

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday, February 15th, 2022, 1:30 p.m.

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Present:

Andy Hover (AH), BOCC District 2
Chris Branch (CB), BOCC District 1
Jim Detro (JD), BOCC District 3 (via Zoom)
Chrystal Hawley, Deputy County Clerk
Karen Beatty, Central Services
Brock Hoenes, Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) Regional Director
Jason Haug, WDFW, Land Operations Manager (Region 2, North)

*An AV Capture archive of the meeting on this date is available at:
https://okanogancounty.org/departments/boards/live_streaming_of_meetings.php*

Summary of Important Discussions: *Application for feasibility study and water plan for fire flow concerning town of Methow ; jail housing agreement with Douglas Co. to end ; Therapeutic Court Coordinator hired ; Central Services acquiring cloud service for large data transfers, of particular benefit to clerk, courts and law enforcement, will get updated Firewall security for guest wireless featuring multifactor authentication ; BOCC questions funding « Retail Academy » for Economic Alliance, and site of construction for Coroner's/Sheriff's dept. building, will « shift money around, » to accommodate PUD's broadband spending ; Investigating quick way to allow road re-alignment on newly acquired land in Chiliwist ; WDFW presents land purchase projects including in Methow and Similkameen valleys, trail work and forest restoration reported on, rule changes and county's TREAD website discussed.*

1:42 - CB presents an application made by the Methow Irrigation District and/or Fire District 15 for a "feasibility study and water plan for fire flow." It concerns an area including 17 private residences, the fire hall and the post office, and a Class A (public) water system. CB: I'll get it figured out.

1:49 - AH: Here's a letter to Douglas County with contract amendment, notifying that the jail services agreement is terminating its housing agreement one year from today. CB: The addendum to the inter-county agreement changes the pay structure for Douglas County for the coming year. *Amendment and addendum approved. ...CB: Resolution 22-22 authorizes a grant-funded coordinator for Therapeutic Court. AH asks that the title be changed to eliminate "classified grade 28" since the salary steps don't apply.*

KB, reporting for Central Services: The AC is working well in the server room. Saturday the phones went down except for 911, the problem was fixed early Sunday morning. We've been looking at a way to have a FTB (File Transfer Protocol) site to put larger amounts (of data) for people to pull out. *It could benefit the Clerk's, Prosecutor's, Sheriff's and possibly Public Works and GIS mapping offices.* KB: While testing I'd like to see if people can get public records requests. Cost is \$4,000 to start, then half that. Law enforcement agencies could share costs, save

from emailing reports. I'm going to work with the Omak Police Chief. He's very interested, AH: Are they encrypted? KB: Yes. ...You can also, for example, ask for files to be deleted at a specific time. *KB plans to obtain an updated version of their Firewall appliance for guest wireless which would double the access points and offer much more bandwidth, and obtain a multifactor authenticator which would generate a code for secure computer connections outside the office.*

2:02 - *During approval of vouchers and payrolls AH remarks that if Public Health had it's own treasurer the BOCC wouldn't have to approve its payroll checks. CB mentions the Methow water study again, says it was signed by the Irrigation District. AH: It doesn't go as far as Methow. I want to ask for a map of the district because one concern brought to me in the water banking discussion is that someone in an irrigation district couldn't just go and buy an irrigation right...*

2:16 - AH: Roni (*Holder, Economic Alliance*) talked to me about \$140,000 for the Retail Academy... Is that going to be more useful in that capacity or— She has \$85,000 for an employee and \$75,000 for grants to Covid-impacted businesses... \$450,000 is a lot of money. (*Unclear what this figure refers to.*) We want to make sure we get the most (*inaudible*). CB: We have to ask that about every project. *He wonders if the building currently housing the Coroner's office and Sheriff's dept.'s (inaudible) task force, outside the shoreline but on a floodplain, should be rebuilt there or on another site. AH has talked with the engineer who sees no problem, but the Coroner needs more space. CB is worried about cost, says he will confer with the mayor and planner. AH mentions need for shifting money around, having agreed to PUD's request for \$2M to develop broadband while he had planned to allocate only a fourth of that. They discuss need to begin soon spending their ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds before the 2026 deadline.*

2:29 - (*WDFW officials arrive*) AH: We purchased land up the Chiliwist with RCO (Recreation and Conservation Office) funding. We wanted to chip seal, and Josh wanted to do some realignment, shift the road for better access. The response was... it was going to cost for the property valuation and take two years... I want to tell RCO that it's like property, just taking from one side and putting on the other... If you supported something like that, it would help to make the road better for hunters. *JH agrees to discuss this with RCO.*

WDFW report - JH: The Lands 2020 process - is a transparency process for acquisitions... There's a ranking system. We'll put (*the plans*) before a regional committee, then they go on to Olympia for technical review, website publication, purchase agreement and funding. Approval is based on conservation value, species imprint, recreation values (trails, hunting), and if the project helps simplify management. ... The Methow Conservancy has directed us to two interested landowners in the Miller's Flat area with a total of 52 acres to protect sagebrush steppe and mule deer. There are white headed, pileated and Lewis woodpeckers, native bees... There's been good recovery to grasses from the Carlton Complex fire. ...The next project is four separate DNR parcels on either side of Balky Hill Rd., close to Twisp, very steep, especially on northwest side. Golden eagle habitat. *AH is wary to purchase if access is difficult, asks where money would come from. JH says from sale of bonds, and that people can access the land. BH says this one may not be top priority.*
Discussion on grazing. JH: Southern portions are sub-leased to adjacent properties, there's currently none on Mills Flat. We'd have to see if it's appealing for someone to have those smaller DNR lands. *They discuss a third purchase, 38 acres, surrounded by WDFW land, near McGlaughlin Falls on the Smilkameen.* JH: If it's possible to put all three projects forward, I'd like to. BH: Maybe not moving forward on the 38 acres. AH: You will pay more in taxes than what Ag was paying. Don't have enough water for the whole valley, and the mule deer are having a hard time. (3:00) BH: It has been a struggle crawling forward, without enough appraisers. Property values aren't stagnant. There will be a recess to apply for additional funding. ... We're putting out a bid on Eater Creek property (Scotch Creek), and an island on the Similkameen south of Driscoll's property. We've made improvements at the Blue Lake campground and expanded the parking lot

and developed trails on the Riser Lake loop. *Talk of treatment of Patterson lake, work on a 2/3 mile trail, need for more low elevation trails.*

AH, a professed game hunter, asks about impact of trails and skiers on mule deer. (JH: They're gathering information.) He describes the county-funded TREAD application where hikers can leave advice, report affluence on and changes to trails, and landowners can say if they don't want hikers on their land. BH mentions GPS on phones helping to track use. He is concerned about unauthorized trails built by users and looking at changes in the difficult-to-enforce rules. He wants them turned around: It's not going to happen overnight but our kids are going to know—trails are closed unless they're marked open. CB says he was "visited" by law enforcement while on a trail. JH describes a "cool project": Ramsey Creek forest restoration. We were able to manage a controlled burn. There was a lot of fuel on the ground. The smoke did what we predicted it would do. We had helicopter seeding of grass on what we prescribe-burned. AH: Are you seeding brush? If it's just grass, it's not available (for deer) in the winter. Tens of thousands of acres of bitterbrush burned in Cold Springs. How can you rehabilitate? BH: We did bitterbrush plug seeding after the Carlton fire. AH: Let's get money from the state. Fires are the biggest enemy... BH: ...I know we can get bitterbrush, it's not a problem. Every two years there's an effort. At the Oroville school they're trying to germinate bitterbrush. JH: ...If we can put the Web telescope up in space... AH: My hobby is hunting.

3:30 - Meeting adjourned.