

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, March 7, 2022 PM

JD—Jim DeTro, BOCC, District 3
AH—Andy Hover, BOCC, Chair, District 1
CB—Chris Branch, BOCC, -Vice Chair, District 2
AF—Alan Fahnstock, Project Manager for Fire District 6 well project
MW—Mike Worden, Okanogan County Dispatch Center
RH-D—Roni Holder Diefenbach, Executive Director, Economic Alliance

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Summary of significant discussions:

Commissioners and Alan Fahnstock discuss the high-volume water source near the Mazama store. The BOCC favors the project but want to make sure the funding would be compatible with The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) guidelines. The BOCC will let AF know the decision next Monday.

Commissioners and Mike Worden discuss the purchase of an emergency command vehicle using ARPA funds. The BOCC supports the purchase but tells MW he needs to read the rule for justification of ARPA spending and report back to the BOCC exactly what the justification is.

Commissioners and Roni Holder-Diefenbach discuss ARPA funding for three projects proposed for the Economic Alliance: staffing for the Small Business Resource and Technology Center, contracting with the Retail Academy and a small grant program to businesses that continue to be impacted by Covid. The cost over two years would be \$450,000. Again, the BOCC approves of the projects but RH-D must find the justifications for them in the ARPA rules.

2:44:30—Commissioners adjourn for lunch. AH mentions that the agenda for after lunch has changed. They'll hear from PP and then discuss ARPA. But after lunch, they decide to skip the Planning Department update because three people (AF, MW and RH-D) have come to the meeting discuss ARPA. PP offers to present her material tomorrow at the regular Tuesday Planning update.

2:47:35—CB—One of the reasons I put ARPA on the agenda is that things are emerging and needs need addressed with Roni's projects. AF has made changes to his project he'll discuss.

AF—I'm Alan Fahnstock, volunteer project manager to build a high-volume water source near the Mazama store for the Fire District. We (AF and BOCC) discussed this last week, but now I've written a proposal that we figure out a way to do it as a "not to exceed" project. I've collected \$75,000 in donations so far. I think the hydrant is going to be between \$120,000 and \$130,000. I'd like to get a

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36kw mobile generator as backup for the Mazama station when the power goes out. I suggested in my email a "not to exceed" program whereby BOCC allocates \$100,000 for the generator. Don't think the cost will be anywhere near that, but I've been a project manager practically forever, and sometimes the project goes sideways. I don't want to have to stop and spend more time to raise money to finish the project. I expect the project cost will be approximately \$175,000 or less, in total, including the generator. Donations are slowing down and I've sent solicitations to everyone from the Weeman Bridge to the Lost River airport and Arrowhead. That's about a 5 mile radius around the hydrant. Don't know what other fund raising options there are. If there's a way to set this up, I can stop fund raising and begin to get the project built. I'm hoping to get it done in May, in time for the fire season. OCEC (Okanogan County Electrical Co-op) agrees with that, and the contractor I hope to use says he's optimistic that he can do the work in May. It's a three-day job if everything is prepared. He's just got to put in some pipe and it's done.

AH—I got no problem doing this. Would it be not to exceed \$100,000?

AF—Yes. I put in that because it's a nice, round number and should be enough. I'm doing this on a shoestring and will be doing as much of the work as I can myself. I can do most of it.

CB—What was the total project cost you estimated?

AF—including the generator, I expect it to be between \$160,000 and \$175,000. I have to hire a commercial electrician to run the wires because it's 480 (volts). I don't know what it will cost. Haven't completely spec-ed out the little building. AH suggested the county own it, and I agree. I'm pretty close to getting the parcel mapped out so I can work with Josh Thomson (County Engineer) to find optimal place to put the little shed so it's out of the way. Pretty sure I've found that place. Basically, I want to be comfortable that I won't have to be raising funds later.

AH—We've got purchasing requirements. If it's donated to the county, then it can be just donated. So we have to make sure this is a project that's all about the Fire District. Deal with Josh because he knows the purchasing guidelines.

AF—I foresaw the potential for some difficulties like this. Because the well work is over \$45,000, we've had to put it to bid, etc. That adds complexity. Cody's done the bid.

CB—I asked Josh to think about this and you can, too. Why would we keep the property the well is on? I talked about a public purpose segregation and use the rest for parking. Why do we need to own the property the well is on?

AH—So we have flexibility if there's an emergency? I'm not saying "no" but thinking about pitfalls.

AF—Josh & I can work this out. There are issues with regards to Mazama Pines Rd. The project is practically in the right-of-way. If there's a set-back issue, I don't want to site it way out in the middle of the parking lot. The county (I suspect) could put it where it wants. There's a good place to put it where it's out of everybody's way, but we might have to go through a lot of land use stuff that you wouldn't have to go through.

AH—Let's talk about the financial end. We're going to start doing these projects. How are we going to manage these? For this project, do a budget adjustment, because that's really what it is. Create a line item for FD6 well project. That's easy. Hard part is who will check the invoices and do the A19s (Form A19-1A, a Washington State invoice voucher). An outside entity? We need to decide.

CB—Let's look at what the potential allocations are, and then take care of it.

AF—I suggest---since it's basically a Fire District project. If we were doing it all with private donations, they'd want the money to go to the Fire District, and the invoices would be dealt with by Cody and the Fire Commissioners.

AH—But this is grant money.

AF—So there's another layer of complexity.

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RH-D—As an example of how we did it with CARES Act (Corona Virus, Relief and Economic Security Act enacted in 2020) dollars, we had a MOU (memorandum of understanding) with the county and sent invoices to you and you reimbursed. We provided the documentation to Lanie.

AH—That’s the easy part. Lanie had to do a lot of paper work (AH describes the procedure). I’m in favor of this project.

CB—That’s the key issues I wanted to get sorted out today. Decide what projects we want to fund and our reasons why. Just get the projects lined up. These low hanging fruits—easy to justify. Then think about a couple of these projects that are uncertain—broadband for example—it’s matching dollars and what if the PUD doesn’t get any money? These smaller projects are small. There are a couple of infrastructure projects for cities that are big, but they know what they need in terms of match, and they’re pursuing the dollars. Omak has a \$10,000,000 has a water project but no idea where the money could come from. That’s a huge amount of uncertainty. This project is moving along very quickly. The projects RH-D are pretty easy to justify under the act, and we can see the need. But then there are other ones. Nespelem has an engineering working on a roads project and then there’s the water tower that might slide off the side of the mountain.

AF—My only question is when will I get the answer.

CB—I’m not bashful about committing to this.

JD—Me neither. I’m fine.

AH—I’m reading the rules to see if it’s covered. He reads aloud, looking for the correct place. Someone in the audience (Mike Worden?) suggests he check in the essential services section.

CB—There’s government services, too. Also revenue loss. But the final rule said revenue loss under \$10,000,000 doesn’t have to be proved.

MW—Maintaining operational capacity.

CB—The infrastructure referenced in the final rule was buildings.

AH—Here we go! Right here: Discussing capital improvements, one bullet point says— improvements to or construction of emergency operations centers and acquisition of emergency response equipment. That’s a piece of emergency response equipment. But I want to look at this more closely to make sure it says what I’m reading.

AH—So the first question is whether we want to fund this if we can. The answer is yes. Second question is when does AF know if we can fund it? By the end of the week?

AF—Thank you!

CB—On Monday.

AF—You’ve got my contact info, if you’ve got any questions. He leaves.

3:20:10—MW—I’m Mike Worden, Okanogan Dispatch Center. We’ve talked before whether emergency command vehicle applies to ARPA funding. Like the Fire Department, I’m ready to go. Basic vehicle \$300,000 and with all the add-ons it’ll be in the \$300,000 to \$350,000 range. Radios, etc.

AH—Are we in favor of this if we can use ARPA money.

CB—I’m in favor, but I’ll ask Mike to do one thing to alleviate the burden to us. I’ll send him the final rule and he can find us the justification.

MW—That’s easy. Send it.

CB—And the more eyes we have, the better. I’ve got a pdf and I’ll send it.

MW—Thank you. He leaves.

3:24:25—RH-D—I’ll start by saying every one of my projects is eligible. We need to pay attention to what the funds were intended for.

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RH-D—I submitted three projects. One was to continue funding for staff for our Small Business Resource and Technology Center. Created this program based on what we saw during Covid. Businesses are still impacted.

RH-D—The Retail Academy was the second project I submitted. There's a time crunch for this one. They raised their rates March 1, and the proposal they submitted to me was good through February 28. They need to know ASAP. I sent you information about what Pateros got—gave them tools to recruit new businesses. Colville Tribe will contribute \$20,000 to include two communities.

RH-D—Lastly, we're offering a small grant program to businesses that continue to be impacted by Covid.

RH-D—That's year one. For year two, my ask is for just staffing and the business grant program, for a total of \$450,000 for two years.

CB—Roni, don't know if you're into the details of the rules—on page 161, under item D, aid to impacted industries—there's a whole long description of industries, especially outside of tourism, travel and hospitality. A process to evaluate. If you'll take those pieces of language and attach it to your projects. I've read the previous rule and thought your projects fell within it. I'm willing to commit to your projects because businesses were really impacted.

AH—The Retail Academy. If the employee learning the software and will assist the business owner?

RH-D—No. We bring reps from every community. One of you guys to participate, Planning Department, Chambers of Commerce, etc. And they'd go to the program. Communities would step up and help their businesses. We contract with Retail Strategies. They give participants the tools they need to have conversations with business owners—see what businesses are needed, how to contact franchises, etc. Also can help when someone wants to open a business—how to get a bank loan, etc. Don, in Twisp, really wants this. Lots of open store fronts.

AH—Who is the entity that's going to do this is each community? How does the program help? Is it for you?

RH-D—It's for both the community and for us. On our website, we'll have all the information we've compiled. People could see what towns they can establish a business in, with lots of data.

AH—I can see what you're getting for the \$140,000.

RH-D—Lots of towns wait for the business to contact them, but this teaches them how to reach out to businesses. How to make connections.

CB—There's a section about economic development. If you could go through that part and figure out what's an eligible use. I can see the need, especially in downtowns with empty store fronts.

RH-D—So, do you want me cite the page that shows eligibility?

CB—Yes. Making those connections is important, and when we write the resolutions we can cite them. If you can make those connections, we're 100% in favor of funding. That would be really helpful. Not proving the viability of the project itself, but just showing eligibility.

RH-D—I'll do it and send it back. And I'll hear on Monday?

AH—Yeah, on Monday.

CB—I search for Economic Development.

RH-D—Can you mail me the rule? Then I can reference what you're looking it.

AH—you're not going to be a sub-recipient this time, correct? Because we're directly awarding you money to do specific things?

RH-D—I think I am a sub-recipient.

CB—We talked about A19s before but I don't think there are A19s involved with this.

RH-D—And I've worked with Lanie a lot and I'm willing to do whatever I have to do.

CB—We have partners. Two are Community Action Council and Economic Alliance. You guys have dealt with this stuff and know how.

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RH-D—Did Association of Washington Counties break down the Economic Development section to make it easier to read?

CB—I'll ask. And we pay extra in our dues to deal with ARPA stuff.

CB—Remind me of your timeline....

RH-D—ASAP. Thanks. She leaves

3:53:25—CB—When I read the projects—Public Health is easy to fit. OCCAC (Okanogan County Community Action Council) Food and Nutrition is probably easy, but how do we represent it? Reporting and then later audits....

AH—When is the reporting due?

CB—April.

CB—On the well project, it deserves attention because it'll be under our supervision somewhat. So a couple of the reason why I tried to separate the project and make it all theirs.

AH—I understood when you mentioned public purpose segregation.

AH—No more business. We're adjourned. I'm going to sit here and read the instructions.

Adjourn.