

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, July 18, 2022 AM

JD—Jim DeTro, BOCC, District 3—absent
AH—Andy Hover, BOCC, Chair, District 1
CB—Chris Branch, BOCC, Vice Chair, District 2
LJ—Lanie Johns, Clerk of the Board
CHa—Crystal Hawley, Deputy Clerk of the Board
MG—Maurice Goodall, Emergency Management
JP—Joe Poulin—Maintenance Supervisor
PP—Pete Palmer, Director of Planning
SK—Shelley Keitzman, Risk Management
AL—Albert Lin, County Prosecutor
KB—Karen Beatty, Director, Okanogan Central Services
NP—Naomi Peasley, Fairgrounds Manager

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/offices/commissioners/commissioners_proceedings.php

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Summary of significant discussions:

Maurice Goodall, Emergency Management, discusses the situation where the county's fire departments are often being called to respond to calls not related to fires. Should EMS handle these calls instead? The Commissioners will talk to the Fire Chiefs first and later talk to the EMS people.

Joe Poulin, Maintenance Supervisor, discusses 17 HVAC units on the roof of the building where the commissioners meet. Also discusses the malfunctioning geothermal system in the jail and potential fixes. Commissioner Branch says Ester Milner, Chief Civil Deputy Prosecutor is working on contracts for ARPA spending.

Prosecutor Albert Lin asks the Commissioners for more money to increase attorney's salaries, making it easier to recruit and retain staff.

Shelley Keitzman, Risk Management, tells the commissioners that the risk pool's rates for liability insurance will increase 40% next year.

Naomi Peasley discusses bids for fencing at the race track, contracts for food vendors at the Fair and plumbing woes at the Argiplex.

1:15—CB wants to fill in the spot on Tuesday's agenda created by cancelling the Finance Committee Meeting. He'd like PP to give her update for the Planning Department to talk about the cannabis moratorium. CB would like to change the recitals (the whereas clauses) in the moratorium resolution. AH thinks that's fine.

CB—I went to the ARPA administrators' workshop that WSAC (Washington State Association of Counties) did on Thursday. Several administrators from several counties, and only one Commissioner—me. Expressing concerns about the audits they're getting—those that have already spent money. The

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, July 18, 2022 AM

state auditor is putting it on them to prove that all the money they're spending is legal. I even heard one person he was going to quit the job. I think this is unacceptable. The state's Auditor's Office needs to know what the rules are.

AH—With us, that's what we've been doing with the Fire Department. We've gone through a lot of stuff.

CB—We're doing our due diligence, and that's the main thing—that we capture by documentation and resolutions. WSAC asked someone to talk to the Auditor's Office, because they need to be helpful in giving guidance. They were really frustrated.

AH—But there's a lot of things that are going on that are not Constitutional in Washington state that funds are being used for. Retention bonuses aren't legal. You can't give someone a bonus for work already done. You have to say—here's extra money for work you're going to do.

CB—Right. It's a temporary wage increase. But they should give us help about how to keep the books in order. Melanie is going to speak with Erik.

AH—Did you look to see if we got the second batch of the ARPA money?

CB—I didn't. I have to check.

8:00—AH—It's 9:15 and time for comments. One comment in the chat box from "FindTheRightPassion" "Morning... Much respect on some that conduct properly running a board meeting! On that note.... The hospitals board meeting was a hot mess! Very disappointing.... Thank you for what you do and explaining the process."

No other comments.

CB and AH discuss the consent agenda.

JD's wife called to say he won't be in today. She called instead of him because he drove over his phone.

CB & AH discuss a document requiring a docu-sign, but the county doesn't do that. It concerns reimbursement and the Blake decision.

CB—did you hear about the farm bill listening session for the legislature. Rep. Shire (?) is doing it. I got it through Sarah Walker, so you probably got it, too.

22:30—Commissioners' Staff Meeting.

MG—Passes out a letter that needs signatures. Forward it to Stacy McLain at State. Discussion has been happening with Corps of Engineers, State and me.

AH—It's a letter requesting assistance from the US....

MG—State's Emergency Management. Conconully and we all issue letters to the Corp of Engineers for assistance. (Deals with mud flows.) Clean-up is moving right along.

MG—Meeting of fire departments at the Fairgrounds this week.

AH—Speaking of fire departments. I pulled all the calls that go to the fire department on non-fire calls. There are a lot! Mallot gets a ton of them.

CB—EMS calls?

AH—In general, it seems like that.

MG—This needs to be addressed. Can I get the Fire Chiefs come and address you.

AH—Some like to be called on EMS calls, Mike told me. I'd like to meet with the Fire Chiefs before we go to EMS guys.

AH—Data from January 2021-present. When I talked to Lifeline, I didn't think it was that much.

MG—One time is too many.

CB—So if the EMS has to up their staffing, that will cost more.

AH—And fire districts are getting taxed for fires, not EMS. And it's over the whole county.

LJ—There's a contract between Omak and Lifeline to provide ambulance service.

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, July 18, 2022 AM

CB—I'm not saying this should or shouldn't happen, but we need to have a conversation about it.

CB—Fire Districts are a government entity and have some control over what they do. We need to have the conversation about this.

MG—I'll talk to the Chiefs and try to get them in here.

37:55—LJ gives her update.

LJ—The new records' clerk starts today. Help with public records request, accounts payable, etc.

LJ—Otis Elevator hydraulic fluid replacement. Talked to Otis. With age and usage it'll eventually need to be replaced. Oil heats up and cools down and that affects its viscosity. Over time, the elevator could have leveling and valve issues. They could do the work now but not pay until next year. It goes 30 years between changes.

AH—I was wondering if we should save for this for future changes.

LJ—They'll remove the oil, clean the tanks and refill. Probably 60-70 gallons of fluid per car. Costs about \$41,000 plus \$10,000 for disposal.

AH—They've never changed the fluid before?

JP—No. Jail built in the 1970s.

CB—Can you ask about when you analyze the oil—check viscosity.

AH—Still move forward?

CB—Yes.

Discussion of where to put the expense. AH will discuss with the Auditor and do a supplemental.

LJ—Another item CDBG Audit program Commerce is doing. Basically on-line. Much longer process than when it was in person. I'm wrapping that up this week.

LJ—Contact Mr. Beamon (the Architect) regarding option #2 of the 20-year Master Plan. Meeting to discuss option#2 is scheduled for August 2 at 1:30.

47:50—JP—Maintenance Supervisor gives his update.

JP—Alpha Company is here do assessment on all the buildings and then start the work tomorrow.

Pioneer Waterproofing show up today to start of the curvilinear project tomorrow.

JP—Long discussion of HVAC units on the roof of the building. Need two units and there are 17 total units on the roof. Discussion of why so many units. Perhaps had to do when the building was remodeled. It was designed as an open floor plan and then turned into separate units. To go back to just one or two big units now, they'd have to redo all the ducts.

CB—Consolidating now would be a huge....

AH—How many units we've replaced so far?

JP—Two, I think. Tried to replace the compressors, but had to replace the whole system. Don't know the price yet. AH guesses \$20,000 each. JP—Yes, and the availability.

CB—Remodeled an older building and always an attempt to cut corners.

AH—before the old one goes out, see what it would cost to buy a bigger one and replumb the thing.

JP—Will do.

1:00:20—JP—Waiting for Northwest Engineering to get back to me about the jail geothermal system and the well capacity.

AH—Talked extensively about the well capacity not being sufficient?

JP—Yes.

Long discussion about the well capacity for the geothermal system. They need an extraction well and a return well. JP says the main issue for a water to water heat pump is that the water has to be clean and filtered. Also issues about the flow requirement. The water flow was lowered to keep the return well

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, July 18, 2022 AM

from overflowing, but then they didn't meet the minimum flow requirement. Well overflowed when the flow was turned up to what was required. CB suggests maybe an executive session to discuss legal action. CB also points out that wells change characteristics over time, so if the well was once adequate, that doesn't mean it is now.

CB—We could hire an engineering firm that knows exactly what they're doing and see if the design was good.

AH—Here's the question I would ask: Were the flow parameters of the plate heat exchangers met?

That's what I'd ask about design. NW Engineering is going to give us a proposal for a fix and its cost.

JP—They're going through to look at the water flows by what the charts say to see if flow was enough.

AH—That's what I wanted.

JP—And they're looking for a fix.

AH—Good. That's what I wanted to know.

1:14:40—PP gives the Planning Department update.

PP—PP has recently been appointed Vice President of the Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association. It's a two year appointment. There's paper work necessary, and she provides the commissioners with a resolution.

PP—Zoning code update--Reached out to 11 more firms to try to get some proposals for the job. I found two that may be willing to do the job. Names the companies who may submit a proposal.

PP—Last item for today. I have one notice from the Liquor-Cannabis Board. We don't have any findings on it, so I just need a signature on it.

AH—Because of the letters where we said there was no proper address (*note taker guesses this means that there's an entity with a cannabis license but there's no proper address on it*) and they told us to go pound sand, we can keep doing this, but we've got to come up with something.

PP—Maybe it's a waste of time to keep doing this, but it's also documentation that we told someone that their address wasn't right.

AH—We can take this to the governor's office and show them what's going on.

CB—In local rules, to approve a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) you need an appropriate address. They can give a license, but if it doesn't meet our parameters, we don't issue the CUP.

PP—August 28 is the end of the moratorium. Have a hearing scheduled in the beginning of August in front of the Planning Commission and then the recommendation will come to you.

AH—Have you been having Planning Commission meetings?

PP—Yes.

AH- I guess they're not as "top tier" without the Comprehensive Plan.

CB—Move to approve sending the comments prepared by Planning staff for Cetava LLC (?) agreement and authorize the chair to sign. Motion passes 2-0.

CB—Move to approve Resolution 108-2022, approving the Planning Director's participation in the APA as Vice President. Passes 2-0.

PP—I'll be back tomorrow at 10AM with the Tunk Basin ordinance. PP leaves.

CB—Have I told you why we need to get a little deeper in the Tunk moratorium ordinance? That's why I asked her to come in tomorrow, so we might want to send a more detailed message using the recitals. We can work on that tomorrow.

CB—In a lot of cases in zoning, the consideration of cost of the county to deliver the services in permitting, I was thinking it's an important consideration in any designation we make. Often times we find ourselves spending a lot for a process that doesn't affect very many people. With lot sizes of 100 acres, some places it's really difficult to deliver those planning permit services. The process should be looked at to make sure we're not charging all the tax payers...

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, July 18, 2022 AM

AH—to provide services for a couple of people.

CB—And we can't get close to making the department pay for itself that way.

1:26:30—CB—ARPA funds. I'll follow up on why we haven't got the payment yet. I talked to Ester (Milner, Chief Civil Deputy Prosecutor) and we were working through a contract for the Fire District. She acknowledged our position on the standard deduction thing. I think she's got a contract that might work. She has to work her way through it.

CB—Our last discussion on the Twisp well project, are we committed to doing that?

AH—Yes. It's in the spread sheet.

CB—I got a call from the mayor and I was talking to their planner. They're *very* ready to go. So if we can get a contract to them, that'd be good.

AH—We have to make sure that when we're doing these things, there's precedence about county to city funding. So it's not something out of the blue that we're giving money to a municipality. We want to establish that it's been done before. I think we have it in the Eastlake sewer.

CB—And everything we've been doing for infrastructure serves the county. It should be easy for the county to set that precedent by setting a county-side policy. When cities annex properties to have housing, etc. and they have the infrastructure basis. One way or the other you know you're going to get an annexation. Serves the county because we know we'll get housing that we need.

AH—I went to Pasco and the city limits sign had the population that's twice the population of Okanogan County. And we're a lot bigger, so we need more roads, etc.

CB—City officials and county officials don't usually go to each other's conferences.

AH—What's going on with us—annexing is helping because property valuation go up because people are able to build on the infrastructure. Police are closer in, etc. It probably saves us money.

CB—County policies would help if we agree to annexation.

CB—Here's an email from Ester I'll forward to you. What she's come up with for ARPA. So there's a grant agreement and she thinks it's better to keep them separate. (*Unclear what's being kept separate. Perhaps the Mazama hydrant project and the FD6 fire station cost overrun grant.*) She's prepared an Interlocal agreement to keep it separate from the grant agreement.

CB—I'll forward to you and we can both reply what direction we want to be going.

1:37:45—AH—Did you see the email from the Attorney General's office? Washington Opioid Distributor Letter. If the settlement is finalized, you'll be able to use the settlement to help with opioid issues. Sign and forward to Ester.

1:39:30—SK and AL arrive.

AH—I just sent you two an email re: opioid settlement. \$519,000,000.

AL discusses problems with getting the Prosecutor's Office fully staffed. Problems with retaining current staff and attracting new staff. Compared to Kittitas and Douglas Counties our salaries don't compete. No responses when we advertise. So we need more money. Younger people aren't coming here, and we need bigger salaries to compete with Douglas and Kittitas. They have similarly sized populations.

Klickitat County, smaller than us, advertised paying between \$91,000 and \$98,000/year. Also Chelan County salaries. Ours are woefully inadequate.

AH examines salary data SK provided.

AH—Can we get a cost analysis of what it would cost to go to the wage scale, including benefits, etc. of these similar counties?

SK—Absolutely.

AH—I totally understand that we need to be at par with these other counties.

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, July 18, 2022 AM

AL—Plus we'll lose people because we're so short staffed that we're working people to death.

AH—I know. Your office, Sheriff's Office and jail all work together to work to fight crime. But our budget is based on 1% increase per year. At some point, we'll be at the breaking point. Not just your office, but the county government. Hope at some point the state recognizes it has to stop spending ridiculous amounts of money of whatever ridiculous things they spend it on and look at expenses like our indigent defense. That costs of \$1,200,000. That's my soap box. CB—do you agree?

CB—Across the board, we have trouble hiring people. Hospitals, etc. Quality of life is affected by crime. AL's got a plan.

CB—This strategy sounds better than other strategies we've tried.

AL—What's changed in the last few years, you're not able to get young attorneys to fill the entry jobs. I don't know what they're doing now, but we're not getting them. Trying to fill 2-3 positions and keep what I've got.

AL—Benton and Yakama Counties are offering signing bonuses.

AH—to SK—can you get the information to us by the end of today? Then we could move on it tomorrow.

CB—And a draft resolution would help, too.

SK—OK.

1:59:00—SK—KB and I are next.

KB—I got a call from a vendor who scans your website and they said we weren't ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) compliant. I thought we were, but I've since learned that we were when it was first revised, but as we're gradually modified it, some things are out of compliance.

AH—What does that mean, in general.

KB—There are a set of guidelines that have to be complied with to help people with disabilities use the website. I've had several meetings with us. They show us the scan and how many issues we have. Also scans for duplications. 69% compliant.

SK—A lot had to do with broken links. This company scans weekly and it tells us what the issues are. Online training. We can set it up to individual departments. \$2949/year.

AH—That's not bad.

SK—Unlimited support to train us so we can look for issues. Spelling issues can make you non-compliant.

KB—Did a search for an employee that left, and her name was still on it. Tanya.

CB—Some issues help everyone—broken links, etc.

SK—We could get sub-reports to go to different department heads.

AH—Price sounds like a deal.

KB—Price is based on the size of the county.

CB—Quality control thing. So what happens if an ADA issue comes up?

KB—I asked what do they do if we get a complaint. He said there's no guarantee, but if you're sued you can show you're being proactive.

KB—I have the contract and just need the BOCC to OK us to move forward.

AH—It's OK.

2:04:55—SK—Risk pool insurance. Liability proposal for 2022-2023 is a 40% increase.

AH—Right now we're paying \$520,000/year.

SK--\$557,000 was in the budget for last year.

SK—Next year's premiums will be \$674,929 for liability, \$166,291 for property, then there's cyber. Total costs are \$864,882. Budgeted last year was \$557,000. We'll be short this year. Tort claims out of this, too, we we're probably about \$375,000 short for this year. Premium is paid in October. Talked to the

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, July 18, 2022 AM

auditor. They (*risk pool people?*) wanted a vote on this this week. They're trying to stay solvent with all of the claims they're getting. Wild fires increase property loss, and we know about the cyber.

AH—I don't know how much fighting goes on vs just settle it. That upsets me.

SK—Legal fighting is very expensive.

AH—So we'll be \$300,000 short?

SK—More than that.

AH—Can you remind Cari (Hall, Count Auditor) because we'll get 3rd quarter distressed county assistance funding. Completely unbudgeted revenue and we can do a budget supplemental out of that.

CB—It'd be wise to see what's the other insurance pool. It's complicated. Not easy to make across the board comparison.

AH—Any counties around us that belong to other risk pools?

CB—Don't know.

SK—The last time I went to a meeting, there were other counties coming back into our pool.

CB—Everybody's having loses. Cost of building materials will be the same in other risk pools.

SK—That's all I've got.

AH—So find out about cost of moving attorney's wages up. Get expense report re: how much wages have already been paid. If we use all of the labor money that hasn't been spent, we may not need a budget supplemental tomorrow.

SK—Will do.

2:17:25—AH—Hearing for budget supplemental for the Fairgrounds. It's for the bleachers we ordered. Instead of taking money from current expense reserve, I suggest we take it out of county assistance payment and put the supplemental off until the auditor and I can get a supplemental motion set up.

CB—Motion 107-2022 to continue the public hearing until tomorrow at 2:35. Passes 2-0.

NP—Was that just for the bleacher?

AH—That and a few miscellaneous expenses.

NP—We've paid \$25,000 in B&O taxes for the first 6 months and there's only \$35,000 budgeted for the year.

AH—We'll get it cleared up tomorrow.

NP—First item—Contract with VIP for Fair Committee lighting and sound. The dates are wrong and need to be changed. Should be Sept 8, 2022 to Sept 9, 2022.

AH—It's on the consent agenda. If we don't get a new contract by tomorrow, I can just cross out the old dates and write in the dates.

NP—Next—Fencing. I received further clarification on the bids re: vinyl coating, etc.

AH—Reads the bids. Quality Custom Fencing from Omak, Overland Fence in Tonasket, Lakes General in Inchelium. Commissioners discuss prices vs materials and the fact that Quality Custom came to inspect the area where the fence would be installed.

CB—Move to accept the quote for the pedestrian barrier fence at the Fairground track from Quality Custom Fencing for \$22,785. Motion passes 2-0.

AH—To CHa—It was on the consent agenda but we just did it now.

NP—I'll bring another fencing project for you. There's no barrier to keep people from coming inside the fairgrounds. Hope to have bids by next Friday.

AH—Just regular 6 ft, no barbed wire on the top, galvanized.

NP—Paying for it with the safety grant. So far spent \$200,000 out of \$375,000 total, including \$125,000 county matching funds. This is all for the track. There's just the LED lights. I've got some feelers to replace them.

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, July 18, 2022 AM

NP—The LED lights—there's someone who'll put them up for free or in-kind.

AH—We'll need to spend another \$100,000 to \$125,000 by next year.

NP—And I've been keeping track of safety volunteer hours.

NP—I have the food vendor addendums.

Discussion of food vendor contracts. Some vendors are told they can't serve certain items. CB says it's his understanding this is usual in fair food contracts—you don't want everyone to serve hamburgers, you want variety. And vendors don't want to be selling what everyone else is selling. Menu restrictions aren't in the contract to begin in. Commissioners don't have a problem with this, but want vendors to know what the situation in from the beginning. They also want to be sure the rules of who can serve what are fair. Mike, the Fair Committee person in charge of vendors, has run the program for many years and most of the rules are not in writing. Commissioners would like there to be written rules with everything spelled out.

3:06:20—NP—Last item. Toilets at the Agriplex. At every large event at the Agriplex, the toilets back up and are unusable. Spending \$500/week on portable toilets. Several reasons for the problem and solutions are discussed. New toilets, but what if they don't work either Improve water pressure. Get a grinder pump. NP will try to find someone to diagnose the problem.

NP—RV park bathrooms are working well. Put on the calendar to drain the bathrooms in the fall so the plumbing doesn't freeze.

NP—Newly hired maintenance person has resigned due to family issues after just one week.

NP leaves.

AH and CB discuss Wenatchee transit that can give a ride to disabled person. Anyone can drive the person and the driver is reimbursed. AH will be at the Trango meeting on Wednesday and CB wanted him to know about it.

Adjourn at 12:20 until Tuesday at 9: