

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday, July 20th, 2021, 1:30 PM

These notes were taken by a County Watch volunteer. Every attempt is made to be accurate. Notes are verbatim when possible, and otherwise summarized. Note taker comments or clarifications are in italics. These notes are published at <https://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 the Okanogan County Commissioners' website at <https://www.okanogancounty.org>.

Board of Commissioners

Present:

Chris Branch (CB), BOCC District 1
Jim Detro (JD), BOCC District 3
Lanie Johns (LJ), County Clerk
(Via Zoom) Gina and Tom McCoy, C6 Forest to Farm,
Daniel Higbee (DH), Building Department
Larry Hudson (LH), Noxious Weeds

Time stamps refer to the time on the wall clock. See AV Capture archive of the meeting on this date at https://okanogancounty.org/departments/boards/live_streaming_of_meetings.php.

Summary of Important Discussions: *A bio-char enterprise has passed a final permitting hurdle and next week will start chipping wood from slash piles, a first step towards pyrolization and commercialization; Building permits numbers up, especially in Methow, even for water-less areas affected by the one-year moratorium, and applicants tend to be non-local; Weed control more difficult in intense heat, and Lake Osoyoos milfoil treatment project compromised by quarter mile buffer zone along Canadian border, grant funds sufficient for treatment budget but not for filling staff vacancies; final paperwork for Oroville Homeless Housing Sewer Project.*

1:35 - *(C6 Forest to Farm will be making bio-char, to be used as a soil amendment, from wood slash.)* TM: We have the access agreement in hand *(with Dept. of Ecology, for air quality permitting)*. Hope to be bringing in line power in the next week or so. The designer of the *(chipper)* will be flying in from Massachusetts and be running it through the 16th or 18th. We'll see if we can pyrolize the chips at the gravel pit *(on Twisp-Winthrop Eastside Road)*...We want to be sure we don't get in *(the DNR's)* way...We'll figure out what we can get and how we can move it. JD suggests *chipping wood from slash piles directly into a "walking floor" trailer, TM says he intends to. CB mentions permitting hassles with Ecology: I'm glad you managed to survive that. GM: It almost killed us. Ecology wanted a change in (the pyrolizer). It was a "near death experience. We would have gone bankrupt." She says that Microsoft is buying bio-chip credits from Europe, that either it or Ecology doesn't know what it's doing. CB teases her for being formerly with a division of Ecology. JD says he will "throw in a good word" when he goes to a fire committee meeting in Cle Elum. CB: Virginia Ridge—it's good you're up there. Stay persistent...GM says CB can crack the champagne at their grand opening. He says the county will be advocating for them.*

2:03 - Building Department report - JD: Your *(permit application) numbers are up.* DH: Considerably. We're seeing those on lots where the moratorium is in place. Just yurts, no water. They're waiting until the moratorium is over, then they can tear down their yurts and build. I'm surprised, with the lumber prices...CB: Do you see a pattern (in the types of applicants)? DH: None, except a trend of non-local money...Says he is seeing typical spring and fall peaks in revenue from permits, expenditures stable, mentions supplemental requests to cover sprinkler system and fire

alarm system permits which are reviewed by a private company, says Auditor advised him to put truck expenditures in Equipment Replacement and Repair; CB asks if he has constituted a contingency or reserve fund, advises that he do so and not just count on their beginning fund balance (123,000). DH: I know I have to stick to my budget. He is glad training for the (permitting) computer program won't start til next month, is satisfied with progress of inspector Cass Robbins in his certification process, he will replace Randy Taylor when he retires.

2:20 - CB mentions a documentary being filmed, says it is statewide, says he is waiting to "see if the producer can give me a sense of trust."

2:30 - LH arrives for Noxious Weeds report. CB says he hopes there won't be any more fires, says the red flame symbols are starting to run together on the on-line maps, is worried about the resources being spent: Are the fires affecting your work? LH: It's the heat. Over 85° we can't apply some (products). Have to go out at 5 a.m. to apply them. We're sorely understaffed. The weeds (in this heat) are going to seed a lot quicker and we're limited in the number of treatments. Quite a bit got through this year. We're shutting down in the valley, going up to Chesaw. (We have) just a short amount of time to get out there. Talked to the board. We'll concentrate on grants. Inspection will take a hit. Next week we'll treat Lake Osoyoos for milfoil. We've got meetings with...Spectacle Lake, private reservoirs. Some landowners from Conconully talked to me, from the upper lake mainly; we want to do some at Patterson Lake as well. CB asks about assessments, LH says they're every four years, assures JR that appeals can be made annually. We've hit one snag on Osoyoos—the quarter mile-buffer from Canada...Gonna hold off until we get something in writing from Canada. He says Canada would love them to treat the lake, and he had planned to do a test plot, but there has been a letter of some sort. He will work on the issue this winter. CB: Have you contacted the Okanogan Water Board? Attended the Water Summit in Osoyoos? LH says he's new to the "aquatic side", is waiting for approval from Canada to test the anti-milfoil product: Persilifor doesn't affect anything but milfoil.

2:40 - LH: We got a whole lot of grant money—\$270,000. CB: Will it help for staffing? LH: Most of it is "money in money out" to pay for treatments and assisting land owners with weeds in wildfire areas, for Forest Service treatments, DNR and State Parks, see that they're doing their part. We send out contracts, landowners sign them and we send out our applicators. The benefit for the landowners far surpasses our time that we put into it.

2:44 - Voucher approval - LJ will send paperwork to Dept. of Commerce: releases to ESD (Employment Security), Labor and Industry, and Dept. of Revenue, then send final invoice for reimbursement. She mentions \$19,000 spent so far out of \$68,329 in Homeless Housing funds. Commissioners approved these final vouchers in connection with the Oroville Homeless Housing Sewer Project. Other vouchers approved, including entertainment contracts for the County Fair and a Professional Services contract.

2:50 - Meeting adjourned. (Board reconvened at 3:05 when several overlooked vouchers were found. No notes were taken of these voucher approvals.)