

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday, March 23rd, 2021, 1:30 PM

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Present:

Chris Branch (CB), BOCC District 1
Jim Detro (JD), BOCC District 3
Lanie Johns (LJ), County Clerk
Andy Hover (AH), BOCC District 2
Department heads

Time stamps refer to two recordings on website.

Summary of Important Discussions: *Employees being trained to detect "phishing" emails to prevent hack like the one in January; folks should be on the lookout for the stolen yellow 65,000 watt generator; 4H and Master gardeners now meet in person; new county website, complete with video, nearing completion; success of fairground court operations the cause of envy, Noxious Weed dept. sending forms out to landowners, "outstanding number" of county residents vaccinated for Covid, Sheriff's Dept. generalizing body cameras; ongoing discussion between CB and AH about planning and water.*

Department Heads' Quarterly Reports

27:43 LJ wants departments to use a new agenda bill form providing summary, a suggested motion and information for funding and distribution source. Requests should have signatures, says AH, and heads should "prep us beforehand or be here at the public hearing."

35:27 Karen Beatty, Risk Management, is getting ready to implement antivirus software, purchase of back-up system okayed. Will work with depts. to erase old data. Network training preparing employees to detect malware by sending them phony "phishing" emails. A new user ID system will send a confirmation messages to a telephone.

Coroner - procedure set up to report any vaccine-related deaths but none so far and odds are low—3.5 per million.

Emergency Management - reports theft of a 65,000 watt generator; AH recommends securing a generator if it must be left overnight, CB says for anyone who might have seen it carried off to report it.

WSU Extension - In-person meetings allowed now for 4H, Master Gardening. Needs assessment survey for county is progressing with professor and students at Vancouver campus.

2:25 Fairgrounds - Arts and Crafts building being remodeled.

7:15 Human Resources - Tanya Craig gives progress report on new county website which is “bare bones”, awaiting logos and training for employees to add content. She gave a preview of the features: things to do in the county, a city calendar, a way for citizens to sign up to receive email notifications of meetings or the agenda, translation tools...People can click on a 2-3 minute video showing scenes from all over the county.

10:45 Dennis Rabidou from Juvenile Services says others who are doing trials by Zoom are impressed that Okanogan is conducting “business as usual,” praises the staff and facilities at the Fairgrounds, says that one lawyer even got his Covid shot while he was there.

13:45 The Prosecutor’s office has a new attorney, John Enger, who just started. AH mentions a Methow Valley News article which spoke highly of the Prosecutor’s office.

Noxious Weeds - Field season starting, Mandatory Control Need contracts going out to landowners.

Health Dept. Head Lauri Jones says 29.5% of county residents have had both vaccines and 20,755 have been vaccinated in all so far, “an astounding number”. But a recent spike in cases among city employees is taking them out of work. She encourages all to “make that choice” and do their research.

18:39 Sheriff’s Dept. - Tony Hawley unhappy about State Supreme Court opinion questioning the crime of possession of controlled substances; is “waiting for the ability to charge people on that.” Body cameras for each deputy are being phased in, “in the interest of transparency and evidence collection, not addressing a particular problem but that’s what the profession is moving towards.”

24:28 Okanogan Dispatch Center’s Mike Worden says they’ve received a Hazard Mitigation grant of \$200,000 for the Tunk Mountain Project. They will receive the new Courthouse generator in April but the transfer won’t arrive until May. The 2-4 week installation will cause some weekend power outages. Dept. is currently doing a radio system study.

Other Business

33:03 LJ reports on bids received for legal notice publishing. Commissioners will be choosing between Sound Publishing (Okanogan Valley Gazette Tribune and Methow Valley News) and the Omak Chronicle.

1:03:56 “Public Hearing to consider declaring county surplus via auction sale by either electronic media or physical auction sale to be located at the County Fairgrounds.” Vehicles can be moved as of now but the rest starting April 1st. CB wonders how the public can know what the sale is about, LJ says they can email the county for a list. Things will be better when new website up and running.

1:15:04 Discussion (started 57:00) between CB and AH on development and water. CB: we calculate (average household size of 2.5) and come up with a potential for population projection. AH: What if you don’t want to serve that many people? CB: If people are using (the issue of) water to control the growth they don’t want to see, we can look at some other numbers as well. (They discuss closed basins, a well 600 feet deep.) AH: I believe in property rights but I don’t like scarring the hills. (They agree that people need to have information - through GIS - about what land can be developed. CB: There’s a mistrust of government. Someone else has to do it (land use ordinances) because if it’s your own department...AH: I think the county should be agnostic about what goes on. All we do is enforce the law and set land use policy based on what our constituents want...We will consider the critical areas ordinance as an imperative piece of the comprehensive plan.”

1:30:40 meeting disbanded informally.

