

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, December 21st, 2020, AM

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(Time stamps refer to a Zoom recording available on County Watch website.)

Present:

Chris Branch (CB), BOCC District 1
Andy Hover (AH), BOCC District 2
Jim Detro (JD), BOCC District 3
Lanie Johns (LJ), County Clerk
Lauri Jones (LJ2) (via Zoom), County Health
Dan McCarthy (DM), Pest Board Commissioner
Assessor's office spokesman
Dennis Rabidou (DR), Juvenile Family Services
Cari Hall (CH), Auditor

Summary of important discussions: (15:22) Public participation in which phase of budget hearings, work-shopping, or once worked on?; (26:30) Troublesome guardrail blocks truck access to a private road; (31:00) Pest Control - Implementation of state law imposing taxes on orchard acres in designated Pest Districts, broadening their scope; (44:45) Public Health - lots of cases but first vaccines given; (59:57) Pest Board Commissioner - Defining the status of this position as Dan McCarthy prepares to retire; (1:35:49) Pest Control, cont.- How to cover the hole in the budget?; (1:59:00) Pest Board position, cont. - Discussion of overtime-exempt status change which affects most other county positions as well; (2:29:54) Public Hearing, CARES Act Funds - Supplemental requests missing, hearing postponed til afternoon; (2:40:09) Court/Juvenile Court - Stipend for additional duties by Juvenile Probation Manager is approved and will be paid for by the Univ. of Washington.

- 15:22 - Budget hearings - A continuing discussion on the merits of involving the public in the workshop phase, favored by AH, and of presenting pre-discussed budgets which CB proposed. They agree that it would be good at these hearings to be able to present a "pie chart" of expenses and revenues.
- 26:30 - A guardrail blocks truck access to a private road. CB received a message from the resident, who has already spoken with JD and Engineer Josh Thompson. A semi would need to go further to turn around if it were not coming from the right direction With regard to future guardrails JD says they should coordinate a meeting between owner and contractor to avoid this situation.
- 31:00 - Pest District 17 (Okanogan County), under tax code Resolution 123-95 adopted in 1995, collects \$1.50 in tax per orchard acre. Given that orchards are such a key element to the whole county economy, should everyone contribute this tax? Discussion interrupted.
- 44:45 - Public Health director LJ hopes holiday-end closings will enable them to "get a handle on what is

“affecting a lot of families.” 197 doses of the vaccine are being given to first responders and long-term care workers. Ferry County is including in Okanogan’s distribution effort. LJ has learned of no secondary effects from the vaccine. Jail workers and inmates will also be prioritized. CB is concerned about growing rate of positives in the County employee population.

59:57 - Pest Board Commissioner Dan McCarthy is retiring at the end of the year. His successor will be offered a salary raise and go from overtime-exempt to hourly wage non overtime-exempt status. Labor and Industry standards require the salary from \$49,000 next year to \$79,000 in 2028 if overtime-exempt, which would exceed the entire board’s budget of \$62,000. AH re-affirms the county’s commitment to maintaining the board.

:35:49 - Pest Control, cont. “Where do we go from here?” asks AH. To generate revenue he suggests raising the orchard tax to \$3. CB prefers taxing the whole county, saying pests affect its entire economy. AH says people would expect a service in return, and that those who live far from orchards would have a hard time paying it. But said non-commercial properties with fruit trees should contribute, perhaps through a new taxation district around orchards or creation of new districts, perhaps with exemption given to open range.

:59:00 - Talk resumes over cost of Pest Board position: Hourly wage plus \$1,000 for overtime allowance. Salaries now must be minimum wage x 1.25 to qualify for overtime exempt status. In 2028 they will have to be twice minimum wage to qualify. (In an aside CB mentions that all but 4-5 employees have gone hourly without exemption, including one on-call person. Fairgrounds Manager has gone hourly.) But the board’s tax base is diminishing, orchard acreage having gone down to 26,000 from 30,000 in 97. The assessment of parcels must be changed in order to culminate the department’s \$10,000 deficit. In Chelan County every parcel is taxed \$3 plus \$1,000 for those with root stock improvements.

:30:00 - Public Hearing, CARES Act Funds - LJ2 is missing supplemental requests from Coroner’s, Probation, Jail, District Court. CH says they can get supplemental fund contingencies. CB moves to take up the subject at three that afternoon.

:40:09 - Court/Juvenile Court - AH moves to approve the stipend for Juvenile Probation Manager Dennis Rabidou. This will be paid for by funds from the Univ. of Washington. The Judges’ Association adopted a resolution to implement the *Uniform Guardianship, Conservatorship and Other Protective Arrangements Act*² which includes a requirement for guardians to create, and courts to monitor, person-centered plans. Since no one was at the hearing the association has gotten Senator Wison to give them some more time (to request funding?). CB remarks that the WASAC (association of counties) would have opposed the bill. Someone mentions \$100 hourly rates.

:49:09 - Meeting adjourned.