

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday January 3, 2023 AM

Present:

Chris Branch (CB) - BOCC Chair, District 1 (by Zoom) *Recovering from recent surgery*

Andy Hover (AH)- BOCC Vice Chair, District 2

Jon Neal (JN) – BOCC, District 3

Lanie Johns (LJ) – Clerk of the Board

These notes were taken by an Okanogan County Watch volunteer via Zoom. Every attempt is made to be accurate. Notes are verbatim when possible, and otherwise summarized or paraphrased. Note taker comments or clarifications are in italics. These notes are published at <https://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.

Time stamps below are in real time. To locate specific topics, a clock on the AV Capture video screen at <https://okanogancounty.org/avcapture.html> can assist in finding the correct spot on the video recording.

Summary of Significant Discussions or Actions:

- Chris Branch elected Chair, and Andy Hover elected Vice Chair. This was Commissioner Jon Neal's first meeting. The Board discussed the many boards and duties they take part in, outside BOCC meetings.
- Update from County Clerk; security issues are top concern- big problem.
- Director from Community Action Council to modify use of ARPA funds from \$200,000 allotment for food to; \$135,000 for food, \$50,000 warehouse rental to store food, and \$15,000 for 'discretionary' emergency sheltering needs.
- Update from Solid Waste and County Engineer.
- Meeting adjourned 11:25

9:00

LJ opens the meeting, nominations for BOCC Chair and Vice Chair. JN first nominates AH, but through discussion with CB, and the need to rotate leadership, AH declines. CB is voted BOCC Chairman for the year. AH is voted Vice Chair.

The next on the agenda were the various assignments on organizations, boards, etc that BOCC members are a part of. JN will stay with OCOG (Ok Council of Governments). AH would like to be on the TranGo board.

9:15

Public Comment

Ruth Hall, County Watch Volunteer, introduces self and welcomes AH & CB back for the New Year, and welcomes new Commissioner Neal.

The newly elected Treasurer, Pam Johnson comes in to introduce Deputy Treasurer, Becky Abrahamson, and wishes the BOCC a Happy New Year.

9:22

More discussion of committee assignments. CB reports that he has been appointed to the State Public Health Advisory Board. AH wants to remain on the LTAC board. He is no longer on the Wolf Advisory Group. WIRA 48 needs to be changed to Methow Watershed Council. AH would like to stay on the Upper Salmon Recovery Board. There is a Courthouse Security Committee that all of the BOCC is on but that is a problem with need to be public when 2 BOCC members are in attendance.

Others:

State Lands Inventory

Resource and advisory committee (WRAC?)

Juvenile Board

Law & Justice

WASAC – Representative for Legislative Steering Committee

9:30

Susan Speiker (SS), newly elected County Clerk, to update BOCC on pressing security issues in the Clerk's office. There have been many threatening words and actions aimed at Clerk office staff. She is very concerned about staff safety and herself. Last Friday, an individual had to be escorted out of the courthouse. The Court had denied client a restraining order and got threatening and scary. He has a known history with the court and is a 'constitutionalist'. Other incidents have occurred. SS states that she used to be able to de-escalate a person, but climate (*temperament of people toward public servants*) has changed. She would like to have a camera facing the people in the hall.

9:44

SS has acted by moving staff around in the office and shielding them from the public. (Tim & Roy) have been very helpful utilizing material on hand, not requiring any purchases. They are creating stalls for staff who would like this.

CB states that he would like to activate the Courthouse Security committee right away. Everyone has been working on these issues. This should involve Emergency Services Manager, Karen Beatty, & Darla & Mike Worden. AH states that all elected officials should be on the Safety Committee.

CB states that things are getting worse.

AH questions why the camera?

SS states that puts people on notice. She would like security, not herself to monitor this.

SS explains that since her staff are dealing with money, there needs to be a barrier between customers.

SS thanks the Board for hearing her very serious concerns.

9:51

Rena Shawver RS, Executive Director from Community Action Council in to request amending the ARPA funds contract as there are new concerns that have come up due to the severe weather, for homeowners who find themselves in need of sheltering alternatives. Also, they become stranded, and Search and Rescue gets involved. There are currently no discretionary funds for this. SS would like to amend the contract for the \$200,000 ARPA funds already awarded as follows: \$15,000 for emergency sheltering discretionary needs, \$135,000 for food, \$50,000 to rent a warehouse for food storage, (for 2 years). Not having storage facilities puts our food banks at a disadvantage. She has spoken with other counties who do have storage facilities. AH suggests that she talk with Roni Holder of Economic Alliance as she has a list of the open warehouse buildings in the County.

Second Harvest and NW Harvest have pulled their contracts for stocking food pantries, which has created this shortage until this can be resolved.

It was Moved, Seconded, and Carried to amend the previous resolution to the new designated amounts for the \$200,000 ARPA funds awarded to Community Action Council (CAC)

CB comments that he understands some of the needs coming to CAC have been mind boggling.

10:05

RS states that CAC is currently sheltering a 77-year-old man who had a stroke and ran out of firewood.

RS will send an amended budget. CB is the Chairman of the CAC board.

10:08

BOCC is back to discussing assignments; Pest Control & Horticulture – possibly Jon Neal

The Noxious Weed Board. AH wants to be on the PNW Forest Planning.

There is an organization of NE Washington Counties, Board of Health (which the entire BOCC is part of). Snowmobile Advisory Group, and LTAC (AH wants to remain)

Workforce Development Council

Aging & Adult Care – CB wants to be on that board

CB already serves on the Economic Alliance Board. CB states that we put \$200,000 per year in the Economic Alliance budget.

Criminal Justice which funds indigent defense

NCW Economic Development Council

Dispatch Advisory Board

Legislative Steering Committee

Columbia River Caucus

JN is concerned that he has a little knowledge but not enough to be on the Board.

Both AH and CB explain that's how you learn.

10:45

There will be no meeting on Wednesday

Moved, Seconded, and Carried to approve Commissioner proceedings from 12/27/2022

10:50

Moved, Seconded, and carried to approve the Consent Agenda as presented:

1. Contract – JIS link – Merfeld Law Office
2. Employment Agreement – Maurice Goodall
3. Employment Agreement – Karen Beatty
4. Employment Agreement – Josh Thomson
5. Agreement – LTAC 23-028 Marketing & Promotion – Merc Playhouse
6. Agreement – LTAC 23-024 Marketing & Promotion – Twisp Works
7. Resolution 1-2023 Road Restriction
8. Resolution 2-2023 Signing Authority Chief Deputy Clerk

11:00

Ken Kovalchenko (KK), Solid Waste Manager reports the landfill is crushing metal. There are a few permanent positions that need to be filled. There is a movement to get “Zero Waste” but needs to be hauled to Spokane. KK states this is a decision for the BOCC to make, but it doesn't appear very sensible. CB states that Cities are a part of the waste management plan.

KK also asks whether they can over-spend on needed vehicle for litter pickup?

Moved, Seconded, and Carried to authorize Solid Waste an additional \$15,000 from their own budget to spend on a vehicle. They will utilize \$35,000 from Grant monies and \$15,000 from Solid Waste budget. Resolution needed.

11:07

Josh Thomson (JT), County Engineer on the maintenance and road conditions; icy conditions – lots of complaints. No snow predicted for a couple of days but expecting snow on Thursday.

Also, reported working with the WDFW on the Hunter Mountain acquisition. They only offered \$1,000 per acre for the 400 acres surrounding county pit. That is only ½ of what JT expected. JT wonders whether we can put it in a conservation easement. CB would like JT to look into that. AH also suggested talking with County Assessor regarding the value of the land. JT will check into both of those.

AH suggests contacting the Mule Deer Foundation.

11:13

LJ has a few items for the BOCC – mostly signatures. CB asks that AH, Vice Chair can sign.

Moved, Seconded, and Carried to approve Certificate of Eligibility for contracted Prosecuting Attorney. Vice Chair to sign.

CB asks LJ if she has any more business.

JN states the need to address Oroville Emergency Services. Would like to see the funding increase. JN is also concerned about the Oroville Senior Center, which is having difficulties. They are having a hard time keeping afloat.

CB suggests that JN be sure to discuss this with Aging & Adult Services. JN asks CB for the contact information.

Some discussion about possibly consolidating the Tonasket/Oroville EMS. They need to get back in touch with Wayne (?) We might want LJ to send Wayne a note to get back with us regarding this proposal.

CB to JN – would also be good to have the Oroville City Council involved in the discussion.

LJ – No more business.

11:25

Meeting adjourned