

BOARD OF OKANOGAN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
10/8/2018

In Attendance at Meeting:

Jim DeTro- JD (BOCC)

Andy Hover - AH (BOCC)

Chris Branch – CB (BOCC)

Lanie Johns – LJ (Clerk of the Board)

Perry Huston - PH (Administrator & Planning Director)

Dave Gecas – DG (Deputy Prosecuting Attorney)

Angie Hubbard – AHu

Craig Nelson – CN (Okanogan County Conservation District)

Amy Martin – AM (Okanogan County Conservation District)

Anna Lyon – AL (Okanogan County Noxious Weed Board)

Unidentified members of the public

These notes have been taken by one of several volunteer citizen note takers and published on the website of Represent Okanogan County (ROC.) 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.

Summary of significant discussions

Nightly rentals

PH describes the restriction in the Methow Review District - that you cannot own more than one nightly rental and notes that it is vague and may be creating problems. Commissioners express skepticism about the restriction. PH will develop clarifying language.

WRIA 49 Watershed Plan

There was a lengthy discussion of the composition and size of the Watershed Planning Group being assembled. There have been concerns expressed regarding the number of outside entities being invited. CB acknowledged the concerns but noted the value of including entities that have or may litigate over the plan; they can provide early feedback. Voting vs. non-voting/technical advisory membership was discussed.

Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP)

Grant funding remains following the adoption of the VSP. This can be used for implementation. Outreach and monitoring to verify that benchmarks and goals are met will be conducted by the Okanogan County Conservation District (OCCD). Budgeting of the remaining funding was discussed, as was the potential for state funding of future implementation activities.

Lake Management District

There was a lengthy discussion with AL about reaching an agreement with the County Noxious Weed Board to perform the aquatic weed control that will be funded by the special purpose taxing from the Lake Management District.

Similkameen Trail culvert

Payment to Public Works for the installation of the culvert was discussed, followed by a longer discussion on possibilities for funding an account to pay for work on trails, including possibly establishing a Parks and Recreation Board.

Comprehensive Plan Update

PH provides the maps for the three alternatives and describes the distinctions between the alternatives. He is working on the narratives for the alternatives and should have a draft for the commissioners to review by the end of this week.

Update Planning Department

1:30 JD not present; CB convenes meeting. Commissioners repeal burn ban.

Commissioners decide to wait for JD before going into Executive Session; start other business

Nightly rentals

PH describes the restriction in the Methow Review District - that you cannot own more than one nightly rental and notes that it is vague and may be creating problems. It is a carryover from 2005. DG agrees that it is vague. Commissioners express skepticism about the restriction. PH mentions that it could be fine if it refers to only one property. PH will develop language further.

Champerty Shores

PH wants to see if Oroville will do a revenue bond to hook up the utilities. CB expresses agreement.

1:40 JD arrives; AH recaps business already conducted. AH moves to go into Executive Session regarding litigation for 20 minutes; invites DG and PH to attend. Motion approved and they leave.

2:00 Commissioners return from Executive Session

WRIA 49 Watershed Plan

PH – WRIA 49 meeting; commissioner Branch chaired. It went well. Vanessa Branch from Ecology attended. Filled some of the vacant spots. Sent email last week, asking if we should have more representation from landowners and water users. Suggestion has been that it should be restricted to

local people. Too many from outside of county. Pulled up the legal framework, sent relevant sections to DG to ask what he thinks.

DG – It doesn't make clear whether local refers to from within WRIA 49 or within Okanogan County. You could invite people from state agencies.

PH – No specific statement saying that participants have to be from county.

AH – *(reads from text of the RCW(?))*

DG – What does sub-section 7 say?

CB – *(reads from email text, referring to state agency participation)*. Will refer to a statement from a website 'Ok Co. Farm Bureau expressed concern that there are not enough landowners and water users'. They are concerned about environmental groups from outside of county. A conversation about this is in order. Some entities that have been invited have pushed water rights legislation. That is why they should be at the table so that we can know *(if we are going to be sued)*.

PH – The concern is mostly about voting members. You could put them on in an advisory role. The Colvilles have introduced the concern about being invited as voting members – might be better as technical advisors.

DG – Sense I get is that they are mainly interested in having the local people in there. How do you define 'local'?

AH – *(reading)* 'Who live and work in the watershed'

PH – An example would be Futurewise. They have members scattered all over the place... Could have DG look at it some more...

DG – Yes. I just started looking at it this morning.

AH – Are there people on there from outside Okanogan?

PH – For instance – Trout Unlimited.

AH – I would assume that the person attending would live in...

PH – We haven't made that a requirement *(projects list of organization invited)* Washington Rivers Conservancy *(and several others)*

CN – A couple of things: as a person called upon to facilitate, I request that the group not get any bigger – 35 is a lot. Second, ask everyone to come in with a mindset of finding solutions, not being obstructionist. Being an active participant who is open to discussion is what we need. Agencies could provide technical assistance. In another setting, multiple agencies provided advice; only Ecology was on the voting committee and they represented all the other agencies.

CB – Question what 'consensus' means. The more diverse the interests, the more difficult it is to achieve consensus. But if you exclude *(outside interest groups)*...

AH – I like the idea of them being a technical resource. Like with the orca – they formulate ideas for the group's consideration.

CB – *(too rapid to record)*

AH – Yes, that is what I mean.

CN – I agree with CB. The last thing we need is to do the work only to have it litigated...

CB – And not only immediate litigation, it could keep coming in. I read something like this *(communication from the Okanogan County Farm Bureau?)* and say ‘Okay, what is the concern here?’ *(gives an example of having a dialog with potential litigants)*. Let’s make sure our mitigation is not out of kind.

AH – right. Have them tell us what the potential pitfalls are.

CB – *(a water-rights transfer example of conferring with potential litigants)*

PH – Let me follow up based on this discussion. Will come up with a suggested group makeup.

CB – On your comment Craig about the group size...

CN – 34 is okay. Typically they will show up for the first 6 months and then fade away.

CB – They will see that their concerns are not being realized.

AH – Will make some phone calls, put it on Monday’s agenda.

Voluntary Stewardship Program (VSP)

PH – Conservation commission has reviewed the contract and believes that the money left in the contract can be used in the implementation. *(\$90k)*. Have asked CN to develop a budget. Will take a look at my budget, make sure that I won’t go beyond the bottom line.

AM distributes workplan to commissioners.

CN – Approved by Conservation Commission. Open to blue tab – goals specific to each critical area. Those are the goals and types of practices by agricultural producers to enhance critical areas. Nutrient management, pest management, tillage, planting, fencing, filter strips, ponds for collecting sediment. Reasonable practices for local producers to adopt.

AM – picked out practices that were already in use in the county *(shows table in the document)*.

PH – Assuming money will go away from budget in June 2019. Assume legislature will come up with ongoing funding – monitoring benchmarks. Logically, will fall to the conservation district. Two distinct steps, one spending what we have in the bank and the other getting ready for future funding from the legislature. Conservation District has a lot of contacts with the legislators.

CN – The spreadsheet with practices. These are things that people are already using. Self-assessment tool. Conservation planners can help them work through it. From these tools and other things we are already doing we can track to see if we are meeting the goals. Need to do outreach, inform what this is and what it isn’t. Some will have to be independently verified. Be able to show the state that we are meeting benchmarks and goals. Will have it up on the website. Getting as much of that as possible in case it is not funded in the next biennium. Conservation commission has requested funding for statewide implementation *(\$9 million)*. We’ll know more in 9 months.

CB – the reporting for the impacts will go through the conservation district? (yes)

CN – the VSP committee is still active. We will be meeting with them periodically, showing them the information we have. Once they have approved the reports that we draft, they will go to the Conservation Commission.

CB – I see that there is already a benefit to the landowner – to adopt Best Management Practices.

PH – I will put 2 budgets in front of you – 2018 & 2019. Then how much to transfer to the Conservation District. Don't have the fine details. We will still capture our own expenses. We can fine-tune who does what as we go along (*e.g., mapping may be done by the County*).

AM – other things we have discussed is tracking – what and how to track. Putting on workshops to let people know what is going on.

CN – A lot of conversations I have had with producers – they are already doing some of this. They should get credit for that. They have trouble believing that. They are used to always being told to do more.

AH – Farmers like to steward their land.

CN – Absolutely. It is in their own best interest.

CB – Will we be meeting with state legislators to tell them what we are doing?

CN – Have heard that some counties that did not opt in have been asking for implementation funding. Causing a bit of a stir –

CB – (*Implementation funding?*) is how we can help keep agriculture viable.

PH recaps the plan for the budget and all agree.

2:45 Lake Management District

PH – Appeal period ends today. No one has (*yet*) filed an appeal. We have a working Lake Management district. They (*the County Noxious Weed Board*) have expressed a willingness to manage. Will need a special purpose budget. You will need to decide who you want to manage it. Looking at the RCW, I think you would be on safe ground – execute an inter-governmental agreement with the Noxious Weed Board. Would put the onus on them to make sure they were complying with regulations. You would collect the fees and they would implement.

AL – the Weed Board is ready and capable to take it on.

JD – (*inaudible*)

AL – They're on board. It is a little more work, but weeds are weeds.

AH – This is kind of like a junior taxing district.

PH – Special purpose taxing district. Kind of like Oroville EMS. Anna would generate a more specific budget that would show up in the intergovernmental agreement.

AH – with Tonasket EMS district – that is a levy collection. Where is that showing up in our budget?

LJ – It is separate.

AH – We don't take an administrative fee?

PH – We do not.

LJ – But when they had a secretary doing the work the PH and I do, she was paid.

PH – It is miniscule. If we were perfect, we would. Time administering is minimal.

CB- That is what I would like to see (*inaudible*).

PH – Planning Department doesn't have to do this – I made some assumptions, but it doesn't have to be that way.

JD – When does revenue start?

PH – Billing goes out next year. Won't have money until April, which is when things (*weed control?*) gets started.

AH – So we are okay with this? (*yes*)

PH – I will begin work on an intergovernmental agreement (describes how this will be asking the Noxious Weed Board to extend the same work they are already doing).

JD – The treasurer has followed along with this process...

PH – I have been working with her, discussing whether it will go out with (*tax bills?*) or should it be sent out separately. Rocky will have that discussion with her. If that will work for the commissioners, we will move ahead in that manner.

Anna – The commercial applicator that we have been using for a lot of our projects will be in town next week to work on Leader Lake. An opportunity to see the work we do.

JD – Did you do any work on Salmon and Conconully Lakes?

Anna – Not this year (*provides details*)

PH – You have the option of having an advisory committee. (*refers to a member of the audience*)

Audience member – Many lake management districts have an advisory committee. We know where the weeds are.

JD thinks that is a good idea; so does CB.

AL – Landowners have been coming to us.

AH asks a question about funding for aquatic weed control.

AL – Ecology generally funds for three years. Osoyoos, Palmer, Patterson (*mentions others*) are on their own at this point. They are not focused on long-term management.

JD – What about the USBR?

AL – Bureau and DNR have been very generous about providing herbicide. WDFW is like pulling teeth. Lakes with drawdowns, we have been very successful in controlling milfoil.

AH – F&W gets funding from boat ramps (*Discover Pass*).

AL – They jump on mussels but not on invasive plants. (*The control*) mud snail, green crabs, maybe phragmites.

AH – We need to start putting some pressure on them about lakes.

AL – Any lake with a boat ramp should have funding attached for controlling invasive species. Bureau did a study – all our lakes have enough calcium to support mussels.

AH – Anna, you don't have an advisory committee?

AL – We have a five-member board representing the entire county.

PH - Five year timeline. Someone would have to decide whether and how to wrap things up.

AL – 3 of weed board members are agriculture. It would be good to have aquatic expertise.

AH – Would like to know what would be the role of advisory committee?

PH – It should be your advisory committee. I could draw up a resolution.

AH – Anna, do you think it is a good idea?

AL – Yes.

CB – They should all be sitting there, looking right at the lake.

PH recaps, asks for any further input. Audience member expresses appreciation for the time and patience from the commissioners.

Similkameen Trail culvert

PH – Public works has a bill for the culvert.

CB – Where did the money go?

PH – It has been gone for some time. Public works needs to be paid. PUD seems comfortable with picking up the other costs. I can pay it out of the trail fund. Think it will not put me over budget. We can monitor that.

AH – We had to take care of that. Fortunately, we didn't have to cover the entire thing.

PH – We got a pretty good deal.

AH – Should pay it out of the budget.

PH - We could avoid same kind of thing if we had money in the trail account for Public Works to go out and clean out the culverts.

CB – In the short term we should look at (?) funding (*trail clubs?*). Invite the Pacific Northwest Trail Association.

PH – We previously had more contact with the PNTA. Depends on how much focus we want to put on the trails we have or might have in the future. Previous Commissioners eliminated Parks and Rec board. Could reformulate them with a focus on trails.

CB – Part of thinking about it is the economic development. Update the Park and Rec plan so we can apply to the RCO.

PH – Last time it was revised, *(too rapid to record)*.

CB – Methow Valley Sports Trail Association – at least there was a group there.

PH – So, I will pay the bill. Do you want to look at the resolution I generated, reforming the Parks and Rec Board?

JD – The recent one – a year and a half ago?

PH – *(inaudible)*

AH – The trail system in the Methow is county-owned.

PH – A lot of it.

AH – So, how would that work?

PH – This is brainstorming. My recommendation would be that the Parks and Rec board would be county-wide, with the MVSTA as a franchise of that. The Rec board would not necessarily be involved with that. In terms of what their mission would be – that would be up to you.

AH – I have a little bit of concern. Just say that in 20 years and we're not here. If you have a board that want to take over. I think I should have a conversation with James DeSalvo (MVSTA).

CB – *(inaudible)*

AH – Why have an advisory committee when you have a board? You can get too many cooks in the kitchen.

CB – Advisory committee should be made up of citizens.

PH – How you structure the board, you could populate it with all kinds of organizations *(e.g. Backcountry Horsemen)*

CB – Trails coalition here was a loose knit group.

PH – I will take the resolution and dust it off.

3:30 Comprehensive Plan Update

PH – Maps are done. I am on the cusp of having the narrative done for the alternatives. Alt. 1 – no action. *(Projects maps)*. No specific resource ag or resource timber on current map. Rural encompassed *(?)*. Amount of land in resource designation about the same.

AH – In Alt. 2, what are the criteria for resource designation?

PH – *(Too rapid to record – it has to do with the existing road system of a certain quality)*

(General confusion over ag., rural and reservation; similar colors on the map. Questions about the map ensue. Rural designation follows the transportation network.)

AH questions the absence of rural designation in the Methow Review district.

PH – We left the Methow alone.

AH – Need to show that.

CB – *(There should be)* a designation for a more completely planned area.

PH – Fairly low regulation *(in Alternative 2)*. Not focusing development in urban growth areas. A little more restrictive than current, but not a lot. A little more land in resource land. *(More focus on)* water availability. Alternative 3. We stuck with a higher level for the road system for designating rural – much smaller and tightly tied to water supply. Working on level and intensity of municipal development. You are not bound by the 3 alternatives. Putting it out there for discussion. Done for the purposes of environmental assessment. Likely to be somewhere between the extremes *(Alt.s 1 & 3)*, so environmental assessment will be valid.

CB asks about organization of the document; PH describes proposed organization.

CB – The primary goals and objectives should be there. You might comment on how well different alternatives meet the goals and objectives.

3:45 PH will have a draft for the commissioners review by the end of the week. PH asks BOCC to reconvene as the Tonasket EMS; they do so.

PH – When you do your budget, are you going to take your 1%?

(some confusion. The 1% refers to administrative fees)

CB – My answer is yes. *(others agree)*

PH – That is all I needed to know.

3:50 AH moves to reconvene as BOCC; they do so. Meeting ends.