

**Board of Okanogan County Commissioners**  
**6/2/2020**  
**Meeting Via Zoom**

**Present:**

Jim DeTro - Chair, BOCC District 3  
Chris Branch - Vice chair, BOCC District 1  
Andy Hover - BOCC, District 2  
Lanie Johns - LJ, Clerk of the Board  
Numerous members of the public (see end of notes for partial list.)

1:28 PM - 35 participants on line at beginning. As high as 60 attendees or more at one time later in the meeting.

*Note: the meeting was late getting started due to the number of participants and difficulties for all in running the program with an unexpectedly large number of people. Comments actually began around 1:44.*

*These notes were taken by an Okanogan County Watch volunteer from the zoom meeting, using an audio recording later to assist with the notes. Every attempt has been made to be accurate. These are not the official county minutes, which are normally posted at a later time. To see official minutes, see <https://okanogancounty.org/Commissioners/Cmrs/Cmrs%20Agenda.htm>. Note taker comments, questions, or explanations in italics.*

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**1:30 - Citizen Comment Period**

JD - Shall we start? Does anyone have their little hand wave thing?

LJ -They are asking that the Commissioners identify themselves when they speak.

JD - And they need to identify themselves when they speak.

CB - I'd like to go down the list of who is on the line and ihave them identify themselves.

JD - Good Idea.

Lanie - A lot of people don't have their video up, just audio.

**AH** - I think there will be a lot of people who want to comment. Just a feeling. We said 3 minutes per comment over the phone, when we first initiated the Comment Periods, when we had a full house; but since we haven't had that, we haven't enforced that. With 38 people on the line now, please adhere to 3 minutes apiece. It is public comment, not discussion or anything. I have the zoom list open. I will go down the list and ask if you are there and want to speak. Some just say iPad or phone number.

**Lanie** -*Everyone is unmuting themselves. Please only unmute yourself if your hand is "raised." Note: people thought they should raise their actual hand, rather than clicking the raised hand button, so some folks were not acknowledged at certain points.*

AH - Everyone mute themselves, please, I will just go down the list.

### **Speakers, in order they are acknowledged:**

**Dulane** - I've been having a really rough time in the last week. You know, really upsetting things happening in the world right now. And I was absolutely appalled to see that. I follow local Facebook and have a lot of friends. It's absolutely appalling. Nothing that is happening makes me feel safe. I listened to the minutes of the meeting yesterday, and I believe Jim Detro has no soul. If he didn't understand how that made people feel. I am grieving. I have people of color in my family. I'd like to see him resign. That would be a really good example. Many people in this family are fed up with people acting like they can kill people, or that it's ok. None of that was ok.

**JD** -I'll give a really short response. I told these guys (*Commissioners*) yesterday I have a hard time finding where people think this is racial.

**Dulane** - My god!!

**JD** - We have one black person in the Okanogan Eagles, and I sponsored him. So is that racist?

**Woman's voice:** I have black friends too. Does that make you a saint?

**JD** - I'm just making a statement that we have one black person in our..

*(Tape goes blank from 5:45 to 7:07 while DeTro is ending a sentence. Notes taken during the meeting do not show anyone speaking at that time.)*

**Samantha Culphanger:** This isn't just about that one individual post that has been brought up so many times. There is a pattern of these types of behavior on every public facebook page. Regardless of how you feel, you are the representative of our county. Those people deserve to feel welcome to be here. When you post messages like that of the world to see, that is representative of us, and I don't know about my community members, but I don't want to be represented like that. I love all the people in this community, regardless of religion or race. If you advertise your facebook page, you know (*Transmission broken.*) broadcasting that to the public. .... We have a right to say something when you are a representative of our county. What you have been posting and representing is not ok, it's not appropriate. And... I'm done.

AH - Thank you.

**Tamara Heisley.** I just want to take a second to say please resign, DeTro. Nothing that comes out of your mouth is anything but garbage. Nobody wants you here, You are an embarrassment, Just go the hell away.

JD - That's weird, because. ////People just keep getting on and.....transmission broken) .

**CB** - That's, ok, but please be as civil as possible. We don't want to contribute to any really disrespectful....

*(Laughter from someone.)*

**AH** - I'm trying to keep track of all people. The list keeps changing. Try ing to keep track of who is there. Let's try this real quick - anyone who wants to speak, raise your hand. Can we do that? (Writes names down.)

**1:42 - 41 people online.**

**Oori Silverstein** - I'm forgot how to how to raise my hand.

AH - Ok, just let me know. You will be down toward the end of the list

### **Citizen Speakers:**

**Katie Haven** - Methow, WA. Thank you. I have some brief comments prepared. I am appalled by the violent images promoted by Cmr. DeTro. One in particular came to the attention of many county residents this weekend. But anyone who has followed his Facebook page for any length of time knows that this is not an anomaly, or a mistake, or a misinterpretation of his sense of humor. Jim DeTro's page is filled with memes that attack people of color, muslims, women, and the LGBTQ community. Mr. DeTro states that he has never been politically correct and is not about to change now. But this is not about political correctness .It is about basic human decency. People are upset and rightfully so . An elected public official embracing hatred, bigotry, and racism cannot be accepted. This has been happening both on social media and in public meetings for way too long. I personally heard Mr. DeTro make veiled threats of people "swinging from trees" if they continue to pursue agendas that he doesn't agree with. Just in the past few weeks during public meetings in his capacity as Commissioner, he has referred to our elected State officials as the Gestapo and jack-rooted thugs. These comments don't often make it into the official minutes, but they have been heard - both by the public and by his colleagues. And so far, they have gone unchallenged. We are all on a steep learning curve right now. And what I have learned is that when faced with comments like these ....it is unacceptable not to take a stance. I condemn Jim DeTro's postings and similar public statements. I saw a sign last weekend that summed it up perfectly Silence is violence. I will be silent no longer.

**Cecelia Morgan** - I'm calling with extreme concern about the images I saw on Mr .DeTro's public facebook page Having a leader or anybody with such disregard with little respect for human life is concerning. Directly impacting your constituents, your co-workers, colleagues, etc and their feeling of safety and security. . I understand this is not an exception. Sounds like a pattern, and as I scrolled though you pages, I noticed that. Not acceptable for a leader to behave that way. I am calling for your resignation because I don't feel like you you are showing acceptable behavior as a leader of our community. That is all I have to say.

**Emily Post** , Methow Valley - Cmr. DeTro I think your Facebook posts, not just the truck one but all the others show your true colors. It's incredibly childish of you to make excuses and backpedal... "I didn't mean anything but 'm a trucker, etc." Come on. It is clear what you want, which is that it's ok for people to run over protestors. At least have the guts to admit that. When you post something like that. We don't need a representative who encourages people into hate and division. We need someone who encourages unity. I request you step down because you are unfit to lead.

**Gina Monteverde**, Methow Valley - I am here to comment on the Facebook post of Jim DeTro and recognize that when you are an elected official, you are called to a higher standard, which ....a higher standard than hate in this case, and we need you to resign and before that, an apology to the public would be ethical, and we do need leaders that can unite and help us

through this time of division. I do ask for your resignation and an apology which shows some integrity. Thank you.

**Brian Drye**, Winthrop. Have read Jd's Wenatchee World comments, reviewed his FB timeline, listened to his recordings yesterday and then today. His comments and apology re a truck was not remotely logical or plausible, and perhaps more importantly he didn't address any of the misinformation, derogatory material, or conspiracy theories that he's posted leading up to the bloodied covered truck image. He claims to hate being politically correct and seems to also implying that he can't or won't change. Maybe if he resigns he won't have to.

**Jasmine Minbashian**, Methow Valley- I wanted to share some of my personal experience . Back in 2010, I don't know if you recall, but I served on the Wolf Advisory Committee there was a group that had been working together from various walks of life - ranchers, biologists, recreationists, environmentalists, and they worked really hard in good faith for years to come up with a good conservation management plan for wolves - pretty controversial topic, not an easy one, but the trust and camaraderie that developed was really inspiring and an example of what people can do when they do come together and work together.

One of our very last meetings, at the time, I was 9 months pregnant, we were finalizing our conservation plan, you came to that meeting to comment as the public official, and I remember the words that you said you used, you said .... "I don't want to bury the hatchet. In fact, I want to bury the hatchet in all of your heads." It was such a violent and awful statement. Especially at the time I was 9 months pregnant. I felt very threatened by that experience and I've never forgotten it. And now to see you continue such hateful and derogatory approach towards people of all different stripes, it is very disappointing. You owe the people of this county an apology at least, and you should also reconsider whether you are fit to serve as commissioner. We need someone who will bring us together at this time, and you are not that person, Commissioner.

**Jordan Williams**, Tonasket. Jim Detro's comments and memes on his facebook page are sickening and racist. When he issued his apology, he feigned ignorance - pretends it was about trucking ..and pretended that it was about whether it was a person or an animal who was hit in that photo. But everyone can see that he was making light of causing great damage, possibly death, to protestors who inconvenience him. He is not fit to be a commissioner. I don't even want him be in my community, let alone leading it. He should step down effective immediately. His apology was not sincere, just a string of excuses. And any commissioner who believes his apology, or believes that you couldn't be a racist because you have one black friend, is also participating and being complicit in his racism. Because all of you know that he definitely is not talking about trucking. He's talking about how it's funny to hit protestors with a car if they inconvenience you by blocking traffic. I personally will be protesting. In fact, over the country and even in the rest of the state, many of my friends have been injured by rubber bullets and hit by cars while they've been protesting for black lives matter. And it is not funny. I fear for my life sometimes, and Jim DeTro is making light of that. His apology was not sincere, but even if it was sincere it would not be enough. He needs to step down immediately. And until he does step down which will happen.

he will meet resistance wherever he goes. We the people will not let hi forget this. Even if he was sincere, ....even if he steps down - and he will step down - we will not let him forget this. We the people will not let him forget a single of his many racist posts. His fear of blacks, his fear of muslims. Do you know there are muslims here in this county that you represent? Do you know how you make them feel? I will not let you forget this. I will not let you. And neither will any of your constituents that care about this issue. You will reach us with no apology. All we will accept is you stepping down. Until you do so, expect to see us everywhere. Also, it is

horrible that you expect us to be civil on this phone call when you made fun of someone dying in a protest. That is not civility, and you do not deserve it That's all.

*(Voice seeming to interject. AH announces that Branch was asking people to be civil.)*

AH - Thank you *(to Jordan Williams)*

**Oori Silverstein** - I', debating whether I have anything else to add. I don't really know you. I've lived here about 20 years. The beautiful things about our country were founded on protests and saying "this is not OK." Almost all of us have ancestors who have been oppressed and victimized we came here, we protested in justice, and we became the USA. ....we are choosing to do this now. You might want to differentiate between the protestors expressing frustrations and those who are violent. One of the things peoples are reacting to is the fear of expressing our dissatisfaction with certain things that happen and our right to be able to do so. The specific image that triggered this specific response and response cuts right to the heart of ....not knowing you, I look at that image and I assume you think people do not have the right to disagree and it is ok if they are killed if they dare to stand up for something you think they shouldn't be stand-in up for. I don't know you, I'm not going to make any conclusion about you personally. I'm telling you my personal interpretation of that image, based on how I responded to it.

AH - we have time for one more 3 minute comment. Hold on a second. So we have Jason.....Various people request to speak. AH takes their names ..... Any body else?It's 2 right now, we have 5 people in 15 minutes....

CB- totaling another 18 minutes. Reminds AH of Tonasket Ranger at 2:00?

**2:00 - CB:** We have a call with the Tonasket Ranger at 2:00. Our options are to extend comments or take comments on "chat." *(Note: The Commissioners decided yesterday in a meeting that at 2:00 there would be a meeting with the Tonasket District Ranger, which was originally scheduled for 3PM. The official agenda had not been changed to reflect that. )*

AH - Has she called in yet? So....we'll take comments (you are ok with this? To BOCC?) until (the ranger) gets on (the phone.) Lanie is not sure if she can be contacted to change the meeting. We have 3 minutes left - does anyone want to make a comment?

Lanie trying to find her phone number I wonder if she's having a hard time like some of the others were. I sent her the info, but not sure if she got it.

*Someone, unannounced (Jasmine Minbashian?)* "You have people who are very upset here. My advice would be to cancel the other meeting and let this one finish or call a special meeting to address this issue.

Rick Gillespie - I agree with Jasmine.

AH - Hold on a second here.

Very long pause. Lanie left the ranger a message to get ahold of us.

AH - When Branch gets back, we will decide on a course of action ( He left the room briefly.)

Branch : returns. (Note taker's question: Did DeTro leave? AH only refers to Branch being gone momentarily.)

Voice - the agenda says the Ranger is at 3:00 PM'

CB - Usually says at bottom of the agenda that we sometimes need to adjust the agenda based on things that come up.

AH - do you want to keep going?

CB- She has not called in yet, we may as well take comments.

Kathleen Manseau says she also wants to make a comment. From Twisp.

AH - Jason, you are up.

**Jason Musgrave** - From Omak. I grew up in this county and have been back here since 2010. I am absolutely outraged against JD's many posts that are racist, Islamophobic, trans-phobic, homophobic, sexist, and especially the one that glorifies violence against protesters. I do not accept his explanation of ignorance as to what this represents. He should not be given a pass on this and demand that he immediately resign as a commissioner. This county has a very diverse community who live here, work here, and contribute to each of their communities where they live. - he has shown he is incapable or unwilling to representing those of us who live here. . He has not apologized for posting this particular meme. He only says he should not have posted it. That is not an apology.. Has not apologized to the many people he has offended. He only calls them names and insults their intelligence, says they should get a life. I am one of them. I do have a life. I follow local politics, national politics, etc. and consider myself very informed. This is not appropriate for someone in this position to demean people who disagree with him as uneducated, not intelligent. I just don't have words to express what how angry I am . This is not a leader that deserves to remain in office. I stand with the peaceful protesters that demand justice for the willful murder of George Floyd by 4 police officers.

**Rick Gillespie** - from Chesaw - I watched yesterday a semi truck and trailer race through Milwaukee streets as protestors ran from being in front of the truck. The truck stopped, the protestors pulled the driver out of the truck, and he was arrested. This meme that DeTro put up isn't one he came up with, but he supports. I feel that a commissioner in a position of leadership in the county must keep his personal views out of his position. He or she is supposed to be representing all of his/her constituents. For Jim to use his position to further his personal fears of humanity has no place in our nation, let alone our community . For this, I request that Jim DeTro be removed from office. Thank you.

**Kelleigh McMillan**, Methow Valley - Thank you, BOCC for hearing our comments. I hope you are taking this as seriously as we all are. Just hours after Jim DeTro posted the image of a bloody truck on his Facebook site, , a driver rushed through a group of peaceful protesters in Minneapolis. This has happened 5 times over the past couple of days, in my understanding. Undoubtedly this image and this mentality incites the hateful actions that are occurring. My understanding is also that Facebook took down your post because of its threatening nature. We are not haters as you imply. We work every day to make this place better. Look at what these people do every day I wish I could say the same about you. Shame on you, Jim DeTro. Shame on you. We demand an apology and also a resignation. Please step down from your position of leadership because leadership is not what you are providing. Thank you.

**Erica Halm**, Methow Valley - I think we are unfortunately all used to seeing a wide variety of things that get posted on social media that are insulting and offensive to a lot of people, but seeing that coming from not a random troll on the internet but from an elected official in my county is just not acceptable to me or anyone that values living in a community of people. I agree whole-heartedly with everything that has been said. Resigning would be the absolute least that you could do - it's completely inexcusable for anybody in your position.

**Emily Sisson** - Winthrop, I wanted to say little bit about the notion of political correctness - a new terms for what we used to call "polite" . If someone is bragging about not being politically correct, he is bragging about not being polite. Ie - like it's not polite to make fun of people with disabilities. People should strive for political correctness. That's my point.

**Kathleen Manseau** - Thank you for extending the comment period. This meme is not only offensive, but inflammatory and actually a political tactic used by white supremacists, whether he knows it or not, It's a named phenomenon called a vehicle ramming attack meme, or VRA meme. The frequency of this types of memes has become more common in these past few years, and they are frequently shared by white supremacist groups when they ridicule the deaths and injuries of protesters when they disagree with the cause. For example, James Alex Field, who in 2017 rammed his vehicle in to protesters in Charlottesville, SC, he rammed his van in to crowd and killed a young woman. This man, Field, had posted a very similar VAR meme to the one Jim Detro posted, and that meme was deemed admissible in his murder trial. He was convicted of murder and is serving a life sentence. So as an elected leader, it is Mr. DeTro's responsibility to understand the context of his actions. It is the responsibility of Mr. DeTro to understand the consequences of his actions. What he can call a joke is actually a political tactic. I think we should all be asking what his political views are if this is the type of material he is posting.

**Mazie Shaw (Methow Valley.)** - Too broken to understand. Technology failing. Should not have jokes of killing people.

Is there someone else? We have time for a few more..

**Jason Musgrove** - requests to be heard again.

AH : you took a full 3 minutes. We need to see if anyone else wants to comment.

**Joyce Bergen** - Winthrop. I find Jim DeTro's 's sense of humor worrying. This is not an adult. We expect much better from our commissioners. It's so clear that he should step down.

AH - Anybody else?

**Ava Mott** - Winthrop. Disappointed and angry about actions of Jim DeTro, the Chairman of our Board of Commissioners. I'm asking for his resignation. This is not what should be considered leadership in our county.

AH - What do you think, CB. What do you think? This has gone on for....

**CB-** I appreciate that you all have participated and put in the effort. We need to move on with our business. (2:00 season with Tonasket Ranger and other.) We've gone pretty far catching everybody. We need to move on.

**Woman** - This is business too. *(She wants DeTRo to say he's stepping down.)*

**CB** - I understand, and I'm not going to get involved in an argument about that.

**Woman** - Can you just tell us if he's going to step down? Are you done, DeTro?

**AH** - We are ending public comment now.

**Woman** - We deserve an answer.

**Woman** - Are you stepping down?

Silence.

**AH** -Directs LJ to mute everyone.

*Another voice saying the same thing.*

**Woman** - There are 3 individuals who still would like to speak.

Silence.

**Man** - I would like to submit a comment.

Silence. Apparently the zoom has been muted, although a number of attendees are still on and waiting.

**Note:** *Public comment was scheduled to be over at 2:00, but meeting started about 15 min. late.)*

**2:22** - 55 participants still on line, people signing off. Profound silence. Chime after chime as people sign off. People on "chat" requesting to know if the meeting has ended or not, requesting closure. Most participants eventually leave.

**Notes finished for this session.** When Commissioners finally get back online much later, it is relating to other business.

**Partial list of citizen participants in this zoom meeting:**

Incomplete list of attendees (people tune in and out.)

Dulane

Samantha Culphanger

Tamara Heisley

Katie Haven

Cecelia Morgan

Jennifer Ward

Heather @ eagle

Brian Drye

Mariah Litowitz

Gina Monteverde

Emily Post

Brian Drye

Joyce Bergen  
Nicole  
Morgan Sicilia  
M Martinez  
Jacquie  
Jan Young  
Ronda  
Emily Mowrer  
Ted  
Rick Lewis  
Sara Mounsey  
Jasmine Minbashian  
Oori Silverstein  
Jordan Williams  
Isabelle Spohn  
Emily Sisson  
Jason Musgrave  
Rick Gillespie  
Erica Halm  
Karen Frisbee  
Masie Shaw  
Ava Mott  
Joyce Bergen