

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday, September 21st, 2021, 1:30 p.m.

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Present:

Andy Hover (AH), BOCC District 2
Jim Detro (JD), BOCC District 3
Chris Branch (CB), BOCC District 1
Lanie Johns (LJ), County Clerk
Isabelle Spohn (IS), Methow resident
Sally Bowls (SB), Oroville resident
Tanya Everett (TE), Human Resources, Risk Management
Chris Culp, Superior Court Judge
Denis Rabidou, Administrator, Superior Court
Shelley Keitzman (SK), HR, Civil Service Examiner

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. (Note: meeting archive unavailable at writing of this summary.)

Summary of Important Discussions: *Citizens in public comment period urge mask wearing in the commissioners room and backing up last year's proclamation by spreading mask, test and vaccine info in public meetings and in local media; BOCC hoping ARPA (Covid) funds will be available for the purchase of the Forest Service Building for use by Superior Court; Mandate for vaccination of state employees puts them in difficulty position, says Judge Culp, HR director asks for vaccine exemption petitions to be reviews by attorneys from outside the county in the interest of neutrality; to comply with state's law on less-than-lethal weapons sheriff's office receive grants for purchase of six FM 303s; to encourage recruitment, fees waived for civil service tests; Barter faire likely to be authorized by county but event will still be subject to discussion.*

1:37 p.m. - Public Comment Period - IS responds to an earlier discussion regarding masks in the Commissioners' room, saying they're not a problem for those speaking into the mikes; would like BOCC to consider Omak's Covid numbers. CB counters that people around the building wear masks and that any decision on this will be made by all three commissioners. IS also asked that AV capture record all discussions and not get cut off before meeting is adjourned, which recently occurred, says people listen to them. 1:45 - SB: One neighbor passed away, and in a local family three members got sick--one died and one is 'hardly perking.'" People's "rights" are killing people. Those who need other care are being delayed...it affects people who did the right thing... We need to back up last year's proclamation with action; leverage should come from BOCC, not just Lauri Jones, Each council and school board, each newspaper and radio station should say where to get vaccinations and masks. She quotes Winston Churchill: You can count on Americans to do the right thing after they've exhausted all other options.

1:52 - *CB asks if with County Attorney David Gecas they've set up the draft agreement for the purchase of the old Forest Service building. It may qualify for ARPA (American Rescue Plan) funding since with Covid related issues it's necessary for the Superior Court in order to function. CB asks AH if they can buy it outright without the Covid funds and AH says yes.*

2:02 - Mask mandates and exemptions, Superior Court -TE: We invited CC and DR to discuss the governor's mask mandates. DR: We asked Inslee to clarify on contractors, sub contractors. Took a couple weeks. CC: Proclamation (*covered*) state employees, including juvenile staff. (*Furthermore*) across the state most juvenile courts are requiring the vaccine and Superior Courts are encouraging it for all its judicial branch. ...We actually require it. It's not an option, (*which*) puts us in a difficult and different position. Question is how we deal with accommodation requests. TE: If we could have an attorney review what is truly a religious exemption? If I deny someone, nothing prevents them from suing. AH: Why would I deny? ...TE: One of the questions is, "Have you ever received a vaccine?" "Have you ever been to a hospital?" "Sought medical care?" *CC makes the case that aside from the liability question, an external review of exemptions would avoid accusations of being personal.* TE: In other counties the HR is approving and disapproving exemptions. DR: Many are going with an outside person. There's a split on how it's happening. Tanya's proposal (*keeps it*) neutral. Not talking big numbers here. *AH approves but asks for a spelled-out process. TE says she has a budget line to accommodate this.*

2:19 - TE: There's a state grant for Superior Court and Prosecuting Attorney staff, county employees working on late cases. County has not been paid for my time doing all the grant work. *She mentions fines they've had to pay, defendants' fines they will be required to pay back.*

2:22 - Grant - Less than lethal options - TE: We'll be getting \$3,000 in addition to \$3,000 we've already received. JD: Because of that law they passed. Basically outlawed the 12 gauge. TE: Shotguns aren't meant to be included in that. ...Sheriff ordered 6 FM 303s. If one is used, a sergeant will be on the scene. We're complying. JD: I wonder if antifa is complying.

2:24 - SK: Having a hard time recruiting. Traditionally it's \$20 to take the Civil Service test. Hopefully waiving that fee will encourage more to take the test. AH makes a motion to suspend fees for Civil Service testing until December 2022. Approved.

2:32 - (*On the subject of the building purchase*) AH: I want to email Dave and say hold off, we do not actually have the capital. CB: Check in tomorrow. I'll look into ARPA funds. Will notify all if meeting planned for next day. (2:35) - *Some talk of a three-way agreement between Economic Alliance, Fire District 10 and ? for matching funds for Courthouse improvements, seems to be about the building purchase, need for David Gecas to prepare a document, BOCC give order to go ahead pending availability of ARPA funds.*

2:40 - CB: Barter Fair has an application in. AH (*given that the County Fair took place*) I'm not NOT going to sign. CB: If we approve, they still have a discussion. The Coroner says, "If you want to know about Covid, come to me." He does have stories to tell.

2:42 - Meeting adjourned.