

**< Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, January 12th, 2021, 1 :30 PM**

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(Time stamps refer to a Zoom recording available on County Watch website.)

Present:

Chris Branch (CB), BOCC District 1 (by Zoom)
Andy Hover (AH), BOCC District 2 (by Zoom)
Jim Detro (JD), BOCC District 3
Lanie Johns (LJ), County Clerk
Dan McCarthy (DM), Director, Okanogan Pest Board
Al Seccomb, Okanogan Pest Board
Larry Gilman (LG), Assessor
Maurice Goodhall, Emergency Management

Summary of important discussions: - Public Health meeting (notes posted separately); Pest Board: Replacements found for the retiring board members. While commissioners are in agreement concerning alignment with Chelan and Douglas counties with their horticultural tax, CB and JD would like it to be generalized, considering the fruit industry's importance to the county and that the Hawthorn/apple maggot threat comes from non-commercial orchards. AH anticipates resistance from those with large parcels far from orchard zones and would prefer to raise the current tax on root stock acreage; Other: WSU Extension salary approved; ID card maintenance contract approved; Consent Agenda passed; Short discussion on a future negotiation with the Methow Valley Watershed Foundation and the Methow Valley Watershed council to clarify roles.

- 0:34 Pest Board - Retiring director DM reports that at their last meeting a motion was passed to participate in a 3-county pest board with Chelan and Douglas counties requiring each to contribute \$130,000 annually. The commissioners re-descuss options: adding a 1.52 per parcel tax to the current \$2.25 tax per root stock acre, replacing the tax on orchards with a general per parcel tax of between \$2.82 and \$3, or, as AH suggests, keeping any per parcel tax to \$1 and raising the tax on root stock acres, a way of avoiding "a lot of pushback" in the North of the district. CB acknowledges that many won't be happy with \$3/parcel but points out that 1) the whole county benefits from the quarter of a million dollars generated by the fruit industry and 2) the weed tax, which mainly benefits cattlemen, is also levied to all parcels.
- 28:00 JD cites the number of fruit trees sold to residential users, these trees being the site of the apple maggot proliferation. DM: "Our proposal is to not charge orchard acres any different than other acres." LG suggests that any agreement be reviewed annually.
- 32:00 Commissioners will discuss a common assessment policy with the other county commissioners; Douglas now has no per parcel tax while Chelan's is \$3.15/parcel. JD says that Roland Smith will stay on the Okanogan board and that Mike Azzano, Rick de Lap and Clay Gebbers will join him. A meeting will be held to classify lands. LJ: There should be a public hearing of the Horticultural Pest and Disease Board, then a Pest Board meeting based on the conclusions. CB: "Provide an info

sheet for voters.” AH asks DM to give the impact of Hawthorne on jobs and to estimate how many people have back yard fruit trees.

In other business a motion was passed to approve the WSU Extension employee’s salary of \$41,351 (for the Master Gardener Home Horticultural Training).

- :05:08 Motion approved to pay the budgeted \$27,000 for the county employee ID card software maintenance contract. Motion passed to approve the Consent Agenda (funds for Community Action, Support Center, Behavioral Health Care, Housing Authority and Homeless Shelter, and contracts for the Guardrail Safety program, and inspection and testing for Gravel Crushing program).
- :09:10 AH has been asked to program a facilitated discussion on the Watershed Foundation’s role vs. that of the Watershed Council, “a big deal as of late.” He says “They don’t seem to grasp that they can’t do anything without the government being involved,” sees it as a waste of money, while CB says it might “play into the next moves of watershed planning.” AH would like to see more than the 9 current council members become involved.
- :14:36 Recording ends. (Due to technical difficulties toward the end, a small portion of the meeting was not recorded.