

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, October 12th, 2020, AM

"These notes were taken by a County Watch volunteer via ZOOM. Every attempt is made to be accurate. Notes are verbatim when possible, and otherwise summarized. 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 the Okanogan County Commissioners' website at <https://www.okanogancounty.org>."

Present:

Chris Branch (CB), BOCC District 1
Jim Detro (JD), BOCC District 3
Lanie Johns (LJ), County Clerk
George Thornton (GT), T.V. District agent

(Time stamps refer to a recording of the Zoom meeting, available on the County Watch website.)

Summary: 3:33 - **Technical improvements** in the amplification and diffusion of commissioners' meetings. 6:64 - Informal discussion on the advantages and difficulties with **bio-char**, especially as pertaining to orchard burning. 2:11:25 - **Report from Television District** Agent George Thornton. Financial support needed to upgrade the Omak Mt. Tower to expand broadcasting coverage and quality and to develop an emergency broadcasting channel; the Sheriff's Office is a possible partner. Negotiations for the lease contract with the Colville Tribes for the Spokane Mt. tower site need to be kick-started.

- 00:33 **Technical improvements** - LJ: progress has been made on the sound quality of the AV Capture recording system. To avoid wiping down the wireless microphones after each use during public meetings, "gallery mics" hanging from the ceiling are going to be installed. A new mixing board will be needed to accommodate them.
- 6:54 **Bio-char** - CB and JD discuss an e-mail inquiring about making bio-char from apple wood (chipping and burning for commercial use) instead of burning it in piles. they conclude that without regulation banning open burning, costs would be prohibitive (purchase of chipper, verification for toxicity, transportation). The tribes might want to subsidize it as part of their timber program.
- 24:00 Announcement of a meeting on apple maggot transportation to take place at 11:00 at the Casino.
- :53:18 CB reports that some e-mails about county planning should be clarified, contain "non-truths" about goings on behind the scenes and indicate him personally. He says things are "getting a little out of hand."
- :11:25 The **T.V. District**, represented by George Thornton (GT), is seeking voluntary financial support to expand service and quality. KXPS and KXLY in Spokane have responded to requests for contributions to keep up with maintenance and equipment upgrades. He says the Covid and fire situations have highlighted the need for a station to broadcast emergency information to the public. A long term goal is to replace the Omak Mt. Antenna with a multi-directional 360 degree antenna for broader coverage, more clarity and expanded content. Multiple digital channels have already

been added on. Licensing agreements allow the district to determine broadcasting content.

- 1:19:44 Negotiations with the tribes (CCT) on the firming up of the Omak Mt. lease contract have stalled since the Covid outbreak. JD mentions they've been busy with the fires. CB thinks the BIA may have a voice in the matter. The CCT would do well to recognize the benefits of an upgrade. GT says Ernie Rasmussen (economic development planner with the CCT is trying to set up a face to face meeting. CB, who has good contacts on the reservation, agrees to write a letter in support of the negotiations.
- 1:25:50 GT: The upgrade of the Omak Mt. tower must meet the tribes' specifications. KXLY is looking for a used tower as a replacement, one solid enough to support more hook-ups. Once a multi-directional antenna is in place GT envisions more towers on the plateau to re-transmit the signal, mentions that the tribal signal can't go beyond reservation boundaries. JD recommends enlisting as a partner the Sheriff's Office which could benefit from the upgrade, and contacting its Special Operations and Communications Agent Mike Warden to eventually work out an interlocal agreement.
- 1:37:40 GT asks if money could be made available through Covid or fire relief funding, and says \$10,000-\$20,000 would enable them to move quickly.