

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, March 22, 2022 PM

JD—Jim DeTro, BOCC, District 3
AH—Andy Hover, BOCC, Chair, District 1
CB—Chris Branch, BOCC, Vice Chair, District 2
LJ—Lalena Johns-clerk to the Commissioners
MW—Mike Worden, Okanogan County Dispatch Center

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Summary of significant discussions:

- Commissioners discuss creating a written policy that will govern the agenda. CB will write a draft which should include deciding by Tuesday after lunch if a meeting will be held on Wednesday.
- Discussion with Mike Worden, Dispatch Center, about changes to the county dispatch system. Recently, a consultant recommended changing from the existing VHF system to a digital system and many Fire Districts were concerned about the cost for new dual band radios. MW says a grant for up to \$100,000 per fire district is now available.

3:20:20—Discussion Policy Review Proposal—Commissioner Branch

CB—I want to talk about the policy we talked about this morning. It’s good to create policies that we’ll follow.

AH—I reviewed stuff on agendas. I understand what you want to do and I agree. But I want to have flexibility on the agenda.

CB—We can do that, depending on the policy we adopt. And it’ll be good if people know how we do it. If it’s written down, we can explain why we’re doing what we’re doing.

AH—Here’s what I think are in conflict sometimes. The other day, we had a Public Health meeting at 1:30 and something else at 3:30. And I proposed we do minutes & agenda at 3:00 and have the other person in at 3:00. That’s within the same day. What I’m hearing is “well, as long as we’re within the timeframe of being open for business, we can adjust that back and forth.

CB—If I’m part of the public and I know they’re going to start at 3:30, I’ll go there at 3:30. One other factor, if I wasn’t contacted, there’s others that could go forward without me. Unacceptable to me.

AH—But I would never do that. Go forward with something if you haven’t been contacted. Do we need a written policy if we understand how it’s going to function?

CB—Yes. The staff will know the policy, and the public can know it.

AH—So the preliminary agenda comes out on Friday—covering three days.

CB—proposed for three different meetings. Each day we can adopt that day’s agenda.

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, March 22, 2022 PM

AH—We can't do anything about the agenda until Monday morning. If I see we're done at 1:30 and I try to move some stuff from Tuesday to Monday afternoon that's not 24 hour notice.

CB—We make every effort to make sure the public knows what's happening, but it's not a perfect world. The reason why we're different between cities I've worked for is typically, they have one or two meetings per month. And you approve the agenda at the beginning of the meeting. And if you know there's a hot topic, you make sure you're sure to have it on. We're just trying to get as much information out to the public as possible.

CB—Compare to the Fair Advisory Committee and the Planning Commission. They've got a Gebbers group and they've got a chair. They go through and sometimes people aren't happy with the decisions and sometimes people aren't happy with how much time they were given. It can be that way here. But we've got to leave them to their devices, but when things get really crazy, somebody's got to go and have a conversation. I try to help, but what most people don't understand is we had lots of pressures from different positions on getting the Comp Plan done. After you have a legal review, it's kind of hard to go back and have another legal review that's costing a lot of money. You measure it and go forward.

AH—Why didn't it all get hammered out in the year....

CB—You can blame someone, but I watched a lot of comments come through, but a lot of issues were there and they were the same issues. You can continue to improve and not get stuck in a paralysis situation.

CB prepares to project his document onto the screen.

3:37:30—AH—Did you read the agreement between Kittitas County and its Water Board?

CB—Yes. It was real short and needed more information in it. Concerned about that. An agreement like that needs to establish its authority and not gifting public funds. That was missing.

AH—Did we get the legal description taken care of—for redistricting?

CB—We got the legal stuff taken care of. We've just got to get the paperwork in front of us. Legal part was resolved between GIS and the Auditor's Office, just not adopted by an ordinance.

AH and LJ discuss what should be done to fix the problem. CB will weigh in after they discuss the draft of his proposed procedures for dealing with changes in the agenda. Projects it on the screen.

3:45:30—CB—I like to begin with the intent of the document. Reads rapidly. Does our policy allow for the adequate information given for the public to know when to attend? Legislative intent.

AH—Suggests a change to mention which ordinance sets the dates for the BOCC meetings.

CB—Reads from RCW 42:30.010: *The legislature finds and declares that all public commissions, boards, councils, committees, subcommittees, departments, divisions, offices, and all other public agencies of this state and subdivisions thereof exist to aid in the conduct of the people's business. It is the intent of this chapter that their actions be taken openly and that their deliberations be conducted openly.*

The people of this state do not yield their sovereignty to the agencies which serve them. The people, in delegating authority, do not give their public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know. The people insist on remaining informed so that they may retain control over the instruments they have created.

AH—I think the BOCC regular meeting dates are set by ordinance.

CB—I want to set the policy that created the ordinance.

LJ mentions Okanogan County Code 2.04.010 that includes meeting dates: *The time of regular meetings of the board of Okanogan County commissioners shall be 9:00 a.m. on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of each week, except holidays, or as otherwise ordered by the board. All meetings of the board shall be held at the county seat or at the seat of another county when any two or more county*

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, March 22, 2022 PM

legislative authorities hold a joint regular meeting to consider, discuss or take action on items of mutual concern or interest to the participating legislative authorities. Notice requirements for special meetings are still required for those visiting legislative authorities when attending a joint legislative meeting in another county.

Special meetings may be held outside the county seat at any location within the county if the agenda item or items are of unique interest or concern to the citizens where the special meeting is to be held. Any two or more county legislative authorities may hold a joint special meeting at the county seat or other agreed upon location within the jurisdiction of a participating county if the agenda item or items relate to actions or considerations of mutual interest or concern to the participating legislative authorities.

Notice of special meetings shall be made as provided in RCW [42.30.080](#). (Ord. 2015-6 § 1 (Exh. A), 2015; Ord. 2013-6 § 1 (Exh. A), 2013; Res. M-405, 1953).

3:49:45—JD arrives.

CB—And we can change the code.

3:51:45—AH—It's 2:00, and time for an executive session

CB—Review of performance of a public employee. RCW 42.30.010(g) for 15 minutes. Including Tanya Everett of Human Resources.

3:54:30—BOCC meeting has resumed (Executive session was approximately 35 minutes long.) Discussion of new communications system for County.

AH—JD said this morning that a commissioner for Fire District 4, and we want to hear it again from Mike Worden from the county Dispatch Center. Just go over a few points. When the contractor looked at the system, did they decide there weren't enough VHS channels to do what we need to do?

MW—Basically, yes. You can't get a new license because there are none to give.

AH—OK. So you can't do it on VHS. The Washington DOT has towers using digital and they have capacity for us?

MW—They scale their system for their purpose, but the nature of the system allows them to add additional capacity. They've got enough capacity for their system—the state highways. We need to augment the communications system to make it useful to us. Add additional sites.

AH—We'll use their primary sites and we've got to build more sites to cover what we need.

MW—We've got the sites but we need to add their system.

JD—Does that eliminate communication with DNR and USFS—UHF and VHF?

MW—It puts us in different bands, which is why we'd need to get dual band radios in vehicles.

JD—So there's a solution.

MW—More expensive radios in trucks. That's a new expense we need to address and figure out how to resolve it. There are a couple of grants. One I've shared with them--\$100,000 per Fire District is open right now with the DNR.

JD—The grant's 100? Wow. There you go. When I was talking to Andy this morning about the conversation I had with Jack (?) he said the DOT system is junk and they don't have \$100,000. But if they can get it.

MW—We want to solve the problem we've all complained about and was confirmed by the consultant, we've got to pick a path. Consultant tells us we can't achieve what we want with VHF. That stinks, but it's true.

AH—We tried to fix this several years ago when we bought 3 frequency bands.

MW—The contract addendum says they're going to get 60 bands.

AH—In digital.

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, March 22, 2022 PM

MW—We'll be pursuing 60 licenses. That's a lot.

MW—Grant opportunity. Closes March 31, but it's pretty simple application. Don't know if the fire agencies are going to use this money for other fire gear. If not, it's a great opportunity to get started.

MW—Also a regional grant to pursue. It's \$1,000,000.

AH—Just has to be one of our fire districts?

MW—Regional grant does not preempt the agency from making other applications.

CB—You're going to a meeting and answer those questions for those fire chiefs.

AH—But the day of the meeting is the day the grant closes.

JD—Needs to be further communication.

MW—I've shared this grant opportunity with vendors.

CB—We chose a path at that advisory meeting. How many fire districts were there?

MW—13 fire districts that Okanogan Dispatch deals with, and then the cities that partner with a district.

Ballpark—20-some fire agencies within the county.

MW—Cody Acord, Fire Chief of District 6 was on the line.

CB—But he was the only one?

JD—After our discussion this morning, that's why we decided to call you. You research this stuff and do your job. I didn't want one phone call in the rumor mill to stir this stuff all up.

MW—After the meeting, I heard for a couple of police chiefs. They say the state system is garbage. It only focuses on the highway. People are learning. I've been to the COG (Coalition of Governments), etc. There's reason to be nervous, but we've got to move forward.

JD—Thank you, Mike.

MW—I'm aiming for the grant. We could maybe cover the match. There may be EMS opportunities.

CB—We talked about getting as many people in the room so everybody could hear the same thing.

AH—Eligibility—it says a rural community with population of 10,000 or less. I guess that includes everybody. If we can't apply, nobody can apply. I need to send this to people "over there" (?) Asks LJ to send it to Roni (Holder Diefenbach, Economic Alliance). She's helping with FD 6, getting them into the Technical Advisory Committee—the Tech Team.

CB—A lot of people ignored this, but when we mentioned ARPA, they got interested.

MW—Speaking of ARPA, is there a time-line for the decisions?

AH—This Wednesday at 1:30, trying to get all these things together. We got all the bond paperwork and we're going to get the money on April 7 and we'll give you direction to get all that stuff done. Morgue is part of that, and didn't say no for ARPA money for the mobile command vehicle.

CB—We have to have the time to spend an entire afternoon to make the decisions. Some are easy and some require big matches. If they don't have the match, we'll have something shovel ready on the side.

AH—The money has to be committed by 2024, and spent by December 31, 2026.

CB—Our goal is to have it all figured out by the end of April so we can sent the report.

4:14:35—AH asks LJ to send him the contract with Michael Beaman's preliminary work on the Forest Service building

CB—Should we return to the policy question?

AH—You write it up and send it to us. I won't change anything about when we're in here unless it's an emergency.

CB—Who calls an emergency?

AH—The chair? If there's an emergency, I call LJ.

CB—I'm fine with the chair calling an emergency meeting. If anyone else thinks there's an emergency, that person should call Lanie and she'll call the chair.

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, March 22, 2022 PM

AH—On Tuesday afternoon, we can see if there's more business to do, we can do it on Wednesday. Since you always keep 1:30 open on Wednesday, that's when we'll meet.

CB—We could fill that 1:30 pretty often but that would be inconvenient for some. There are a few things we can really grind through.

AH—I'll come to Wednesday meetings but I want to make a decision at the end of the meeting.

AH—This time, when we talk about the ARPA money, I want to make a decision about the \$10,000,000 issue for justifying our ARPA spending, but not necessarily about which projects we'll fund.

CB—Maybe we could get help about justifying spending from WSAC (Washington State Association of Counties). They're going to hire someone to help with that. But probably won't help us on Wednesday.

CB volunteers to call Eric (?) at WSAC and get basic advice.

4:29:15—AH—Last thing before we go—Planning Department. I'm getting a lot of call about when will building permits be done. If you can help, that'd be great.

CB—I'll talk to them.

LJ—Auditor would like to talk to BOCC tomorrow, Tanya doesn't need to talk to you, so tomorrow at 10:00, it's the Auditor.

CB—One last thing—transfer of property on the Similkameen—I talked to a woman from RCO (Recreation and Conservation Office) who's been the project manager and she says, "send me what you're doing," and she'll determine if we have to do anything else. Plus Ester has a quick claim deed prepared.

Adjourn until tomorrow morning.