

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday October 20, 2020 PM

Present:

Jim DeTro (JD) - BOCC Chair, District 3

Chris Branch (CB) - BOCC Vice-Chair, District 1

Andy Hover (AH) - BOCC, District 2

Lanie Johns (LJ) - Clerk of the Board

These notes were taken by an Okanogan County Watch volunteer via Zoom.. Every attempt is made to be accurate. Notes are verbatim when possible, and otherwise summarized or paraphrased. Note taker comments or clarifications are in italics. These notes are published at <https://countywatch.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/Minutes%2020/2020%Minutespage.html>.

*Time stamps below are in real time. To locate specific topics, a clock on the AV Capture video screen at <https://okanogancounty.org/avcapture.html> can assist in finding the correct spot on the video recording. (Note: the county notified County Watch that AV Capture had a corrupted file and **videos archives are not be available for 10/19 nor 10/20/2020**. Therefore, notes could not be double-checked nor time stamps improved.)*

Summary of Significant Discussions or Actions: **Public Comment question** about masks at BOCC meetings; **C-6** info given and request for fee waiver for C-6 Biochar project; BOCC support shown, but request denied due to regulations. Alternative funding suggestions made; **Dan Higbee, Bldg Dept.** No major changes in building permits, new position to replace retiree discussed; budget on track; **Tanya Craig:** brief update for HR/Risk Management; **Noxious weed budget** discussion; **Emergency arises:** Courthouse/jail situation with 2 injection wells overflowing & heating for Courthouse/jail affected; concern over a basement in town. Courthouse closed down. AH considers it an emergency, Branch concerned about bio-fouling & mineral fouling. Ameresco contacted. Branch remains after meeting adjourned, wondering about resources in Olympia.

1:30 - Public Comment period:

Isabelle Spohn, County Watch note taker, requests clarification on why Cmr. Hover and Cmr. Branch ceased wearing masks during Commissioners' meetings several weeks ago. She brings up that BOCC discussed being good examples to the public. Branch states that if someone approaches the dais he puts his mask on. If the room is empty, he takes mask off so people can hear him (*assuming over virtual programs.*) Cmr. Branch requested feedback on how he could be heard over Zoom/AV Capture with his mask on. Spohn replied that masks did not appear to be interfering, but position and particular mics do. The interaction could not be completed due to technical problems between AV Capture and Zoom. It was agreed that Hover and Branch masks (*Cmr. DeTro, cites a health issue with masks*) when they consider it necessary. Since others wished to comment, Spohn agreed to communicate over e-mail what kind of additional clarification was requested. (*This will include clarification of Hover's statement during the*

Twisp Grange candidates' forum that he would support a health and safety requirement that all people attending county meetings wear masks.)

Gina McCoy (C-6 treasurer, with Tom McCoy attempting to attend from another location) on behalf of C-6 Biochar project:

Gina - - Hopes BOCC had a chance to take a look at e-mail she sent yesterday AM. Planning says they need a temporary use permit and a SEPA analysis in order to do the research with bio processor. Collective fees are \$1,020. Please waive fees in terms of how valuable it is to the community in view of poor air quality - this will do nothing but improve that. The processor is clean, quiet - aiming to process a pretty big stockpile of material the County roads folks have accumulated close to the biochar site.

In an e-mail to me Pete Palmer said it was a great project - we are all doing it as a volunteer basis and that is a lot of \$\$ for us right now. Any questions or discussions?

AH - We recognize it's a really good project But we were just involved..... you will need to run a generator because of no power to plant.

Gina - Yes. It runs on natural gas. Quiet. The only noise is grinding and chipping. That would be a short time. We would need to bring in a tub grinder, during business hours, and a concentrated period of time.

AH - This is one of those things when I'd like to say yes but cannot...after looking at our Planning Dept and the research time it takes, planner's time, etc. and trying to maintain or increase staff level in planning because of all the issues we are going through. And we really should have a public hearing for the noise, time frame, and everything else - takes money for the hearings examiner, others - meant to cover the costs. We know it's a good project, but at the same time we have to cover other things.

CB - We just heard this am , a few questions, etc...whether or not we actually have an option to waive a fee on anything on the zoning stuff, etc.....even others that have industrial classification. If we find ourselves in a conditional use situationwaving the fee may be one thing, but operating may be another thing. The difficult thing is waiving the fees.... I was a thinking we should be thinking of how we can come up with a solution.

Gina - Just wanted to say it's a temporary permit, not a conditional use permit. We ARE pleading poverty. I thought we should ask because this is going to cost a lot of \$\$ to show that we are doing something for the environment.

CB - Yeah - we don't have that question o the checklist. They don't ask if the project will benefit the environment.

Gina - I imagine the county will not have to file a permit to burn that pile, and that pile is not going to burn clean..

AH - Have you communicated with the conservancy?

Gina - They have not wanted tohave had communication with MVCC.

AH - They have an Ag (program?) That gets \$\$ for various projects. They were the primary group for a study in Tonasket. You might want to call Jason and tell him BOCC is on board and ask if there is anything they can brainstorm on like a temporary use permit.

Gina - Thanks for suggestion. We were going to call them anyway.

JD - I agree with whole board that it's a good project, but we do't want to get a ruling from (DNR?)

Reach out to USDA or NRCS. Might reach out in re the fire blight situation - they now open burn them. It might be something they'd do.

AH - Vaagen Bros, Sierra Pacific (*and others*) - that buy timber. You might call them.

Gina - Another great idea. Will follow through on that.

CB - Was thinking of any particular site the DNR might have - Don't know if you go to forest collaborative meetings (November 4 is next meeting.) 2 chairs, facilitators I was talking about putting that on the agenda. The DNR participates in that also. I would bring that up as a start-up project where there is a prototype - they and the USFS might help in locating a machine. It might help with a permanent site also. Talk in the Methow that we need a small saw mill - I talked with Peter Goldman about that. How will we do these sorts of things to treat the forest happen when we don't have zoning in t Methow to do even this? Keep that in mind about Nov. 4 - a possibility there could be some help there.

JD - wants to add that with DNR, the commissioner Hillary Franz has done a lot of work with the wildfire committee - this may fly into that.

CB - Adding because you are on the Planning Commission, I have explored a number of deficiencies and onerous regs we have in place. Like special use permit process - have to pay \$1,000 to get permits. If you have to pay \$1,000 for a construction office and you are small - way different for Walmart, etc. and everyone is paying the same, but not sure the personnel required in Planning are the same. Some of these regs are like a Christmas tree - one patch after another, and the tree falls over.

Gina - Appreciate your time and consideration and suggestions. Did not capture all these ideas, but would like to follow up. Maybe we can call and hear all your thoughts - Must say, JD, that your idea works in Spokane. Sounds like you have a wealth of ideas. May need to touch in with you.

All - a good project, but our hands are tied on some things.

Gina - Understand you have to obey the law.

Dan Higbee: Building Department Update

Building permits: We are a little ahead of last year, not too extreme. Got a call from the newspaper..... Everyone in the Methow seems to think everything is exploding. But it's not so - It may seem like it's pretty busy - it is busier than I expected with election year and pandemic. There's ust a little later run at it. So far, 100 applicants for residences as opposed to 99 last year.

Revenue and contracts with cities - up a bit from last year, partly due to the fact that we took back on the cities. At this point, talked with mayor of Okanogan - they know who they want to hire but haven't done it yet. Hopefully they do that soon.

Jokes (about him doing too good a job.)

AH - When you look at cost expenditures.

DH - I still have a 23 year old chair.....with pandemic, etc..... this (*document*) shows revenue from the towns. Speaking of the towns, the contracts are annual. Trying to get with Dave (?) to get those going. In Omak, maybe could do a contract with them so we can cover inspections for him.

AH -As long as we can cover everything we need.

CB - *(He is laughing, can't hear.)*

DH - *(They talk about having an agreement.)*

DH - Assuming we'd do the same kind of contract, even though we don't have to do what we need to do with some other cities. Assuming it would be the same as other contracts....\$125 for.....

AH - Not until you have a couple of years of data and you know what it really costs.

DH - Right now, we are covering the costs.

AH - Don't need to bump up charge at this timebut it's not only recovery, we are taking away from you doing our own work. Needs to be some incentive for that too.....

AH - As long as you see it's covering your budgets, I'm for keeping it the same. Make sure it's not ongoing.....seems to be that way.

DH - In Twisp and Brewster, it is.

AH - Maybe we should have a conversation with them.

Retirements and new inspectors: DH - The one thing that could come up - we have inspectors who are at retirement age,....if I'm training 2 guys at the same time, will not be able to do that right now. Wanted to talk about this. Proposed new hire for next year. Would like your permission to start that process now so we can get someone at the first of the year.

AH - I would move toFor building inspector 1. Not going to make that motion yet.....How many building inspectors do you feel....

DH - A minimum of 2. Has been working out great. We are understaffed part of the year, perfectly staffed part of the year, over staffed part of the year.

AH - So we are not adding a 3rd.

DH - No. Proposal is to train someone else.

AH - A trainee, *(Moves to hire Bldg Inspector 1)* for purposes of succession planning.

LJ Resolution needed?

AH - Get with HR and get a resolution that tells what the position and time frame would be. That position will last no longer than a year or 1/2 year.

DH - As far as I know. Depends upon when the others retire.

AH - So you will not have 3 positions forever. Go to Tanya, get a resolution, hiring process, and bring back so we can sign.

CB - It's one of those situations when employment security and Work Force would pay. They do have a requirement where you would have to hire the person that is trained.

AH & JD - Agree. Good thought.

CB - Yes - the expectation is that you hire whoever you train. Tanya knows this.

Budget: DH - We will talk budget tomorrow. Don't need to get into that somewhat. The new code 0 will be the 18 codes, 21. (?) Take effect in February. Actual building code update - not much. But electric updates are pretty restrictive. They are going to do...these new energy credits, they make you have them.... water heaters - there aren't even things on the market yet that can make you comply. This is WA state energy code.

AH Interesting. I went from incandescent to LED. I was amazed at how much \$\$ I saved. It was on a cycle stop valve on my well. If you turn a faucet on , it restricts the flow to whatever the well is using. The valve was \$85. Really good - the turning on of your pump is what really uses elect and it ruins your pump. Really efficient.

DH - Everything is much more efficient now, and they are not considering this in the energy codes. Sounds like it might not be too good.

JD - Talks about 100 HP engine....\$1,000 right off the bat.

AH - Push the button, and \$400.

DH - Lost motor in a truck. Not a new one. But one of the better old trucks. Put the surpluses one back in service for now. Over 200,000. It was a the one we bought used because Randy totaled a truck. Hasn't been a great truck. Now not any good.

The rest is basically budget stuff. We will now be billed by Central Services. Would like building permit program so people can apply online....

AH - That's what those fees are for. You are a separate fund. We are increasing efficiency for tax payers, keeping your budge straight....a good thing to progress.

CB - One of those development things in the way, not leaning on the taxpayer.

DH - Right now, Gene Wilson created our program, and it works. But Debbie had to create her own for these reports. People can't look on computer to see where there application is....

AH - If you are looking at the new program, I hope you will talk with assessor also Health, to see if there is something that can help across the board.

CB - and timing of permits.....

DH - Larry.....

AH - Try to integrate something

DH - Not sure he has a program....

AH - I think he does. He had said something abut getting extra models. He is using the heavy duty ones....

DH - goal for me would be people would be able to use it for all of us.

CB - Actually there is an option for a pre-permitting conference. We may go into that If you don't choose it....those deals where someone wants to to do something...you may find down the road that you have to

bring something up to standards you didn't know about t, They pay upfront and people don't realize until they get into it.

DH - If we required pre-application meeting, they would not be happy.

CB - If just a simple building application, it wouldn't be like that.....Be sure the requirements are commensurate with what is going to be done. Don't treat little projects like big ones.....

DH - that's all Anything for me?

AH - Appreciate the job you do.

Will see each other tomorrow afternoon.

CB - I hear no complaints.

2:00 Tanya Craig - Human Resources, Risk Management.

Talks about increase in costs. Collective - Union issues, Schools. Most are back, on part-time basis. But some people (*assuming employees*) have younger children who cannot be home alone. (*Hard to follow.*)

Note: CB put on mask during public comment, and it is still on at 2:35. Others not wearing masks.)

2:40 - Video - Did commissioners have any changes to the county video?

(Back and forth discussion....about something at Columbia River overlooking the Methow. Columbia River is referenced when they show either the Methow or the Similkameen. Some confusion. Video shows one of the small rivers and says it's the Columbia.

2:44 - Review of minutes, approving Consent Agenda items, agreements between county and other agencies, fundings through CARES Act, various other vouchers & payroll certificates.

2:54 - Agreement bet Okanogan County and Ok County Pub Health for funding through CARES Act.

3:00 - 3:23: Noxious Weed Discussion on items for next year's budget including staffing changes. Speaker unannounced. "Lisa" & "Ana" (*Lyons?*)

3:23 - Weeds folks leave.

3:24 - Discussion of tomorrow's agenda and Emergency situation occurring with wells/heating at Courthouse & Jail.

LJ - Just got call from Joe Poulin - Both wells in lower parking lot are overflowing. What he had feared would happen have happened. Both jail and courthouse heating are down.

AH - This is an emergency situation.

AH - Joe had expressed concerns they couldn't take any extra water. So what changed since then?

LJ - Injection well was overflowing before, but not the extraction well. Correction: Both injection wells are overflowing. Just one was overflowing before. Joe says solution would be to dig another well to take the additional water.

AH - How did DOE..... ?? - Questions about water quality.

CB - Wondering about well being bio-fouled or mineral-fouled.

LJ - I understand there is too much water. 900 gal permitted well and we only needed....

AH - But not artesian? Not boiling out over the top?

LJ - mmm . There was a lot of water. They were not sure we could use the well for our purpose because of this.

AH - OK, but it's an emergency.

LJ - Won't know anything until tomorrow. Courthouse is shut down. Will be chilly before anyone leaves.

AH - Jail will probably be ok.

LJ - Joe is informing people.

CB - Speculation on my part.

AH - wondering if city can do something.

CB - The question is water quality.

LJ - ??? Was a big part of that project and working with the city to be sure the city's concerns were addressed, more in terms of the storm water drains...maybe there was a SEPA....

CB - Explanation about storm water and water quality in re the river. Now that's why they probably need to do again.

LJ - It is going into the drain. Joe mentioned he hoped the Nelson's 509 Cafe didn't have a basement. It's running down the alley way to the surface well. A storm drain on the corner it's probably going into. I will e-mail Joe to be sure he's notifying.....

AH - When I look at that planing stuff, their (?) for a planner aren't included in the numbers for the budget. The numbers weren't added into the ????. So....that's going to be one we need to

LJ - Got call from Joe. He is in the lower parking lot. Both injection wells overflowing. Has contacted Ameresco. Everything shut down at courthouse and jail. I'm asking him to notify city, jail, courthouse. Sounds like an emergent situation that may need to be addressed tomorrow. Joe says we may need another well to inject the water into.

JD - Do some fracking.

CB - Debates this and that . Bio fouling, mineral fouling, they can put CO2 down the well, which freezes it. Assuming those are the options.

More debate about facts and options.

JD - on phone with someone about the situation.

Talk about By-Laws.

NEWC (North East Washington Counties) meeting Friday

Lanie has tentative agenda for NEWC meeting on Friday. Also forwarded the Web EX info to you previously.

AH - Asks about County Commissioners in Stevens county. Don Dashiel - the audit came back...Spokane paper said it was an illegal thing by BOCC, misappropriated funds. Debates about homeless housng, etc. Just a mistake, but it wasn't the Commissioners' fault. People are saying they ran off with the \$\$, etc.

3:45 - Well Emergency Again

Lanie - Joe does not think jail will be affected the much. City knows. Saucedo - suggests closing some valves. More speculation about wells.

3:45 - Andy, DeTro preparing to leave. Lanie will tell everyone board is adjourned.

3:45 - DeTro/Hover have left. CB still there wondering about well. Talking about water resources in Olympia.

Meeting closes down.

