

Okanogan County Board of Commissioners Meeting

12/13/2016

**Present:**

JD - Jim DeTro

RC - Ray Campbell

LJ - Lanie Johns

PH - Perry Huston

AL - Albert Lin

LT - Laurie Thomas (Auditor)

Deb - Head of Human Resources (Debbie Hilts)

Staff person

AH - Andy Hover (incoming commissioner)

**Note taker comments**

*The Board of Commissioners did not formally convene their meeting, and much of the time the Commissioners' Clerk was not present or taking notes while discussions were conducted.*

**Summary of substantive subjects, or those discussed in detail**

**Commissioners' Staff Meeting**

**Legal Counsel**

*AL reports that 1) in the Three Devils Road vacation case, oral arguments will be heard on January 31<sup>st</sup> (?), and 2) in the ATV case, the County has made a motion to strike and is waiting for the court determination.*

**Human Resources**

*Deb reported on a number of new hires. A few County employees received raises based on FSLA (federal legislation); challenges in court to the FSLA have resulted in an injunction. PH advised against reversing the raises, based on the small amount of money involved.*

**Planning**

*PH noted that there is a Planning Department study session scheduled for tomorrow (12/14/16), and that issues will be discussed at that time. Nightly rentals will be addressed. Tonasket EMS Accounts Receivable has about \$60,000; PH is working on organizing the information by year and category to help the County recover the funds. PH is studying the costs of maintaining the Agri-Plex relative to rental fees.*

**Miscellaneous**

*There was a lengthy discussion of various topics. It was not clear whether it was part of the Staff Meeting. Much of the discussion was inaudible. Notes were not taken by the Commissioners' Clerk. Topics included elk, wolves, cougars, the Hlrst decision, the Whatcom County decision, the Electoral College, Futurewise, AH's attendance at the WASAC (?) training, and other topics that the note taker could not hear.*

### ***Planning, cont'd***

*PH discussed the 2016 and 2017 facilities budgets. Apparently there has been inconsistency in regard to allocating costs between the Fair and facilities, due to the involvement of Planning, the Fair Advisory Group and the Auditor. PH intends to develop a consistent budgeting approach.*

### **Update - Auditor - Laurie Thomas**

*Laurie Thomas did not appear. At about 11 am, AH asked whether there would be an update from the Auditor. JD told him that she would not be back until the 18<sup>th</sup>.*

### **Update - Public Works**

*JT briefly describes status of repairs to bridges on S.R. 153, construction of two other bridges, the need for bank protection on the Methow River in the vicinity of Gold Creek. AH expresses concern about the possibility of structural failure of one or more bridges along the Methow River and the lack of alternative routes for keeping S.R. 153 open. RC expressed concern about driving conditions on the West Chewuch Rd. JT asks for a resolution allowing the County Engineer to sign agreements with WSDOT to acquire federal funding; the commissioners approve the resolution. JT describes maintenance activities being conducted by Public Works staff.*

### **Consent Agenda**

*LJ provides the commissioner with a number of items not previously entered on the consent agenda. Topics included Community Services, the Pest Control Board and annexation of the Town of Winthrop into Fire District 6. Some of the topics addressed were inaudible to the note taker. Commissioners approved all the documents.*

9:00 Note taker arrives

9:03 AL arrives

### **9:05 Commissioners Staff Meeting**

JD - Okay...

AL - Three Devils hearing - oral argument on outlined issues familiar to the Commissioner - on Jan. 31<sup>st</sup> (?) ATV - motion to strike, waiting for court determination. Any questions? (*No questions*)

Any other questions?

RC - Shoreline review. Concern about addressing some of those comments. Wonder if that is taking place. Would like to see Perry or somebody taking care of that.

AL - Might want to raise that on Wednesday at Planning meeting. Zone code, Comp plan, all coordinated.

Staff - County employees driving county vehicles home as a fringe benefit. They are supposed to record miles and report those on their taxes.

RC - Ask them for their logs?

Staff - Talked to the Auditor about keeping track. Talked to Deb. Public Works that need to respond to snow storms in the middle of the night, that is emergency use and doesn't count as a benefit. Commuting for regular work does.

HR - Busy in the last month. Have had 8 hires in PW, some of those returning. District Court prosecuting attorney position. Hired Solid Waste manager yesterday. Senior Front Desk Clerk opening. Interviews next week for PW financial tech. (*Too many details to capture*). Our AFSME group (*union*) has not signed yet - insurance issues. Premera contract has gone up 24% (?). They are interested in joining PEBB.

JD - Thought they didn't like PEBB.

HR - Yes, but I couldn't tell them that. Updating (*mentions various documents*). Will send them after the first of the year. You have read in the paper that FSLA suit was lost.

PH - 29 states have brought suit against it. We are not party to the suit. Injunction against implementation. They haven't necessarily won yet.

RC - Where does that leave us?

HR - It is implemented and done. There are no issues. If the lawsuit fails, we have implemented and done. If it is successful, we won't be taking back raises.

*(Discussion occurs too fast to capture)*

PH - In this case, fairly modest raises. You were pro-active in responding to new mandate. Should stay the course. There are other places in the budget we can save that money. One man's opinion.

HR - FSLA mandate was just for those four employees. We got it all taken care of. The issue was not about the money. The amount, doubling, was too extreme. We will see what the new administration does.

*(Discussion too rapid)*

HR - That's it for me.

PH - We have a study session in the morning. Will deal with issues there. Sent a memo yesterday about nightly rentals. We have a couple of options. Will have commissioners decide on that. Decide where they want to draw the line (*for vested operations?*). Tonasket EMS on the agenda. Going up today to deal with claims - put at least two to bed. Also have about 60K under Accounts Receivable. Breaking it out by year and by category. Tracking that down. More detail tomorrow. Have been doing spot checking at Fairgrounds, in terms of expense. We are using about 100 gal of propane a day heating the Agri-plex, stopping it from freezing, even with repairs. Am trying to get a handle on hard expenses for maintaining, relative to what we charge for rentals. Christmas baskets (free event) and a wedding, then nothing until the end of January.

RC - Keep the water circulating, don't need much heat.

PH - Right. Just trying to figure out what it costs.

RC - is that system on top of the slab, or under it?

PH - Don't know, trying to find As-Builts.

RC - If it is under the slab, it would have to get pretty cold...

PH - Right. Trying to figure out if we need both pilot lights

*(Discussion of water system)*

PH - Turned it on Sunday morning at 9:00. When I went back yesterday, it was light jacket conditions. 12 more hours and it was T-shirt weather. Lot of lag time, stays warm quite a while.

RC - Cascade has done work on it. They should know.

PH - Yes, but haven't found anything on the gas system. We will figure it out. As Debbie pointed out, we are at full staff. Looking at moving them around. We have all the well data we need for DOE meeting in January. Am looking at including the static data. Lay that in against the flow gages. Trying to correlate precipitation and river levels with static level. Wednesday had meeting with (?). A few well drillers. Good meeting. Think everyone has a good understanding of the information you need on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

Staff - *(inaudible)*

PH - Can't find his card. *(Staff provides phone number to PH)* I'll check with him. Those are the high points. Is there anything else?

RC - Will cover those in the planning session

9:42 PH, HR & staff leave.

RC - Move to approve vouchers (?)

JD - Second. *(Approved)*

*RC receives a basket of paperwork from LJ, looks at it briefly, and passes it to JD. They appear to be signing documents. Conversation is inaudible. RC returns paperwork to LJ. Commissioners work in silence.*

9:48 RC leaves, returns at 9:50

JD - Did you read the Stevens County (?) on the water deal? They want to fix *(reads too quickly to record. Evidently, Stevens County government disagrees with the Hirst decision)*. They have some good points.

*(Discussion of various entities that oppose the Hirst decision, then commissioners work in silence)*

LJ - Group coming on the 9<sup>th</sup> to talk about elk herds & damage. Invited them to come to Perry's study session because he is usually involve with that.

10:00 JD leaves; returns at 10:07. *Inaudible conversation between RC & JD.*

JD - So does the Whatcom County decision supersede our own health ordinance?

RC - *(inaudible)*. Futurewise - do they want to do that? *(inaudible)*

JD - I don't think they are smart enough *(inaudible)*

RC - *(inaudible)*. One of those ideas from the big city.

JD - They need to start looking at (inaudible)

RC - That is why we have the electoral vote. Don't want New York City...

JD - Exactly. That is an exaggeration... It used to be one senator from each County. That is how it was set up, originally.

RC - (inaudible)

JD - Andy - do you know where the Board of Health is meeting?

AH - Yes. I am going to go down there.

*LJ tells AH about the meeting with farmers regarding elk. Scheduled for 1:30, at the beginning of PH's study session. Explains that the Board has previously directed PH to handle these complaints.*

RC - We had some complaints last year.

JD - And further up Eaton Valley.

AH - Have the wolves been having an effect on the elk?

JD - Don't know if you have been following the wolf problem. In Stevens County, the wolf-huggers have threatened their children, gone in and shot their cattle. Had a meeting with Jim Unsworth (Director of WDFW). Told him that I am saying it is hearsay so that I don't get in a position. Told him constituents have gone underground, are taking care of it themselves. That is why it is not a problem here.

RC - No evidence.

JD - That is why I say it is hearsay.

AH - But now we have a problem with elk... I have seen them up in Chewelah.

JD - The wolf plan will never come to fruition. Will not cross I-5, go to the west side. That's why I say we should trap them and transport them over there.

*(RC agrees, calls the plan a 'Catch-22'.)*

*(Note: Commissioner's clerk has not taken notes on discussions since the apparent end of the staff meeting.)*

AH - Everything needs to be managed.

JD - Since ESA, allowed to environmentalists and lawyers..

AH - Everything is cyclical. If we just let them go, they will eat everything and then they will starve.

RC - If they are let go, they will just devastate everything.

AH - Right now, we are talking about an active problem (the elk?). We can get depredation permits.

JD - Problem up in Chesaw, fire one shot and they go across the border. Come back after the season is over. They are smart.

AH - Right now, we are having problem with deer in haystacks.

PH - Have commissioners looked at 2016 facilities budget? We can move some money around.

RC - I would like to see that in black and white. There always seems to be some confusion *(about Fair vs. facilities costs)*

PH - Fair enough.

AH - Should be separated. Distinguish between the facilities the county owns vs. the Fair.

PH - *(Discusses details of budget, too fast to capture)*. Will run some numbers, see what we are buying.

RC - Just the facilities themselves, the advertising.

PH - Right. I'll do some work on this one.

LJ returns, starts taking notes

RC - Advisory Committee thinks they should *(determine budget?)*

PH - Depends how you want to track it. Rental or (?). Just a question of how you want to do it. I have a feeling that it is going back and forth. Three legs on stool: Fair Board, Auditor's Office & my office. Will go through 2016 budget, try to figure that out, get the details. Then move onto the 2017 budget, decide how you want to track expenses.

10:32 PH leaves; LJ leaves

RC - On the wolf issue, I made an effort to reach out. Talked to the WDFW conflict resolution person.

JD - WDFW pays her \$850K for two years. Went to a meeting with her with the cattlemen and Joel Kretz. She got all emotional, cried at the meeting. You pay me \$425K a year, I'll cry at meetings, too. *(Talks about Selkirks, Yellowstone, wolves eliminating elk and grizzlies)*

Conversation continues, too fast to capture.

10:37 LJ returns, confers with AH. Provides him with some paperwork. Inaudible.

AH - Went to WASAC training. Don't want per diem. Would like to be paid for hotel.

*(Apparently the paperwork involves travel reimbursement. Commissioners continue to talk between themselves. No notes are being taken by clerk)*

JD - Did you get a lot out of that?

AH - Yes I did. Met a lot of people who knew my dad. Met a lot of new commissioners coming in. Interesting insights. *(Discussion of some of the individuals)* Got some interesting insight from (?). Talked about using the term 'forest resource management' instead of 'logging', more in tune with the times.

JD - Skamania has a big problem...

AH - Yes, their problem is mind-boggling. I thought we had a problem. They have 4% of the land in public ownership.

*(More discussion of individuals. Problems with cougars comes up)*

AH - The saving grace with cougars is that they are solitary animals...

JD - They will hunt in packs. I have a picture showing seven cougars on a kill.

AH - Look at the black bears. Everything needs management.

JD lists cougars killed around county.

RC - Problem with cougars is that they have no fear....

AH - Since the fires, the deer coming down.

RC - Even before the fires, they had no fear. People used to have hounds, and the cougars were afraid, now they are not.

AH - Part of the management strategy. If you are out there hunting and you see a cougar and you shoot it, you don't know if it is male or female. When you hunted with hounds and you treed it, you could see. Who is going to set the agenda for the first meeting that I will be at?

JD - It is open right now.

10:56 RC leaves

AH - Is the Auditor not coming in?

JD - No. She is not due back until the 18<sup>th</sup>.

AH - Oh. Okay.

10:58 JT arrives; RC returns

11:00 - Update - Public Works (Clerk not present for minutes until 11:08)

AH - (?) wanted to know about Hwy 153 bridges.

JT - WDFW will only let WSDOT work on 2 bridges a year.

AH - That is a little unnerving to me. If one of those bridges fail...

JT - Yes, there is no good way to get around them. They don't have money for replacement.

AH - Is there someone I can talk to in Wenatchee?

RC - They are inspecting them, working on them.

AH - They have girders. If the deck fails, it is part of the structure.

11:02 RC leaves & comes back, talking with PH; JD leaves.

RC to AH - We have a decision to make, about the water.

11:04 - JD returns. RC talks to JT about something on the West Chewuch Rd.

JT - Friends up there are concerned... Last year we did a speed study (*cites results*). So you are talking about mile 5.2? (*yes*)

JD - (*inaudible*).. that would be my suggestion.

JT - Okay. I haven't driven it with that in mind

*(more discussion of driving conditions on both the Chewuch Roads)*

JT - Okay. I'll look at it that way, break it up into sections.

11:08 LJ returns

JT - Road maintenance. Brush cutting. (*refers to 2 bridges*) bridge construction going the right way. Need the water come down a few inches so we can drive piles. Upcoming construction projects. Tonasket bridge south next summer so we don't hold up school buses. Conconully (?) Bridge load ratings. Federal requirements for re-load rating (concentrated loads). 25 bridges need to be re-rated (sometime in 2017). Advertising for consultant. Rest of bridges in 2018. Adams County (?) resolution that allows county engineer to obligate the county for federal funds. Addresses federal requirements. Change orders I sign but bring before you so that you know what is going on. Can sign under emergency circumstances. Ran this by AL - only one small change. He approves of language, as long as you approve what is in it.

JD - Who requested this?

JT - DOT administers federal funds. DOT finance branch. Don't see that it changes anything about the way we do business.

JD - Right

LJ - Any changes to what you sent me? (JT points out one small change)

RC - We will have this back tonight before we leave.

JT - Sent you proposed speed limit comments. Not much there.

RC - (Moves to adopt resolutions; seconded; passed)

JT - Thank you for doing that on short notice. Proposed road vacations - we got those advertised last week, so we are okay with public notice. Four on reservation. Checking with BIA/Tribe.

*(Discussion of reservation roads. Road crew doing GPS of roads were told to leave)*

RC - They just flex their muscles all the time.

JT - It wasn't anything official. Do I need to be at the Exit Conference?

JD - They didn't have anything on PW, so you get a clean bill of health.

JT - Good. That is thanks to Kerri (?)

*(Discussion of some individual who complains about everything the county does on his road)*

RC - Gold Creek Rd. Lynda Hofmann put the kibosh on the riprap. What was the reason for that?

JT - They don't like riprap.

RC - I need go get hold of Jim Brown. That is just going to keep going.

JT - I talked to Chris Johnson about it. He doesn't think it is a good place for a log crib wall. Just encroaches on the channel. If he supports it, it might help. That is one we need to address.

AH - That is right there where you go past Creveling's old place?

RC - No, right at the bottom of the road.

AH - Right. That is very dangerous. Is that a straight stretch of the river, or in a curve?

JT - (?) There is riprap right next to it. They stopped about 150 ft too soon. Think we need to just reinforce the toe, not encroach into the river.

*11:29 JT leaves; AH leaves*

*LJ approaches commissioners with an armload of papers.*

LJ - I have a lot of things that are not on the (consent?) agenda. The first one is a grant (inaudible) (moved, seconded, passed)

LJ - Two requests from Community Services. This will allow them to get reimbursed (inaudible) (both moved, seconded, passed)

LJ - Two contracts. One is for the Pest Control Board. The other is (description is too fast to record. They are both approved)

Oroville EMS vouchers are approved.

LJ - Two more resolutions I am working on. Town of Winthrop to annex into Fire District 6. The other is to authorize Perry to transfer funds from the contingency fund. I will have those for you this afternoon. Do you want to move to adjourn (inaudible)?

*11:40 Commissioners move to adjourn. They work in silence on computer and phone. 'Blackie' comes in and there is a discussion of the NFR.*

*11:46 LJ returns.*

*11:47 JD leaves. Note taker leaves.*

t

