

Okanogan County Board of County Commissioners meeting February 14, 2022
AM session

AH – Andy Hover, BOCC Chair, District 2
CB—Chris Branch, BOCC vice-chair, District 1
JD – Jim DeTro, BOCC member, District 3
Crystal ?- Deputy Clerk of the Board
ZK- Zak Kennedy – Lobbyist
MW – Mike Worden (Sheriff’s Dept)

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, see https://www.okanogancounty.org/offices/commissioners/commissioners_proceedings.php

Summary of Significant Discussion: Vacancy on Board of Equalization; qualification for citizen appointee to Salmon Recovery group; possible formation of new North Central WA county group (similar to NEWC) with Chelan and Douglas counties; Legislative Update focusing on bills that address firearms and magazine capacity, using dogs to hunt dangerous wildlife, and cannabis; discussion about Public Health Dept- how it is structured, what authority they have (with particular attention to the environmental health officer); presentation on Equitable Sharing Agreement (required to disburse funds from seizures); Discussion about county jail and possible revenue sources

The time stamps refer to the times on the AV Capture archive of the meeting on this date. Click [here](#) to go to the video.

NOTE- the AV Capture audio was not functioning for the first half hour or so. It was re-started when the lobbyist, Zak Kennedy began his update. Notes for the discussions prior to that were taken from Zoom meeting.

AH - Discusses bonding for new building. *(The County has purchased the building that is located next to the Public Works building at the south end of the town of Okanogan).* He was contacted by Judge Short regarding need for District Court to be near the jail. The BOCC will look at options for which of the courts and related services move to the new building.

Crystal – There is an applicant for vacant at-large position on board of equalization.

Someone contacted BOCC with a concern that the scope of work for courthouse job has not been completed.

NOTE- AV Capture starts working partway into the following discussion about the Salmon Recovery committee.

AH – Brings up the Salmon Recovery citizen advisory committee. It has 7 people. Bylaws say they need to be resident of Okanogan County. There is a person who wants to be on the committee who no longer lives in the county, and who was previously on the committee from 2010 – 2014. AH wants to amend bylaws to allow a former resident to be on the committee. Discussion followed about what the citizens advisory committee does, and what the impact of such a change would mean. AH suggests that the committee proceed with recruiting residents for the two vacancies, and if they can't find anyone, they will re-visit the idea of changing by-laws.

AH asks if CB has talked with undersheriff about “that letter”. *(No details about what the letter is about).*

4:20 - CB mentions that he talked recently about having a NCW group of county commissioners. Interesting discussion ensues about how Okanogan County is connected to neighboring counties. AH mentions that we have a NE county group (*NEWC- meets quarterly and is comprised of commissioners from Okanogan, Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille counties*), and that often the issues they talk about don't really apply to our county. We have a lot in common with the other NCW counties (*Chelan and Douglas*). Discussion about some of the things that NCW counties deal with.

7:05 -ZK reports that very few people are in Olympia currently, but security is higher than he's ever seen. Guards everywhere. He's not sure what they are guarding for, but they are guarding well. Hearing that there will not be any compromises. Because the Gov vetoed all compromises last year, they won't be asking for any more.

ZK- Wednesday is a big day for firearms stuff. Bill on high capacity magazines ([SB 5078](#)) will be heard. You need to let people know about it. Has been challenged constitutionally. To testify you need to register an hour before.

ZK- Bill [HB 1918](#) – about small engines such as leaf blowers etc, after 2025 (*AH interrupts to ask about gun bill and conversation never gets back to the small engine bill*)

ZK- Inside talk is that Dems don't think they will do well. They are hardly funding their own culvert work. Trying to bring Tribes more into the conversation.

Anything in a finance committee we need to keep an eye on. Could move forward. Rumor that they might do riparian stuff in a budget proviso. They might require a study to prove effectiveness of restricting riparian areas.

Limits on Gov ability to declare a state of emergency. Gov is very unhappy about a bill that surfaced that would restrict his powers. It got his attention, but the Bill didn't go anywhere. Majority caucus will have to get on the same page.

WSAC is doing a pretty good job.

CB- asks about a bill dealing with dispatching of bears and other wild animals.

ZK – using dogs to hunt? Is that the one?

AH – [SB 5613](#). Requires sheriff to get permission of WDFW before dispatching dogs to dispatch dangerous wildlife. Discussion about how that is unnecessary and how can you restrict elected official's ability to do his job.

ZK – why would you want to add another layer of control? There is another commissioner who has submitted quite a bit of testimony.

CB – has a couple of questions, what changes are necessary to make the bill acceptable. Want to make sure that we don't simply oppose it, but look at what changes could we suggest to make it palatable.

AH – I disagree with it anyway. The sheriff has jurisdiction in the county. DFW doesn't have jurisdiction. I oppose anything that would limit the county sheriff's ability to protect the citizens of the county.

CB – concerned about a bill that is likely to pass, and wondering if there were amendments that could make it easier to live with. Wonders if rather than requiring permission each time there could be a blanket approval.

ZK- we don't need this. This comes from the Olympic Penn. And they get kooky ideas over there in the rain forest. Will follow up to see if it looks likely to move on.

CB notes that the bill is moving forward and has a chance of passing. Wants to make sure that we take an opportunity to suggest amendments that we can live with.

21:35 CB – I have a question about another bill about cannabis. Has to do with craft licenses.

ZK – What is the question? Is it bill [HB 1260](#)? Craft cannabis production? Looking to expand market for craft cannabis production.

CB – I'm curious if it has opportunity to drive smaller production model. One of the growers asked why counties are opposed. (*WSAC has opposed this bill*). The issue is local control, which we want to retain. Does it take away our ability to regulate? Would it be better for small producers? Is the argument between big cannabis vs small producer? Similar to brew pubs. There may be something to it for counties who are dealing with issue of large cannabis producers driving out the small guys. Might help with the problem of people buying up large tracts of land and leasing out to multiple large growers that we have here.

ZK – it might allow direct retail sales from small producers, but retail shops are opposed.

One way to handle that would be to put the cannabis growers under Dept of Ag.

28:07 CB- one more question. Do you work for Chelan and Douglas counties? No. Adams? No. Kittitas no, Klickitat yes. Lincoln yes. We are talking about another small coalition of counties in NCW. and was wondering about our common interests. Also have relationship with Adams, etc.

ZK- reason we don't represent Douglas and Chelan is that their main issues are fish. They are different than other counties. Kittitas is their own monster.

CB – asks if ZK ever finds himself representing counties that have opposing issues.

ZK- says that he thinks it is a good idea to think about collaborating with Chelan and Douglas. There is a chance that Douglas county might come back with us, but don't think Chelan will.

JD- asks about magazine capacity bill and wonders how they are going to enforce it?

ZK- that's a good question. There is an exemption for pre-owned. There are lots of questions about proving ownership and when it was purchased. We are not letting our guard down.

AH- asks if that same bill was struck down in CA?

ZK – yes it did.

JD- says if you want to buy a rotary magazine you have to check if it says on the bottom “made in CA – 6 rounds only”. Short conversation about different types of gun magazines.

ZK – well that’s no good. *(Concludes update)*

36:08 - CB - anyone know Peter Conrad? He is applying for Board of Equalization position (at large). JD and AH don’t know him. Apparently he is a pilot for Wheels Up *(a private jet company)*. Seems like he would be as good as anyone for deciding if property has been appropriately taxed. Move to approve. AH – seconds, asks for discussion. CB- mentions that all Board of Equalization members are trained. Motion to appoint Peter Conrad is passed.

There is a long period of no conversation while commissioners work on their computers.

47:35 – CB asks Crystal for a copy of agreement between Okanogan County and the City of Oroville regarding the Similkameen trailhead.

50:38 – CB asks other commissioners if they have talked to Dave Hilton about changes in code. AH relates that Dave Hilton (Environmental Health Director) said they needed to have a public meeting. AH suggested he consult the county attorney. Says he (AH) knows what’s going on. JD – well he doesn’t want anyone telling him what to do.

Very interesting conversation ensues about the authority and organizational structure of the Public Health Department.

JD – The dept of public health runs their own ship and thumbs their nose at everyone else. They should not act like they are law enforcement.

CB – relates history of how Dept of Public health is organized and structured. Changes made in the past have led to a dysfunctional department.

AH mentions the State statues that govern how the board of health is run and that the Health Officer has a lot of authority. It’s the same thing that was happening at Trango. Someone wanted to take over control and it was a mess.

56:30 – Tech support (Ray) comes in to help CB get on line with his computer.

1:00:00 – AH says he got an e-mail from Tony about the Bonapart Creek bridge. Discussion about bridges and lack of room for pedestrians and bicycles.

AH – mentions that infrastructure bill has money for bridges in OK County. More discussion about bridges, bicycles and pedestrians.

JD relates story about an encounter with a bicycle while he was driving a truck.

1:05:40 – discussion about road and bridge conditions concludes.

Approx. 7 minute interval of silence while BOCC works on computers.

1:12:40 – AH asks if CB wants to bring up budget for ARPA funds that they have been working on? Discussion about the list and how CB has been working on a draft. *(Okanogan County has \$8.2M to spend from the American Recovery Plan Act).*

1:16:00 – Discussion about how public perception is often inaccurate. AH says that some people from the Republican party have accused him of appointing a prosecutor without consulting them. *(Note- the Republican party did not submit names as required so BOCC had to do interim appointment until Republicans can provide a list for them to choose from).*

1:17:45 – Meeting is interrupted by Zoom bomber.

Approx 14 minute interval while BOCC works on computers.

1:31:44 – AH shows Crystal some changes that need to be made on the spreadsheet for the budget supplemental to make it accurate.

1:33:00 – brief discussion about some details on the ARPA money allocation. (*Note- ARPA money allocation is discussed in detail in the afternoon session on 2/14/22*).

1:35:30 – Budget supplemental hearing for vehicle reserve fund. No public comments. Motion is made and passed to approve transfer of funds for Assessor's vehicle.

1:38:45 – Discussion returns to ARPA funds.

1:41:40 – Undersheriff Mike Worden reports on Equitable Sharing Agreement that is required by law. Gives background and reason for needing BOCC approval of agreement. Program requires the county to be the fiduciary agent for the task force. Mostly deals with funds that are obtained through seizure.

CB – relates story about an issue involving the town of Oroville and funds that were seized.

MW – elaborates on how that would related to current situation.

CB – mentions that he has modified a letter that MW has written regarding jail agreement with Douglas County.

Conversation about the arrangement with Douglas County – AH mentions they will need an addendum to the existing contract.

Discussion turns to options for renting out jail space to other counties in the state. Perhaps focus on people who have already been sentenced. Must not happen until our jail staff is back up to full staffing levels.

1:52:40 – BOCC adjourns until 1:30.