

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday, May 18th, 2021, 1:30 PM

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Present:

Chris Branch (CB), BOCC District 1
Andy Hover (AH), BOCC District 2
Lanie Johns (LJ), County Clerk
Tanya Craig (TC), Risk Management, Human Resources
Lael Duncan (LD), Community Action
Karen Beatty (KB), Central Services
Ken MacNamee (KM), DNR
Pat Ryan, DNR
Michelle (Sandover?) (MS), and Isabelle Spohn (IS), citizens commenting via Zoom
Joe Poulin (JP), Maintenance Supervisor
Court (C) and Kirsten (K) from Amaresco, a well-drilling company.

Time stamps refer AV Capture recording on County website.

Summary of Important Discussions: *Briefing on mask-wearing and ongoing personnel gaps; Public Hearing to support Community Action's CBDG grant application, director lays out how those grant funds are currently used for many food and housing needs; New county website "goes live," report on its success and proposed adjustments; burn ban discussion, land is dry for the season but wildfire prevention is facilitated through slash-burning and bio-char projects under newly passed HR 1168, as through the "Wildfire Ready" program which has already assessed 201 homes; Water overflowing from an injection well at the jail and opinions differ as to who (or what) is to blame.*

3:58:10 - *Informal discussion about lumber, CB telling AH about construction project in Omak where a beam couldn't be graded because the lumber expert's license had expired and cost too much to renew, and signs of rising lumber costs: fencing stolen at a marijuana farm, people stocking maple and walnut.*

4:03:39 - Latest Covid guidelines - TC: I received requests for guidance after the CDC's and Governor's (Covid) directives. My guidance is: commissioners are allowing elected officials to do what they think is best. CB: Still wearing masks? TC: Some are, some aren't. Governor opens state June 30th or before if 70% vaccinated. CB: Guidance from CDC is for fully vaccinated people. *He recommends people maintain same guidelines, concern for under 16 population, still unprotected.* It's not illegal to get STD. AH: Don't want you to use that analogy! *He asks why vaccinated people would worry about masks, TC explains they can still get the virus but not as bad.* I agree with CB on masks: be safe, be smart. CB: Don't want to learn the hard way...I'm pleased to say we're doing better. TC: Jobs being filled through Worksource (in house job training), two encouraging candidatures for Dispatch posts, not as many applicants as hoped for Planner position. CB: No one is mentoring for those positions.

4:22:20 - CB, concerned about notification and translation requirements, asks to look at hearing protocol as they prepare to open Public Hearing on CDBG grant application for Community Action. LD says hearing was posted through Family Health Centers. CB opens hearing. LD says grant is used to support public services, is related to housing through support of salaries for housing support managers who help people qualify for home repair, weatherization, also emergency referral for homeless, fire victims, Covid isolation cases. LD: Food distribution to food pantries, referrals to other services, (are)often under-funded...food and nutrition staff, arranging for donations to be delivered equitably. We do all purchasing and distribution (to food pantries). We will be receiving \$81,171 from the State, and \$3,000 from the county for administration. A listener, MS, asks why invite testimony. CB: part of the grant process; though it doesn't affect this application it informs on what community needs are for future applications. (4:54:03) Listener IS comments on housing being in a "desperate situation", hopes "Community Action is working with planning and Commissioners regarding possibility of affordable housing in city expansion areas." LD says they work with Room 1, Behavioral Health Care, two housing authorities and support center; in recent years have paid recording fee with real estate companies, and supported senior housing in Omak. IS (referring to problems with water in the Methow): It's difficult for towns to locate new construction on affordable housing.

4:58:05 - CB closes hearing, resolution to support grant approved, he invites people to put their ideas on how money should be spent on the Commerce Department website's CDBG page. Says he is pleased with the turnout at the hearing. LD adds that they are looking for a low income representative on their board, as well as alternates to vote in the absence of AH or commissioner Detro.

5:06:36 - KB (Central Services update) : New website going pretty well, need better link to ordinances and maps, make zoning districts easier to get to. AH: Move "Share" and Translate buttons away from the center (he translated page into Chinese and couldn't find the button to go back). CB: need a button so people can give input to make the site easier to use.

5:45:21 - Fire bans - In annual report DNR's KM starts by reporting his visit to Leader Lake where he says the newly repaved road was the result of his engineer's getting an estimate approved by Sen. Hawkins because snowplows were wearing down the road after Fish and Wildlife authorized year-round fishing. Fish and Wildlife will maintain the road in the coming years. AH wants to know if a county burn ban applies to state campgrounds. KM thinks so. AH: All the time people say, 'Why isn't there a ban yet?...There's a grey area of liability. KM: In April there were 152 fires. Usually there's an average of 40...Several were 30-acres We're on pins and needles. I'll get back to you on the burn ban—we juggle with it every year. AH concerned about fire pits, why DNR campgrounds can use them in spite of a burn ban, and KM thinks as long as they've been inspected and are in designated spots in campgrounds, fire pits in private, Forest Service or county campgrounds could be used even under a ban. KM commends Emergency Manager Maurice Goodhall's performance during fire and Covid situations, saying he knows how to talk to people.

5:45:21 - Timber sales - KM: Five new bulldozers, five permanent operators and four new overhead positions will aid in implementation of HR 1168 for Forest Management and Wildfire Resources. PR: Seven sales, two-three in process and three more planned this year. Pre-commercial thinning above and beyond what was done in the past, for slash, trying prescribed burns. AH: Lot of good firewood at the bottom of slash piles. KM: Have to be with the loggers at the sale. That conversation is going forward. PR: People got funds to do bio-char. KM - Rock Creek shelter still needs a new roof... May 7th they auctioned three parcels of trust land..."Wildlife Ready" program " pretty successful, 201 assessments, Conservation District doing some. I was skeptical but things are going pretty well"

6:07:39 - Failed injection well at the jail - JP: Water is coming out of the ground. AH: That well has blown so much water out of the casing that there's a hole all the way down and blown sand and clay around." C (employee of drilling company Ameresco): This is the first I've heard of damage to the well...It was over pressurized. AH: ...Needs to be resolved before summer. C: I can provide recommendations. It operated two years without issue til it collapsed; the screen filter started causing clogging. *(There's been)* a continued lack of routine preventive maintenance. JP: They're not our screens or filters. *Says problems in 2019 when jail heat pumps clogged.* AH: ...There's an obstruction somewhere, or there's an injection well that can't take the amount of water. JP: Both issues. Cleaned three times, nothing in filter. *K from Ameresco agrees to arrange a visit. She and C leave meeting.*

6:32:33 - JP: They drilled a third well, because of gravel, put a casing and made it into an injection well, then they put in an extraction well, then another injection well, drilled behind the Courthouse and jail driveway but neither worked. CB: Proceed as if you know there's going to be litigation. JP: Ameresco built first one we're having problems with as an extraction well, messed it up, put a casing and said use it as an injection well. Ok Drilling had something to do with the first injection well filling with silt. *CB (accuses the sand and clay aquifer):* The water can't push through.

Six-year capital facilities plan approved, discussion about administration costs of monitoring grant spending, need for a Finance Manager for Community Action. CB: If we don't have what we want, we'll go with a head hunter. *Humorous discussion about attracting people to county government, how to emphasize the positive.*

6:52:52 - *Meeting adjourned.*