

**BOARD OF OKANOGAN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
**01/13/2020**

**In Attendance at Meeting:**

Jim DeTro- JD (BOCC)

Andy Hover - AH (BOCC)

Chris Branch – CB (BOCC)

Lanie Johns – LJ (Clerk of the Board)

Angie Hubbard – AHu (Interim Planning Director)

Dennis Rabidou – DR (Court Administrator) & 3 others

Hank Rawson – HR (Superior Court Judge)

Bill Snyder – BS (CEO)

Tanya Craig – TC (Human Resources)

Scott Nielson – SN (Cattleman)

Jeff Flood - JF (Stevens County Sheriff's Department Wildlife Specialist (Wolves & Cougars))

*These notes have been taken by one of several volunteer citizen note takers and published on the website of CountyWatch.org. The notes have been taken as close to verbatim as possible, with any writer's comments or explanations in italics. For officially approved minutes of Board of Commissioner meetings, normally published at a later date, see [www.okanogancounty.org](http://www.okanogancounty.org).*

**Summary of significant discussions**

**Update – Planning Department**

*AHu updates the commissioners on a grant proposal having to do with Salmon Creek and water being prepared in coordination with the Conservation District. The monthly Planning Commission meeting is being rescheduled from Jan. 27<sup>th</sup> to Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup>. AHu presents a spreadsheet summarizing permitting activity handled by the Planning Department, by month and year, since 2017.*

**Discussion – Courthouse Security – Dennis Rabidou**

*DR briefs the commissioners on the activities of a task force charged with implementing state legislation to ensure adequate security at courthouses across the state. Okanogan County is an early priority, due to certain unique factors. The task force is requesting an estimate by January 23<sup>rd</sup> for the infrastructure costs of improving courthouse security. The options for getting a rough estimate in that timeframe were discussed.*

**Discussion – Presentation Cattle Producers Grant Funding**

*SN informs the commissioners of a grant proposal for non-lethal deterrence of wolves to protect cattle. The grant will fund four positions (one in each of the northern tier counties – Okanogan, Ferry, Stevens and Pen D'Oreille) to work with Sheriffs Offices and investigate possible wolf depredation. State protocols for wolf removal were discussed and criticized. The cattlemen feel that a 10 month process allows the problem to spread throughout entire packs and that human presence (e.g. range riders) without threat does not provide deterrence. Lots of interesting views were expressed.*

**1:30**

*(AHu provides a spreadsheet) JD is not present. CB starts meeting.*

### **Tonasket EMS**

*AH moves to adjourn and reconvene as Tonasket EMS board. Motion passes; AH moves to approve an invoice for payment; approved; board adjourns and reconvenes as BOCC*

### **Update – Planning Department**

AHu – First, meetings of Thursday and Friday last week. Good discussion, good projects coming forward.

AH – Were discussing the project on Salmon Creek. Can you get us Brad's number? (yes)

AHu – Webinar tomorrow on grant proposals. Craig & I are going to get together.

AH – I know the group wants you to put out a grant proposal. How much did they want?

AHu – Don't know. The officer from the Columbia River office will be at the meeting on Thursday.

AH – Before you go too far, find out what types of water can be purchased.

AHu – There is so much to do. Craig & I...

AH – My opinion is that if the water we purchase can meet everyone's needs, that is a good thing.

CB – I am withholding my opinion until we get more information.

AH – How long do the meetings last?

AHu (*inaudible*) I think this is going to be a little longer than typical. Usually, about 2 – 2 ½ hours. Next item – Planning Commission meeting rescheduled for January 3<sup>rd</sup>. Have heard that quite a few want to attend, so I will put out a public notice of a quorum. Last item, the monthly Planning report (*spreadsheet*).

AH – On the nightly rental – is that because we require a yearly update?

AHu – Yes. They require yearly license. Rocky tells me that about 100 have not yet sent in their renewals. A lot of those are from Veranda Beach. She sent out a reminder letter. Is there anything else?

CB – On the report – If we could get a feel for how many land use issues are in the Methow? It would be helpful if we could track that.

AHu – Not sure if this will work for that, but I think we could do it.

CB – That would be good. It will help us identify trends.

AHu – We could do that in a different database, when the application comes in.

*Discussion turns to B&B's and nightly rentals*

*(1:50 JD arrives)*

AHu – We have records of where the nightly rentals are. Thank you commissioners.

*(1: 52 AHu leaves)*

### **2:00 Discussion – Courthouse Security – Dennis Rabidou**

JD – Courthouse security...

DR – Thank you. I am here primarily to have a discussion about the courthouse security task force. I also wanted to take a few minutes to introduce Bill Snyder – CEO of (?). The first we have had with clinical experience.

BS – Thank you for the welcome. It's an honor to have been selected. A little about me – professional counselor, also behavioral health clinical experience, nonprofit experience as well. Is there anything I can answer about myself?

AH – Most recently in Colorado?

BS – Denver for 12 years. Before that, Los Angeles & Philadelphia.

AH – What was the thought process for moving from Denver to Okanogan County?

BS – Mostly, the desire to get back into behavioral health. Also, the opportunity to be in the outdoors.

DR – He will be working with Phil (?). Looking forward to forging ahead and doing great things.

CB – *(mentions a meeting in February)* State mental health services. It is all about behavioral health. There is a lot to catch up on.

BS – I will be very accessible. Thank you for your time *(leaves)*.

CB – I hope to meet with you before the meeting comes up. I will call you.

DR – The handout I gave you in Nov. 2018. The board of (?) established a task force to look at implementing (?) legislation regarding security at courthouses. Did a survey of needs across the state. Came up with needs and a funding package to put before the state legislature. We were contacted by the task force about 2 weeks ago, because of Okanogan's uniqueness as to courthouse security needs. They are putting a funding package together. One of the unique things is the Auditor and Assessor's offices in the courthouse. Equipment – cameras, scanners, metal detectors. They want to know if we can come up with capital/infrastructure costs. They need that to put that in front of the legislature.

AH – How soon do they need it?

DR – As soon as possible.

AH – Ha!

*DR discusses a couple of options for how to come up with an estimate.*

DR – Need to get down to which direction we are going to go.

AH – Last thing, there was a discussion of single entry or (?)

CB – If we have the costs, that will help us decide which way to go. *(Mentions something about the risk pool)*

AH – I think, one way or another, an entry up there would be good. Right now, we are literally driving vehicles right up to the entry. We don't really have an entry where people are all parked and can get in.

DR – I think your (AH's) idea is do-able. 'If we were to do this, what would it cost?' I think the task force knows there will be construction costs, across the state.

AH – Problem is that it will be a ballpark number that Public Works comes up with, or we need to put out an RFQ.

DR – Michael Beeman might be able to come up with an estimate.

*Discussion of details of possible entry.*

DR – He has been coming to our facility so much, he might have a good idea.

TC – I know most of the judges want the single point entry. I think one does not. There are some valid points.

AH – Need to balance security with access to services. Someone here illegally, in need of services, might be deterred. But just the entry way, without all the monitors, would be nice, especially for ADA *(Americans with Disabilities Act)*.

JD – Everywhere I know, there are people sitting there watching what's going on. But people are coming and going from all the doors.

HR – When I go into the Administrative Office in court, the doors are locked.

*(Anecdotes of the security measures in other government buildings.)*

DR – They were asking if we could come up with something by the 23<sup>rd</sup> *(of this month)*.

CB – They are trying to quantify what the costs are going to be to the state.

DR – I think that they are thinking of the long term, starting with where the highest needs are.

HR – I think they want 'ballpark'. If we get an architect and it comes in a little high...

JD – We still have Beeman under contract.

AH – I am willing to take a photograph, describe what it will look like, ask for an approximation. They have only given us 10 days.

TC – I can talk to Michael.

*(rapid, overlapping conversations)*

AH – Did we come to a conclusion? Do we ask Josh (*Public Works engineer*)?

*CB asks whether the architect's contract is specific to a particular project. Side conversations. Evidently, Beeman will be asked for a ballpark estimate.*

### **Discussion – Presentation Cattle Producers Grant Funding**

SN – Past president of Cattlemen's Association. Put in a grant proposal for non-lethal deterrence, with support of 4 counties. We didn't get any of it. Administered by Dept. of Ag. WDFW has too much influence.

AH – I am on the Wolf Advisory Committee. I don't get enough input from you guys.

SN – A couple of years ago, WDFW wanted funding for more wolf specialists. What they were doing was not working for producers.

Discussion of funding sources, administration, background info.

AH – what I am hearing over there is that they are pushing range riders. If it is public money, it needs to be accountable.

SN – Accountability is part of what I want to talk to you about. The first year we didn't get any money. Dept. of Ag. Doesn't know much about wolves – were wondering why they are doing this. I think it was so they would get more buy-in with producers. But WDFW was providing the input on the evaluations. We were trying to create a position like Jeff Flood has. WDFW came back and said that that was illegal. I wrote it but with Joe (?) Kindle (*sheriff?*). That bothered Kindle; I showed it to the commissioners and they got upset about it. The commissioners pushed back, with Joel (*Kretz*). We were proposing a job match; put up part of the money for a county job. We didn't get that. One of the things we were arguing – it's also going to be wolf-centered (proportional to the funding). The counties got some...

JF - \$4,000 for each county (*Stevens & Ferry*)

SN – They did fund him. We had no part of it, but that was fine.

AH – Jeff, are you a crime scene investigator?

JF – Most of what I do is depredation investigations on wolves.

AH – Is it to say 'Yes, this is a confirmed wolf kill'?

JF – It was to have a separate set of eyes – more than just WDFW.

CB – It helps to resolve the trust issue, right?

JF – Right.

JD – *(inaudible)*

AH – The protocol gets written up – when you start lethal removal. The problem is, over in the north-east, the wolves are recovered.

JD – More than recovered.

AH – So, up there, the cattle on the range are dispersed. The range con tells them how much to graze, stubble height. But with a range rider... But because of topography...

JD – In my opinion, Jeff has done exponentially more good than all the range riders out there. They are just out there having a picnic.

JF – I don't think anyone has an effect on deterrence *(just moves the wolves to some else's cattle)*.

SN – The rancher manages the cattle, the department manages the wolves. The range rider is about moving cattle/livestock management, not wolf management. The range rider in our community has a terrible connotation. Most ranchers don't like it. Last year, Jeff was providing human presence, but there were no range riders. I will tell you, we pushed back on the range riders. It was a little insulting to be told to watch our cows. I thought we did. We don't call them range riders; we call them wolf monitors. This time we got about half the money. *(displays the contract with description of duties – reads from the description)* That's what we are doing. I have had a fairly adversarial relationship with the department. I really like Kelly *(District director?)* – came over from Department of Ecology. We were asked by Junior High teacher *(pro-wolf)* to give the cattleman's side of things. Part of what we were saying is, they don't want to raise sheep in Stevens County *(due to wolf predation)*. The teacher said that the sheep were on state land where they weren't supposed to be. Our guys will work with the Sheriff but they won't share information that the rancher doesn't want shared.

AH – I have banged my head against this. Anytime I bring up the subject of hunting wolves, I get shut down. In your opinion, going with nonlethal deterrent, is this going to do the job? Will the ranchers down there use that?

SN – I think they are less likely to try to work with the department. To me, the wolves need to be more like the cougar – they need to fear and respect us. I think every rancher who has tried to work with the department feels betrayed. But they trust us. One of the things Joel wanted, was he wanted people who are part of the community. We hired a young kid with a ranching background, has trapped wolves. We need people who are trusted by the rancher. That is the most important to me. I am trying to work with the department. I think this is an opportunity for them. But to be effective, we need information. Our guys understand a lot now – don't bait them *(the wolves)* in. The notion that you can human presence your way out of a wolf conflict – it has to be a pretty small one.

CB – I think that if there is a presence there, but no threat, it is not deterrence. There has to be a threat.

*JD gives example of conditioning coyotes to stay away from his house. Friend in Wyoming has wolves on his ranch; they don't bother the cattle. If one cow is killed, one wolf is killed. But they have the ungulate population to support the wolves.*

AH describes how he didn't understand the problems the ranchers have with the department; the department here is much more responsive and communicative.

SN – We had some really good enforcement officers over there, but most of them are gone. They didn't fit in. But it has improved. Jeff has really helped. We are starting to see a change in WDFW. There is a lot of really corrupt things with the wolf thing.

JD – You mentioned Travis (*Kletcher?*). He has an ability to be an advocate but still be fair to the rancher. The conflict specialists are entirely different.

SN – We got funded for one for each county (*Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille, Okanogan*). Your ranchers have options, so they are less interested.

JD – Tribe understands they are managing their wolves, as an obligation to their elders to maintain an ungulate population.

SN – I would argue that they are moving onto the reservation because the game is there. (*discusses pack removal; it took too long, so it wasn't effective*). I think the tribes are not seeing the effects on the ungulate herds because they are managing them.

AH – So, did you come over to ask us about...

SN – Just wanted to let you know that we will have a person in Okanogan County, coordinating their efforts with the Sheriff. Get you in contact with them so they can keep you informed. This year we are trying to work with the counties. When we do the application, we will send it to you.

CB – Can I see the application you put in?

SN – I can send it to you.

AH – My opinion is you guys out there need a lot of help. Not as much going on in Okanogan County.

SN – Our people can cross county boundaries. When we have a real hotspot, we can take all the people and put them there. We need information from the department. For us, if you are trying to help an industry – we are still going to have this problem when the wolves are delisted. We still want to have a collar program. We will pay for it. That way we will know which ones are the problems and will take them out a lot sooner.

AH – Should talk to the people in Idaho and Montana, find out what post-delisting looks like, what works.

SN – We want local control. For the Forest Service, you need to have your cattle dispersed,

AH – For the wolves, you needed them concentrated.

SN – We want to work with the Sheriff's department, so they hold the information pretty tightly. We want to know what the wolves are doing, not to have every wolf with a collar shot.

JD – So, do you want anything from us today?

SN – Just wanted to let you know what we are doing. If they fund again this year, we will let you know what we are putting in. If you have problems develop, there will be somebody here to work on it. If not, they will probably be helping out elsewhere.

JD – I can tell you how to get a wolf, especially in wintertime, take a yappy little terrier dog, put it in a cage. The wolves come in like flies to honey.

AH – So, who are these people reporting to?

SN – The Cattlemen’s Association.

CB – You investigate the same kills that the department does? Is there much difference between your interpretation?

JF – Usually. Last year I went and looked at 3 calves that had been chewed up. It was clearly depredation. Three of us confirmed that (WDFW biologist & enforcement officer). That report went to WDFW board and they changed it to a ‘probable’. I had to go to Kretz, the county commissioners. We went back up, roped the calves and took another look. It was confirmed depredation.

*SN leaves to make a phone call; lengthy, wide-ranging conversation about wolf management.*

