

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday November 3, 2020, PM

Present:

Jim DeTro (JD) - BOCC Chair, District 3

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

Andy Hover (AH) - BOCC, District 2 (present after 3:18) (Had been at water code conference remotely before that.)

Lanie Johns (LJ) - Clerk of the Board

Leah McCormack - County Treasurer

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%202020/2020%20Minutespage.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.*

Summary: 11/3//2020, PM: Public Comment: Mask wearing during Commissioners' meetings; Budget work session -**Pest control: Daniel McCarty-** Apple Maggot quarantine, milfoil, budget work session talk of tax \$1 per parcel for pest control; Coroner's office, Dave Rodriguez - Cost of autopsies on covid-related deaths, other expenses. **Res #148-2020: Hiring of Deputy Clerk to the Board; Public Hearings:** Emergency Hearing and Management and other Supplementals discussed and approved. Hover will attend **Pest Board meeting on November 30.**

1:30 PM - Public comment Period: Summary:

1:42 - (meeting started late after lunch)

Isabelle Spohn: I wasn't in on the morning session - is Andy gone today?

JD - Yes, he was here until 11:00.

Spohn - I had decided I wouldn't have any comments today, and so I tuned into yesterday's session and the first thing I saw was saw a meeting at 9:55 - this was intended to be a comment for Andy, but I seem to keep missing him. I'll say it anyway - at this meeting there were 9 people, about 3-4 feet apart, no one wearing masks, appears to be a public works session. My question to Andy, which I guess I'll need to try to e-mail him again about this - his statement during the Candidates' Forum in Twisp (*online*) was that he would support a health and safety requirement

that all people attending public county meetings should wear masks and yet he is not wearing one - and at this other meeting (*public works yesterday*) there was no one except Branch and Lanie Johns wearing masks. So has the public health directive changed, has the commissioners' resolution changed? Or can you please clarify that - and I'll just have to contact AH about his statement.

CB Nothing's changed (*long pause*)... and yeah, I think you are gonna have to talk with Andy about his statement.

IS - Yes, I will - And I'll repeat briefly what I said last week (*see Tuesday, Oct. 27th for complete statement*) and I hope that you follow the international news, the US news, and the state's news and know what's going on with the Corona virus at this time. And I personally am becoming offended by this. If I were Chris Branch I wouldn't want to be sitting there. And it just seems there is no attention being paid to the public - here in Twisp we are having some problems, but most people are wearing masks most of the time and socially distancing also - I just feel that this is poor leadership. I compliment Chris Branch and Lanie for complying with the directives, and I certainly hope something can change. That's about it for now. Thank you.

1:45 PM - Commissioners searching for information of some sort - has to do with vouchers. It was a payroll voucher.

1:55 PM - Public health payroll approved. FICA tax. Consent agenda approved as presented. Talking to Linda Schreckengast about an adjustment.

2:00 PM - Budget work session: Pest Control - Dan McCarty, Leah McCormack (County Treasurer), Lisa Schreckengast

Dan McCarty (DM - not wearing mask) - McCormack & Schreckengast wearing masks.)

DeTro - to DM: You get the hot seat.

DM- I've been there before.

JD - Looks like the Asian Hornet is cleaned up.

DM - Don't know, but they at least cleaned up a nest.

(McCormack or Schreckengast) - Watching them do that tree.....

CB - Are they really big? If I saw them, I'd say that's what it was.

DM - Yes. Easily recognizable. These are big. A couple of inches.

CB - There are expected revenue cut-back

DM- acres went down by more than 1,000. Not 1,000 acres, \$1,000 of assessment. The total is *(too rapid to follow.)* The acreage has fluctuated. *(Goes into history)* About 20 years ago raised from 1.75 to 2.25/acre. No increases until then. We joined a program that compensated us for acreage torn out. The amt. we get will continue to go down. Main expense that will go up is my wages. We have been in deficit of 10,000/ year , now it will be \$20,000/year. That is used for emergency orchard removal, then put on as a lien to compensate for the expenses - it's no longer in place. It was 1/4 million, and we got 1/2. That is over now.

Early 2,000's was last assessment. There is no method to compensate for inflation; I haven't had a raise for 15 years. A couple of years ago I've bought a proposal for another means of revenue. The 1700., RCW - per acre - methods are per parcel, the current use general fund, and (???????)

Chelan/Douglas do combo of per orchard acre and per parcel. Parcels within a short distance of orchards,,...within a mile of commercial orchard. I brought to pest board was to assess and additional dollar per parcel, would make about 2,000 - a little more than the deficit we have now.

Woman - Are you saying every parcel in the county?

DM - No. You have a map that shows every acre or orchard. If you are in town, you pay \$1 per parcel. Similar to weed board/conservation district.

Others - We did that with milfoil. We do 10,000 for starlings - in and out. The basic \$63,000+ expense.

DM We are about \$22,000 short. Another 20,000 will have to come out of our investment.

Woman - if the BOCC did approve, what would timeline be?

JD - Would be nice for 2021....but

(McCormack or Schreckengast) - wants different information. She seems to be aiming for end of this month.

JD - What was overall discussion fo pest board?

DM - a \$1 assessment would be needed you. Could raise the amt for orchardists, but there is a lot of time spent outside the commercial orchards.

(McCormack or Schreckengast)- Also, trying to get through for 2021, do you have to do any advertising with the other people?

DM - I think there has to be a public hearing of the pest board. It was brought to a monthly meeting.

(McCormack or Schreckengast) - Once they see something on their tax statement, they will question it.

JD - It will go through the public process. Have to be careful how we structure the public hearing as far as the info goes out to the public - be sure to educate them in addition to telling amounts.

DM- It will not be only on the backs of non-orchardists - they will have their own amounts. \$1 per parcel isn't a lot.

JD - As long as I've been on board, a "council-matic" (?) is very unpopular.

DM - I hate to ask for taxes. But I think you can look at my budget....pickup is 22 years old.. . etc.

LJ - We pass a resolution every year about pest control I believe there is the option of raising or lowering through that resolution. But we are adding new parcels, so believe Pest Board will need a public hearing.

JD - As long as I've been here, have never voted for a council-matic raise except for ad valorem, for the veterans. Had no public push-back about that.

CB - Does state pay PILT on this?

JD - Good question. DNR has a lot of land that is leased that is under orchard.

(Many people talking. Cannot understand. 2 different conversations.)

DM - Would be good to get this assessment done for 2021, but if not we won't go broke in the meantime. I know there is a lot of push-back especially from ranchers, when this was proposed.

LJ - There was a petition to exclude them, and they (??)

DM- The Methow was really against it.

(They talk about starlings - over & \$8,000. Send a bill to Gebbers and they pay. "In and out.")

McCormack or Schreckengast - Looks like maybe....*(Still 2 separate conversations. Can't understand.)*

Discussion re use of cash on hand. *(Still 2 separate discussions. Speaking over each other.)*

CB - Looks like a budget process. If we had that hearing by Nov. 30, I think we can do that.

McCormack or Shreckengast - They close their books on Nov.30

CB - It has to be for us to support them.

McCormack or Shreckengast - They need at least a week.

LJ - the letter was on the 15th, but I think this might be an exception if...would be final week of...It's this Monday. I will be off the week of Thanksgiving.

(Jokes about masks, no air. Warehouses, fork lift drivers.)

DM- will you be able to make it to the pest board meeting?

JD - Not liking the weather.

DM- It was 1 degree below zero in Wauconda last week. 12 below in Fairbanks.

JD - Once he sees this (Andy?) we'll get him up to speed. Maybe he can go to the Pest Board. Will have Lanie leave a message for Cmr. Hover. I'll be gone at that time. '

(Separate conversations. Can't hear individual voices.)

DM- *(talks about no one being interested about something.)* Concerned about whole county being quarantined - apparently talking about Hawthorne.

JD - Thanks man for ringing the bell.

DM- Talks about apple maggot meeting.. they are the ones explaining who will be quarantined. Seemed more dire in or conversation - it doesn't have to be this way.

JD - There has never been a positive actual find in a commercial orchard.

LJ - Commercial orchards will not have a market to sell to for 3 months!

CB - Wasn't there an exception for the fruit in CA?

DM - It's a method of sanitization. 30-90 days in refrigeration, and it's ok.

DM - Trying to figure out how I can get something signed to get this orchard certified. No one is answering my calls/messages, including several of Gebbers family. To know how many inspectors we'll need - if 30, it won't get done. If 10...who will pay? No one responding.

CB - When we have 1 mile from orchard - every year you will need GIS assessment. It's a moving target. Instead of having it roll off and then on 4 years later....

JD - Apple Maggot may be the driver that makes them do something.

CB - May as well charge per parcel for everyone in the county.

DM- Yes, but will get pushback. In my view they are not a threat...but if you live in Wauconda and Mazama, I'll go, but it's not a big threat. It's close proximity to the commercial orchard who creates an impact.

CB - A lot of argument around that. Lots of people send apples around. Ran into some folks in the Methow - they were buying apples at Hank's and I told them I didn't think they could.

DM - They could if they went over N Cascades, but not through Chelan.

Chat about the sensitivity of taxes.

CB - Was thinking if you were spreading the assessment around the county, it wouldn't be that much.

DM - Agrees.

CB - Bring it up because of the moving target....

DM- Target will change, but if 2-3 years before it's recognized, it won't be that big a burden. It could be 25 cents a parcel. Creveling didn't want to pay 25 cents per parcel.

LJ - Talks about small orchards that spend 1/2 their time controlling pests for the commercial orchards.

CB - I'll rely on the pest Board, because the statute says they are the experts. (laughter.)

DM- Yakima valley is getting by, and have been quarantined for a long time. They have the manpower for it, but not that many threatened orchards. If you trap and don't catch flies within

1/2 mile of the orchard, it's considered pest - free. Talks about the types of assessments they do (only non commercial acres - maybe all parcels in the county are assessed. Will find out.

CB - especially in the counties next to us. Whole West Side is quarantined, right? (Yes)

(Man) - in Bridgeport Bar on mitigation land, the PUD will come out and remove the host plants. But that's only on a 5-Acre parcel... just a band aid. Comment them for it, though. Once you find pupate, it means you have reproduction in a native plant....

LJ - But your fruit has to be 100% pest-free.

Chit-chat. DM leaves.

**2:53 -- Budget Work session for Coroner's Office - Dave Rodriguez. (Meeting starts early.)
Dave Rodriguez is wearing a mask, as well as Leah McCormack and Lisa Schreckengast.**

Many references to a chart on the wall that cannot be read. Cannot be followed effectively.

Rodriguez - Summary: *(chooses certain budget lines to go over.)*

During the conversation, Rodriguez clarifies that his office will not be making money off human body parts. Talks about a grant he's applying for next March - does not have amount totally figured out yet. Has to send Covid samples by mail, so that part of budget is higher - however, expecting reimbursement for those. Line should be on "telephone/mail." Change that line to "communications" - *(they seem to agree.)* Repairs/maintenance is for vehicles. We got trucks from WDFW...one is operational at this time. Talk of expense of tires. Number of gurneys has to do with number of autopsies - no control over that. A lot higher costs for PPE - submitted to Lanie - includes Tyvek suits, etc. Determined number of miles last year, estimating how much gas will be - hard to do. Came up with \$4,500 - professional services. That's about it. After he gets his truck, he won't have to rely upon funeral homes for that. Says he's getting better at estimating after 5 years. If something comes up, like this year - should have some leeway. (Branch points out it's not over.) General purveyance of autopsies and Covid deaths, you have to do them. Have to go to traveling contract guys. They say before the autopsy, he has to do a Covid test. If positive, they won't do the autopsy. Has to be done in a special positive- pressure room with positive- pressure suits. We have to take to Seattle, and they say there is only one room for the entire west side of state, so they are not doing them very much. There are not a lot autopsies for Covid deaths. There is also a room in Spokane. In a regular autopsy ...they are being pretty cautious about it.

LJ - We have a couple of things the Board could take action on. (*Too many people talking over each other to hear.*)

Hover enters remotely, approximately 3:18.

LJ - Res #148-2020: Discussion: New position, Deputy Clerk of the Board. It demands more expertise, etc. than previous position.

AH -Most of the changes you had were in the public hearing, right?

CB Some of the sentences needed rewording. AH - Looks consistent to me. AH - there are some grammatical errors.

LJ - Looked through some. Not sure if they were changed. (*They go over the changes in punctuation/spelling.*)

AH - Is it Step one, or #1?

LJ - We are turning the Clerk 3 to Deputy Board Clerk 1.

AH - Is there a clerk #2? Why is it #1?

LJ - They would act instead of the Clerk of the Board. It's a higher level position than the job we are authorizing. (The other title we had was just Deputy Clerk of the Board.)

AH - Wondering about other positions where we have positions #1 and #2.

LJ - Yes, if that would happen, that's the way it would go. Oriented around a 2-step process, so person could be promoted for additional experience and training.

3:30 - Public Hearings - Emergency Hearing and Management and other Supplementals discussed and approved.

3:49 - Approval of Minutes.

3:50 - Lodging Tax fund issue - Contract for Marketing and Promotion Approved : \$861.50.

3:54: Res. \$148-2020 approved.

3:55 - Hover filled in on Pest Board issues and upcoming hearing (Nov. 30th, for 2021 budget - current revenue as well as new proposed assessment) after consultation with other counties. Hover requested to attend Pest Board meeting on Monday & agrees. Proposal to include tax for parcels only within a mile radius of an orchard, for \$1 per parcel.

4:02: Meeting Adjourned.