

Okanogan Board of County Commissioners
7/11/17

JD—Jim DeTro
AH—Andy Hover
CB—Chris Branch
LJ—Lalena Johns-clerk to the Commissioners
PH—Perry Huston—County Planner
AL—Albert Liu, Attorney
TC—Tanya Craig—HR & Risk Management
LT—Lauri Thomas-County Auditor
MG—Maurice Goodall, Emergency Management
JT—Josh Thomson—County Engineer, Roads
BR—Ben Rough—Solid Waste
FR—Frank Rogers, Sheriff
JS—Joe Somday, Undersheriff
MR—Matt Reidy, District Ranger, Tonasket Ranger District USFS
ML—Mike Liu, District Ranger, Methow Ranger District USFS

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.

Summary:

Supplemental appropriation to maintain the spill trailer.

Public Works update—Open positions, rental rates for office & storage space, snow grooming at Loup Loup. Burton Ave Okanogan property, Recycle Grant, Leachate Lagoon

Roads update—Current projects, Liberty Woodlands Sewer System Repair, WATV maps, SRS status, miscellaneous issues

Courthouse Security—discussion of security improvements & how to achieve them

Forest Service/County Road WATV coordination. Discussion with Forest Service about coordination on WATV road issues. Updates from Tonasket & Methow Ranger Districts.

Notetake arrived at 10:40. No meeting in progress. AH & CB were chatting, JD looking at his phone. JD read aloud an anti-Obamacare post from his phone. He & I had a candid exchange of views regarding merits the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Public Hearing Supplemental Appropriation

MG—It's a small grant to maintain the spill trailer. We own the trailer, but they give us the money for maintenance.

Commissioners pass the request 3-0.

CB—Are there lots of opportunities to use the trailer?

MG—No. There's all kinds of spill stuff & everybody knows what we've got, but minimal chance that we use it.

CB—You respond if there's a spill. Do you charge them?

MG—We're the first responders if there's a spill. I don't know if we charge.

CB—I had a five gallon spill once & I could deal with it myself.

MG—We deal with spills in waterways. Fires Departments keep the spills out of drains & with Ecology, we deal with spills in waterways. Fire departments need to call us, but they don't all know that.

MG—We've only used our spill trailer once & that was an exercise. If you do use it, you then need to replace some of the parts that were in the water.

Public Works Update

Open positions

BR—No change in open positions. We hired a permanent mechanic but not getting good applicants for temp positions.

AH—Mechanics start out at Step 1. Maybe hire them at a higher step? With higher pay, then we could keep them.

BR—Should I coordinate this with Tanya?

AH—Jerry (?) has recommendations about what step to start. The budget can absorb the raises.

BR—Sounds good.

Rental rates for office & storage space

BR has created a chart of rental rates for different offices in different buildings. The county provides different packages of utilities for different tenants. He would like to make rates within a single building more consistent, maybe varying rates a little due to differences in utilities provided.

BR—AL & LT are looking into legalities of this approach.

LJ—I recommend the BOCC pass a resolution saying they're going to set different rental rates for each building. The state Auditor said a resolution would be a good idea.

BR—Maybe \$.30/sq ft for storage space.

AH—Raise Noxious Weeds & BECCA from \$.40/sq ft to \$.43/sq ft.

LJ—It's been \$.40/sq ft since just after I started.

BR—I agree with resolution approach. And if we need to raise the rates, it's easy to change.

AH—A raise to \$.43/sq ft would make it all even. And Public Health pays their own electricity.

LJ—It's not in their budgets.

AH—We'll start in January, 2018. The resolution will say—here's the rate as of January, 2018, and if someone moves in before January, that office will pay the January, 2018 rate, too.

Snow grooming

BR—The Snowmobile Advisory Board (Committee?) wants to expand grooming at Loup Loup. They are developing a MOU with the Loup Loup Ski Education Foundations. Okanogan County is not a party to the MOU, but AL is reviewing it. The grooming should start next winter. Their snow cat & our groomer will be using the same trails.

City of Okanogan/Burton Ave. property

BR—City of Okanogan want to own the county property along the dyke, just a portion of what the county owns. They know they will need to do maintenance. I recommend that we surplus what the city wants and auction the part they don't.

BR—The city wants the dyke and what's water-ward of the dyke. I don't know if they have plans for the property. If we divide the property, the city will split the cost of the survey.

CB—I'll go look at the property. I hate to sell property with lots of restrictions because a buyer will want, and push for, development, but it's in a flood plain.

Washington State Department of Ecology Recycle Grant amendment

BR—I learned there's an extra \$8,000 available for that grant so we need BOCC to redo the Recycle grant application. If we get that money, it will free up other money.

Leachate lagoon

BR—We got a new truck driver hired and he is hauling every day. Leachate level is going down—evaporation. I don't think we need new permits to build a lagoon. The plan is to use the Land Use Permit we've got to expand. We're pretty much lined up the process going forward.

BR—We're now just 30 feet below the maximum height for the landfill.

CB—There are trees to act as a screen. Are they growing?

BR—Yes. And we planted more and we irrigate.

CB—How's the water holding out?

BR—There's less than we thought but still enough to water the trees.

Roads update

Current projects

JT—Peter Dam Rd. We got the information we needed on Friday. Moving towards the final fix options. Maintaining the emergency by-pass.

JT—The chip seal starts Monday. It'll take 4-4½ weeks.

JD—What about all that extra fill. KRCI (a construction company in Wenatchee) has extra fill from Loup Loup.

JT—I'm going to look at the fill. They say it's mostly sand with some rocks.

AH—Would it be good for the race track?

JT—If it works for us, it'll be great.

AH—Something needs to be done at the track.

BR—How much volume do you need for the track?

JT & AH do the math. 3,700 yards.

AH—And they've got 8,000 yards.

AH—Or maybe they could just rent Public Works' screen and screen the fill to put on the tract. If it's sand, it's really good for the track.

JT—Most of the overtime is stuff we would have done in May but the weather was too wet.

JT—Tonasket Bridge S will be rebid in November or December. Build next summer.

JT—Chip seal project—We received some federal funds.

JT—Gravel crushing project—It's hard to get a crusher.

JD—Names someone who just bought a new crusher.

JT—That's good. Plus we'll widen the window and allow winter crushing.

JT—Tonasket Bridge N—The work is probably three years out.

JT—Old 97—That will probably be a 2021 project.

JT—Bridge load ratings. We're working on this project.

Liberty Woodlands (in Mazama) Sewer System

JT—A pump house is above ground and the pumps froze. Two pumps broke, spraying effluent all over and now the equipment is corroded. To fix everything, replace the current pumps with new, easier to fix pumps, and bury them—the quote is \$33,000. The system is almost at capacity and the HOA needs to take over the maintenance. We'll have a contract next week.

JT—The \$33,000 needs a supplement. We've got a \$106,000 carryover from last year. We just need to move the money from one line to another.

WATV map

JT—I have a conflict with the WATV map meeting this afternoon. Can I skip it?

AH—Yes. The WATV map for District 3 (JD’s district) is all done. Moving on to District 1 (CB’s district) so can you start a list of roads?

JT—Yes.

AH—But District 2 (AH’s district) starts right near Okanogan, so maybe you shouldn’t do this strictly by districts.

SRS

JT—Do you know if SRS (Secure Rural Schools) was funded. I think PILT was.

JD—I think it’s going to be fully funded.

JT—Good.

Miscellaneous

JT—The hole in the parking lot (behind the Granger Building) maybe was caused by a rotting tree stump. We did a minor repair and can do that 15 times for the cost of a major repair.

AH—So you don’t think it was caused by water?

JT—I don’t *think* so.

BR—It was probably a tree stump.

BR—What about the proposal for an air quality monitor in the parking lot? Nobody knows what happened to that proposal.

JT—People have complained to me about irrigation water getting on the roads. The latest is Jack Wells Rd. Water can cause lots of damage on paved roads.

AH—Write to the people, saying there’s an ordinance against watering the road. Please be careful and try to keep it off the road.

BR—You’ve got new computers!

AH—Yes. They’re light and start up in just 10 minutes!

Courthouse Security

CB—I met with Dennis (Rabidou). He wants to get a small committee to lay out what needs to be done concerning courthouse security.

FR—If we have a committee, one of you (BOCC) needs to be on it. You control the money.

TC—We’ve had committees before and we know what we need.

FR—We need bodies.

AH—And if you have a guy there for courthouse security, then he’s got to be there.

FR—We need more bodies to cover calls. There’s more search and rescue than before. Drownings, climbing accidents.

AH—I’m glad we funded a coroner. It’ll be nice if voters pass the sales tax increase for the Juvenile Center and we can cover the pay for another person for security.

AH—Phoenix Security—what do they do?

FR—They can detain you and they can carry arms.

JD—They have authority in an emergency.

FR—We can use corrections, but they’ve only got so many guys. We could use Phoenix. He’d have a gun, wearing a uniform. It’s a stop-gap but at least there’s somebody on site.

CB—I went to the courthouse in Spokane and got screened. Dedicated funding for that purpose.

TC—You’d need two people manning the screening.

AH—Plus it’s inconvenient, but maybe worth it. It’s also inconvenient to get shot.

FR—The easiest fix is money. If you’ve got money, you can move everybody around. The Sheriff’s Office should be in the courthouse building.

AH—How much money? \$1,400,000?

TC—Just for that building.

AH—But including FICA, benefits, etc., a deputy costs at least \$100,000 per year. 10 years = \$1,000,000.

JD—And you could do a GO bond.

FR—One stop shopping with courts and cops in the same building. But it costs money.

FR—A negative side—the court is safe but then people in this building (Granger Building) aren't safe.

CB—Haven't heard discussion about reorganizing the place.

FR—Plus the computer room has just one outlet. Best, easiest fix is to move the Sheriff's Office back down there.

Discussion on how other offices would be relocated.

CB—I'll be on the committee, but it shouldn't be big until we know where it's going.

JS—Phoenix pays the overhead. They'll send another guy when the first guy is on vacation.

Rates are based on how many and how long. It costs less per person if you hire more people. I've got their old rates.

CB—And if you aren't going to do anything, then you're more at risk.

JS—Judge Short's (Okanogan County district Court) comments were useful but he's not the decision maker. The BOCC is.

JD—I couldn't take my gun into the Forest Service building in Portland. What does that tell you about the Forest Service?

AH--\$1,500,000 is only one deputy for 15 years and you can bond it.

Discussion of Forest Service—County Road WATV map coordination

PH—unrolls a huge map and gives it to MR.

MR—Perry, what's the time line?

PH—We want to know what roads you don't want opened, or whatever mitigation ideas you might have. It's a couple of weeks before we can publish.

JD—We were instructed by litigation to review SEPA.

PH—We didn't adequately address the impact of illegal acts. The worry is that the roads opened up make for easier access to sensitive areas.

JD—For example, we had to eliminate a road because it was near wetlands, but also it was too close to the Canadian border. DHS didn't like that.

MR—So you've ID'ed the county roads.

AH—It shows roads open to RVs, ORVs, WATVs. Rules for which are which are convoluted, and needs a legislative fix. Some 50 mph roads are grandfathered in.

AH—Mike Liu's area doesn't have any roads marked yet. We've not doing it exactly by Commissioners' districts because the geography doesn't make sense.

AH—We want to coordinate with the Forest Service. ATVs are one of the multiple uses.

JD—Margaret (?) said she'd approached the Forest Service Travel Plan starting with all the roads closed and then opened one-by-one. But we don't like that. We want it all open and then closed one-by-one.

AH—Some in the Methow don't like that, but the Forest Service is multiple-use. Also, we realize some will disobey the law, so how can we help mitigate the problems.

MR—I agree there are places where we should have motor recreation. In Canada, they have maps with hiking, mountain biking, ATV (both single & ATV tracks) trails all marked.

CB—If you have routes ID'ed, users create trails and they can be in the wrong place, next to a stream, etc.

JD—We always write letters with you to coordinate, so we want you to coordinate.

MR—If we have questions, do you prefer open meetings?

CB—If we're (BOCC) all together, then it's an open meeting.

PH—For technical questions, there's the Monday 1:30 meeting. I'm here.

AH—Where a county road becomes a Forest Service road, please be forward thinking. How do these roads line up? Please don't just say No. Maybe we can integrate. And maybe there's some Nos. The ATV community volunteers can help people from riding illegally.

JD—For example, the ladybug area is sensitive, but Jim Brown said the road's fenced on both sides, so it's OK for ATVs.

MR—Betsy (Forest Service mechanized recreation person) will be gone for a week, so it may be hard to finish in two weeks.

AH—We can initiate SEPA on some roads.

PH—You can always pull roads off without more paperwork.

AH to PH—so MR's "maybe longer than two weeks" is fine?

PH—Sounds like it'll work.

JD—Other litigation in other states—the ADA in California multiple-use public lands. Maybe it'll have an impact.

ML—Is this a one-shot deal, or will it be later open to additional roads?

JD—We see it as a work in progress. The legislature needs to do its work on ATVs vs WATVs, etc.

AH—But this is the main bunch. The ones we pull off will more than likely stay off. (To ML) When we get to the Methow, it'll be different. Can you think of areas that will be OK for ATV use?

JD—The lower Methow—those guys are less alert to the situation as those in Mazama.

PH—BOCC isn't trying to do this in one bite. Move forward with ones everybody's happy with and do the harder ones later.

ML—Moving ahead with some roads already ID'ed for ATVs, but lots of roads with no decision yet. Timing-wise, it's not like the county process. More like one-by-one.

CB—Primitive Road Study in draft plan. Try to deal with them. If the Forest Service could do that jointly with us, that'd be great.

AH—The old Travel Management Plan said ATVs could travel on Forest Service roads. In the new plan, the wording was changed, causing a change in status-quo.

JD—Conconully Jamboree. Mr. Graves caused a stir. He answers to people above ML.

ML—Under the new plan, overland travel is closed.

AH—What should they do if a county road turns into a Forest Service road? In Tonasket District?

MR—Some routes in the old plan are allowed. Our interest is to ID all those routes. Right now we're in the interim.

AH—What if we get done and you're in interim? What do we do?

MR—Mr. Graves chose education and not enforcement. If the county does its routes and we do ours, there will be routes we share. That's where education is really important.

AH—What to do if we finish first? The travel plan keeps getting pushed out further.

MR—When you make your announcement, say this is *our* decision and there will be another decision (by the Forest Service) later on.

JD—I was in Wallace, ID, and they've got a great big map with trails marked. Locals here don't do that.

MR—What to do in the interim? As we get decisions done, our plan is to have a big map. Eventually, you'll even get the map on your phone.

CB—If we know what are the Forest Service routes right now, that will help in the interim.

ML—Our routes currently opened to ATVs and WATVs won't change.

AH—We need that map.

ML—Most routes are in the Tonasket district.

AH—No loops in the Methow district?

ML—None originally, but there will be some when we're done.

AH—If someone tells us a Forest Service road is good, how hard is it to open it up after the management plan is passed?

MR—There's always the opportunity to do that. Interim period publish the motor use map and the public starts using it. Then you discover things you didn't know and adjust the plan.

CB—Plus you have a comment period.

MR—Yes. If your question is "is it less timely to adjust the plan after it's adopted", the answer is Yes.

ML—Mixed use and safety on the roads. Idaho law put liability on cars. In Washington, licenses for ATVs aren't treated the same. If the Washington legislature fixes that to match Idaho's law, that makes a big problem moot. Until that happens, we have to do mixed-use process.

CB—We need to look at Idaho's law.

JD—When I was in Wallace, ID, lots of people called me from Conconully. My phone was on fire. I encourage MR to talk to the law enforcement guys and retired law enforcement guys. Graves gets way too happy with his gun. The DNR guy was real polite. Attitude makes a big difference.

MR—We've taken steps with the Jamboree guys for next year. We'll make clear the expectations. Maps, special use permits, but it didn't turn out the way either side expected. We're taking steps to ensure next year is successful.

JD—4th of July. Service-connected vets. They want to have a disabled vet jamboree. I'll tell them they need to coordinate fully with everyone There will be disabled vets with trackchairs.

CB—Also helpful to start discussion with BOCC, so we know what the understanding is.

MR—Tentatively we can set up a time in the fall and keep you guys informed.

Updates by MR and ML (USFS) on other topics

Tonasket District update

MR—There's a range monitoring workshop in July. Many have signed up for it but I've been assured by the presenters that everyone will get hands-on experience.

MR—Mt. Hull Restoration. We've done community input. Transition from PreNEPA to NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act).

CB—What's that about?

MR—Upland terrestrial restoration. Road management issues—some roads parallel the streams. Enhance bighorn sheep habitat.

CB—Any effect on (notetaker didn't hear trail name) trail?

MR—Trail is identified, but we'd like to get it off Hunter Road. We like to get hikers off the roads.

MR—Toats Coulee—Starting NEPA in the fall

MR—Sneed Mt. Restoration. We're close to a decision for terrestrial restoration and a prescribed burn.

MR—Salmon Meadows Campground restoration. We received funding. Move the tent sites away from the creek and create RV sites. Put in fencing to reduce conflict with grazing permittees. Put in toilets. We don't provide water. Campground will remain open during development.

MR—Road Damage. ERFO (Emergency Relief for Federally Owned Roads) funding. Federal highways will do NEPA for us. Road 42 had extensive damage so we're trying to do it quickly. Continue to get calls about road damage, but our crews are stretched thin.

CB—What about Wilson Creek?

ML—Part of ERFO damage. Considering moving the road.

MR—Former road maintenance agreement with the county. We'd like to redo it. Recently, when there were slides on 30 Road and 38 Road, the county helped us out. Advantages for both county and Forest Service is we reinstate the agreement. It makes paying the county *much* easier if we have an agreement in place.

CB—Why'd it go away?

JD—Not much money, reduction in county and Forest Service road crews, disappeared because there was nobody there.

MR—It's emergency management now.

CB—Yes. Let's begin discussion.

MR—Next time I come, I'll bring the old agreement.

AH—Josh (Thomson) would have stuff, too.

JD—NACPLSC (National Association of Counties - NACo—Public Lands Steering Committee) says PILT is funded at the 2017 level.

Methow District update

ML—There have been two timber sales, some fire salvage. Also hauling associated with it will be done by the end of the month.

ML—There was logging in other locations and commercial firewood permits.

ML—We received over 1000 comments on the Mission Project.

ML—Outfitters guide. Hoping to have it out for review. It comes out in two months.

ML—8-Mile fish ranch on the Chewuch for coho acclimation. Yakima Nation is part of this. Also fixing holes in the road.

ML—Approval of chainsaws in Wilderness Area so volunteer repair crews can get in. Backcountry Horsemen are doing a lot of work.

ML—Thanks for noticing our stuff in Loup Loup. It worked out well for both.

ML—Road speeds. 3 year FLAP grants (Federal Lands Access Program). Funds through federal highways.

AH—Would Beaver Creek count?

ML—Definitely.

ML—I echo MR's wanting the agreement with the county reinstated. It's hard to get a guy to collect garbage at a campground because the road is so bad. If we could use your grader that'd be great.

ML—So much grass this spring. 2-3 times the biomass, so heads-up for fires.

ML—Mt. Leecher Lookout is staffed.

AH—What's the access?

ML and JD—Benson Creek. There's a connection via French Creek, but it goes through private lands.

MR—If you have questions, or your phone explodes, feel free to call.

AH—Horse clubs want to do distance rides. How do they get a permit?

ML—For the Methow, for all special use recreation events—winter and summer. We work through those as the special use evaluator has time.

AH—How long is the process?

ML—Six months in advance. We're taking winter events now.

CB—How did things go with the harvest of mushrooms?

MR—Fewer people, shorter window, so no damage. Fewer commercial pickers because not a lot of mushrooms this year.

ML—Partial hoot-owl may start on Friday.

Question from the audience—How do we keep up with hoot-owl rules?
MR—DNR provides it. Call the Ranger Station visitor Center in Omak.

Notetaker leaves at 4:40.