

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday, May 17th, 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
Lanie Johns (LJ), County Clerk
Isabelle Spohn (IS), Methow citizen
Shelley Keitzman (SK), Human Resources
Karen Beatty (KB), Central Services Director
Larry Gilman (LG), Assessor
Naomi Peasley (NP), Fairgrounds Director

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

***Summary of Important Discussions:** In Public Comment the Board is criticized for too-few-too-late efforts to have public participate in the Wildfire Protection Plan meeting, the caller seeing a pattern with the lack of time afforded to people evacuating from fires to review a 700-page mitigation plan last fall; LJ urges a clearer organization of invoices and departmental roles with the construction projects currently involving the Courts, Sheriff, Coroner, and Juvenile Detention, explains Duck Lake Irrigation District spending gap; Executive Session regarding planning, strategy, or position of BOCC. In department updates money requests dominate: Microsoft adding to Central Services bill \$30,000/year for cloud services and charging 10% annual increases across the board, a new generator will secure computer transfers during big move in June; Assessor's office swamped, need for new appraiser more acute, "aggressive land-owners" posing problems; Fairgrounds' half grant-funded \$675,000 capital improvement program includes RV park electrical work and water infrastructure assessment to be done right away and a big horse barn/indoor riding arena subject to debate; facility hosting multiple events. Meeting adjourned at 4:20.*

1:33 - **Public Comment Period - IS:** Regarding the County Wildfire Protection Plan meeting tonight, the agenda had the time wrong. It was corrected today after I called to signal the mistake. Notice of the meeting is not in the latest Omak Chronicle or Methow Valley News. There seemed to be no EMS emails or texts sent out on this subject, just news of the avian flu. *She thanks AH for requesting that the meeting be recorded, as she and "a substantial number of people" who couldn't attend would benefit, but says that the board's stated concern for public participation appears to be motivated by the possibility of a legal challenge. She says residents being evacuated from fires last September had only five days to comment on the 700-page AHMP (All Hazard Mitigation Plan) and that similarly, this document wasn't made available until 24 hours before tonight's meeting. She adds that*

people are busy and need more than a few days to schedule in a meeting. (The commissioners made no remarks following this comment.)

1:38 - *LJ asks for direction on current construction projects. All fee proposals have been approved except the Justice Building, two just need contract approval: the Sheriff's equipment and Coroner's storage sheds. Some budgeted sums have already been paid out. Juvenile Detention had an overage of \$17,000, she's not sure why. Instead of sums being paid out in a disorganized way with no single department keeping track, LJ suggests either having the individual departments pay the invoices or have them all paid through the Commissioners' Office. AH agrees that the invoices should be reviewed for consistency with the scope of work and paid by the BOCC. LJ has made a spread sheet for the pay proposals in play right now. presents for approval pre-design engineering and architectural studies for the Sheriff's and Coroner's storage buildings, \$69,000, and for the Justice Building, \$116,349.*

LJ announces bid opening on May 31st for work allowing Duck Lake Irrigation District's take-over of Johnson Creek's irrigation needs due to contaminants in the system, including uranium. The original cost was \$465,000 but prices have risen and now exceed the ARPA (American Rescue Plan) funds provided. The district also wants \$75,000 to pay a project manager. The total funding gap is \$225,000. AH will discuss this with Public Health after the bid opening, in order to have the final sum.

LJ says for work to begin on the Courthouse exterior a contract must be signed but it is 39 pages-long so she is working on having it reworked into a form that would be simpler to review.

2:00 - *HR Analyst SK talks about the EAP (Employee Assistance Program) for jurors in cases that are "especially bad", that inflict trauma. A letter can be sent informing them of this mental health service. Behavioral Health would charge \$93.75 per visit, and the limit would be two visits per person. AH sees no reason to refuse; SK says the need for this service is fairly rare.*

2:05 - *Executive Session: RCW 42.30.140 (4b) regarding the governing body's planning or adopting the strategy or position to be taken by the governing body.*

2:25 - *CB reads a letter he has written to the RCO (Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office): A group called the Oroville Initiative applied for lodging tax funds to add to improvements already made to build a restroom at the Similkameen trail head which the city has agreed to own and maintain, conditioned on the trail-head being owned by the city... The letter goes on to assure the RCO that this land has been accorded to the city of Oroville. It is approved to be sent.*

2:30 - *Central Services update -KB reports that to continue their agreement with Microsoft, which is expanding its cloud computing, it the company is giving a "special offer" of \$93 for each of 330 accounts. This is to be paid in addition to the yearly service fee of \$102,000. Microsoft also charges a 10% increase every year (the next scheduled enterprise agreement is \$130,000). If they wait, the per-account annual fee will go up to \$323 each. They discuss the risk and cost of migrating to another company and decide to accept the offer. **AH:** We should just bit the bullet and pay. **CB:** It's kind of like fixing your car. Sometimes it's way better to let someone else do it. **JD** says Microsoft invents viruses then sells you the systems to fix them. **KB** says he could write to "Uncle Bill". **JD:** It wouldn't be a very nice letter.*

There is need for an “FTP” setup for sending big quantities of information. KB has found a service that provides a portal. AH: A drop box. KB: Yes. She got positive feedback from those who have tried it. Omak uses it to send to the county. It can send 10 gigs of data. The annual license is just under \$1,000. This could benefit Superior Court.

2:47 - On June 3rd Courthouse employees will have administrative leave to move to the new (formerly Forest Service) building. Central Services is getting its own generator with a manual transfer switch to be able to take the computers safely off line.

3:00 - Assessor’s report - LG has an employee moving away and has just hired a replacement. He would like the board to consider opening up another appraiser position as their workload is increasing due to 1) the new requirement for annual assessments and 2) the rising number of properties being appraised. LG: Since 2003 the County has gone from 43,000 to 52,000 appraisable properties. We’ll need to train someone to replace a retiree within two years. Another problem is we got a letter from the Constitutional (*inaudible*). They filed a deed at the auditor’s saying they’re not taxable. The deny us access to their land. They owe us two years of arrears. AH asks about drones. LG: It’s “a sticky subject now being reviewed by the state. I have some appraisers who wouldn’t want to be a part of that... We have 1,230 open building permits, a carry-over from last year. Since last July, 550 new permits. More subdivisions... He talks more about aggressive land-owners, says he avoids sending law enforcement, sends letters, relies on estimated value.

CB: I was at a planning meeting in Tacoma. We talked about the necessity for a law holding the Liquor and Cannabis Board accountable for more collaboration with the counties. We also talked about law enforcement; at some point I’d like to share that with you. And we have the opportunity to show our interest in state-wide committees. *He says he is involved in the one on health care.*

3:30 - Fairgrounds update - NP: (*passing out a spreadsheet*) Here is the breakdown for capital improvements, including the electrical work (*in the RV park*). AH: \$675,000. \$325,000 was our match, plus the grant. NP: We’ve received \$150,000 for that project. AH: Out of \$303,000 do we have 22,000 of in-kind expenditures? (*These must be kept track of to complete the grant sum.*) NP doesn’t know which of \$142 in certain anticipated costs will be in-kind. \$150,000 of the funds received will go to the electrical work and \$150 to underground irrigation AH would like to hold on to some money as a cushion. She says the grandstand demo has been paid for already. The RV park electrical work will cost a total of \$161,421 plus tax and be started in the spring following the next fair. AH: So you’ll still have to roll out the “spider roll”. They talk about bonding for projects over \$300,000 vs. “retention of contracts” for those less than \$150,000. A motion is passed to accept the lowest quote for the electrical work.

NP: We’re hosting the first season opener of the Horse Nations Indian Relay Racing and the State High School Rodeo Finals. This week there’s Rotary, a wedding and a quinceañera. Next week there will be five events. We’re very busy. They discuss holding off on the irrigation project to address infrastructure issues. They need a water cross-connection assessment. NP: I’m moving forward on nine pages of recommendations. One thing is labeling things in English and Spanish. CB: Are you making a priority list? With some necessary to do right away, and the things that don’t cost as much. AH mentions again keeping track of volunteers’ time to help with more grant money, talks about a 5% retainer-ship bond, but not right now. CH says they must go through some contradictory language, AH: You’re appointed. They discuss having reached out to the Tribes for cost-sharing but

receiving no answer and conclude that the back and forth would be taxing and it would be easier to take care of the costs themselves.

*For the horse barn AH recommends wood instead of metal for cost and ease of construction, He is surprised to see the project has developed into a closed-in 125 by 210-foot arena with space for stalls, and an interior riding facility in the winter to generate revenue, instead of the 25 foot-wide two row structure he had imagined. **AH:** Tell us the maintenance and construction costs and if you can show the revenue pay-back. **NP:** Please refer to the budget. I appreciate your time and support for what you're doing at the Fairgrounds.*

4:20 - Meeting adjourned.