

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
September 20, 2021
Monday AM

JD—Jim DeTro, BOCC, District 3
AH—Andy Hover, BOCC, vice-chair, District 1
CB—Chris Branch, BOCC, chair, District 2
LJ—Lalena Johns-clerk to the Commissioners
CH Crystal Hawley
LMc Treasurer McCormack
JN Jim Nelson
NP—Naomi Peasley

* three people in the audience were introduced, they were county employees, one was the County Assessor, but I did not get their names.

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/> and are not the official county record of the meeting. For officially approved minutes, which are normally published at a later time, see

<https://okanogan-county.org/Commissioners/Minutes%202014/March%204,%202014.htm>

Volunteer took the notes via Zoom. AV Capture not working. LJ said that the system should be up and running later in the day.

Summary of significant discussions:

Commissioner Branch opened with a discussion about Covid practices in the Commissioner's Hearing Room.

Commissioner Detro had corrections to minutes of Sept. 14.

Commissioner Briefing: Discussion of issues related to purchasing property, of the possibility of a mandated vaccination policy, Spending of American Rescue Plan money.

Leah McCormick and Jim Nelson: County bond discussion

Naomi Peasley: Fairground Report

9:10 Commissioner Briefing: The meeting opened with a discussion about Covid protocol for the Commissioner's Hearing Room. **JD** was expressing concerns about unvaccinated people entering the US. **CB** said that the policy given him requires that masks be worn in the Hearing Room, but that if a person needed to speak into the microphone, they could remove the mask and then sanitize the microphone afterward. **JD** requested changes to the minutes of Sept. 14: Line 60: The Fairgrounds were never closed. Line 59: John Hubbard volunteered to fix the north well. The other site will have to be fixed by hiring whoever is available. Line 51: Would like Comm. **AH** to be available for French Creek discussion/resolution. **CB** mentioned that there is a conflict between a couple of the parties involved in proposed property purchase; need

to be sure we get whole story on everything going forward. **AH** there are emergency situations that need to be considered related to fence lines in property purchase matter. **AH** A letter from the Union about whether we have or are going to have a mandated vaccination program. The matter may have to be negotiated. **CB** “are there any provisions in the agreement for situations you have no control over?” referred to the cannabis issue as having some similarity. **AH** We can’t insert stuff when it comes up, need to have exact language and policy. **CB** Ask Maurice about beds filling up at MVH? **JD** stated that there is some “propaganda” or misinformation out there about current communications about hospital overload. It is more of a staffing situation. **AH** asked about how this relates to our Hazard Mitigation Plan. **CB** “let’s get them all in here to look at this.” **JD**’s point about staffing is well taken. **MG** can clarify what should be our plan for crisis bed capacity...” (as well as additional quarantine space that might be needed) (not verbatim). **AH** “We need to be sure when is the last time that we can spend (AR?) money. Need to know how funds can be used, can we use reimbursable?” Some proposed expenses are longer ranged. “We are responsible to keep track of all monies, dates, it is important for accurate documentation.” **CB** “Do we need some kind of warranty program to keep record of spending?” **AH** I am thinking of a Mobile Command Center for several emergency purposes. **CB** questions details, need to have a budget meeting. **AH** “How do you want to manage times of budget meetings, workshops?” **JD** “Whatever you guys want to do, I’ll make the time. **CB & AH** back and forth (hard to understand and hear clearly) about Forest Service leases, funding related to bonding coming up at 10:30; Leah has been cc’d about conversations so far.

10:20 LH and JN arrive introduce selves and pass out paper packets. **CB** reviews mask policy specific to BOCC re mask mandated except when using microphone, etc. **AH, CB, JN** casual banter about Bud Hover’s football career.

10:25 Short Break

10:30 Bond discussion opens: *there are times when the discussion was over my head and I could not really make a coherent synopsis. But I think I have the main points. **JN** The county has an S&P score that is pretty good. **LMc** Thinks that it would be a good idea for Ronnie Holder-Dieffenbach to come in. **JN** explains that IRS has rules governing “Commissioner Bonds,” funding purposes need to be thought through. **AH** “Would it behoove us to refinance any of our existing bonds?” **AH, JN, LMc** discuss aspects of refinancing existing bonds. County has good S&P score, very little outstanding debt, and **JN** “there is additional debt capacity if the county wants to go to the voters. would be a good idea to formalize things into one policy for the county” There is a need to review the current policy. **JN** “We are trying to set interest rates as low as we can.” Added that analysts read details about climate change and wildfire policies. Had a question about spend down timeframe for (AR?) Described other counties’ Bond projects and practices. **CB, JN, LMc AH** discuss how refinancing has gone in the past, and making projections of repayment of current bonds. **JN** has talked to the county’s bond attorney. **AH** says will have a Finance Committee meeting, decide how much they want to put out there. **CB** calls attention to the county’s consideration of purchasing a building, and the possibility of leasing that building instead. **JN** “We will talk to Bond Attorney about that. **LJ** will prepare resolution related to budget/bond issues.

11:25 Budget folks leave

11:26 Maurice Goodall short discussion about hospital capacity, problem with interpreting Public Health Statement. (could not see Maurice on Zoom, hard to determine who was talking. **MG** states that we won't take more people than we can quickly ship somewhere. **AH** "I thought we were creating extra space." **MG** The problem is getting enough staff. **AH & CB** we need Laurie to come in and fill in the blanks. (I could not see who was talking much of the time.)

11:40 Naomi Peasley, Fairground Report: **CB** wants to know why **NP** is not wearing a mask. States that there is a policy, and he has to ask. **NP** explains that she can tell him the reason in private, but does not want to talk about it publicly. **CB** explains that he has to ask and needs to know, **NP** is becoming nervous and upset, and as **CB** continues to explain his position and that it is not personal, she is wiping her eyes, crying and trying to compose herself. **NP** says something about her therapist, and that she would need to talk about it in private. Tries to move on to Fairgrounds Report. **AH** steps in and steers discussion towards USDA Grant applications. **AH, NP, LJ** (I found the next part of the discussion hard to sort out. Discussion about nature of current projects, need to identify In-Kind and Cash (transactions, receipts?) donations from businesses and individuals, looking into modular restrooms, **NP** asks if Commissioners would consider letting her part-time assistant become full time because of her work load. Discussion seems to be a little tense. **AH** would someone be needed in the Winter? **NP** "I have every weekend booked except two." **CB** "Losing staff Oct 1?" **NP** "Correct." **AH** "Can you come to a Budget Workshop, we can talk about seeing if we can hire a new person. Right now costing more to run the Fairground than _____?" **NP** "The Fairground has been neglected for 30 yrs." **AH** "What would a full-time person do?" **NP** describes grant writing, paperwork, storage work that she can't get to because of workload. Can revisit this in the future with more specific numbers. "I am at close to 200% revenue for the Fairground." **AH** "I just want to be educated about it so we can lay it out for the public." **NP** "I understand. I just want you to consider how much work I am doing and can't get to things. **CB** "We need to look at budget projections and see that numbers are right. **AH** "I realize we sometimes need to spend more to make more...need to see where we are at now, specifically. **CB** Some facilities are neglected and we spend more time fixing than productive time. This can impact future bookings. **AH & CB** We need to continue this discussion. **AH** Says something about how submitting 10 applications to WSDA won't help (unclear). **CB** "You are not expected to know all the complexities and how they affect us." **AH** concurs. **NP** states she is going to apply for 200,000.00 grant and then "prioritize what needs to be taken off the list." **AH** says he wants to avoid applying for it and not spending it.

12:18: Meeting ends