

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, January 30, 2023 AM

JN—Jon Neal, BOCC, District 3
AH—Andy Hover, BOCC, Vice-Chair, District 1
CB—Chris Branch, BOCC, Chair, District 2 via Zoom
LJ—Lanie Johns, Clerk of the Board
CHa—Crystal Hawley, Deputy Clerk of the Board.
NP—Naomie Peasley, Fairgrounds Manager
PP—Pete Palmer, Planning Director
MG—Maurice Goodall, Emergency Management

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Summary of significant discussions:

- Commissioners discuss aquatic projects in Forest Service cuts. Commissioner Branch points out that the best time to have such projects included is during scoping.
- Naomie Peasley, Fairgrounds Manager, update the commissioners. They discuss moving ahead with the race horse barns project, the newly installed floor of the Annex and how to develop plans for dealing with buildings damaged by the winter weather. The bathroom in the RV park has been demolished and rebuilding will start soon.
- Pete Palmer, Planning Director, says the “Tunk thing” is now off her desk (referring to last Tuesday’s public meeting about the Tunk Valley rezone), and the office is now dealing with lots of public information requests for documents between the Planning Department, the BOCC and the Planning Commission.
- Maurice Goodall, Emergency Management, tells the commissioners that the snow pack in approximately 100% of normal for this time of year and that the prospect for flooding is the spring is small.
- Commissioner Hover tells the other commissioners about a recent conversation with the Mayor of Conconully. The town is trying to build a new fire station/community center paid for with two grants and \$400,000 in bonds. After they received the bids, they realized they’d be \$2,000,000 short. The mayor was asking Commissioner Hover for help in obtaining money from the state legislature. The commissioners discuss the situation. Commissioner Hover says he personally might support using some the \$3,000,000 the county is hoping to receive to buy new radios needed for emergency communication.
- Meeting adjourned 10:30 until Tuesday morning.

08:25—Pledge of Allegiance.

AH reads the agenda to CB because CB is attending via zoom and his agenda is unavailable. AH notices that Thursday’s Fair Advisory Committee (FAC) is at 6 PM, not 10 AM as the Agenda now says.

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CB—Is the Planning Commission meeting this week? Just out of curiosity.

AH—The agenda says Feb.6, we've got a meeting about the Tunk Basin rezone. I think that's the date the moratorium was set to expire. I'll double check. If it is, we don't need that one. I'll go check with Planning.

JN and CB chat about CB's health. He's not recovering as quickly as he'd like from his recent hip replacement.

19:00—No public comments.

CB—Two legislators were supposed to call me but they didn't. I bet they're really busy.

LJ and CHa discuss a change in January 24 minutes.

AH—(Back from Planning.) The entry in the Agenda was just a placeholder.

AH—Michael Beamon says he's done with being the county's architect, so we should probably put out a REQ (Request for Qualifications) for architectural services for the County.

CB—Yes. Just the standard architectural services with emphasis on public buildings.

AH—asks LJ to get the REQ to go out.

AH—I met with a Yakima County Commissioner, a Kittitas County Commissioner and a Chelan County Commissioner with the Forest Service. Yakima and Kittitas were already meeting with them. Just to be involved with Kristin Bail to hear what they're doing with the North Central Washington Initiative. Make sure all four of us in the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest are hearing the same thing.

CB—We'll have to compare note. My conversation with Kristin is in the Forest Health Collaborative (FHC). We don't always meet with her.

AH—What I was interested in—when the Forest Service is doing aquatics in these big projects, dealing with streams and tributaries in these zones, I'm curious because on the Salmon Recovery Board (SRB), a big thing is that it's tough to do projects on the forest. They can be so varied. Like if you put a beaver dam analogue in the Forest Service, it's not going to be covered by something's programmatic. It'd be nice, if when they do NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) on the cut, and we knew ahead of time on the SRB and we knew the major things we could do as far as habitat goes, to help with drought resiliency, fish, flood management. Just try to coordinate better, so we'd be able to put a project in there.

CB—I imagine the SRB weighs in on the scoping process.

AH—We don't.

CB—That's where it happens.

CB—NEPA scoping takes quite a while.

AH—That's a good point. We need to talk to Sarah (?) every time the scoping comes out for a new cut, we need to know so we can put a science package together—saying here are the projects that could go on in that watershed.

CB—What happens with the Forest Service and the DNR these days is—there's not a commercial harvest. A commercial harvest is within the project. So the overall project is (*inaudible*) the treatment. The commercial plan happens as an element to the project.

AH—So the project needs to have a salmon recovery component to it—something to do with the tributaries—if it needs it. Some may not need it, but for some, it'd be very beneficial

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CB—Probably when the aquatic portion of the project, that's where all that stuff is built in. So the SRB isn't seeing a project they'd expect to see, that's the time to get that scoping in.

CB—And at the same time, you've got Trout Unlimited, Conservation Northwest and the Nature Conservancy and the Yakamas—they're all on the Forest Health Advisory Committee. When they go to do the aquatics part of any project, you're usually immersed in salmon recovery issues. You should see anything the SRB has in any of its plans they should already be there.

AH—I don't think they are. I've been to every board meeting, but only kind of hearing about what's going on with the FHC.

CB—The Forest Health Plan doesn't dictate those projects, either. All they're doing is providing as much collaborative review as they can. Lots of issues during project development are addressed through NEPA. That's one of the issues with the challenge that's just emerged. The complainant is asserting that the FHC is creating the projects, but it's the Forest Service doing what it does, and the Collaborative's objective is to increase the pace and scale of forest treatment. When people comment in the NEPA process, they get input. There's a hefty aquatic element to everything. Brandon (?) of the Yakama Nation, is on it.

AH—Brandon will sometimes chime in, but it's Shannon (?), they have their own representative...

CB—If you're in those meetings, ask them if they think the aquatic issues are being addressed.

33:45—Staff Meetings.

CB—Naomie gets to go first.

AH—Brock (?) did a good job with the agenda.

NP—Agreed.

NP—Just a couple of things. I got prices from the Building Department and the Assessor's Department. Discussion about correct procedures to transfer the vehicles to the Fairgrounds. The assessor's vehicle is owned by the "current expense budget", so it can be transferred to the Fairgrounds. The Building Department's vehicle must be accurately valued and then LJ will write a resolution to transfer it.

NP—I've finished the Fair Convention Fair expenses, so I need a signature.

NP—Next, the College and Career Expo. Last year they had the rental fee waived, and they'd like to have it waived again this year. (Commissioners agree.) NP will complete the fee waiver form and the commissioners will vote on its approval. The Expo will be held on a Wednesday, so it won't conflict with anyone who wants to rent the facility on the weekend.

NP—We're painting the annex. The floor is done. It's amazing. It's textured and not slick. We're painting so we can get it prepped for a horticultural event next week. Then we'll do the kitchen floor. We'll use the same paint in the RV bathrooms when we paint them. The RV bathrooms are almost completely demolished and ready to go up next week.

AH—The race horse barns. We need to prep the pads and they do the installation. The price is still good?

NP—I haven't checked on the price for quite a while.

AH—So it'll be 40 stalls. Four barns with ten stalls each. Really nice looking. Monitor barns. It'd cost us out-of-pocket \$100,000, plus doing the pads.

NP—It'll cost \$256,000 for all of them.

AH—But we have \$120,000 in the Trust and \$30,000 with the (*inaudible*) so it'll be roughly \$100,000 for us, plus doing the pads.

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NP—Estimated \$5,000-\$8,000 to do the pads.

AH—If we're going to discuss it, we need to discuss it. NP should make sure the price is still good.

NP—I put it on the back burner because of all snow damage to the other buildings, etc. I can get the price on paper now. Including the mats, the water, etc. Not just the barns.

AH—So we need to discuss what we'll do to the barns because of the damage to them. Are we going to totally revamp them? Tear it down and build a new one on site?

JN—Might be more cost effective.

AH—More cost effective, and maybe we can get a good pole barn in there.

NP—I put this on hold. Didn't know about damage or insurance.

AH—All the buildings are insured with a \$5,000 deductible.

JN—Build them back as they were?

AH—Build them back in the same spot. The spots are good.

AH—And the Beef Barn has lots of issues. What about the Commercial Building?

NP—The Commercial Building is condemned. The ones that recently had damage are the horse barn, the beef barn, the north showers and the Home Ec building has the giant crack in the wall.

JN—Looks like you should just be able to fill it.

NP—It's doing what the Commercial Building did. Breaking the slab.

CB—I hear some ifs in the conversation. That's the assessment we need. What NP puts on paper is exactly what you need to do to get funding for it. We might get some insurance money. With that whole thing on paper, it makes it easier for us to make a decision. If it's on paper, we can look back and justify our decision later. Also if it's on paper, if a funding source comes up, we'll have a shovel-ready project. That's why I emphasize putting it on paper.

AH—One of the first thing to do is talk to Shelley (Keitzman, Risk Management) and the risk pool. Get an insurance adjuster to look at it.

AH—Do we get the adjuster out here now?

JN & CB—Yes. Schedules will fill up.

AH—to NP—Work with them and find out about the insurance. Then we'll have a better idea what we should do.

CB—What about a building plan?

AH—We haven't talked about that before. If/when we decide what kind of building we want, we can get a design/build RFP (Request for Proposal).

JN—The Spring thaw will make the Home Ec building worse. Can we brace it somehow?

NP—I'll try to get someone to look at it.

AH—We should try to get someone to do engineering services for us.

Discussion about putting out an RFQ (Request for Qualifications) for an engineer as well as an architect.

AH suggests Josh (Thomson, Public Works) could help with the engineer request.

NP—That's all.

1:03:35—PP—We got that Tunk thing off our desk. But we've got lots of public information requests from Isabelle and Nancy for documents sent from us to the Board and to the Planning Commission. We're getting them together to send this week. And that's all I've got to report.

AH—Where is the consultant with respect to the zone code update?

PP—We've been through meetings with interested parties—MVCC, Futurewise, the Yakama Nation.

They're compiling that information and the comments sent for previous versions. They're putting it all together.

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AH—I'd be interested in hearing from the consultant directly how the process will go. I don't want the consultant to just go with what all the commenters wanted and then brings it to us to pass. Is there some process where they'll make a draft and then talk to us and maybe rewrite it.

PP—I was very vocal about that. I told everyone I talked to that the ultimate decision will be made by the board.

AH—Good.

PP—I'll get a date set and get a process to them

1:06:20—AH—Maurice is here!

MG—I don't have anything but wanted to make sure you didn't have any questions.

AH—Where are we on water content?

MG—We're sitting a little bit above 100% depending on what they've got in Canada. They say the ground's not frozen and it's still dry. Some water is evaporating. Depends on which basin, too. Likelihood of flooding is minimal.

AH—In the Methow last Friday it was 32° at 4:00 in the afternoon. Friday night the groomer at Rendezvous recorded 57°. It was 47° at my house. Driving over here, things are looking melted.

MG—Did you see the mud slide at Beaver Creek?

AH—Yes. Right above the turnoff to Beaver Creek, but it's cleaned up.

MG—They called me but one lane was always open.

MG—Department heads meeting is still on tomorrow?

AH—Yes.

MG—Met with people in Pateros about the ammonia leak.

MG—That's all.

1:13:35—CB—We got time for more things if you've got anything to bring up.

CB—Thinking about zoning ordinance—looking at the Comprehensive Plan and making some sense of implementing the plan. Sometimes the interpretation of what the plan says is different with different groups.

Discussion about AH going to Olympia to discuss proposed legislation with the legislators. Zak (Kennedy, Okanogan County lobbyist) said maybe I could get meetings on zoom instead driving all the way and spending money on two nights in a motel on the county dime.

CB—If you have some issues lined up, I can see what's on the WSAC agenda. Maybe you could go into a Legislative Steering Committee meeting.

1:17:45—AH—Another topic I want to bring up. It was a hard deal for me to make this choice. I heard from the mayor of Conconully. They've got a project—a new fire hall/community center. Had grants in place and bonded \$400,000. The same thing happened to us—they went out to bid and they're \$2,000,000 short. So I got a call about Okanogan County Capital Project stuff. We need \$3,000,000 for all the radio stuff. If I'm going to think about this in a rational, fair way—they bonded money to do a project and came up short. That means they're on the hook for the money and the interest rates went up. I don't know how you can give the bond money back. My view is the money for us isn't county money. It goes to fire districts and everybody else. But Conconully bonded money, so I think it's more important than our \$3,000,000 ask for the radios. If you run down a logic list, they have money that the taxpayers are obligated for. A senator called me and I said it's hard. The money is just partly for us—for the Sheriff's Department, it's for all the users out there. Their staff is going to look for money and I volunteered myself to look for the \$3,000,000 from a pot of money we can get for this because we're going to have so much going on with the North Central Washington Initiative and all the others, we'll

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need good communications. They're going to look for other money and I volunteered myself to look and help track down that pot of money.

CB—Was that from Senator Short? Good to know because the communications lines we're got here are broken. I say that because some of us are pursuing this and didn't know about this.

AH—We have a lot of things coming out of this county, a lot of asks.

CB—Well, for any particular ask, if we don't know about what's going on in a county, it compromises any ask that's being made. I suppose the Senator's Office contacted you about the Conconully project and then we don't know where we are with that office and the ask for the \$3,000,000 for the communications system.

AH—They called me and asked about what the county's ask is all about and it's really important. But the day before, I got a call from the mayor of Conconully to say can you please point out in Olympia that they've got a project with all of these funding sources (two or three grants and the bonding) so could you look for help to try to get it done.

AH—When the Senator's Office called me, they were just calling about the communications stuff. I brought up Conconully. And they said they'd heard from them too. I told them honestly that I couldn't say ours should take precedence because they've got that bond money out there.

JN—In reality, both projects have taxpayer dollars.

AH—But we haven't obligated any money or gone through the bonding process for the communications money. And I told them that this is just my opinion. But they're shovel ready and they're \$2,000,000 short.

JN—I talked to him the other day and I threw your name out there because I knew you were heading over. But I didn't understand that they were that much short.

AH—No. It's exactly what happened to us. We were looking at \$1,600,000 for two buildings. Now it's \$3,500,000. Double.

CB—In both cases, we have to reevaluate our projects to decide what to do.

AH—The Senator's Office said we have a lot of stuff going on and we might be able to get our money a different way.

CB—Maybe.

JN—The communications project will be interesting. Lifeline is going to do a test run to see how well it works. I have my doubts talking to DOT people. I hear there are a lot of dead spots.

AH—But remember, it won't be just DOT towers. It'll be all of our towers, too.

JN—I understand. It'll expand the system.

AH—Hopefully, it works. If we get digital repeaters on our towers, and the DOT towers, then hopefully it'll work.

JN—I'm on that board and Mike said they'd piggyback on our towers and they'd have fewer dead spots, too. Maybe they could kick in some money.

CB—Test it pretty soon?

JN—They need to get the right equipment. We have to advance to a certain point before they can do that.

CB—If we knew that, we'd have a shorter term goal.

CB—Let's see what comes out of all these projects. I think about our own projects we're short on, and I think about looking at opportunities and when they present themselves. Not just create a reserve but finish projects instead fragmenting them. I also think the legislature is privy to the fact that Okanogan County got more PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) than any other county in the state.

AH—If you told people we're trying to put the money in reserve and use the interest to pay for projects, a lot of people would think it's a good idea. I know there are a lot of things, like court house safety,

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they're trying to get state money for court house security. If they paid for our indigent defense bill of \$1,000,000, I'd be happy to put our \$1,000,000 into court house security every year.

AH—By the way, can you (CB) get into the portal and get the other \$6,000,000.

CB—I think I can now.

1:32:40—AH—I don't have anything else.

JN—Me neither.

CB—There's a Legislative Steering Committee meeting on Thursday at 8:00 AM if you're going to Olympia. From 8:00 to 1:00

AH—Can I listen virtually?

CB—Yes. CB sends AH and JN the email invitation from Paul Jewell.

JN—I got it.

CB—At those meetings they tell you if there's going to be testimony from a commissioner about a project. It's pretty informative. There's also a hot sheet that comes out on Fridays. I'll forward that when it comes to me.

CB—If there's no other business, we'll adjourn until tomorrow.

Adjourn at 10:30.