

< Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday, January 19th, 2021, 1 :30 PM

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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 Higbee (DH), Building Official
Larry Hudson (LH), Pest Board
George Thornton (GT), Okanogan TV District
Ernie Rasmussen (ER), Okanogan TV District
Maurice Goodhall (MG), Emergency Management

(No recording available. Computers and Zoom audio down.)

Summary of important discussions: - Building Dept. - 14 building applications to be reviewed by Planning Commission following an Attorney General opinion challenging permits approved in Methow basin subdivisions. DH foresees a decrease in new home building; Pest Board - Pesticide license recertification class announced for February, 10 acres of Mediterranean Sage treated behind Whitestone Mt.; Computer outage - The entire county's system was hacked last weekend. MG says telephone lines are affected and two of four (emergency?) lines are being used by District and Superior Courts; Television District - Repairing the tower which collapsed on an OkTV structure on the reservation will be an occasion to upgrade the system with broadband and improved electronics, benefiting valley residents as well as the tribes. Several funding opportunities discussed.

Building Dept. - The Ecology Dept. handed down an Attorney General opinion challenging permits approved in Methow River basin since 2002. The Planning Commission will decide which of 14 pending permits should be approved. DH: "(this situation?) ...gonna knock down Methow revenue by 50%." Some discussion of accounting, of hiring a new position and acquisition of a truck.

Pest Board - LH says the pesticide license recertification class to start in February may have to be virtual. Candidates can get a credit from attending Pest Board meetings, where speakers are scheduled to cover certification topics. The classes are usually available from January to March and from September to November. Apparently it was a cat, chased by the fire, who spread Mediterranean Sage behind Whitestone lake last year. The landowner treated in the beginning, then the pest board applied "Tordon" and "Escort" free of charge to rid 10 acres of the weed. AH: what to use on Scotch Thistle? LH: "Milestone", which he called "an environmentally conscious version of Tordon", effective on broad-leafed plants, which can be used right up to the edge of the water.

Television District - Two weeks ago, when the district started receiving complaints of loss of signal, and KSPS asked for an assessment of damage, GT and ER were escorted on snowmobile by Colville Tribe officials up Omak Mt. to where a tower had fallen on an OkTV building.

Transmitting capacity is down to 5%. To repair the tower and building and to be able to offer an improved service (multi-directional transmitter, upgrading satellite stations) should cost at least \$175,000. TheTV district has since been investigating funding possibilities, among them a grant of \$95,000 from the Open Road Alliance. The grant, says ER, is 80% finalized, the alliance awaiting estimates of the number of users set to benefit from the service. ER is sure getting broadband into far-reaching locations will increase the number of subscribers, including among the tribes who rely heavily on FNX (First nations Experience channel). The district could qualify for Economic Alliance emergency funds, or a \$75,000 grant from the Safe Start Fund. CB proposed emergency funding from the County to enable reconstruction to begin immediately. AH says it could come out of the Infrastructure Fund. The commissioners agreed to sign a letter of intent for a contribution of \$50-\$60,000.

Meeting adjourned at 4:20 after MG announced that because of the computer outage he will send a press release to county media outlets to advertise the public BOCC meeting scheduled for Wednesday January 20th at 1:30.