

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Monday, August 16, 2021 AM

JD—Jim DeTro, BOCC, District 3
AH—Andy Hover, BOCC, vice-chair, District 1
CB—Chris Branch, BOCC, chair, District 2
LJ—Lalena Johns-clerk to the Commissioners
MG—Maurice Goodall-Emergency Management Director
KJ—Kathleen Johnson, Tonasket Ranger
CF—Chris Furr, Methow Ranger
BD—Bea Day USFS Dep. Incident Leader (Calif.)
DH—Dave Hayes DNR Section Mgr
ML—Matt Laughlin, USFS?
RH—Ronnie Holder Diefenbach
NP—Naomi Peasley, Fairgrounds Manager
JH—John Hubbard, Well Driller, local

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 mines, which are normally published at a later time, see

<https://okanogan-county.org/Commissioners/Minutes%202014/March%204,%202014.htm>

Volunteer did not use a time stamp, but took the notes in person at the meeting. Times are approximate within a few minutes. Topics can be located also on the AV Capture video screen at: <https://okanogancounty.org/avcapture.html> and actual times topics discussed can be viewed on the video recording.

Summary of significant discussions:

Maurice Goodall and Fire Professionals KJ, CF, BD, DH, ML report on fires in area, especially Muckamuck in Conconully some of the professionals had come from California.

Ronnie Holder Diefenbach reported on Economic Alliance

County Commissioners Briefing Public Hearing Budget Supplemental Public Appropriation Jail Improvement Fund 193 motion to accept made and seconded.

Other discussions including ongoing Forest Collaborative Project

Naomi Peasley report on Fairgrounds; competing needs for Agriplex use

9:00: Pledge of Allegiance, Review of Agenda, postponing of agenda items: Methow Watershed Council Admin Services Discussion;

9:05: MG, KJ, CF, BD, DH, ML: Fire Report: Mostly handled by Matt Laughlin (not sure if I heard name right, Lanie not sure either) Muckamuck fire: progress has been made, but wind came up this weekend and exacerbated the fire. Town of Conconully evacuated due to Level 3 Evac status. Campgrounds searched and campers evacuated. Lots of energy devoted to contacting land owners for their safety and preparedness and safety of animals. Property owners also kept in loop about where blackburn's would occur. **JD** praised firefighters for their diplomatic skills and for all the effort made for property owners.

9:30: MG, AH, JD, CB: Discussion about difficulty getting jet fuel for aircraft to Okanogan County. Problem is mostly a lack of drivers. **JD** suggested they get the airplanes in the air earlier in the day before smoke gathers in air, **ML** said they have done all the adjusting possible to the schedule, and pilots are up in the air by 7:30 am usually. **BD** “We are trying to use our resources where we can be successful, still a long fire season ahead.” There are fewer resources available than in the past.

9:45 Break

10:30: RH: Economic Alliance Infrastructure Prioritization: List was distributed of projects considered. Top candidates were described. **AH:** “What is Methow Water Feasibility Study?” **RHD** explained that it is about coordinating water usage during a fire. **LJ** was asked to create a Resolution for Approval. **AH** moved to approve. **CB** seconded. **CB** asked for clarification on Chief Tonasket Project. **RHD** explained it had to do with access to the park, and is a Tonasket Annexation issue. **CB** asked for letter of support for Oroville initiative. **AH** agreed. **CB** and **AH** discussed triad project near Oroville. **AH** asked **LJ** to schedule a meeting about a Budget Supplemental. **CB** “All three Commissioners should go see the Forest Collaborative Project with their own eyes so as to give a better report to the public.” **AH** responded that he is more inclined to trust the professionals that they are doing their job and have science guidelines to follow. A back and forth discussion ensued about public criticisms of natural resource agencies and their decisions. **AH** said that he trusts their decisions, sometimes there are decisions that have to be thought through again, but that is part of any public decision making, and re-thinking of decisions will be based on the professionals following guidelines set by science. Not sure that Commissioners need to “go look.” **AH** reflected that he became aware that 300,000 new trees had been replanted, and he did not know that USFS “still did that” **AH & CB** spoke back and forth about public perceptions of USFS, the spectrums of opinions about how it should function, it takes a lot of patience to keep the public informed and in the loop, the time involved can slow down projects getting off the ground. Some people don’t trust the USFS. **AH** said many of his constituents want more logging. Maybe they should “go over and look.” *I think JD left the meeting about 10:30.*

11:00: Public Hearing Budget Supplemental Appropriation Jail Improvement Fund 193: No one present for Public Hearing. Note taker was asked for opinion, and note taker had none. There is 5,000.00 needing approval. **AH** moved to approve, **CB** seconded.

11:05: NP: Fairgrounds: There is currently a lot of competition for use of the Agriplex: Fire Camp is currently housed at the FG, and needs to use the Agriplex at times; Superior Court is doing jury selection for an upcoming trial scheduled for September. In addition, Okanogan School District Athletic Director Kevin Daling has asked for use of the Agriplex because of floor renovation in the school district’s gyms. *A lot of animated back and forth at this point; hard to keep track of discussion.* **AH** We have had no communication from Superior court about what’s going on. **NP** Fire Camp may need the building. **AH** (*confusing*) Did Superior Court ask Naomi to cancel something? Is there the possibility of using the PAC for anything? **CB** Can we straighten out the communication? **AH** “When you have an active fire, you gotta accommodate the fire people.” FG is also possibly needed for evac of animals. **NP** would like all information that is needed to have clear decision-making and so that she can bring clear communication to the Commissioners. **AH** “Can you get with MG for clarification of Land Use Agreement he has knowledge about what people have paid in the past, etc. **NP** Electricians are working on solar panels. “People are asking about the fair.” **AH & CB** in unison: We are having Fair. **JH** (local well driller) **AH** we want to put in an underground irrigation system, can we combine our 2 wells, or can we examine the well and fix it? **JH** explained options for fixing well under different scenarios. It may involve replacing a screen.