

Board of County Commissioners
Monday, Aug 2, 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 Board of Commissioners
MG—Maurice Goodall, Emergency Management Director
TH—Tony Hawley, Sheriff,
AC—Aaron Culp, Undersheriff
PP—Pete Palmer, Planning Director

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.county-watch.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/Commissioners/Minutres%202014.htm>

Note: 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://www.okanogancounty.org/departments/boards/live_streaming_of_meetings.php and actual times topics discussed can be viewed on the video meeting.

Summary of significant discussions:

MG *Maurice Goodall reported on fire situation, listing evacuation areas. Mention was made of inaccurate information being posted on social media.*

CB *Chris Branch Forest Health Collaborative is planning flights to look over the forested land in our area. It has been proposed that Congressman Dan Newhouse go on a flight.*

TH, AC, CB, JD, AH *Discussion on the use of the ESSB 5092 funds being used by the County Sheriff's office for training*

9:15 Pledge of Allegiance, Review of Agenda. **CB** has meeting with OBH at 1:00, will not be present for some items in the afternoon.

9:30: MG: Emergency management report: Evacuation areas, Level 2 and Level 3 have been designated. Hwy 20 is open to Mazama; some trees on the sides of the road are being taken down. Support team coming in a week and a half. Refer to Okanogan County website for fire levels.

The website works well from a desktop, but there is some trouble with using the site from a phone. Working on that. When using the Facebook site for updates, unfortunately Facebook takes in the information submitted and edits it, posting it with inaccuracies, **MG**: “it’s dangerous.” **CB** commented on his experiences with discrepancies in information on public sites and stressed the need to urge FB to do something about it. **MG** agreed. **MG** stated that regarding smoke, hospitalizations are up, and N95 masks are available at City Hall and other locations. **JD**: “Whatever you do, don’t use the term ‘stockpile.’” this will trigger unwanted attention from various groups. **MG**: Manpower is a problem. **CB** “Borrow from other Dept’s? We have done in the past.”

MG: training someone who is working with Emergency Management on a temporary basis is both difficult and very time consuming, taking him away from critical tasks. There is a large skill set that any person called in to help needs to have. He needs people available who can do a large variety of duties and be able to step in right away. Canadian fire still going, about 5 miles across the border. **CB** thinks they have done some Evac in Canada. **AH**: Have not seen the payment for Fairground Use. **MG**: “It is in their hands as of last week.” **CB**: “DNR spread thin?” **MG**: “There are fires all over.”

9:50: Discussion about planned fly-overs: CB: Forest Health Collaborative is working on arranging a series of flights to look over our County’s forested area. Congressman Dan Newhouse is being contacted for availability; and an additional trip to the Smokejumper Base is being included in the flight plans. **JD**: Perhaps other folks could join the group with Cong. Newhouse possibly from the Eastern Washington Council of Government that JD attends. **JD**: Need to get people paid from the American Rescue Plan funds- there are some complications with that (not clear here to volunteer). *some back and forth conversation here between JD AND CB about process.* **JD**: Folks are getting tired of the confusing CoVid policy; seems emotionally and politically driven. Mentioned people using the term “Weapons of Mask Destruction.” **CB**: “I am just keeping my attention on what’s happening in this county.” **JD**: There are counties that are getting Solar and Wind farms going but there is an unforeseen problem with tax incentives offered to solar and wind companies. Some companies are approaching county governments and asking for refunds on their taxes paid, **JD** heard in his EWCG group that one county is being asked to pay 800,000 in tax refunds to a wind or solar company. **JD** says he does not know all the details, but we need to keep an eye on this. **CB** says he would like to know more about the issue. “Let’s ask some more questions.”

10:00: TH: Discussion about Funding Appropriation ESSB 5092:

Monies are going to Counties and Cities for Law Enforcement Control Tactics Training and other training for officers. **JD:** “Does this include Body Cams?” **TH:** “No, it is to help Law Enforcement in situations too slow down, and keep things from escalating. It’s very good training.” Described how many officers have gone to training, how long the average sessions are. Wants the board to be aware the training exists and that officers have been sent for training. **AH:** “How is payment being made?” **TH** explains. Adds that control tactics, different, less lethal deployment systems, recording all Felony interrogations, Interrogation room needs upgrading; There are several areas where any extra or leftover money could be spent. **JD:** Asked about a new law preventing officers from helping in a Mental Health situation. **TH:** It is not that they can’t help, it is that they need to have better ways of approaching mental health situations, and are working with the County Attorney on this. **CB:** “It is getting more difficult to be a police officer; more training is good.” **JD** asked something about a shotgun law: **TH:** “we can use less lethal methods, but there are restrictions on how to use them.” **AH:** “Any impact on wages?” **TH:** “Not directly.” **AH:** costs over and above should require a budget discussion. **AC:** We have descriptions of all funds and accounting. Question from the audience, (Auditor and Treasurer’s office) about using bar codes for accounting.

11:00 Executive Session with Pete Palmer and David Gecas

11:45: Reconvene: **JD** continued with concerns about solar and wind companies contracting counties, paying taxes and then coming back to collect refunds. **SC** (Stephanie Clark) asked if this tax incentive situation was comparable to large companies getting tax incentive financing from government entities. **CB:** “Incremental Income Revenue tax financing is done in some counties.” **SC** “Has that been done in Okanogan County? Mr. Detro, could you find out the names of the counties and the companies who have asked for tax refunds?” **JD:** “I am sure the secretary of the EWCG would have the minutes with the information.” Something we need to study. **CB Explained to SC (me) that the usual way of doing things does not include discussions with the note takers. I apologized and thanked him for the clarification about correct procedure.** **CB:** It would be interesting and helpful to do retrospective cost-benefit analysis of counties’ contributions to development projects. That has never been done before. **JD** moved to approve vouches for payroll and other expenses. **AH** seconded.