

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, January 31, 2022 PM

JD—Jim DeTro, BOCC, District 3
AH—Andy Hover, BOCC, Chair, District 1
CB—Chris Branch, BOCC, -Vicechair, District 2
LJ—Lalena Johns-clerk to the Commissioners
LMc—Leah McCormick, County Treasurer
DG—David Gecas, Attorney for the county
MG—Maurice Goodall, Emergency Management

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Summary of significant discussions:

00:00:00 BOCC and County Treasurer discuss adopting a policy for administrative leave for asymptomatic employees who test positive for Covid. BOCC passes a resolution approving her to grant the leave. CB hopes the county will soon adopt a broad policy for dealing with Covid.

00:21:33 The Agriplex has been double-booked for two different Fridays. Public Health will be doing mass vaccinations every other Friday in February and March, but Naomi booked the RV show and another group for two of the Fridays. BOCC and MG try to work out a solution to the problem. MG will talk to Lauri Jones in Public Health and report back.

00:00:00—The Zoom broadcast began after the meeting began, so we missed the first few minutes.

LMc is discussing why employees who are sent home because of a positive Covid test but are asymptomatic shouldn't be required to use sick leave or vacation. They should be able to use administrative leave instead. The office is down to bare bones and it's hard to get the work done, but today she's only concerned with the issue of administrative leave for these employees.

CB—I think there should be a better process. I don't see how the Health Department decides how the office is going to run. Seems to me there would be better coordination. If I put myself in the position of the health officer, and I thought there was a health issue with the transmission of Covid, I'd contact the department head and see how we could make this work instead of deciding who had to go home.

LMc—I'd like to go into executive session to discuss this further.

AH—I don't we can do an executive session for this.

CB—We could do it as the Board of Health and there was a complaint against an employee of the Department of Health.

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, January 31, 2022 PM

AH—I'd like to get straight on what is the actual policy. I see things going on that are different and the policy is not being implemented uniformly.

LMc—I'd like to be able to tell the whole story but I'm not sure....

AH—An executive session during a Board of Health meeting would be the place.

LMc—Today, I'm not here to do the complaint, just to resolve the leave issue.

CB—Surprises me that it's been suggested that they didn't have admin leave.

AH—But I'm glad you came to use. Can we have a motion to authorize the use of admin leave for the treasurer's office.

CB—Before we do that, what's the police in regards to admin leave anyway. Would anyone argue that it shouldn't be used in this situation?

AH—I'd argue against carte blanche that elected officials and department heads can decide when to allow admin leave.

LMc—I agree with that. Eventually, someone will start to play favorites.

AH—I guess follow the provisions in the contract, and if there isn't any contract come to us.

LMc—This whole thing started, when we called someone in the Health Department , we'd get different answers depending on who was called. We need consistency. That's fair.

JD—I move to approve the Treasurer to authorize admin leave to those people affected. CB—I second.

AH—Discussion?

CB—Back to the policy. What does the union contract say about it?

AH—I remember is your house is affected by an emergency, you can get up to three days admin leave.

AH—Leaves to check the contract.

LJ—We've also done this by resolution, not a motion.

LMc—And to be consistent, I want contract employees treated the same as non-contract.

CB—I've brought up the subject of having a Covid policy before but it wasn't adopted. Asks JD if he remembers these discussions.

JD—I remember the discussions but not why we didn't adopt a policy.

CB—It was about masking, etc. all through the county and in this building. We couldn't even come to agreement about just in this building.

LMc—Masking vs unmasking is one thing but this is about how we treat employees who have to take time off.

CB—It should be a total policy. Agree it should be consistent, and to get consistency we should run it past the Health Department.

AH—returns from searching the contract. The only place it talks about admin leave is for natural disasters if your real property is endangered.

CB—So if the health officer closed a department, would admin leave be warranted?

CB—I'm trying to clarify the issue. Not here for a fight.

AH—If an office was closed because of Covid, we gave employees admin leave but there's no written policy. Only written policy is just what I talked about in the contract.

Discussion about resolution vs motions for leave issues.

AH—Resolution is fine with me. And maybe elected official or department head can give admin leave in these conditions, and then everybody doesn't have to come back to us.

Motion to change to a resolution and move to accept the resolution. Passes 3-0.

CB—I hope this starts a discussion for a broad policy.

LMc—We—elected officials and department heads—are all concerned with the same things—staff safety, public safety. But we need to be consistent. Thanks and have a good Monday!

00:21:33—MG—Do you have a few minutes?

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, January 31, 2022 PM

MG—I need to get the Everbridge quote approved. It’s for mass notification. They changed their system of how we get charged. Colville Tribe is going to Everbridge and we’re working with them to coordinate.

JD—I move to approve Everbridge contract as amended and authorize the chair to sign it. Passes 3-0.

MG—Also need another contract signed. To fix the printer that prints our ID cards.

Discussion of what MG can sign by himself and what the BOCC needs to sign. AH advises him to talk to the Auditor and the purchasing policy for advice.

00:31:00—MG—The BOCC received an email from Naomi (Peasley, Fairgrounds Manager) about the rental situation. We’ve had the Agriplex rented for mass vaccination events and also storage of items in between events. We learned last Friday....

AH—Can I read the contract?

MG—Sure. Here it is.

AH—So did the contract have dates?

MG—It’s open ended. Jan. 31 to TBD.

AH—So there are two events Naomi scheduled and then found out about the vaccinations that are going on.

MG—Correction. We’ve been doing it every single Friday. As on this last Friday, we’d move to every other Friday and only going through April. Next vaccination date if Feb 11 and 25. March 11 and 25.

JD—And both of the other events conflict with your dates?

MG—Yes.

JD—Can you vaccinate this Friday and go every other week after that and then there’s no conflict.

MG—We’d like to do that but it depends on people’s vaccination schedule. First, second and booster, and they have it set.

AH—Can you check that out? How is there a designated day you need to be vaccinated?

MG—They’ve already put out the information already. Made the decision on Friday morning and put it out Friday afternoon.

AH—Can they issue a correction? We have to all work together to do this. Here are some options I talked to Naomi about. Can you do the vaccination on Thursday?

JD—Both shows will be moving in on Thursdays.

MG—Only option is to take to a separate week.

JD—How many people are you getting?

MG—25-30.

JD—Can you use the same signage, etc but route them differently?

MG—Two problems with that. Once you start letting people come in to the Agriplex, people get confused. Even with no one else coming in, they go the wrong way. Other thing is that we can’t use the front parking lot at all. We’d have to go to another location. Also, we’re outside in the weather. To do it inside, they’d have to walk in and we’re trying to avoid it.

AH—That’s too bad. We have a large event for an Okanogan County company that’s trying to generate income, and now we can’t do that because 25 people are going to get vaccinated?

MG—I see your point, but if we had a contract with the county....

AH—Was the county apprised that you were changing to every other Friday?

MG—Yes.

CB—What difference does that make?

AH—If Naomi knew about every other week, she could have suggested other dates.

CB—I didn’t talk to Naomi about this, and basically, she overbooked, I wanted you all to have a chance to weigh in. The plan was for every Friday and I don’t know if she knew the contract was changed to every other Friday. She should have realized it was a double book.

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, January 31, 2022 PM

AH—I agree with you.

MG—We didn't change it until Friday and we told Naomi about the change. And we pay money to store stuff down there.

CB—Naomi said something like the groups were grandfathered in.

MG—If a group has an event every single year, but hadn't signed any paperwork, I think it would be good to call the usual group to see if they're going to hold it this year.

CB—I understand how people schedule around this event. In my mind, I look for a way to make this work.

CB—It's tough to do both at the same time.

MG—I'll continue to talk to Public Health. If we hold it outside the fairgrounds, we could do it somewhere else.

AH—Can you do it at the Public Works bays in Omak? They're drive through and they're heated. Can they use it on a Friday afternoon. It's got a long driveway.

MG—I'll discuss with Lauri Jones.

AH—The reason I was getting overheated is that I want this all to work.

MG—I understand.

AH—I don't like it if it's just "No we can't, no we can't, no we can't." and the economy of this county is junk.

MG—I totally get that. If we were still going every single week, we were just made aware of it on Friday, and they spring it on us....

AH—Can you just stop having events? Is that within the contract? Does Public Health owe the Fairgrounds \$5,000 every week until whenever?

MG—Until the funding runs out.

AH—That means we can't book anything because we don't know. Either that contract needs to be changed or she shouldn't book anything on Friday.

CB—This doesn't need to be a hot subject.

AH—You're right. It doesn't.

CB—It just happened in a short period of time. We have to deal with it.

AH—We have to work together!

CB—Good coordination was Naomi's responsibility, but working together is really important. That's why I didn't respond when Naomi told us about it.

AH—That's why I asked Naomi to see what could be done. See if Public Health can do it on Thursday or Saturday. If not, can they do it somewhere else? Call Josh. But the dialog basically was—we've been doing it every Friday, so we can't schedule anything else on Fridays.

MG—There's the verbal part and the contract part. The verbal part is it's up in April. The contract should have reflected that.

AH—We need a resolution because the group wants Feb 24.

MG—I'll reach out to the group today with Lauri and we'll have that discussion. I spoke to Lauri this morning and she's not got her foot down.

CB—A well-coordinated schedule is a good thing.

MG—We talk to Naomi every week about storing our stuff week to week. Lots of communication

CB—Contracts are contracts, but I can't imagine Public Health is going to sue the county for breach of contract. Worst case scenario is that Naomi has to tell Mr. Hamilton that the Friday isn't going to work. That will cause an upset in the community with people associated with the group and that's not good.

MG—We're over there for a two hour period and maybe they could take a break at that time.

AH—Can you do it later in the day?

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, January 31, 2022 PM

MG—I don't know. Discusses the schedule for vaccination day. I wish it'd been brought up sooner about the other events.

CB—Can you do us a favor and see how to make both events happen?

MG—Yes.

CB—And I intend to talk to Naomi about this.

MG—That's it. I'll be in touch.

00:55:40—AH to LJ—Can you call DG? We have executive session scheduled for 11:00 AM. Can we move it up?

CB & LJ agree they can move the meeting up.

AH—We need to have a discussion about the operational capacity of the jail. Part of this has to do with the contract with Douglas County. Executive session would involve the Sheriff and Under-Sheriff. Not sure if we need to have the executive session right now, but we do need to have the discussion about the future of the contract in general because of the operational capacity of the jail. So can you find out if he's around? I also have question about Prosecuting Attorney.

LJ—He says he'll come up here.

AH—I'll go check about the Sheriff and Under-Sheriff. Returns and says the Under-Sheriff is over at the task force but he'll be back.

DG arrives. He's not speaking into the mic, so he's hard to hear. Discuss the situation of no Prosecuting Attorney.

AH—Here's a question. About the Comprehensive Plan. Is there a 21 day LUP-A (Land Use Permit—Application) statute on the Comp Plan?

DG—Can't hear the answer.

CB—When Legislative Steering Committee and the board of WSAC (Washington Association of Counties) was considering suing the legislature. This one year came up and we'd been at them for a long time over funding indigent defense. At one point, I suggested we not say anything about it because if somebody doesn't do anything, it can get their attention, too. They might think we were working on our lawsuit.

CB—My hope is we can get on with things and go to zoning.

DG—Hard to hear.

Sheriff and Under-Sheriff arrive.

AH—I propose executive session under (i), possibility of potential litigation. If we decide there's no possibility, we can discuss it in an open meeting.

CB—I move to go into executive session under RCW 42.31.110(1)(i) to discuss potential lawsuit. 10 minutes. Passes 3-0.

1:28:35—BOCC returns.

AH—We're not ready to make any decisions yet and circle back around next week.

JD—Did you say "circle back"?

AH—I did when I thought about it, I was circling the wagons. Everybody laughs.

Sheriff and Under-sheriff leave.

AH—That concludes the agenda. Anything else?

Several miscellaneous items are discussed.

LJ has several matters.

- Chair of BOCC needs to sign a performance progress report for a CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) Covid 1 grant.
- BOCC needs to pass a different resolution concerning bonding. The one they've already passes has the wrong dates. BOCC passes the new resolution.

CB discusses the primary .09 bill.

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, January 31, 2022 PM

CB—Seattle Times had an article about Methow Trails.

AH—County GOP has received only one name of person interested in Prosecuting Attorney office.
Discusses if it's OK for HR to put the position on the WAPA list, saying "reply to the Okanogan County
Republicans.

AH—discusses estimate from Code Publishing.

Adjourn until Tuesday morning.