

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday February 22, 2022 AM

Present:

Chris Branch (CB) – BOCC Vice Chair, District 1

Andy Hover (AH) – BOCC Chair, District 2

Jim DeTro (JD) – BOCC, District 3

Crystal Hawley (CH) – Clerk of 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.

Time stamps are in real time. To locate specific topics, a clock 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: Discussion with Planning Director regarding responses to survey re:comp plan and sub areas, getting ready for Monday hearing on Cannabis Moratorium extension, difficulty in hiring for Prosecuting Attorney's Office and District Court – planning to increase salary to 95% of salary range, if possible, Legislative updates from County Engineer and other senate bill regarding taxes being returned to Counties, Public hearing on budget supplemental for housing fun/tiny house project. Update from County Assessor – struggling to keep up with home prices increase, difficulty keeping up with overnight rentals, Update from County Engineer on road maintenance and 1 bid for gravel crushing project \$1,189,000. other Public Works projects, along with legislative bills.

9:04

Pete Palmer (PP), Planning Director draws attention to article in the Methow Voice – good information for sharing in community regarding Comp plan. PP also reviewing 49 responses to survey. PP and staff are getting ready for Monday's public hearing on the cannabis moratorium. She has 2 letters for the State Liquor Control Board.

9:10 *****Executive Session under 4231 10 1.H with Tonya Everett (TE), HR & Risk Manager, for 15 minutes*****to evaluate qualifications for elected office.

9:18 AH states they are having major issues finding qualified candidates for the Prosecuting Attorney's office and District Court. May need to pay more for skill level. Considering 95% of salary range even if costly due to recruitment and retention.

Discussion of BOCC, along with TE regarding re-classification with turnovers. CB – hopefully the future holds well and we'll do okay with these increased expenses. CB – these are big increases and we struggle to pay non-bargaining staff. AH states that it costs a lot to go to school.

9:42

AH discusses sales tax revenue which is higher due to inflation.

Re: increasing Attorney's salaries, CB says when you factor in the costs of turnover and hiring outside attorneys – we've budgeted \$85,000 for outside attorneys.

9:45

CB asks who gives support to Civil Deputy? TE states that he has an assistant.

9:46

Maurice Goodall (MG) – brings in paperwork for BOCC to sign for an extension of the Emergency Services grant for 1 month – October 31st. Moved, Seconded, and Carried to approve.

9:54

AH discusses Senate Bill 5841 which would give 1/10 of 1% of tax back to the counties. Could be used for law enforcement. AH states that maybe we could hire more staff. They want to let Zac Kennedy (lobbyist) know that the BOCC supports this.

9:58

Opens Public hearing for Budget Supplemental of \$75,000 to housing fund for tiny houses project. This was not used last year. No public comment. Moved, Seconded, and carried to approve Resolution 28-2022. Some discussion about who will be doing this...?

10:05

Larry Gilman (LG), County Assessor gives his quarterly update. Levy process has been completed. Some of our work, especially house sales are on the backlog. We lost books around Thanksgiving and are behind. Every 2 years the Assessor's Office is audited by the DOR. - They approved our process in 2019 and now, no findings or recommendations. LG states they have 1 position open. When he came to work here in 1995, there were 17 people in the office, and now there are 13.

10:14

AH comments there is a lot of new construction going on. LG states July 2021 was a record year – 8 January is not, historically, a high sale month but it has been.

Quite a bit of discussion regarding housing prices, what their houses cost them back in the day, and what the averages are now. A home on Omak flats is \$400,000 on average.

10:29 Some discussion of vaccination requirements to cross the border.

10:33

AH reports that tomorrow @1:30 interviews for the Prosecuting Attorney replacement begin. There will be 2 interviews.

11:00

Bid Opening for 2022 Gravel Crushing Project – 1 bid for \$1,189,000 total bid by D Uttley
Public Works will get back with BOCC regarding recommendations.

11:04

Josh Thomson (JT), County Engineer gives Public Works update. Not much new on road condition side.

Getting plans to Dept for new shop buildings. AH said we signed a resolution that \$800,000 be budgeted. Would like to see Public Works get started on these – move forward with permitting.

JT states contractors are so busy right now. Will get authorization to bid in 2 weeks back to BOCC.

AH to CH, fairgrounds project bid needs to be put away.

11:09

JT talks about legislative bills still being watched; transportation package – mostly for State projects.

Also, watching the 0 emissions bill – grant waivers have been added.

More cattleguard franchise renewals on the Consent Agenda.

11:19 Meeting Adjourned