

Okanogan County Board of County Commissioners meeting December 13, 2021
AM session

CB—Chris Branch, BOCC chair, District 1
AH – Andy Hover, BOCC vice-chair, District 2
JD – Jim DeTro, BOCC member, District 3
LJ—Lalena Johns- Clerk to the Commissioners
DH – Dan Higbee, Building Dept
PP – Pete Palmer, Planning Director
FAC – Fair Advisory Committee
OPMA – Open Public Meetings Act

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/> and are not the official county record of the meeting. For officially approved minutes, which are normally published at a later time, see https://www.okanogancounty.org/offices/commissioners/commissioners_proceedings.php

The time stamps refer to the times on the AV Capture archive of the meeting on this date. **NOTE: AV Capture was not working properly for the first part of the meeting. It was stopped and re-started, resulting in two videos for December 13th.** Click [here to go to video #1](#), and [here to go to video #2](#).

Summary of Significant Discussion: Exec. Session to discuss press release from Yakima Nation regarding Comp. plan; WRIA 49 planning; contract with Douglas County for jail beds; safety of fairgrounds bleachers; required OPMA training; ARPA funds; Public hearing to review request of resident to be relieved from Lake Management District assessment.

(time stamps below refer to video #1)

09:28 – Pledge of Allegiance. (CB, AH, LJ). LJ reviews agenda with BOCC.

13:24 – JD arrives

15:35 – CB says he has invited the county attorney (David Gecas) and PP to come at 9:30 for an executive session to discuss the recent press release from the Yakama Nation. (*press release is attached*)

16:40 – Discussion about WRIA 49 planning. CB wants to get a WRIA49 committee together to move forward with planning projects. AH has some concerns about how the committee will be determined. Conversation about how the committee will be structured, and how the BOCC will make their decisions about who is appointed.

21:15 – JD asks if other commissioners have seen the [Wenatchee World article](#) about the agreement between Okanogan and Douglas counties regarding payment for jail beds. CB relates a conversation he had with Douglas County commissioner on this subject, and then pulls up the article and reads from it to inform AH and JD, who are not familiar with the details. During this reading, BOCC discovers that Douglas County may be withholding funds from OK

County. AH reacts angrily and suggests terminating the contract entirely as soon as they can legally do so. CB recommends contacting Douglas county to see if they can work something out.

31:30 – AH has short discussion with LJ about an e-mail regarding capital facilities.

33:00 – CB mentions that Naomi (Fairgrounds director) had someone come to look at grandstands at fairground. AH says that means now there is a problem. *(this discussion is cut short due to Exec. Session and is continued when BOCC returns from that.)*

38:10 – BOCC goes into Executive session with David Gecas and Pete Palmer to discuss potential litigation regarding Comprehensive Plan.

51:35 – BOCC returns from Exec Session to resume regular meeting.

53:40 – CB reminds BOCC that they are all required to do some OPMA training every 4 years. They agree that they should do that. CB brings up a specific example of the FAC and whether they are required to follow the OPMA. Mentions another group he was in where that discussion came up.

56:35 – Discussion about fairgrounds and the fact that an engineer was hired to look at the bleachers and does that open the county to liability due to the fact that they now have an expert opinion saying that the bleachers are unsafe. The county doesn't have funds to replace them. Do they tear down the bleachers until there are funds available? Discussion about how to approach legislature with examples of how regulations restrict local govt ability to operate. Should they get a second opinion? Conversation about possible funding sources (infrastructure? Tourism money?). AH asks about LTAC board – LJ explains how the rules work and how much influence the BOCC has over how LTAC distributes funds.

1:10:35 – CB says that the PUD wants to come to talk about their "thing". *(No details about what the "thing" is.)* More discussion about various projects and how they are prioritized.

1:14:30 – Discussion about a contingency plan for securing ARPA funds and whether they can use bonds and what the limits are for bonding various projects. CB says he couldn't find anything that says ARPA funds can be used for purchasing property, and recites his arguments for why Okanogan County needs a new building for the courts.

1:25:45 – JD mentions an e-mail he received asking about the Senior Center Board. Discussion about what the e-mail is referring to as OK county doesn't have a board by that name.

1:28:50 – CB brings up the upcoming interviews for District Court Judge scheduled for this afternoon. BOCC agrees that applicants have provided very thorough written documentation so in-person interview doesn't have to include questions they already have answers to.

Video ends at this point. There was a short discussion with County Clerk about training a new employee which was not captured on video. The BOCC then went into executive session to discuss the District Court Judge applicants.

The rest of the morning portion of the meeting is on Video #2.

Time Stamps for the following notes refer to Video #2

The first 14:34 is during exec session when BOCC is not present. There appears to be about 10 minutes missing, as the BOCC appear again in the middle of a conversation. AH tells CB and JD that he has heard from the Public Health Dept that they may be able to use some Covid funds to pave the Agriplex parking lot. There is a very short time line (March 2022) and Public Works

has indicated that there would be other work needed such as prepping and other ground work that may not be able to be done in the given timeline.

16:25 – Public hearing on building department supplemental. Dan Higbee (building dept) gives information about why he needs the supplemental funds of \$6100.00. Motion made and passed to approve the request.

19:14 – Discussion about various infrastructure issues – heating in the Agriplex and jail, the condition of the well at the fairgrounds.

32:08 – Discussion about OPMA training and logistics of how to do it.

40:15 – Pete Palmer arrives for public hearing on Lake Management district. There are objections from residents who are being assessed and feel that they should not be. PP gives short history of the Lake Management District and relates details of the documents provided by the residents. BOCC discusses the issue and votes to deny the request to be removed from the Lake Management Dist. They then pass a resolution to add some parcels and remove others.

1:02:00 – JD leaves, meeting is unofficially adjourned for lunch.