under that category, if not under addressing negative economic impacts.
4. Premium pay for essential workers—Looks different in a lot of different areas.

AH—Have you seen any one's proposal on essential workers?

CB—We just received one from Whitman (?) County via LJ's Clerks' group. There are others and I know we've got access to them.

5. Invest in water, sewer and broadband—The most expensive, especially broadband.

RH-D—I was going to ask about loss of public sector revenue....

CB—Just the fact that you bring certain things up, it may expand the commissioners' views about what to include in the category.

AH—Loss of revenue for hospitals? Is that what you were talking about?

RH-D—That and others. The PUB had lots of unpaid bills, which is lost revenue.

CB—Another question. Is it lost revenue across the board as it applied to us? Don't know how that applies to another public entity. You'd think it'd be the same metric.

AH—I thought that was for government entities specifically.

CB—We'll have to answer that question.

LJ—I received a request from the Housing Authority of Okanogan County, the PUB and also the cities had talked about lost revenue.

AH—With the cities, they're getting their own ARPA funds.

CB—As far as projects go, we can talk of all we know that we've been contacted about.

CB—This next slide (#5) This is what RH-D found in Clallam County...

LJ—Do you have a process to gather this information?

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CB—Not yet. It's up to these guys (*his fellow commissioners*).

CB—Shows a pdf from Clallam county. List of all of the ARPA funding categories that are outside of the allocations for the counties. My point is that if there are other places that the funding is available, we need to know that there are others that are looking at things to fund. We don't want to gobble up all of our allocation if others could fund it. Discusses how daunting and arduous it is to apply for some funding, whereas .09 funding was much easier to apply for (*Rural counties in Washington have benefitted from up to a .09 percent 'rebate' of their own county's state sales and use tax for over twenty years. This type of funding has helped to build critical infrastructure, attract new industry and diversify economies.*) We want to make sure that everybody is looking at these other funding sources. There's quite an array of them.

**3:40:05**—CB—As we go through those areas, we have to determine what are the negative impacts to the county. (Slide #7)

Are they contracts with existing partnerships? Community Action Council, Okanogan County Behavioral Health, Aging and Adult Care, WorkSource Council, DSHS? These are just examples of groups we're engaged with now. Do some qualify for the premium pay for essential workers?

CB—(Slide #8) Replace lost public sector revenue. WSAC (Washington State Association of Counties) is looking into that.

CB—(Slide #9) And what does premium pay mean?

CB—(Slide #10) Municipal infrastructure that serves affordable housing. Infrastructure serving unincorporated city expansion areas. Prioritize Broadband project.

CB—(Slide #11) Develop strategy on how to proceed. Meetings with:

1. Our Finance Committee
2. Elected Officials
3. Internal projects (county projects)
4. External projects (those outside of County government)
5. Commissioners adopt the strategy.

But we have to do the general allocation through the five areas (talked about in Slide #4). How do we want to structure the framework for that much money that we want to distribute responsibly?

AH—I'm in general agreement with your allocation table, but first we should talk to the Finance Committee and I think we need to answer basic questions. Next step is to go through the five categories in Slide #3, trying to determine a hierarchy of how to distribute funds based on who's applied for them.

CB—I agree. And remember the distribution in Slide #4 is just the starting place for our discussion.

AH—It's a plan for how much money to put into each pot. Other than waiting on replacing the lost public sector revenue until we know what that looks like, the allocations seem appropriate based on what I was thinking.

CB—What's important to share with the Treasury when we say "OK, here's our plan. Give us the money" is that we have a particular allocation. What LJ shared with us—what the clerks had—was pretty general.

LJ—Yes. They were just getting started.

CB—Meet with the Finance Committee to agree on the approach itself, the general allocation framework.

Also we want agreement on the principles we use to make the allocation. And I'd like to include RH-D in our discussions because she's been so helpful as an interface with the public.

RH-D—We're going through prioritizing our Community Development projects for 2022 now. We got 30 applications—26 for infrastructure projects and 4 for community and economic development. I can bring the prioritized list to the meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> so you'll know the funding requests. Then they get ranked on a regional basis. Just wanted to mention this.

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RH-D—I also meet with Department of Commerce and a lot of ADOs (Administrative Service Organizations) in Washington. A majority of the counties are moving towards economic recovery.

CB—What can we do going forward?

RH-D—Few counties are doing small business grants. All trying to move forward. And big challenge now is finding the workforce. They can't hire enough workers, so they can't open fully.

**3:52:25**—CB—With regard to the principles we'll use to determine funding, here's a document I was using to measure projects as people bring them to us. Discusses the difference between equity and equality. Equity involves giving people what they need to enjoy full, healthy lives. Equality aims to insure that everyone gets the same things to enjoy full, healthy lives. Equity addresses the needs of the people in the region. Right now governments are increasingly subjected to scrutiny and sometimes we react to advocates for social justice by denying social injustice. That's just one area I've proposed we include in our goals or principles we use to make our decisions. Food for thought.

RF-D—Resiliency as well as equity.

CB—Any Questions?

AH—Do you want Cari (Hall, County Auditor) & me to work on getting the ARPA funds into our bank account?

CB—If you want to. I'll work on setting up the ID.Me. If you want, you could do ID.Me set-up.

Much back and forth about problems setting up an ID.Me log-in. It's finally decided that CB will do it. Commissioner Wes McCart of Stevens County may have already done it, and could possibly help.

CB—I'd like a meeting with the Finance Committee to go over this.

AH—I appreciate all the work you put in on the slides. And I agree for the most part with you on the issue of equity. We want to make sure different communities—Hispanic population or Native American population—have same opportunity to apply for that money.

CB—Sometimes it takes some work to stop and make sure I didn't forget something because of my own bias. Checklists can help.

AH—We just have to make sure different people all have access to us.

CB—If we could set up a time with the other Finance Committee members, we could do Finance Committee work. When's the next meeting?

LJ—Next Tuesday you meet with just the Treasurer for an update, and on the 17<sup>th</sup> is the Finance Committee meeting.

CB—We could spend an hour just on this subject?

AH & JD—Yes.

CB—It may be Auditor and Treasurer may have information to add about loss of revenue.

AH—But the money can go into the account before we do allocation. That's how we set it up.

**4:10:05**—Discussion about the Fairgrounds budget. Who will be paying the bills? Should there be a supplemental? Naomi Peasy will pay the bills. There should be a supplemental. JD asks if Public Health should be included in it.

Also discuss recent purchase of a water truck and the lease of a tractor, both for the fairgrounds. CB will work on ID.Me and will also the issue of shirts and boots with HR.

Adjourn at 3:55.