

Commissioners Mtg. Okanogan County Board of Commissioners Meeting April 26, 2016

Present: Commissioners Jim DeTro, Ray Campbell, and Sheilah Kennedy. Clerk of the Board, Lanie Johns. **Guests:** Kit Arbuckle, Matt West, Carol Johnson, Mike Lynch.

1:30 p.m. Civil Asset Forfeitures

This presentation was given by **Kit Arbuckle** .

Civil Asset Forfeitures is a procedure whereby a governmental body can seize the assets of an individual or company if it is believed those assets were gained in a criminal offense. The government does not have to have a warrant but if challenged by the owner in a court of law the burden of proof does lie with the government.

Mr. Arbuckle had researched this process thoroughly and found the laws in Washington State were basically the same of those found in many states but the procedures in Okanogan County were somewhat different. A warrant was obtained by law enforcement, there were court proceeding initiated by the court took place and primarily were used in drug cases. A very small amount of money or goods had been seized by law enforcement under this statute in Okanogan County.

Mr. Arbuckle's primary reason for bringing this to the commissioner attention is that a relative living in another state had a civil forfeiture of gold and lost possession of the property. He was making sure that the commissioners were aware of the statue and procedure in Okanogan County and that it was being followed. None of three commissioners were aware of the statue or procedure and thanked Mr. Arbuckle for educating them on this issue.

2:00 p.m. Cattle guard Franchise

Commissioner Kennedy recused herself due to the fact that the road in question was named after her significant other and she did not want to appear to be biased.

Matt West was requesting two cattle guards be put into place on Delfield Rd. in order to protect his property. All procedural issues had been complied with notice in legal newspaper, and posting within the court house with no comment from the public. Notification of date and time of hearing was then placed in legal newspaper and there appeared to be no one but Mr. West at the hearing. Commissioner Campbell moved to approve cattle guard placement and motion was carried.

2:30 p.m. Feral Horse Problem

Ms. Carol Johnson and two of her neighbors unnamed were questioning the commissioners about the number of abandoned and wild horses up in Sun Country in the north end of the county. Ms. Johnson had taken it upon herself to fence in a small herd of approx. six horses and was managing to find homes for them through a rescue organization in Enumclaw but there were many many more that were outside the fence causing damage to fences, destroying pasture land and harming tame horses owned by residents of the community. Ms. Johnson had found three horses a mare and two foals shot and killed due to what she believed was destruction of pasture. The commissioners do not have any authority over these

animals and referred her to the county ordinance officer Deputy Yarnell who Ms. Johnson is currently working with. Two of the commissioners Commissioners, DeTro and Campbell referred her to two other volunteer organizations that might be willing to help her. Primary problem is that when economic issues are a problem people will let their horses loose and problems between ranchers, Forest Service and other individuals living in open country arise. Due to the loss of the slaughter factories, and glut of horses breeding without controls the number is growing Ms. Johnson is going with the Commissioners approval to continue to try to find homes for what horses she can.

3:00 p.m. - USFS, Mike Lynch

The Forest Service has a new regional supervisor who is named **Mike Lynch** and is in charge of both the Okanogan and Chelan National Forests. He has been here approx... six months. He was at this meeting to introduce himself and to determine if there were questions, problems, or other issues the commissioners had. Also present was Deputy Prosecutor Linn, and Perry Huston Planning Office Okanogan County. It was a somewhat heated discussion due to the past two years of fires that the commissioners felt the Forest Service failed to coordinate with the county offices in charge as well, the B.L.M., the D.N.R. and private contractors and land owners. Mr. Lynch is the sixth supervisor in five years for the forest is not aware of a lot of the issues but is learning quickly and is going to start with joint training among all stakeholders. Commissioner Detro and Campbell were concerned about the plan for the forest and management by the Forest Service apparently there is supposed to be a plan every two years and the Okanogan Forest has not had one since 1987. Commissioners concerns of ranchers not being able to use their range permits, that tree salvage was not being coordinated, and that supplies for individuals who lost for example fences is not progressing as promised. Mr. Lynch emphasized his willingness to work with the commissioners and other stakeholders several times but due to his lack of hard information was unable to really make concrete suggestions. This was an extremely difficult discussion for everyone concerned with little resolution. The Commissioners are very aware of the problems and probably deal with them on a daily basis but moving a Federal Agency to react to problems seemed fruitless. All of the Commissioners repeated that they have been working with agency heads in Olympia in an attempt to move forward on these issues. Environmental problems also were questioned and there is to be a new review of that situation within the year by other forest supervisors. This particular presentation went on by far the longest and had several facets that would be best related by the video recording.

At this point the meeting was brought to a close.

POST SCRIPT:

There was a brief interchange when Commissioner Kennedy brought up mushroom pickers who come into burned areas and the forest service assists them and provides camp sites and bathroom facilities. She did not say what damage they did but she was willing to take forest service personnel out to the Tripod Fire to show them. The Forest Service men did not take her up on the offer.

There was a mention of a fire meeting (*apparently the May 26th meeting*) brought up by the Forest Service Regional Supervisor Mike Lynch. He described it as a simulation of a fire situation or several situations. There was a great deal of back and forth between the commissioners and forest service personnel about who exactly was going to be invited to at-

tend. The commissioners were adamant about private landowners who may have a stake in protecting their property. The Forest Service was more interested in agency participation. The commissioners came back with county personnel and private contractors. There was apparently no resolution of these issues.