

**Board of Okanogan County Commissioners Mtg.
4-4-2017, AM**

JD—Jim DeTro, BOCC-Absent
AH—Andy Hover, BOCC
CB—Chris Branch, BOCC
LJ—Lalena Johns, County Clerk
AL—Albert Lin, Prosecuting Attorney
TC—Tanya Craig—Risk Management & Human Resources
DH—Debi Hilts—Human Resources
PH—Perry Huston, Planning & Development/Admin.
JF—Josh Freel—Fair Grounds
CG—Charlene Grooms—Clerk, Courts
S—Susan in Clerk's office
BR—Ben Rough—Administrator, Public Works

These notes have been taken by one of several volunteer citizen note takers and published on the website of Represent Okanogan County (ROC.) The notes have been taken as close to verbatim as possible, with any writer's comments or explanations in italics. For officially approved minutes of Board of Commissioner meetings, normally published at a later date, see www.okanogancounty.org.

Summary—

Prior to the meeting, there was a discussion of the newspaper ad asking for bids for the contract to print legal notices. The Auditor should be the person who places the ad

Commissioners' Staff Meeting

. The county will need a policy to deal with people who want to ride their horses on the Fair Grounds' track.

Clerk's Office update

They have changed to a new collection agency & are very happy with the results. They are also very interested in the storage space Public Works may have available.

Public Works update

Ben discussed the storage space & other issues.

Before the meeting began, AH & AL discussed whether the correct steps were followed in placing the announcement asking for bids from newspapers to let the contract for legal notices. AH & CB were going to open the bids at the afternoon meeting. AH wanted to make sure the announcements were done properly, so there'd be no objections when it came time to sign a contract.

Commissioners' Staff Meeting

TC—Nothing earthshaking to report. Several people, including AH, are going to LERA training. (*Notetaker assumes this is the LERA NW Chapter Collective Bargaining & Arbitration Conference in Seattle on April 6 & 7.*)

AH—What about those classes I signed up for at the conference?

TC—The list of classes should have been in your email.

AH—Yes, I found the email.

DH—I had a phone conference with Paul (?) concerning a salary survey they're doing to prepare for negotiation new contracts with several unions. Survey includes 9 counties. Paul will do 3 groups & I will do 3 groups. We'll compare benefits, salaries, (high, low & median), job

duties, vacations. In short—everything. We'll have all this information when we begin talks on July 1.

DH—There are currently 22 positions open, both temp & permanent. Getting lots of good applicants for the Fair Grounds position, including some with marketing skills.

DH—Getting information from insurers so we can decide on new insurance benefits.

DH—Going to PERC training (Notetaker assumes this is Washington State's Public Employment Relations Commission) in Yakima May 3-5. She has a scholarship. Training is similar to LERA. Last year was really good.

Legal notices

LJ comes in and says she placed the ad, but it looks like the RCW says the Auditor must place it. The county is required to advertise once, 5 weeks prior to the bid's deadline, and this was done. However, it was done by LJ and not the Auditor.

AH also wanted to be sure the contract is awarded to newspapers that are qualified to publish legal notices.

AL—assured the Commissioners that they can open the bids this afternoon as planned, but they don't have to have a contract signed until July 1.

AH—I want to avoid contention like there was last year.

LJ—Last year the Board considered cost of placing the notices and circulation of the papers.

AL—And the Board has discretion in the decision.

AH—But the Board is in the limelight, so we want to follow all the rules.

PH—The Growth Management Act changed the world for legislative bodies and that causes lots of scrutiny. Commissioners lose their re-election bids much more often. (editorial comment: note that Okanogan County does not plan under the GMA, just has to follow some of the same rules for specific land use ordinances.)

CB—A lot of issues, for example the court house renovation, were not due to land management issues.

LJ—We're trying to help people if the Commissioners' Office can do so. Irate callers feel they haven't been listened to. This was happening since before I've been here—5 years ago.

AL—to sum up—the Auditor should be the one to place the ad & it looks like that hasn't been done.

CB—Maybe LJ should call up the Auditor every year and say “it's time.”

(Back to the staff meeting)

AH—Someone called me to ask if we have a policy for the public to ride horses on the Fair Grounds' track.

TC—We don't have anyone there to supervise, so maybe the riders should get a waiver from Josh Friel.

CB—Do we do waivers?

TC—We do. Someone once broke a leg during a race and the judge said the waiver was really strong. (Notetaker couldn't tell what kind of race—foot race? horse race?, or whether this was in Okanogan County or not.)

AL—There are lots of kinds of waivers. For example, on the back of a baseball ticket. What if the tract is improperly maintained?

JF—The track has not been properly maintained. The railings are rusty and there are broken and sharp edges.

(Someone?)—At the Fair, there's a big insurance policy for fairs & rodeos.

AH—We need to have a policy on riding & we need a day use charge.

JF—\$100/day?

AH—That's too much. If we charge \$20/day, will that pay expenses?

TC—How many people will use the track? I'll check. Also check with insurance pool—other counties with track.

AH—We won't do anything until we research the issue.

JF—I disked the tract twice yesterday and it needs 4 more times.

PH—If we make them sign a waiver, and we have to maintain things that we don't maintain currently, then that's a problem.

CB—Check with Chelan County because they've had lawsuits.

AH—If we have a track but the public can't use it unless it's maintained, why even have a track?

PH—Kittitas County phased out its track.

JF is advised to tell this person he's in consultation with Risk Management.

JF—I have another question. The Vintage Fair Board wants a lot of work done that I won't have time to do—pressure wash the building and the Beef Barn & move some big cabinets. They'll do that work as volunteers but they want a discount on their rent for the facilities. Is that OK?

AH—Sounds good if they do the work with JF supervising.

TC—They need to fill out the volunteer form & submit their hours. We have to report the hours to L&I.

Update from Clerk of Court's Office

CG—We're changing the collection agency from AllianceOne to Dynamic Collectors for our Legal Financial Obligations. Dynamic Collectors is much better.

S—Transfer cases from AllianceOne to Dynamic in September, 2016. We're getting much more money now than ever before.

CG—We're getting some garnishments, too. Dynamics comes in every month & talks to us. They're from California, but they had the best offer out of five companies.

S—We're spreading the word to the other counties.

S—We have no control over juvenile criminal payments. The probation department monitors that.

CG—Courts sometimes waive fees, especially juvenile fees, due to indigency.

CG—Some people have outstanding debts that are really high, \$1,000,000 for example, in part because we charge interest. One woman burned a hotel in Winthrop and mailed in only 1¢!

S—Kathleen, our new hire, is doing really well. She can do passport applications, as can several others in the office.

S—We've received our new desks and they look great. They've improved morale.

CG—We're scanning old files, trying to go paperless and open up some space.

CG—We're trying to close old cases if they're inactive. Closing 5-10 per week. If the case is re-opened, there's a fee. That brings in a little revenue.

S—We once had 1,686 cases eligible to be closed. Two years later we have only 775, so we're closing lots of them. Describes all the steps involved in closing a file. At any one time, there are 50-60 files undergoing this process.

AH—You have files in several locations. What's the security? Maybe you could store records in the Public Works space, if Public Works can't rent it out.

CG—The files just need to be locked up. Public Works is temperature controlled.

AH, CG & S all agree the Public Works space would be great.

CG—I should go look at the space, but it sounds great.

CB—Call Public Works to tell them you'd like that space.

CG—One employee will retire in 2017 and we'd like the new person to start so we have two months overlap for training. Another employee may be taking up to four months leave due to her spouse being in hospice care. So we'd need extra budget to pay for a temp worker when she's on leave. Leah McCormick suggested a JTPA person (Job Training Partnership Act?). That will pay some of the wages.

AH—Will the current employee return?

CG—I don't know.

AH—So you'll need to pay both for four months & then just one employee?

CG—Probably.

AH—Send us the numbers.

CG—Will do.

AH—Mike Liu of the USFS wants to talk about an update on the Mission Project before the EIS. *(Editorial comment: the Mission Project is doing an EA (Environmental Assessment) rather than an EIS at this point.)* Let's get him on the agenda.

Public Works update - Well discussion - stream adjudication

AH, BR & PH discuss well drilling procedures in regard to the Hirst decision, including DOE's responsibility and the county's responsibility in allowing a well to be dug and allowing it to be put to use after it's dug.

PH—I'll call well drillers to see how the DOE is reacting to closed basins. Do they have any advice about how to drill & seek permission from the county?

BR—Is the legislature taking any action?

AH—There's one bill but it doesn't really do anything.

AH—I talked to someone who filed an "impairment". Another person's well impaired his well. Wanted to see paperwork to see how all this happened.

BR—This happened to someone in Mallot, too. Maybe it's the same person.

AH—I'll ask AL if getting the paperwork interferes with what might happen later.

PH—Are they public records?

CB—Is there a list of streams being adjudicated?

PH—Kind of.

(Stream adjudication discussion was too rapid to record.)

BR—The agency that was thinking about renting out our space said no, so it's available.

AH—The Clerk's office is extremely interested.

BR—But their containers won't fit in the space. *(Notetaker's impression is that some files are currently being kept outside in rented storage PODS or something similar.)*

AH—But they're scanning old files and the volume is shrinking.

BR—We'll have to work out an arrangement for one fund benefiting another. Charge rent? Pay the electric bill? Something else? Also, another office would like the space, too.

AH—If they can get the files out of the two containers.

BR—1800 sq ft, 10' ceiling. Slab on grade, so weight is not an issue. We could put a scanner down there, too. There's a local company that contracts scanning services.

PH—If you have to organize the files, pull staples, scan off-sized paper—the labor adds up fast.

BR—Maybe better to have a scanner and a part-time person to scan.

CB—But it's so easy for this person to get sucked away from scanning to do other work.

BR—I'll call the Clerk's office and see what's what.

BR—I'm reviewing applications for summer temps. Also coordinating with JF concerning contaminated soil at the Fair Grounds. It's mostly done with being tested. There's a lot less than I thought.

BR—We hope to have the MOA about the Conconully sewer line next week. It would be great to transfer sewer to Conconully.

Discussion concerning capital costs, facilities responsibility.

CB—It's helpful that Conconully knows about the pumps & their replacement.

BR—The vaults are deterioration but the lines are OK.

CB—I'll help talk to Conconully about this.

BR—I talked a while ago & it went OK.

SW Landfill leachate—there are problems but they were discussed too rapidly.

BR—We'll try to evaporate the leachate this year so we won't have this problem again. But we may have to build another lagoon & pump up to it.

BR—We're trying to get back to the process for the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC).

CB—Process is important with SWAC. Rapid discussion.

BR—The bid is going out for the new scale at Ellisforde.

BR—We had “Active Shooter” training. Everyone thought it was excellent. We learned how to set up things differently, with little expense, such as rearranging files and cabinets, change locks. It was fun and exciting, not scary. It's not mandatory. We learned your options are hide, run or fight. If you're going to fight, you need to have a plan in your mind.

BR—Methow Valley Clean Air Project. AL says county employees can't be used unless they're doing what they normally do. We can do outreach.

CB—Try to find a solution to take to AL and say “Is this OK?” that works better than asking “What should we do?”

BR—I'll see what other agencies do. These partnerships happen often.

AH—Speaking of air pollution, DOE wants to move its “particulate sniffer” and it says our parking lot is a great location. They'll pay for installation & it takes up just one parking space.

CB—Our parking lot would be great.

Discussion of DOE wood stove drive. Reimbursed if you bring in an uncertified wood stove.

AH—Also there are rebates to replace an uncertified stove.

CB—Pellet stoves are good but they don't work without electricity.

BR—No. Now there are non-electric models.

BR—Josh is out all this week.

Meeting over at 12:05.