

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
March 20, 2017

Jim Detro – JD, BOCC
Chris Branch – CB, BOCC
Andy Hover – AH, BOCC
Albert Lin – AL, Prosecuting Atty
Josh Thomson - JT- County Engineer

Perry Huston – PH - Planning, Admin
Lanie Johns – LJ- County Clerk
Leah McCormack – LM- Treasurer
Laurie Thomas – LT - Auditor
Ben Rough - BR- Public Works

This is a paraphrasing of conversations by one of several volunteer citizen note takers and published on the website of Represent Okanogan County (ROC.) Any writer's comments or explanations are in italics. For officially approved minutes of Board of Commissioner meetings, normally published at a later date, see www.okanogancounty.org.

CONTENT: Public Works & Landfill Dozer, Hwy 7 Right of Way purchase, Repeal of ATV ordinance, Muddy roads, Exec Session ongoing litigation, Water conservation & beaver, County Road plan, Hirst fix, Sheep management on Hwy 97 N, Role of note takers & BOCC, CB & Supt. Public Lands, Fair Manual, County Parks & Rec Plan, Jail update and Grant Co. BOCC, MTG w/ County Elected Officials, Budget issues, Tax increase, Terminate planning agreement, VSP, Planning Dept. Vehicle, Co. Code & fees, Letters to USFS /NPS– grazing & grizzly, Grandstand, Budget costs!!

9:00 BOCC STAFF MEETING

- all present. Public Works (PW) and the new head of the landfill (Connelly?) present. PH – is talking about water and permitting process as note taker arrives. PH asks about LJ & ATV ordinance progress.

Public Works – Solid Waste is making a request of a new bulldozer. The current D6 has accumulated needed repairs that exceed its value and wants to purchase a new D6. Earlier plans had been to accumulate funds to purchase a D8 but the money would not be saved up for several years. The new D6 is much more powerful and much cheaper, needed now, and more than adequate. There is enough money available with a need to carefully monitor the budget and cost cut through the rest of the year without additional funds. Discussion is over which BARS code with sufficient funds and purpose. Current D6 has a need for over \$50,000 repairs and then is in need of an overhaul. Talk about where the money comes from and go to balance line items. Currently rental cost are put into a line and then goes into ER (Equipment Rental & Repairs), PW will take money out of ERR and then replenish ERR out of operating expenses. There is already money in Operating Expenses and will be transferred when there is an invoice. JD – sees prices for new equipment is much lower than a contractor price. JT – these are posted prices through a state bid

and includes D6, D7 & D8 as comparisons. Bottom line is that with luck PW can do this within current budget.

JT – Wants to get BOCC to authorize right away **Hwy 7 right of way purchase** so PW can get to work and meet timeline. This involves an intersection with N. Pine Creek Rd. PW needs to improve line of sight at the intersection. There are 4 different land owners involved. BOCC approves purchase of right of way.

BOCC resolution without comment: 2017 – 1, repeal of ATV resolution that was challenged in court.

That old resolution opened up all county roads that were 35 mph or lower to ATV usage. This allows new plan to review the county roads area by area and selectively decide about each road.

AH & JT: General discussion about the difficulties of maintaining **muddy roads** during the thaw season and especially during such a wet spring. Not possible to work over night when roads have been frozen as there is too short of notice to comply with work rules and notice to employees.

9:33 AL – wants an **exec session** about ongoing litigation, 15 min to begin and gets extend in two stages 25 min more.

AH mentions of having beaver enhancement as a tool of **water conversation and water issues** in the Methow. There is a rule revision proposal looking for constructive engagement to accomplish a variety of needs. There is a need to develop a comprehensive plan, enhance the resource and to conserve.

CB brings up **county transportation plan** – there is a need to look at lower level roads – primitive rds etc. There is a need to keep potential for use of access. CB attends Legislative Planning committee.

There is a concern over the nature and even the possibility of a **Hirst fix** in the state legislature.

The note taker asks about thinking about a long term consideration of effect of **increased fencing along Hwy 97, Mt. Hull and sheep management**. This arises out of a proposed surplus property sale in the area.

AH – concern over grizzly in populated areas in Upper Methow.

AH with note taker – lengthy discussion of the **role of note takers & BOCC**. AH is concerned that some statements in the past in the notes are perceptions and not official. Would like to make that ROC be especially clear that it is posted on the ROC site that those notes are perceptions and not official.

CB will be having an appointment with **H. Franz, Supt. Of Public Lands** and will be sharing points of view. Also he has met with DNR regional representative about co-operating over issues.

11:28 LJ & AH – wants to put together a **comprehensive fair manual** discussing overlap of Fair & Facilities – funding, responsibilities, and such. Reach for consistency and clarity in a Fair Manual. AH expresses a need to meet with the Fair Building managers and other supervisors looking for common goals and policies. LJ – need to recognize all the ownership and hard work of volunteers and contributions over the years. CB sees need for continuity between past, current and future BOCC and a good manual would be a big step towards that and other usages at the Fair grounds. PH gives some history to disbanding of old Parks & Recreation Board and moving to a Fair Advisory Committee. Old Parks & Rec looked at whole of the County and there were internal issues. *(CB is interrupted when he was wanting to voice a misgiving. He passes a note to AH while PH continues).* There was an overlap with Park & Rec Board and **Parks & Rec Comp Plan**. AH – old plan called for a taxing district with one goal to pay the proposed Parks & Rec board members. CB sees fair & fair facilities need to pay for themselves. Need to work in that direction. Need for people to focus on fair and another group that focuses on the facilities. Sees a need to update a County Parks & Rec Comprehensive Plan.

AH wants/needs a formalized letter to Douglas County BOCC communicating about **costs on jail update** (ceiling, communication pods, etc.) and for them to consider. Hopefully this will start an exchange of ideas and lead to a good IGA (Inter-Governmental Agreement).

AH announces that there will be a noon lunch meeting with the **County elected officials** to share concerns. Topics might cover budget, PILT and more.

Lunch. (Meeting among BOCC and County Elected Officials.)

Budget - Extended conversation (picking up from Lunchtime meeting w/elected officials)

Upon return the meeting is still going on with Frank Rogers expression how the last budget left him underfunded and that it will not be possible to do the job with that budget. Various requested budget lines were zeroed out by the last BOCC in order to reach a balanced budget. Some are necessary expenses.

Looks like the County will not be able to pay back \$2 million the full loan made to balance the **budget and cover cash** flow until 1st property tax by the end of year. A big pay back was recently made. This will extend budget tightness and problems into next year at least.

LM (Treasurer) is uncomfortable with the way future looks. Revenue may not come through so services in some departments would have to be reduced. Feels Sheriff's budget is currently insufficient, will need to find additional funding to alleviate the problem.

LT (Auditor) – need to put pressure on legislature to stop cuts to counties. Current issue, as an example, is there might be a requirement for County to put a ballot drop box at each Post Office in County. This would require installation, upkeep and also timely pickup of the ballots on a voting day. This is extra money with no additional revenue. More actions like this are coming from the state.

1:32 - Went over a recent bid process where there had been some problems. One bid came in late, BOCC needs to accept apparent low bid and ignore late bid. LJ went over the details and verification of lateness.

Proposed Sales Tax - Criminal Justice, etc.

1:35 PH – there is no room for a tax increase in proposed Jail Tax, Mental Health, infrastructure – these are already maxed out. Available are a juvenile detention (.1%), communication (.1%), general sales tax (up to .3%) but that would last would be shared with cities so is less than the .3% to the County. 2 Cities currently collect 1/3 cent for fire and would need to be considered in those cities. LM – there are a couple of counties, Franklin, Walla Walla, that have raised a voted tax increase in criminal justice tax in excess of BOCC jurisdiction levels. She will check on how this was done.

PH - .1% Cum tax is pre-mature at this time. There needs to be a build out of the system to justify to the public the need for the expenditure. The tax is not a capitol improvement source under most conditions. The .1% Juv. tax is appropriate, a lot of discussion and impetus form last election cycle to support it. A .3% sales tax has a lot of involved interests so many entities (cities) might support and work on the behalf to cover a variety of costs.

Sales tax decision

The consensus is running all is not possible to be successful. CB leans towards the .3% sales tax and perhaps the juvenile because it's "right." AH is considering the best strategy and likelihood of passage: juvenile would be totally county revenue, while the sales tax would be shared with the cities. Mayor Culp (Okanogan City) gave a position they would be open to a discussion on a shared sales tax. There is a general agreement with the idea that the juvenile tax is doable. CB still feels a co-operative city/county effort could sell a .3% sales tax increase. Yes, could do a juvenile .1% but there are severe needs for additional funding that juvenile would not cover. AH leaning at .1% juvenile which would generate bout \$640,000 a year. JD supports a .1% juvenile tax and the consensus is then to run a .1% juvenile levy on this Fall's ballot. BOCC moves and approves to do this. Directs PH, Prosecuting Attorney office and Auditor to prepare. CB opposes for reasons stated.

Termination of Development Agreement

PH – asks for a resolution to **terminate an old development agreement**. Sonora Point on Spectacle Lake. They are not moving ahead with the original plan. Their business plan has changed over the years. They want to terminate the old agreement as there has been nothing done towards the old agreement. The agreement establish a frozen in time procedural process for a staged build out so they would have consistent policies and regulations to work under. By termination they would do away with that agreement and any future effort would piece by piece fall under the current policies at that time.

Voluntary Stewardship Program – Conservation District, Grant Co. VSP & Okanogan VSP work group want to have the Grant Co. VSP come up and present to the Ok. Co. group. Money would come out of current state grant. BOCC OKs doing that.

2:12 Planning Dept. vehicle is shared and also Planning Dept. business. It needs new tires, alignment. Planning has the money in their budget band can shift money to cover the cost. Planning could save some money on budget on a new plotter for printing large maps due to lower than expected cost for replacement. AH wants to prepare paper work and move on this sooner than later.

Hirst, WRIA 38,49,& 50

Okanogan Co. Code update needs a decision on water availability in WRIA 48 & 49. 710 gallons per day (debit) is the number to deduct from the remaining available water for the use of each well. This is the average amount used for each domestic well. (650 gpd for irrigation, 30 gpd for indoor use, & 30 gpd for stock watering).

- Mitigation can offset some usage – vegetation management (Remove veg., less irrigate, favor less consumptive vegetation are examples). Want to find a way to encourage being more water efficient in outdoor irrigation.

CB – WRIA 49 could do a sub-basin review of water, and not allow any exempt wells in the Water Service Area (WSA) and then review where water rights have been relinquished through non-use. Lot owners would need to hook up to an existing system. Might save money in the long run for the individual lot owner. Example is around the valley in the Lake Osoyoos area. PH – needs BOCC input on how to proceed. He has pending permits on the table he needs to act on. AH – points out that the costliness of review of prospects. It is not financially feasible to do that in depth for each case. CB proposes asking users in a basin, lots, estimating potential build out and current permit & water right holders to convene and work towards a solution. PH – he has 3 pending in WRIA 50 (San Poil). There is no in stream flow rule in that area but points out that only very little of that watershed is in County, most is on the Colville.

2:57 JD leaves. John Wyss came in through the back door and sat in the back. He wants to meet briefly with PH. He has been just listening. There is a lengthy discussion of approaches to analyzing number and type of water available in a given area.

3:10 PH & staff are building a web page the people can track where in the process and the status that a permit might be.

Fee schedule is still not changing the cost of a certificate of water availability. Can only charge fees that reflect actual cost recovery. Asks that BOCC consider current expenses and staff time and look at a \$200 fee to cover actual costs. What does BOCC want to do about such a fee, if any?

Letter to USFS, grizzlies,

The proposed **letter to USFS Williams**, AL has reviewed, does the BOCC want to send the letter? Second letter to the NPS on grizzly re-introduction – many counties are opposing due to usage of old data, climate change. John Wyss (JW) has copies of all letters of opposition as well as from legislature. He will forward them to BOCC via PH.

Admin Issues: - no update on fair ground staffing, - preliminary work on **grandstand** decision. Estimate a canopy at \$140,000 to cover a slab & bleachers would be under \$200,00 total – might have more opportunity for rental and multiple use of bleachers in other venues compared to a permanent installation. BOCC need to know if the grant money is still available, cost options on various grandstand options and such before moving ahead.

4:00 Public hearing on Surplus Real Property & PW vehicle – real property is around Whistler Canyon PNT trailhead. Several attendees.

Note taker leaves due to previous commitments.