

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners

March 28, 2017

Present:

Andy Hover, BOCC

Chris Branch, BOCC

Dennis Rabidou, Juvenile Detention/Court

Hank Rawson Superior Court Judge

Chris Culp, Superior Court Judge

Leah McCormack: Treasurer

Absent:

Jim DeTro, BOCC

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

Commissioners' Staff meeting:

8:15: McCleary mentioned

Legislative cuts to court budgets impact Superior more than Appeals; affecting guardian ad litem particularly, adding to workload; effectively unfunded mandate; changes are fixes to problems that don't exist.

Branch offers to talk to Brad Hawkins, find out what's going on.

Rabidou: Court budget "okay" but process needs fixing: last year not even able to complete

Hover: Revs vs expenditures booked badly in the past; will work on a fix; should be more PILT and sales tax this year

Rabidou: Re try to be realistic but "stuff happens"; recent extraordinary outlays for coroner

Hover: All about establishing trust. May be moving to a bottom-line budget system

Rabidou: big problem with courts' fleet, need to replace 5 vehicles ASAP: obsolete, unsafe (airbags), can't get parts/repairs. Rigs used by CASA, transporting kids, etc., so critical.

Hover: talk to auditor & treasurer, determine cash available, currently unclear, will inform when to begin purchase process. Three bids required; buy local if it makes sense.

Rabidou: thanks for the opportunity to discuss in a reasonable manner

Conference call with legislative lobbyists: Hover, Branch, Huston

Water policy up at 10AM in Oly; commissioners from Pierce, Skagit in attendance, committed to “water bill”. Still confusion over roles of counties vs Ecology.

Huston: need to get “paper water” off the books, clarify exempt wells policy, water banking; lots of watershed plans include exempt wells

Ecology trying to kill bill in question, doesn’t want to participate in water regulation going forward: too expensive, legal liability

Brief mention: Becca funding, PCP funding, McCleary funding.

Health Insurance discussion: Hover, Branch

Representative of Maloney O’Neill, insurance broker (Shawn Cicilia); HR person(Tania Craig) & assistant (Debbie Hilts) from county.

County recently(?) split into different bargaining units (by department), caused Premera BC to want to drop as clients (groups too small for efficient coverage); Cicilia persuaded to hold off on cancellation, work with county to fix

AHCA “show&tell”: convinced it will come back around: song and dance about all the aspects of PPACA that are unpopular (*The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, often shortened to the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and nicknamed Obamacare*); AHCA with HSAs, flexible spending accts & age-based subsidies better; etc. Couldn’t gauge reception by BOCC.

Please let us take out a \$4million loan to do much needed upgrades on the hospital, in spite of the fact that we are already on the hook for \$1.1M in registered warrants. Had paid off \$3M in warrants by last year but top-selling ortho surgeon got ill, cutting revenues. Now he’s back, and we hired another one besides, expect to have warrants paid off by early 2018.

Coastal Bank ready to lend the \$\$ @ ~5%, Rural Dev to guarantee 80%. Bank REALLY likes lending to hospitals (new line of business)

Leah: Seems like a no-brainer but is effectively a bond issue without a vote by taxpayers, who would potentially be on the hook if hospital fails (despite guarantee, etc). All highly irregular

Hover, Branch to explore with legal, further discuss with Leah, etc., prior to decision (no date)

Side note: Hosp CEO: “If ACA goes away, we are in trouble”.

PW Update: Ben Rough and County Engineer, Josh Thomson

Updates on assorted roads. Mostly not dry enough to do a lot of work.

Per DOT, four bridges on 153 to get structural repairs in 2017. No replacements in foreseeable future.

WATV, ORV maps nearly done, all incorrect signage down by 15Mar. Winthrop, Twisp only ATV non-accessible towns. Much discussion of ORV vs WATV, need for education, conflicting laws, etc.

Road log reconciliation progressing, lots of mess figuring out roads on Colville, DNR roads, etc., but all fixable. Discussion of Leader Lake road.

Discussion of allocation of federal funds for roads: new process makes it “use or lose” which causes problems: county can always use any money available but towns more complicated, get hung up in planning and whatnot; trying to figure out how to reallocate so as to maximize fund availability and use but it’s messy.

Note taker leaves.