

**Board of Okanogan County Commissioners**  
**Tuesday November 23, 2021 AM**

Present:

Chris Branch (CB) – BOCC Chair, District 1

Andy Hover (AH) – BOCC Vice Chair, District 2 (Not in attendance)

Jim DeTro (JD) – 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](https://okanogancounty.org/offices/commissioners/commissioners_proceedings.php)

Time stamps below are in real time. To locate specific topics, a click 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: BOCC did walk through of newly purchased Forest Service building today with the architect consultant, Non-bargaining County employees showed disparity in their wages compared with other counties and are requesting this to be reviewed, also COLA increase, report by Solid Waste Manager re: composting workgroup – statewide, update from Public Works: short discussion on recruitment and retention of employees. Public Health: has need of security cameras and lights in parking lot.**

9:00 BOCC on tour of newly acquired Forest Service building until 10:15 when AV Capture turned on.  
*No sound on Zoom until 10:25*

10:30 Crystal Hawley (CH) deputy clerk of BOCC presented to BOCC on behalf of the Non-Bargaining County Employees. *(there was a large crowd of employees in the audience, who spoke sometimes, but was difficult to hear)* A breakdown of bargaining vs non-bargaining unit wages and COLA or CPI given to BOCC. Quoted RCW's 4946-020 & 4958-005 regarding minimum hourly wages and no bias in relation to gender.

LJ states most of the non-bargaining employees are women.

JD cautions group about relying on the CPI as it changes – up and down

CB has gone to 2 different workshops on retaining employees and finds this very important to recruit and retain employees.

Leah McCormack (LM), County Treasurer spoke to sales tax increasing revenue and property value as increasing, which translates to increased revenue to the County. One area that has considerably less revenue is Criminal Justice, especially with regard to unfunded mandates.

JD states we (The County) are grossly mistreated in the cannabis tax collection and states that all

departments should do a concentrated effort to get more \$\$ to the counties.

CH acknowledged that this industry (cannabis production (also brings revenue to county other ways)

CB states that changing wages is definitely a budgeting issue.

LJ asks if this request for wage parity should come from the departments individually or a collective effort? CB suggests the Departments request in this budgeting process.

*(This discussion continued until 11:15)*

11:15 LJ and CB discuss Enterprise Services communication regarding tenant lease.

11:18 Ken Kovalchenko (KK), Solid Waste Manager reports on workshop for composting for reducing methane gas. This is a state level group and hopes to make changes by 2022. There are 2 facets to this group; food and composting of materials.

CB requests to be kept informed and commented that some of the composting may be compatible with Bio-Char operation.

11:34 – Josh Thomson (JT) County Engineer reports the high water hasn't been a big issue for the County workers, and that Public Works is down 8 or 9 positions in different parts of the county.

CB to JT, any suggestions on how to recruit and retain staff.

JT - Of course the wages, benefit package, and better write -ups for the jobs. There are not a lot of people out there to hire. They need a skill set, CDL, etc. CB states that benefits are one of our challenges.

11:42 – JT discusses that he has spoken with Lauri Jones of Public Health. Security cameras and lights are needed in their parking lot.

Some discussion whether law enforcement will do anything about what comes from the security cameras.

Per JD, Omak is doing something about patrolling businesses – more of a neighborhood watch.

Per JT, Okanogan got grant for chip seal and Omak also has funds for this.

CB asks JT to come to meeting @2:00 to meet with the Architect consultant for a debrief after the walk through this morning, re: Forest Service Bldg.

Meeting Adjourned 11:58