

Okanogan County Board of County Commissioners meeting September 26, 2022
AM session

AH – Andy Hover, BOCC Chair, District 2
CB – Chris Branch, BOCC vice-chair, District 1
JD- Jim DeTro, BOCC member, District 3
LJ- Lanie Johns, Clerk of the Board
CH- Crystal Hawley- Deputy Clerk of the Board
MG- Maurice Goodall – Emerg. Mgmt.
PP – Pete Palmer – Planning Director
JP - Joe Poulin – Maintenance Supervisor
NP - Naomi Peasley – Fairgrounds Manager
JS – Jennifer Short – OCCAC
KC - Katrina Cates - OCCAC
TE - Thomas Even – Veterans Relief Board
EM - Esther Milner – Civil Deputy Prosecutor

These notes were taken by an Okanogan County Watch volunteer. Every attempt is made to be accurate. Notes are verbatim when possible, and otherwise summarized or paraphrased. Note takers comments or clarifications are in italics. These notes are published at <https://www.countywatch.org/commissioner-and-board-of-health-meetings.html> and are not the official county record of the meeting. For officially approved minutes, which are normally published at a later time, click [here](#).

Summary of Significant Discussion:

- *Public comments on Lower Valley Advisory Group, Legal Notice for project near Twisp*
- *Emergency Mgmt update – discussion on creating County Fire Marshall position*
- *Planning Dept update- zone code revision will start Oct 1; Mazama Advisory Cmte requests \$25K for consultant to assist them with sub-area update; Barnholt Loop advisory board concerns; Dept of Health report shows 7 septic permit applications without site analysis; CUP for development outside of Twisp will not be re-advertised.*
- *Maintenance supervisor report – HVAC units being replace, cameras are being installed in courthouse*
- *Fairgrounds report – NP wishes to attend conventions, will increase damage deposit for rentals*
- *Veteran Services update- better coordination between agencies, still great need for housing and legal services*
- *Code revision update – BOCC has received legal review with proposed changes, needs to review and make comments. Scheduled meeting for Oct 3rd at 1:30 pm.*

The time stamps refer to the time on the clock on the wall. Click [here](#) to go to the video.

9:14 – CB mentions that he received notice that Fed Gov is cutting back on funds to administer ARPA. JD replies that he read that for the amount of money the Feds are spending on new IRS agents, they could put one armed guard in every single school and still have money left over.

9:15- Public comment from Isabelle Spohn. Comments on lower valley advisory committee. Found a letter from previous LVAG. Between LVAG and the town of Pateros. Given that the new boundary line is now below Carlton which removes the major population base, why does the LV group need to have 7 people when their population is smaller than the middle valley group? Please consider reducing the number of members for the Lower Valley Advisory group. Also, there is CUP regarding a campground/trailer park that was just announced in legal notices. It states that it is in Twisp, but it is actually outside of Twisp. This notice was unclear where the actual location of the property is. CB says he will check it out. Barbara Schneider (board member of Methow Recycles) says she is just here to learn and hopefully engage more in the future with BOCC on recycling and composting issues.

9:30 - MG- asks about retention bonus funds and the logistics of managing it. DNR is still restricting campfires. This weekend there was an illegal burn (on private land). CB asks if DNR normally takes charge of the enforcement in those situations. MG – it depends. Mentions Moose lodge in Omak burned down. We are planning a tabletop exercise with Bureau of Reclamation in November. Hoping more entities will show up. CB – asks what type of exercise (dam failure, flooding?). MG – says it is kept secret until the date. He doesn't know which scenario they will choose. Discussion about actual incidents that have occurred in the past and the value of training. MG – USDA grant. Wants to use money for FM radio alert boxes in the community, but he was told that there may be other funds for that so they will hold off on that application. Creating a County Fire Marshall – possible funding for that. Enforcing codes, which ones will they enforce? CB- asks what things are currently not getting done that a fire marshall could help with? MG – we need codes first of all, ones that can be enforced. Also a fire marshall could work with all the other Fire Dist. Chiefs. Continued discussion about what is the purpose and need for a fire marshall. MG- I've been working with the Conservation District about helping with the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The goal is to have it done by June 1, 2023. Fire season is winding down. Okanogan Chamber of Commerce had a nice fly-in this weekend. Good turnout.

9:45 – Pete Palmer. I have a contract for amending the Zoning Code. We have funds to pay for the remainder of this year, will need an extra \$40K for FY23. The funds for this year will come from leaving the Planner 1 position vacant until end of year. Motion made and seconded to approve the contract. BOCC votes to approve. Zoning code work will start October 1.

PP – The Mazama advisory committee is ready to move forward with their sub unit (A) plan. They are asking for \$25K to fund consultant to assist them with their plan. They did apply to Economic Alliance to fund this. I recommend waiting until the EA funds are allotted before moving further on this.

PP - Barnholt Loop – Had meeting last Tuesday with Stan Carter. Oct 10th will be a meeting here at BOCC to introduce members. Got a call last Friday from a resident who is very upset and thinks this is a ploy to attack specific property owners who are disliked. I assured her this was not the purpose. Another gentleman contacted me to ask why we are reconvening this group when we have just been using general county rules and why not continue with that?

CB – talks about need to reach out to Barnholt Loop community to explain the history and find out what neighbors want.

PP – there is one property that has had enforcement started, which may not be well known. CB suggests talking to the Prosecutors office to find out what they will be doing regarding enforcement.

PP- DOH report shows that during first two weeks of September there were 15 applications for on-site septic. Only 8 had a site analysis. Which means 7 Septic systems are going in without a site analysis.

We have a new VSP advisor. Would like to bring him next week to talk about options for continuing VSP.

Stoney Wild conditional use permit. Proposed campground outside of Twisp. Isabelle Spohn is concerned that legal notice was inadequate. We felt that with the address, parcel number etc. being published it was enough info for people to determine where it is. We will not be republishing the notice.

10:04 Joe Poulin – maint supervisor. Replacing HVACs on the roof. Found another heater inside. Asked for proposal to replace this heater. This is the last old unit in that building.

CB – asks if it is working. JP – yes. CB – suggests that since it is not budgeted and it still works, we should wait until next year.

JP - NW waterproofing should be here this week. Concerned that their timeline is running out. (no mention about which project this is in regard to).

Starting to run wires for cameras in courthouse.

10:08 Naomi Peasley – Fairgrounds. Saw that new fee schedule was passed. I will be raising the damage deposit from \$250 to \$500. Most damages are exceeding \$250.

Discussion about making an amendment to fee schedule for this.

NP- There are two fair conventions coming up. WA state fair convention and WA state events convention. I would like to attend. Need the OK to pay registration fees. CB – moves to table this discussion until later when AH will be here.

10:14 – Discussion about adjusting schedule for tomorrow, and adding another exec session.

Break before next agenda event, CB mentions that WSAC is talking about moving some veterans funds outside the county general fund and make it a separate levy. He is not strongly in favor of this.

10:30 – Katrina Cates, OCCAC veterans program manager. Jennifer Short, OCCAC program director. Thomas Even and Jim (Veterans support assistant). Jim has completed training and has already processed several applications. We are having group meetings with OCCAC and other agencies to discuss how we can work together. We are going out to homeless camps with backpacks full of supplies (food, boots, etc.) to give to homeless Vets. Progress is pretty good in Twisp, working on doing better in Brewster. Working with Chelan, Douglas and Grant counties via Zoom to see what they are doing. Went to conference in Wenatchee and learned a lot. Went to Nespelum job fair, had some good conversations. We have a van, but no driver yet. Need to recruit one. We are getting 5-10 calls/ day. 88 calls for the month of Sept. so far. We've done 10 claims, served 39 Vets, (29 of those is helping with paperwork). Lots of Vets are curious about PACT act. We are doing our own research because they don't just send it to us. We expect more younger vets as they are more likely to have been exposed to burn pits. CB – asked about communication with Tribe. TE – said that Tribe has their own VSO, but if they are not providing service, Vets can contact him.

OCCAC – asks how much BOCC knows about support services. They focus on providing housing for very low income vets and their families. We help identify goals and connect with local VA resources. We are a short term immediate needs provider, and work to connect them with long term services. Some services we can help with – short term rent, utility payments, transportation, groceries, ID verification, background checks etc.

CB asks if funding is specific to Veterans? Yes. Budget is Approx \$700K covers staffing, overhead, supplies, outreach, admin costs. Our goal is to serve 112 clients during the 15 month contract period. We have seen 26 clients since contract started in July. We would like to add to our team, but we have no more room. Barriers – lack of housing. We have housed 33 Vets, we have more vouchers available. The challenge is finding the housing for them. We are seeing a higher number of Vets requiring a higher level of care. Some due to mental health and substance abuse. Shortage of mental health professionals to help in this area. Lack of shelter and transitional housing are barriers to dealing with the mental health issues.

CB – mentions that homeless shelters in Oroville are going away. That will increase the problem.

OCCAC – we use the shelter here in Omak near our offices. But there are limits to how many days we can provide. We are working on strengthening our partnerships and presence in the community. Our focus in October will be to expand presence to Twisp.

General discussion about how to find and distribute surplus supplies to Vets.

OCCAC – gives example of how it took 14 pieces of ID to secure a valid WA state ID that is required to obtain housing. One Vet almost slipped through the cracks because of lack of ID. It took us 9 months of work to get it straightened out. Catch-22 – can't get ID without a valid address, can't get a place to live without valid ID. It took us experienced advocates 9 months, imagine how hard it is for someone who doesn't have the resources we do.

JS – We want to make the point that legal services for Vets need to be strengthened. And a lot of the barriers boil down to lack of access, especially in rural areas.

11:08 – Joni (Code Revision) gives update on the Code revision project. Esther Milner (county civil deputy attorney) present, and Lanie Johns (county clerk). AH joins meeting in person partway in. CB asks about changes to the legal status of the Public Health Board and how it relates to the “public health district”.

Joni- we provided a legal review and identified areas that we thought could be cleaned up.

County may need to pass new ordinances to be in compliance. Then we looked at the organizational structure of the code

There may be areas where the county would need to repeal ordinances that no longer apply.

Have you looked at the areas outlined in the legal review?

CB – I just got started. There is a lot there. I'm wondering where this will take us. For example, the declaration of a nuclear free zone in OK County.

Joni- We can still start on the recodification and update as necessary.

CB – in Chapter 2, for example a regional planning commission in Oroville was repealed.

Joni- We have updated code including through Ordinance 2022-05. The legal review was based on an earlier date. Confirms that the Oroville planning commission has been removed from current code. Usually we go through and remove anything pertaining to an ordinance that has been repealed, and then renumber, etc.

CB talks about how OK county uses resolutions to adopt changes, rather than ordinances.

(Some counties use ordinances). Asks Joni what they recommend.

Joni- says usually they see counties using ordinances, but they can track resolutions that impact the code and update as required. It depends on how each county wants to do it. LJ comments that they made a decision a while ago to use ordinances whenever it affects the code.

CB- asks if it is appropriate to state in the code about the purposes of ordinances vs resolutions and where to use each.

Joni – says she has seen similar language in other municipalities. As soon as legislation is passed and sent to us our goal is to get it published ASAP. We also include a currency date so that people know what the update status is.

Joni- Your county does not have a printed version of the code – it's all on line.

Discussion about the pros and cons of having a hard copy.

CB hands over gavel to AH who is the chair and is now present.

CB asks if Esther has had a chance to review. EM – says she will need input from other departments. CB – There are changes that will require adopting new ordinances. EM – those are the ones I am looking at. I just did a draft for indemnification. The current one needs to be repealed, but a new one needs to be written for adoption.

Joni – we will need to move code to a different platform and can incorporate changes found in the legal review as they come up. Editorial changes can be made without new ordinance.

EM – gives example of language clean up such as consistent use of terms. Once the term “county” is defined, the document can say “county”, and not have to spell out “Okanogan County” each time.

AH – clarifies what the BOCC needs to do at this point to move forward with code revision. LJ wonders if they should go through legal review together, one section at a time.

AH – asks to put it on the calendar. Monday Oct 3rd 1:30 pm.

Joni- confirms that BOCC will review and suggest changes. If there are things that don't need ordinances, we can wait until we hear back from you before we start the recodification. We had some suggestions about rearranging a few things to help it make more sense. I will send those to you this afternoon.

AH – asks if anyone has anything else?

CB reviews parts of discussion earlier in the day that AH missed.

11:47- BOCC goes into executive session until noon, regarding potential litigation.

Notetaker leaves meeting.