

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday, October 19th, 2021, 1:30 p.m.

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Present:

Chris Branch (CB), BOCC District 1
Andy Hover (AH), BOCC District 2
Jim Detro (JD), BOCC District 3
Lanie Johns (LJ), County Clerk
Tany Everett (TE), Human Relations, Risk Management
Dan Higbee (DH), Building Official
Cari Hall (CH), Auditor
Craig Nelson, Okanogan Conservation District
Mindy Untalan (MU), Okanogan Conservation District

Time stamps refer to the time on the wall clock. See AV Capture archive of the meeting on this date at https://okanogancounty.org/departments/boards/live_streaming_of_meetings.php

Summary of Important Discussions: *CB disagrees with Chronicle version of last week's Coroner's report ; candidates sought for District Court Judge and Fairgrounds positions ; discussion on unintended consequences of state legislature decisions, notably Campbell & Gwyn on building moratoriums ; Search and rescue, Conservation District to receive Title III funding ; AH offers farm/family reasons for his recent absences from meetings ; Building Dept.'s Senior Plans Examiner to retire, some salaries raised to resemble those in other counties ; Redistricting planned in November, county's unusually high number of precincts should be reduced next year.*

1:40 - *CB states for the record that the Omak Chronicle's report on the Coroner's statement was in error. He does not elaborate.*

2:02 - HR report - TE: Can we post for interest of those who qualify to apply for District Court Judge? I've also received notice of resignation from Kyle at the fairgrounds. He applied for a position at the landfill...I sent LJ a resolution on Superior Court employees. We have a potential litigation issue. We also have a stay on a Fair civil case I've been working on for three years.

2:07 - JD cites a conversation with former County Planner Perry who said the Campbell & Gwyn decision (on a building moratorium) does not apply to the Methow Rule. CB: I could come up with the same theory... That's the thing about precedents. They said "A subdivision is a project" so you couldn't (use) a civil use exemption. A couple other nuances as well. *He talks about a legislator who, in talking about land use, said "judges and courts are very fickle, some because they don't understand the issues."* Legislators hurry to get a problem addressed in a session and it's not a perfect fix. It gets to be, with the provisos, a systematic problem. The Legislature should get down and say they're causing unintended consequences. *He tells the story of a state law overriding the cities' and counties' decision that an r.v. is not a permanent home, with as a result*

having a park just south of the border with a refrigerator on a palette outside the r.v., giving a bad image to border crossers, and a lawmaker being glad that was brought to his attention, he had no idea.

2:18 - Title III Funding - \$136,000 will be split between the two applicants, Search and rescue, \$20,000, and the Conservation District, \$116,000, to be spent on the Firewise program.

This budget issue having been dealt with, AH is excused himself from rest of meeting: Farming is hard enough as it is, when you have a family member trying to do it all, then they get hurt - I'll be here tomorrow at 8.

2:50 - DH: Still ahead by 50 applications. We were over 100 applications ahead in the spring. We actually peaked in the fall last year instead of the Spring... spending flat except that we paid for new (computer) program. Want to get a truck. We're a bit ahead revenue-wise... If the truck doesn't come we won't go over on budget... Winthrop has found it's own inspector, not experienced but certified. Cass (Robins, building inspector) not only got certified but also passed his plans exam in 6 months... A salary survey was conducted, comparing Okanogan to other Eastern Washington counties and it was found to be at the low end along with Ferry County. DH says "the girls" should have their salaries "bumped up" in next budget and that there's some leeway which would allow for raising the fee schedule. DH will be losing the Senior Plans Examiner/Assistant Building Official to retirement.

3:20 - Redistricting - CH: A legislative and congressional map will be there by November 15th. Then according to state code, there are public meetings to figure out your boundaries by population. My office then draws up the precincts. CB: Any chance of reducing the number? CH: We've talked about this several times. We were among the first to get all mail-in ballots... Had to have 200 or under per precinct. For next year maybe. I'd like the Precinct Committee Officers to be involved. Even if we could cut out 100 out of the 500 to 600 that we have it would be great... Do you know, we have more precincts than L.A. County? More than anywhere else in WA. JD: Some with no voters. CB: Or one or two. We have rolled them up with other precincts. JD: But it's a huge headache. CH: It is... We'll have to work on it next year to implement in 2023. But the office shouldn't be involved because we process the elections. We'll give you the data you need.

3:32 - Conservation District - LG announces the split of Title III funds, giving them \$116,000. MU: I'm fine with that. We have \$132,000 of work to do. CN: We continue to ask the state for funding... have scratched some many out of State conservation Commission but it runs out around Thanksgiving... CB: Firewise is going to be more in demand. CN: When the snow flies the requests don't come but in March they start increasing. When the fire is nearby they want it now, but then we have restricted access. CB: Do you do messaging? ... (3:38) CN: Just applied for a grant for (publicity), social media. *He recommends measures such as removing patio furniture and the welcome mat when evacuating.* Embers is what most of this is about. JD: I have 200feet of decorated rock, no lawn, fire preventative siding. The decoration we have is desert steel. CN: Our concrete siding didn't cost extra. 1/8th inch vent blocks keep embers (and bees) out. Every little thing helps. MU:... In the district we're the biggest player. CN: ...The DNR doesn't have time to service (the small lots). LJ: Do you have partnerships with the DNR? MU: If they do assessments. We don't have direct aid but we have sub-contracted with a veterans group. We also help vulnerable communities with the Tribes.

3:47 - Meeting Adjourned