

**< Board of Okanogan County Commissioners  
Tuesday, March 2nd, 2021, 1:30 PM**

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

Chris Branch (CB), BOCC District 1  
Andy Hover (AH), BOCC District 2  
Jim Detro (JD), BOCC District 3  
Lanie Johns (LJ), County Clerk  
Kathleen Johnson, District Ranger, USFS Tonasket Ranger District  
Kayla Wells (KW), WSU Extension  
Will Carpenter, Chelan-Douglas Co. Pest Board Director  
Dan McCarthy, retiring Okanogan Pest Board Director

*Time stamps refer to recording on AV Capture*

**Summary of important discussions:** *Public comment submitted urging better publicity for public hearings and an extended comment period if necessary for the Comp Plan hearing March 8<sup>th</sup>; CB and AH consider ways to increase visibility of public hearing dates in advance of upcoming hearings on subdivisions and building permits; Tonasket Ranger District, now part of Colville Ntl. Forest, to raise campground fees, management going smoothly; feasibility study ordered for possible use of old Forest Service building by Juvenile Detention/Juvenile Court; new tri-county Pest Board will share indemnity, insurance and equipment costs, must determine common tax policy before August to go into effect in 2022; Capstone Project survey (WSU extension) goes out this summer as part of needs assessment for county; funds directed to Oroville Homeless Housing; auction April 10<sup>th</sup> of county surplus.*

Public Comment Session: Methow resident Isabelle Spohn expressed concern that comment period info isn't getting out prior to Revised Comprehensive Plan public hearing Monday, March 8<sup>th</sup>. Short article in Methow Valley News didn't print deadline for comment; nothing printed in Omak Chronicle since the legal notice. She's hopeful that, if people aren't successful testifying over Webex verbally, comment period will be extended. CB says the commissioners will discuss her suggestion.

3:23:30 - Public hearings on subdivision moratorium (March 15<sup>th</sup>), and building permit moratorium (April 5<sup>th</sup>): AH would like to see these appear under a specific heading in the agenda while CB prefers them on the County Commissioner website home page. They agree to do both. AH: include all hearings for upcoming month, include descriptions. CB: Put on the radio Thursday? Says most valuable comment is written. (9:25) AH says willing to listen alike to those who "want to shoot down development" and "someone who makes a living subdividing." CB: Have to take (the comments) in light of what people don't know. "If there were a vote it would be problematic because (they) don't understand what the comp plan will do for us." AH says advertising in newspaper is costly. CB: talks of costs to the county if someone has a problem created by the government. AH: Set a three hour time limit on public comment and convene a new meeting if necessary.

3:43:26 - KJ announces hike in campground fees, “the first in awhile,” ranging from \$2-\$3 more to double the price. Funds go toward recreation. Since Tonasket Ranger district became part of the Colville National Forest last year it charges no fees for firewood. Talk of enforcement. A new agent manages the area which extends east to Waukanda and west to the Methow River. KJ says forest users educate each other as to rules. CB has heard complaints about vehicles on closed roads. AH wishes fees would go toward improving the roads. KJ says upgrade likely now thanks to tribal resources. Merits of managed grazing – the same amount of cattle but moving them around. A minority of cattlemen would prefer to increase number of cattle. (4:02:15) CB points to cooperative relationship between Greg Bosel’s grazing unit and those trying to preserve a meadow and the upper waters of Beaver Creek. KJ says ranger Donna Fout has worked with Conservation Northwest on an erosion problem in Cox Meadow. She calls Colville Forest Supervisor Rodney Smoldon “fairly open”. They will be putting out on a map for firewood collecting. Permits available at Tonasket district office, Conconully, North 40 and one gas station in Tonasket.

4:35:12 - Juvenile Detention and old Forest Service buildings: Commissioners agree to spend 13,800 on a feasibility study for moving Juvenile detention to old Forest Service Building. Given the trend in decreased juvenile detentions they will consider different options: remodeling, demolition, building a smaller facility, city parking lot, use by emergency dispatch and communication.

4:43:25 - Formation of tri-county Pest Board. Indemnities set by board but adjusted by counties. Prosecutor offers services in case of enforcement action. Risk pools: each county pays one third of the insurance and equipment replacement and repair (4:56:30). Cost of board for Okanogan jumping from \$65,000 to \$135,000. Board now full, will meet quarterly or monthly. Next meeting Monday noon at Dawghouse in Okanogan. (5:07:26) Chelan-Douglas counties favor generalized tax to deal with apple maggot situation; AH leans toward determining which lands receive benefit and only taxing these. A public hearing will determine the tax rate. LJ reminds all that documents must be submitted by August 1<sup>st</sup> to start taxing in 2022. Quarantine: WC opposed recommendation at annual meeting since no one from Okanogan present and the areas now under quarantine are in Malott and Oroville (two thirds of district 3).

5:21:59 - Capstone Project, WSU Extension: Online survey based on county needs assessment, to be directed by students, will be distributed this summer. KM says they have a database from past projects but welcomes AH’s suggestion to put the link on the county website. Questions will cover reasons for choosing Okanogan County and perception of its education opportunities. A follow-up survey could answer questions pertaining to the ramifications of the cannabis industry, a needed conversation says CB. The county will receive from taxes on cannabis \$44,000 which, he says, can contribute to public health. Results due in the fall and should be presented by the students themselves. The data will inform the county on differences between the districts, and aid in reports and grant applications.

5:40:15 - Request for Homeless Housing funds, Oroville: Discussion ensues comparing the Methow, which has a housing trust which people donate to, and the Okanogan Valley where fundraising efforts are more infrequent. LJ says she will move forward on the resolution. Commissioners agree with the expenditure but AH questions the need to pass a motion to draw up a resolution. LJ answers that this is because she should be directed by the whole board and not just one individual.

6:01:20 - LJ has scheduled the public hearing for declaring county surplus on Tuesday March 30<sup>th</sup>. Emails have been sent out to department heads and assistants. Motion passed to hold the auction on April 10<sup>th</sup> at 10a.m.

6:03:50 - Meeting adjourned.