

Okanogan County Board of County Commissioners meeting November 28, 2022 PM session

AH - Andy Hover, BOCC Chair, District 2
CB - Chris Branch, BOCC vice-chair, District 1
JD- Jim DeTro, BOCC member, District 3
CH- Crystal Hawley, Asst Clerk of the Board
MM - Matt Marsh, Tonasket Ranger District
CC - Chancey Crowell, District Court Judge
DR - Dave Rodruiguez, Coroner

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.countywatch.org/commissioner-and-board-of-health-meetings.html> and are not the official county record of the meeting. For officially approved minutes, which are normally published at a later time, click [here](#).

Summary of Significant Discussion:

- *Report from Matt Marsh, Tonasket Ranger District*
- *County Judge and Coroner say goodbye to Comm. DeTro*
- *Comm. DeTro praises Commissioner of Public Lands, Hilary Franz*
- *Discussion on request from Farm Bureau to sign their letter regarding Grizzly Bears*
- *BOCC goes into Exec Session with Planning Dept regarding potential litigation*

The time stamps refer to the video that is published on the county's AV Capture site. To watch the video, click [here](#).

2:30:00 – Matt Marsh from the Tonasket Ranger District gives an update. Reviews list of commercial and non-commercial logging operators. Most on the list are not in OK County, but they are adding some. These are people who they will contact when they are putting projects out for bid. Recites list of Okanogan County operators who will be added.

CB- has a question about the designation on the list.

MM – Notes that many of these are very small operators such as people who want to buy firewood sales, etc. This is important because there is a lot of money being pushed out by the Federal Govt for non-commercial forest projects.

AH – asks about road conditions in the Colville Forest.

MM – for the most part they are in decent shape. Supervisor has committed to looking at the Tonasket forest. We now have lots more funding. Areas like Mt Hull will happen right away, and we are looking at Bonaparte. Long term we are looking at some of our chip sealed roads.

AH – suggests that MM keep in contact with OK county public works when that sort of work is done so we can collaborate when it makes sense.

MM – says he has met with Josh Thompson and they are all on board with that.

MM – update on current projects. We are working on Mt Hull, both north and south sides, doing commercial harvest. Will be doing that all winter. Also doing post-fire sale on Mt Bonaparte. Also another site on Salmon Creek doing logging for salvage sale.

AH – asks where timber is going- East?

MM – yes, the only mill in the western area is in Darrington, but they haven't bought anything for a while. Most of our stuff goes to Boise.

MM – we are in the midst of a sale just over in Ferry County. Will be doing a lot of restoration, culverts, etc. Also Buckhorn Mountain and a large portion of the north side of Bonaparte Mtn. It's a large area and we will start on that this coming summer.

MM- 20 year plan. 3 zones – East, Central, and West (Republic and Tonasket). Projects mentioned above are in the West zone. We will be look hard at restoring as much of the logged landscape as possible. One project area could take up to 10 years, which provides stability for the operators and mills.

MM- We were successful with prescribed burning. Had to shut down in Spring, but started up again and got 1500 acres broadcast burn, and a lot of piles burned. (Mt Hull to Crawfish lake area). Those are getting ready for future restoration projects.

CB – asks about money for Central WA.

MM- We didn't see much. Most went to the Wenatchee area.

CB- asks about Mt Hull good neighbor agreement.

MM – we were able to hand off several thousand acres to DNR and they were able to handle it. The good neighbor authority has been working well.

MM – thanks JD for his service and wishes him well in future endeavors.

JD – reminisces about firefighting days of the past.

2:48:00 – Dist. Court Judge Chancey Crowell presents JD with a letter of appreciation and relates a story about the days when he and JD worked together. Praises JD for taking care of the citizens of Okanogan County and listening to the citizens.

2:52:00 – Coroner Dave Rodruiguez comes forward to thank JD for his service. Relates a story about how JD approved his budget request for body bags in the past. Expresses his gratitude for funding a new assistant coroner position for next year and gives examples of the kinds of things it will allow him to do. Wants to be able to stick around after a death to console grieving family rather than have to tend to body. Also wants to be able to set up a program to provide assistance such as helping a widow to bring in firewood, or shovel snow to get her through the immediate days after death of loved one.

JD acknowledges that it is hard for the coroner to have to work alone and is glad to approve an assistant.

DR – gives example of how he had to assist doctor in filling out paperwork for a death just last night. Also mentions how there was a death during the big snowstorm and he had to get a tractor in to plow the driveway so he could get to the body. Talks about how there could be a small community fund to pay for things like plowing or other assistance for grieving families.

3:00:00 JD mentions that he received a letter of appreciation from Hilary Franz, Commissioner of Public Lands who wanted to come to his retirement party but had a conflict. Relates how he reached out to her after the 2015 fire with some ideas and she listened. Goes on to praise Hilary Franz for supporting our county. Says she has been here more than last three Public Lands Commissioners combined. Can't enough good things about her and how she is doing her job.

AH- We have had some really good luck with folks in the upper levels of State Govt coming here and listening to us.

3:11:20 The Farm Bureau sent us draft comments for the grizzly bear issue. It is long and has a lot of citations. I am hesitant to put my name to something like this. I know it was written by a consulting group. I've reached out the Chelan County to see their comments. (*although it is not*

explicitly stated it appears that the Farm Bureau is drafting comments that they want the BOCC to sign their names to.)

CB- asks if he was on the distribution list. AH says he is – it was sent by “Threehotfrogs” (*assume this is an email address*).

JD looks on his computer for the email but can’t find it.

3:17:40 CB- says that regarding the bears he is satisfied with the comments the BOCC sent themselves and isn’t interested in signing anything for anyone else.

AH- says he thinks that last time the BOCC may have signed something but isn’t sure. He will look it up.

3:20:15 BOCC goes into Exec Session with Planning Director, Assistant Rocky, and Civil Deputy Atty Esther Milner to discuss potential litigation.