

**Board of Okanogan County Commissioners**  
**Tuesday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022, 3:00 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  
Lanie Johns (LJ), County Clerk  
Elizabeth Walker (EW), Methow Valley Citizens Council  
Kathleen Johnson (KJ), Tonasket Ranger District

*Time stamps refer to the time on the wall clock. An AV Capture archive of the meeting on this date is available 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:*** *Elizabeth Walker talks of measures by the Methow Valley Citizens Council to address air quality issues, asks BOCC to support bid for grant to finance transfers to certified wood stoves, more air quality sensors, and a local specialist ; CB evokes recent State Auditor's office break-ins ; Cannabis Board requests approved, CB glad for increased BOCC input ; new security apparatus for jail cells mentioned ; Juneteenth to become County holiday ; Tonasket Ranger reports on timber sales, landscape restoration, funding request for post-fire water development and fencing, campground repair and her retirement ; CB evokes multiple National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) projects on the Okanogan-Wenatchee Forest.*

3:05 - *CB mentions attending a Forest Health Collaborative meeting. They are on zoom with EW. AH: What's the overarching goal? To make people stop using wood stoves? EW: There are two: aligned with the theme of Clear Methow... to raise awareness of air quality issues and try to improve it whenever possible. We've applied for a grant from Ecology to change wood stoves to newer ones. We're working with Solid Waste to promote chipping drives so people have alternatives if they want to opt out of burning. (With prescribed burning there's going to be more smoke. We need air purifiers for people who can't afford them... Our goals *(include)* having better numbers and data for looking for funding... *She says in the Methow they are using more "purple air sensors", and several years ago started a program enlisting schools and residents and tribal members as "clean air ambassadors". Some funding will go for sensors they are creating which don't need power or wifi and can be placed at trail heads during wildfire season; they also plan to hire a local air quality specialist since the nearest one is in Yakima. A motion is carried to approve the grant application for air quality research that would support MVCC's actual project. CB mentions a workshop he attended to discuss the smoke issue with the Colvilles.**

3:14 - *Discussion on recent break-ins. CB: The second one could bring in an investigation about the State Auditor's office. If you have a break-in, then another break-in and the cash is lying out about in the safe, you might have to pay the money back. You could be looked*

at as negligent. That's an issue that's emerging and we can get our auditor to talk to us about it when she has an opportunity. It's one of those cases where the criminals are wrong but we're more wrong.

- 3:15 - *The BOCC must reply to three requests by the Board of Liquor and Cannabis: Transferring a licence from Griswall Enterprises LLC Marijuana Producer to Royal Greens, LLC, 68 Nichols Rd, Omak, granting an application to Silver Green Botanical Inc., 5 Union Springs Rd., Tonasket, and approving a change of location. All are approved. CB: The Planning Department has researched and recommended approval. We hadn't gone to this much effort to make these comments and approvals; it shows that we're stepping up our attention to the license applications.*
- 3:21 - **LJ:** Tanya (Everett, Human Resources and Risk Management) has received signatures for a General Services Agreement that she talked about earlier today regarding PACs for the jail. (*Patented Access Control System; a cell access allowing more secure handcuffing and, when necessary, dispersal of chemical agents to control violent inmates.*)
- 3:22 - **CB:** I move to... add Juneteenth as a County holiday. *Motion carried. CB also talks about an agreement providing back-up medical services to the jail in case independent medical contractor Dr. Craig, who provides periodic services now, is not available. AH describes an amendment to the Law Enforcement agreement between the county and Forest Service: They allow money for over-time for some of our deputies who are doing stuff on the forest. Not sure where the funding comes from. Last year we got money for overtime.*
- 3:30 - Tonasket Ranger District update - (*JD excuses his physical absence from the meeting, citing "an old smoke jumping accident that flairs up this time of year".*) **KJ:** It was a busy day last week and I couldn't come in. We had two salvage sales from Walker Creek and Mukamuk. It went way above what we thought they were going to go for... Walker Creek was \$3M just in deck (?) sales. They're all green trees, not burnt, used for fire breaks.
- 3:34 - *KJ asks if they've gotten word about the "quad county" meeting scheduled for March 18<sup>th</sup>. AH: Is it different from the NEWC (Northeastern Washington Counties) meeting? KJ: Yes, but they're having one after the other the same day. CB asks if it's related to the Forest Health Collaborative (FHC). KJ: The Colville Forest does all these Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR) projects. The (Toroda-Trout Creek?) one is by Republic. AH: I can't believe how much stuff they can get done on the Colville... CB: Here's one man's perspective: The Colville doesn't have a LSR. Which is a big deal. AH: But they still have to figure out how to deal with those LSRs without making it so long and drawn out. CB: The challenge is, you end up in NEPA (National Environmental Protection Act) for a protracted period of time. I put a lot of effort into the Forest Health Collaborative. There's a whole bunch of money that just came raining in. AH: I appreciate all the work you've done... Without that there would be more challenges... That was not meant to be a criticism... KJ: We're a lot more similar to the Colville (*than the Methow district*). CB: That's one of the reasons the Northwest FHC promoted the idea of you going over to the Colville. KJ: We're still on the Okanogan plan... I think it's 2025 they'll start the NEPA part to get under the Colville plan. CB: The Okanogan-Wenatchee will have five NEPA teams in the Wenatchee. There'll be a lot going on really fast. AH: What's the travel plan like on the Colville for ATVs on the roads?... KJ: We're still under the 1989 Okanogan plan. JD: ... We've had lots of Forest Patrol guys try to write tickets to ATV guys. I challenged them all the way up, so did Commissioner Campbell. Said "You guys write the tickets, we'll challenge you in court."*

3:44 - *KJ talks about the Tonasket and Republic Ranger Districts sharing specialists. KJ: The next area will be the Buckhorn area north of Bonaparte Lake, the next NEPA area for timber sales and stuff like that. The border's up in Canada. This past year that Bonapart Unit burned. We decided to divide it in half. The northern part is going to be absorbed in the the Buckhorn unit, partly so they can go in and do some more timber and thinning, and pull out some of the trees that we anticipate will be dead in the next five years. It's going to take a year longer because of all the watershed the specialists will have to do. JD jokes about "gold up there", CB says they're going to have to check employees' pockets. CB: So they're doing the same thing as Twisp, prioritizing sales. AH questions the extra year. KJ: They added on 50% more acres and need time to do their surveys. AH: How much acreage was affected by the fires they had up there? KJ: Four or five pastures are going to have no grazing, a few others will be reduced year by year or by number. They've started the BEAR (Burned Area Emergency Response) type stuff; extended it out to include more things like range structures. Josh and Donna applied for and got money for more water development and fencing. It's separate from the normal BEAR; it's not going to take care of all that was damaged but will do a lot. Recreation got some money. The worst (campground affected by fires) was Cottonwood. Oreo had a few signs damaged.*

3:55 - *KJ announces her retirement in May after three years as District Ranger. JD: You came in here -- I want to compliment you on how you fit into the situation. Hope we can get a replacement who has the same values. Hope you have some input. KJ: Rodney knows the type of person we need... I hope they don't have another year like the last year, and 2015 and 2014.*

*The BOCC talks about attending the memorial for long-time smoke jumper Doug Houston. JD says he might have Miss Montana come for a "fly by". They agree to reconvene Wednesday at 11:00.*

4:07 - *Meeting Adjourned*