

Okanogan County Board of County Commissioners meeting June 28, 2021 Monday AM Session

CB—Chris Branch, BOCC chair, District 1
JD—Jim DeTro, BOCC member, District 3
LJ—Lalena Johns-Clerk to the Commissioners
MW - Mike Wordon (Sheriff's Dept)
TE - Thomas Even (Vet. Relief Board)

These notes were taken by an Okanogan County Watch volunteer. Every attempt is made to be accurate. Notes are verbatim when possible, and otherwise summarized or paraphrased. Note takers comments or clarifications are in italics. These notes are published at <https://www.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 <https://okanogancounty.org/Commissioners/Minutes%202021/2021%20Minutes%20Page.html>

The time stamps refer to the times on the AV Capture archive of the meeting on this date. Click [here](#) to go to video.

Summary Of Significant Discussion

0:00 – Fireworks in Omak

6:10 – Ongoing Issues at Fairgrounds – management, budget control, communications.

30:00 – Discussion about American Relief Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

38:00 – MW arrives to talk about ARPA funds specifically as they apply to communications and broadband issues.

49:55- Discussion about renting Hancock Building to Economic Alliance.

52:20- Discussion about repairing parapets on County Courthouse

1:21:38 – Discussion about Executive Session planned for Wednesday

1:34:50 – Update from Veterans Relief Board rep Thomas Even

1:45:40 – Maurice Goodall (Emergency Mgmt) drops in for brief update

00:00 - Discussion about the danger of fireworks given the extreme high temperatures. City of Omak is allowing fireworks – CB and JD express concern. Informal discussion about history of fireworks being used during Stampede in the past and the lack of wisdom for allowing it. Talked about having County Emergency Manager put out a communication to remind people that it is not a good idea. Consideration about the delicate situation of interfering with a decision made by one of the towns.

6:10 – Discussion about communications regarding Fairgrounds policies. How to manage the Fairgrounds budget, and difficulties among fairgrounds staff. CB suggests that when Comm. Hover is back they should have a meeting to discuss the management situation.

14:05 - CB asks about livestock management fund (relating to fair and 4H). JD says he's been hearing about it from people and they aren't happy. The discussion is about a group that has done it for years on a volunteer basis and now that group is being replaced by another entity that wants to charge the kids.

16:30 – CB talks with LJ about tracking the fairgrounds maintenance budget and separating it from the rest of the county budget. Discussion about whether to include the 3 fairground employee wages in the maintenance costs.

18:31 - Discussion of changes to schedule for the rest of the day, and other meetings that are coming up.

24:00 – Mike Wordon (Sheriff's Dept) arrives.

24:40 – CB mentions to MW that he visited Omak Mtn and the communication structure that is there. Casual conversation about access to site.

30:00 -Discussion of resolution regarding ARPA funds. Resolution needs to be updated in the Whereas section. New information has arisen since it was drafted earlier in the month. BOCC originally thought the money was coming through the State, but have since learned that it is coming directly from Federal Govt. This requires using a whole new computer program which nobody is familiar with. CB is learning how to use it. CB says he wants to create a matrix of funding sources to help prioritize projects. JD wants to share some work that WASC has done related to this. LJ has e-mail that she will share. Discussion about the edits to be made to the Resolution to comply with the rules and funding source. CB says he wants to get a lot of input before specifying projects and has been talking with the Economic Alliance.

38:00 - Mike Wordan discusses ARPA funds as they relate to broadband and radio communication projects (assume this is Sheriff Dept communications project). He wonders if while the communications upgrade is taking place, if there is other funding for broadband, maybe some projects could be coordinated. There could be overlap with the needs for both radio communications and broadband, and it would be good if planning and coordination for these needs could work hand in hand. CB says that there is a lot of opportunity, and a lot of learning to do to figure it all out. CB mentions that Mayor Moody (of Twisp) is chair of the COG and is looking into it as well. Wants to make sure that each qualified entity (towns, etc), are pursuing their individual options for funding projects in addition to looking at the County as a source of funding. CB summarizes: we want to make sure we know what all the funding sources are for projects, which entities are qualified for which projects, and how we can maximize the amount available. Then we want to prioritize projects with lots of public input.

49:55 – CB mentions that the Economic Alliance (EA) is looking for a bigger space. He is looking at the Hancock building (county owned) and suggests that the County could rent them space. He is looking at rental rates and trying to ensure that it is a fair price that the EA can afford. EA

has secured some significant grants and expanding the work of the EA. Hancock building will give them good visibility.

52:20 – LJ met with architect Michael Beeman regarding the parapet project on the county courthouse. MB asked if the courthouse has been assessed. LJ says no. MB suggests that a detailed assessment is in order, as it will give an accurate idea of the repairs needed. Suggests that the entire courthouse be assessed because any grants will require one. It is possible that courthouse will need a lot of work and could be done in phases. The assessment will satisfy any future funding requirements. It's possible that the State legislature could provide some \$\$\$. Assessment would be \$25K - \$50K. Assessor should be an expert in stucco. LJ discusses the options of an RFP vs an RFQ. Assessment cost is not included in the grant award. County will have to pay for it. LJ and CB discuss details of this project. BOCC approves the posting of public notice for courthouse assessment.

1:06:00 – CB talks more about rental rates for county owned buildings. LJ reminds BOCC about a contract for other buildings and the rate charged. CB says he was thinking of offering that same rate to the EA for the Hancock Building. The rate is \$0.42/ sq ft. CB suggests that the contract exclude the basement from the square footage, and that the EA pay their own PUD bill. Discussion about how icky the basement is in the Hancock Building and that the EA does not want to use it. LJ and CB discuss how to handle the fact that Emergency Mgmt dept has been storing stuff in that building without paying rent. They will be moving that stuff out soon. CB notes that commercial space is not in high demand, pointing out that there are several vacant commercial spaces in both Omak and Okanogan. CB mentions that LJ has been retained as a signer on the EA. Mentions that he is now the Chair of the EA board, and LJ is the alternate.

1:15:20 – More discussion about whether Naomi Peasley (Fairgrounds Mgr) is going to be here at 11 today. Reference to an e-mail received from her last week, and another one this morning. Some confusion about what the end result is. Decides that she is not showing up today.

1:19:10 – BOCC approves vouchers.

1:21:38 – CB asks LJ to arrange Executive session on Wednesday, requested by David Gecas. Discussion about what time.

1:26:00 – LJ brings up county employees being reimbursed for their workwear. It was brought up some time ago for discussion, but no further action was taken. Employees are wondering if they are going to get this reimbursement. Discussion about whether the money could be spent for any kind of workwear, or specific items such as boots, shirts with logos, etc. LJ is instructed to prepare a resolution on this subject.

1:30:00 – CB says there are a couple of items for the Executive session. Dave Gecas has the comp plan to discuss, and CB wants to talk about the rental issue.

1:33:40 – CB talks about the sequential mapping model that is the topic of a meeting he will be attending. It maps out the systems in Okanogan County. Brings in all the players – medical, Sheriff, PUD, etc.

1:34:50 – Veterans Relief board rep Thomas Even gives report. Purchased a sonic vault. VA has been contacting Vets for Covid Vax. Vets are still having problems with health care policy changes. VA wants to go all computer, but many vets don't have access or interest in using computers. CB asks if it more a reason of no WiFi access, or no interest in computers. TE says both. Response to claims is still slow, but should get better now that state offices are opening up. TE just completed an on-line course that was useful. \$378,291 going to county. As of June, there were 8 claims, 75 calls, served 69 vets, (62 were paperwork assist). Still piling in. Had 2 today as I was leaving. Vet Relief board has asked the Eric come up once a week to train. That has been approved – should be coming to BOCC for final approval. Board likes the new on-line system that is connected to new county website. More discussion about schedule for training for TE.

1:45:40 – Maurice Goodall (Emergency Mgmt) arrives. Briefly discuss increase in Covid cases. Talks about cooling centers and mentions that libraries are going to be open for cooling. Heard about schools opening for cooling but no further details. Talking about risks for people living without AC. Had couple of fire calls, but all turned out OK. There have been a few false reports for fire. Some talk about drains backing up at a building at the fairgrounds. Discussion about how water, electric and sewer systems have been mapped out. It took Maurice years, but he had it pretty well documented when he left. Not sure if the records have been updated since then. There has always been an issue with the well and the adjustment of the controls. There is no screen in that well and lots of junk gets through. Control of the VFD is done manually, but requires a certain amount of knowledge. Discusses the meeting on Wednesday about the sequential mapping. Will include PUD and discussion about power supply, and limits of our local grid and planning for future heat waves or other crises that would impact power supply.

1:57:05 – JD mentions that California has new requirements that restrict people from charging electric cars. Says that “your illustrious governor” will be mandating electric cars soon. Discussion about hybrid vehicles and the pros and cons.

1:59:15 – JD asks LJ to make a correction to minutes from June 22nd meeting.

2:00:36 – adjourn for the day

2:05:00 – CB and LJ continue casual discussion. Talk about fairgrounds infrastructure and how nobody really knows what's under the ground. LJ says that there is a grey water holding tank and that's what backed up this past weekend. CB says he is concerned because of the lack of knowledge about how the systems are laid out and are cross-connected.