

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday, September 14, 2021, AM

Present:

Chris Branch (CB) – BOCC Chair, District 1

Jim DeTro (JD) – BOCC, District 3

Andy Hover (AH) – BOCC Vice Chair, District 2, On Vacation

Lanie Johns (LJ) – Clerk of the Board

These notes were taken by an Okanogan County Watch volunteer via Zoom. Every attempt is made to be accurate. Notes are verbatim when possible, and otherwise summarized or paraphrased. 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:

https://okanogancounty.org/offices/commissioners/commissioners_proceedings.php

Time stamps below are in real time. To locate specific topics, a clock on the AV Capture video screen at <https://okanogancounty.org/avcapture.html> can assist in finding the correct spot on the video recording.

Summary of Significant Discussions or Actions: How to purchase the Forest Service Building for the Courts; composing an earnest money agreement to secure the purchase (short term), and then determine long term process of purchase, fair review; attendance and exhibits down, but all good, with everything considered, Fairgrounds currently closed to public for work on water systems. Discussion of how new fee schedules can be accommodated on County website, Covid problems/solution in the Planning (locked front door) and Auditors Offices. 40% staff reduction d/t Covid in the Auditors Office – closed to public 2 days last week, Planning Dept submitted new fee schedule, also questions about role in the Watershed Council RFQ for Administrative Services, Problems with the 67-2021 pest control assessment resolution – computer doesn't allow odd number and rounds up. May need to change resolution to the \$1.62, rather than \$1.61 tax assessment, a new hearing is needed to increase, will be meeting with Jim Wilson (from Auditor's office) regarding ARPA, other funding for bonding on building purchase, etc, County Engineer's Solid Waste and Road maintenance updates.

8:20 Discussion with Dennis Rabidou (DR), and Judge Culp (CC) regarding need for purchasing the Forest Service building. BOCC hoping to wait until AH returns from vacation. Seller of the building needs some reassurance or purchase, has other interested buyers. CC explains the need for fast action – would like to get in there next week, suggests an earnest money agreement, considerable discussion of funding – using ARPA funds in a lease/option to buy. Dr states that a lease using ARPA funding would be the quickest, trials are being put off due to no space for jury trials.

DR states that we need to respond back to the seller of the building. CC wonders if able to use the money designated for Courts in the Capital budget – not sure if for 2022 or current year. He wants to encourage BOCC to look at something short term to begin with.

JD suggests upgrading dollar amount in Earnest Money agreement. Maybe \$25,000. to buy some time.

CB states that we need to make a commitment to this purchase.

8:44 CB states meeting with Fair Advisory Committee went well. He also states on Thursday, the vendors weren't wearing masks, but that was remedied.

8:50 – JD had met with John Hubbard, well driller, who has offered to clean out a well on the fairgrounds for fee. Stock auction went well at the fair.

CB states he will be out of town on the 1st Monday and Tuesday in October.

8:58 Dave Gecas (DG) – Civil Deputy, arrived to discuss writing up an earnest money agreement for purchase of Forest Service building for Courts. Why has seller been holding out so long? Bonding? Court can operate without a CUP. BOCC would like to give \$25,000 earnest money tomorrow and then take 90 days to close.

9:06 DG also spoke to the French Creek Resolution and also working on public records requests via the new website. Discussion of the new fee schedules that need to be incorporated on the website. Both ordinance and fee schedules need to be updated.

LJ – We can also chart actual charge for thumb drives, CD's, etc.

DG states that you can't charge for staff time.

CB states that some jurisdictions make records available to public without actual Records Request

9:18 – Naomie Peasley (NP), Fair Manager, along with Kyle, fairgrounds maintenance.

For the most part, happy with how the fair turned out. Attendance and exhibits down. Fair State Judges put Okanogan Fair in the top 3 in the State. There was a record-breaking stock sale \$425,000 with 3% going to the auctioneer. NP got many positive comments regarding handling of the auction in person and online. Next year is the 75th Anniversary of the Ok County Fair. Starting plans now. Met with Fair Advisory Committee. Election for new officers next month. Fairgrounds closed to the public for work on water systems. John Hubbard and Steve Ayers will come in and bail out the well – and donate their time.

JD stated the rain had a big impact on the fair on Friday. Leaks in the Arts & Crafts Building.

NP wants to request FT position in the fair office to be extended. JD tells NP to talk with HR

CB – Will have different revenue outlook especially with all the repairs.

CB- Stated that the fair staff did a bang-up job considering everything they had to deal with; tractor & water truck broken down, Covid protocols.

NP stated the FAC meeting was more positive than expected. JD – did the FAC talk about fixing the starting gate?

9:32 – Joe Poulin (JP) – Maintenance Supervisor. No other response for bids on the HVAC at Public Works. Just has the one. Haven't started on the Admin building yet, hopefully it will be finalized in October.

JD handed out facilities budget to BOCC. More of a statistical analysis.

9:43 Pete Palmer (PP), Planning Director, Due to Covid, we have locked front door and installed a door bell. There is 1 positive Covid case and 2 exposures – out for 5 days. PP hearing a lot of concerns from staff so taking extra precautions.

CB – Are they able to work from home? PP- yes, some.

PP also received resolution from City of Conconully – building dept to continue to do assessment.

PP also working on new fee schedule – comparing with other counties.

PP received e-mail from software company regarding RFQ for administrative services for the Watershed Council. PP – Are there details I need to know?

CB Explained when land use rules apply, planning dept will be involved anyway.

PP Stated that Dept of Ecology offered the County an \$84,000 grant for a consulting fees – nearly completed regarding forests.

PP states that there are 2 upcoming interviews for Senior Planner position. This was from the Work Source meeting set up to Meet the Employer.

PP – we really need someone now.

9:55 – Larry Gilman (LG), County Assessor and Leah McCormack (LM), County Treasurer to talk about the 67-2021 resolution to assess a fee for the Pest Control. The computer program rounds up to an even number, so the \$1.61 is problematic. It rounds to \$1.62. We need to change the resolution – which may require a public hearing if we change to \$1.62.

LM states that we should always go to an even number for system balancing.

LG wonders whether there will be another resolution in 2022 for collection? Yes.

LG state that I can't go forward without the change. Can we re-do this resolution?

Discussion of whether another hearing is needed.

10:10 – LM reports that Jim Wilson (*state auditor?*) will be here next Monday the 20th. Will be asking questions like how much \$\$ will be dedicated to the bonds? On a 30 year it will be 2% We are still at an AA- rating. Still a good category for going forward with bonding.

CB explains the conversation with the Court earlier this morning. Decided on earnest money agreement and then did a lease/option to purchase.

LM just getting BOCC prepared for Auditors questions.

10:19 – CB – I think we need to consider price when we go into executive session.

10:20 – Cari Hall (CH), County Auditor thanks CB for his support (*regarding Covid?*)

About financing the FS building – CH explains difference between ARPA and CARE \$\$. Obligation vs using the funds.

10:31 CH gives update on Covid problems in the Auditors Office. 40% of staff tested positive for Covid. Talked with Public Health – requiring masks and closing the doors. Maybe, they will be going

to appointment only - hasn't made up her mind about that. JD asks if there are things that can be done online? CH states yes, some. But if aggression continues to escalate, will need to close. They closed for 2 days last week. The outstations: Brewster, Twisp, and Oroville are still open.

10:51 – JD “I heard the vaccines are carrying the Delta Variant”

CB continues to talk with CH about using the emergency notification system about office closures and possibly doing an article in the paper for people to have patience for current situation.

11:00 – Josh Thomson (JT), County Engineer gives up date on Solid Waste; Dept of Ag doing an annual certification,

There was a fire below B&O Road yesterday.

JT updates on road maintenance. Working on Ross Canyon Road, grading and cleaning culverts.

On fires, JT has met with Emergency Manager, DNR, & Forest Service re maintenance of the roads.

DNR states that county gets taxes to do this and is not interested in helping with this.

CB state that brings up a new conversation.

JT also states the Conconully sewer system may need to some adjustment if there will be increase to the water in the lake. CB & JD suggested he contact the Irrigation District and Bureau of Reclamation. Also, Check with Maurice Goodall.

JT discussed STP projects (Service Transportation Program) using TA or CAP funds. They are making those funds more difficult to access. We may lose \$400,000 this year because the projects did not get done this year. There seems to be a split between urban and rural.

11:21 – brief discussion of public records requests by Public Works with JT

11:28 Meeting Adjourned until Public Health meeting this afternoon @ 1:30