

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday October 19th, 2021 AM

Present:

Chris Branch (CB) – BOCC Chair, District 1

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

Jim DeTro (JD) – BOCC, District 3

Lanie Johns (LJ) – Clerk of the Board

These notes were taken by an Okanogan County Watch 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: Planning Dept getting bombarded with public record requests and e-mails, Fair manager to attend Fair Convention this coming weekend in Spokane & planning for upcoming projects, audit of Public Health funds from CARES act, lengthy discussion with County Auditor and County Treasurer, also discussion of ARPA funds/process for accountability of eligible projects, BOCC considering hiring outside firm to keep track of grants, bid opening for refrigerant removal services – 1 bid, lengthy discussion after the executive session regarding how the County needs to handle Covid mandates – County does not have a policy for masks or vaccines, Have been utilizing the Public Health Officer to determine how to handle a Covid positive employee or just exposure and need for quarantine – administrative leave vs sick leave for this.

9:04 – LJ heard from Dennis Rabidou and Charleen Grooms re: not being available to meet until November 1st. Court will be setting up in the PM on November 1st for Jury Selection November 2nd in the BOCC meeting room.

9:08 – Pete Palmer, Planning Director states her office is getting bombarded with public records requests and it is taking a lot of staff time to fulfill these requests. They have stemmed from the timeline release on the Comprehensive Plan. AH suggests that Planning Dept put the draft Comp Plan on the website. PP will do that but they are waiting for DEIS. PP also states they are getting buried with e-mails. This is not helping them keep on track with the timeline. PP will make sure all is on the website.

9:17 – Naomie Peasley (NP), Fairgrounds Manager reports that she will be attending the Fair Convention in Spokane this weekend. Domestic well at the fairgrounds has been fixed. Had a bad lab test, but now is good. Putting irrigation lines project on hold but still needs the tree work to be done. Original cost was \$4,000, but 2 more trees need to be taken down. NP reports \$130,000 in revenue from Fire Camp. NP is currently looking for grant money for

upcoming projects.

9:25 NP reports there are big projects lined up and would like to put out for bids. BOCC suggested that she contact Josh Thomson, County Engineer about putting out for quotes as he has considerable experience doing this. NP questions whether BOCC wants to move forward on the pedestals at the fair. CB – I would say yes, you are putting together a capital improvement plan.

9:32 NP will move forward with Josh T. on upcoming projects and calling for quotes.

Fair Advisory Committee policies and procedures are due. CB will talk with NP later regarding current conversation.

Ruth Hall, County Watch Group asked whether there will be BOCC meetings next week. LJ answered that the Courts have cancelled next week so BOCC will be having regular meetings.

LJ brings up call from Jill Gates, Public Health regarding upcoming audit of CARES act funds. BOCC transferred monies to Public Health and if not used, will need to return to General Fund.

9:50 Leah McCormack (LM) County Treasurer and Cari Hall (CH) County Auditor, along with other staff member in for finance meeting with BOCC. County contracted with Public Health for Covid testing, therefore transferred \$278,000 to Public Health from the Cares Act. This needs to be accounted for and unused portion to return to County. Some question as to whether funds were used for purpose intended or not. CH will follow up with Public Health to see where they are with money left over. AH asks LJ to take a look at the CARES \$\$ contract.

10:09 – Discussion of ARPA funds used for the fair for public safety measures. Receipts needed and unused portion needs to go back to the County. CH states that transferring of funds doesn't give an accurate picture.

Lots of ongoing discussion regarding accountability, process, in payments, budgeting, and vouchers. Per Dennis Rabidou – some of the Court programs are applicable to ARPA funds also. 'AH states they are talking about hiring an outside firm to manage the grant funds. AH suggests that Public Health use their wages under CARES act funding.

10:51 – CH states let NP submit invoices, commissioners need to check and then vendors are paid. Excel is used for tracking

11:00 Bid Opening Refrigerant Removal services, 1 bid Cascade Mechanical for \$97.56 per unit. This was presented by Shasta Stidman, Public Works.

11:07 – BOCC goes into executive session with Dave Gecas, Chief Deputy Atty, for possible litigation. For 15 minutes.

11:26 CB states he is concerned about HIPPA violation regarding employees. Also brings up how the BOCC deals with COVID, various things in different departments. Sometimes, depending on job of the employee, they are unable to accommodate employee to do online work. Discussion of sick leave vs administrative leave. CB states his biggest concern is not having policy to do what health officer says. If health officer wants us to comply with mask mandate or vaccine mandate – do we?

10:29

Extensive discussion followed by all BOCC members. AH we don't have a mandatory policy for dealing with contract tracing. What to do if staff comes in sick.

AH & CB what about a policy?

11:39 JD states that it is my constitutional right to not get tested, vaccinated, etc

AH asks CB, What implementation would you like to have? You told us that if we are talking into a microphone, we do not need a mask.

AH also states that he is done with the mask thing. AH asks CB and LJ if either of them are concerned

with JD & AH not wearing masks?

11:47

CB – Would we have a liability if we don't comply? AH believes it comes under L&I
JD gives a personal example he knows about where daughter was hospitalized, survived, then her mother got it. Her husband gave her Ivermectin (*wormer for livestock*) and she was over it.

AH thinks mask mandate is hard to understand.

11:55 – JD states that he read a paper that Dr Fauci wrote while in college regarding the Spanish Flu, and ensuing deaths. They were caused by the mask wearing...

Also, JD states that they (*I think maybe Public Health?*) refuse to acknowledge immunity after having Covid because there is so much money made from this vaccine. Bill Gates is making millions and Hydrochloroquine dose is only 10 cents.

CB sees a lot of hypocrisy in how policy is being applied in the county.

12:02 – AH wants to give workers as much assistance in non-compliance as compliance.

“we have no masking policy”

LJ speaks after meeting adjourned regarding the confusion for staff. Board of Health is not updating protocols and it is important to know these things.

Audio was turned off at that time. All during the Covid protocol discussions from 11:29 until noon, AV Capture kept going on and off.