

**Board of Okanogan County Commissioners**  
**Tuesday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021, 1:30 p.m.**

*"These notes were taken by a County Watch volunteer. 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:**

Andy Hover (AH), BOCC District 2  
Chris Branch (CB), BOCC District 1  
Jim Detro (JD), BOCC District 3  
Lanie Johns (LJ), County Clerk  
David McClay (DM), Director, OBHC (Behavioral Health)  
Kathleen Johnson (KJ) Ranger, Tonasket-Colville Ntl. Forest

*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](https://okanogancounty.org/departments/boards/live_streaming_of_meetings.php)*

**Summary of Important Discussions:** *Unused 3 :30 – Meeting adjourned*

1 :30 - *AH questions CB about a long plat where parcels are divided out. They discuss plats and parcels, homeowners' associations, and planned developments. CB : A planned development gives the opportunity to create a site plan and stray from the zoning standard. AH : You need twice as many acres as what your underlying subdivision is so if you have two lots you need 20 total acres. CB : it's specific to our zoning laws. AH : I'd like to see more systematic development. ...CB :with cluster developments and open space ...we could have smaller development if you compensate with lots of open space. It makes a lot of sense. You can keep away from areas you shouldn't develop in. AH : Wetlands. CB : Perry added a lot flexibility in this development agreement process. Not so sure it's not « anything goes as long as we all agree to it in a contract. » Don't think the public would like that very well ; it's not predictable for them. AH... We need to go through the codes, update them. CB : And look at what our objectives are. We ended up with a Comprehensive Plan and you're back into codes based on codes going before. Not a good idea. It's frustrating when you come in on these codes. We have a meeting in a couple of weeks. They're coming to sit down and look at what was done before, make sure we all understand.*

2 :00 - OBHC Update - *DM says he's heard from others in the state. Overall crisis calls up 200% and requests for mental health services up 34%, similar to local situation. Efforts made to raise rates for Medicaid which covers 90% of local OBHC business. DM : We were down to two DCRs (Designated Crisis Responders). But we've put together a Mobile Crisis Team to analyze, de-escalate, and assess need for a DCR. We've re-hired a DCR and another is returning from medical leave. AH : If you have someone in crisis mode, if the person is combative, how do you get help ? DM : A first responder or a family member, or the Crisis Line. If it rises to a certain level they go to the hospital and are evaluated for substances in the system and treated in the emergency room. AH says they need to do a better job getting people to the hospital first, need coordination to get someone to go there who doesn't want to go. CB : Are there mental health agencies that have people that go out and get these people ? DC : It's the role of the Mobile Crisis Team, but it's a challenge get them from one end of this county to another. As long as I've been here we've had*

law enforcement there with the DCRs. Now the system is broken with nothing to fill the gap. We do have a good relationship with (inaudible), law enforcement and the city. AH : Those legislators need to know what they did--the job the sheriff has to do in rural counties without EMTs. It's difficult for them not to be able to respond to these issues. I'd testify personally (*before the legislature*).

2 :13 - *CB has been talking with WASAC, (the association of counties), and with Chelan and Douglas in particular, about the Regional Health Authority's role, about efforts to have a regional evaluation center, a center for domestic violence, and a collaboration between community groups to deal with mental health issues. Says in Douglas County they want to keep people out of jail who are mentally ill, who should be kept away from others. CB is working through the legislative steering committee to « fix » resolution 1310 (restricting law enforcement's role in dealing with the mentally disturbed) and WASAC wants to work collectively on this with several advocacy groups.* DM : The ITA process is legal in this state. It was broken by not allowing law enforcement (inaudible) or restricting them from transporting people. It's not helpful. *He says he is proud of emergency rooms, Lifeline, law enforcement and OBHC who have all worked together. On top of what CB calls « unintended consequences » of the state bill, DM says there is a statewide work force shortage of Master's level therapists, making it take longer for people to receive care, and he recommends a pay increase for these providers.*

2:22 - *JD talks about funds that must be spent in a certain, which takes away from the main focus.* CB: Take away from the program to match the grant. *DM agrees: Recently we relinquished our grant for a certified behavioral health center. We gave 750,000 back to SAMHSA because we would have had to pay 500,000 more for the requirements. CB (who earlier mentioned Senator Parlette's decentralization plan for hospitals that ended up costing the counties more): It would be enlightening to have Sen. Parlette come... It's important to talk to her about what our interests might be, keeping legislature from intervening too much. She's offered to do that before, and it could help with the Medicaid issue as well. He says many of the homeless would have a home if they or the person they were caring for didn't have mental health issues. DM speaks of a need for case managers to keep people on their medication, to keep them engaged and away from emergency rooms and law enforcement, and the benefit of providing "23-hour beds" for people who don't need to be detained but need staff around and time to de-escalate. He is glad they are now better able to track patients' info through a new electronic data system. CB mentions the usefulness of the Clubhouse. DM says this, along with Shove House and outpatient care could be braided more tightly together. CB asks him to think about members of a collaborative who might want to come in and discuss these issues with the commissioners.*

2:48 -Approval of \$39,000 Fairgrounds budget supplemental to pay for Maintenance technician's salary, Maintenance overtime and new computer, a land survey, a leaf vacuum and new round table carts. Approval of transferring funds from Title # to Emergency Management in order to finish out contract with Firewise, which will have a new contract in 2022.

3:00 Report from Tonasket Ranger District - KW: We're done with the fires! AH: I saw some smoke coming up from Bonaparte Lake. Was that peat burning? KJ: Yes, from the Walker fire. Don't know how long it's going to go. With the logs from the fuel lines in the Walker Creek fire we have three million board feet stacked, ready to haul out. It's already been sold. A much smaller quantity of logs from the Mukamuk area is stacked and ready to be bid on. We'll have two salvage sales—we can do 250 acres per watershed— on Toroda Creek and Salmon Creek with trees killed in the fire or which will die within three years, mostly Douglas fir and larch. Didn't have a lot of time to get them out.

Last year a BAER, a pilot program (Burn Area Emergency Recovery) was set up to reseed hillsides. This year range and recreation have been added. The fund will provide \$117,000 worth of materials this year for the rebuilding of signs, bridges, fences and water developments in areas affected by the Mukamuk, Walker and Bulldog (Republic) fires. Two range people are figuring out how much of each allotment is too burned for grazing, good for grazing in reduced numbers or okay. Some of them are nuked. We have 600 treated areas of burn piles. On the down side, a couple of chainsaws were stolen from the back of a truck. We got them back, but this morning we found out the someone had drilled a hole in the gas tank of a Forest Service truck. CB: A coincidence, same thing happened here. AH: Not a coincidence. *Conjecture on the chances the incidents may be related, stories about battery-operated chainsaws. (3:26) AH talks about a right of way issue near Hwy 20 and Beaver Creek road.*

3:30 - *Meeting adjourned.*