

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday September 10, 2024, AM

Present:

Jon Neal (JN) – BOCC Chair, District 3

Andy Hover (AH) – BOCC Vice Chair, District 2

Chris Branch (CB) – BOCC, District 1

Lanie Johns (LJ) – Clerk of the Board

These notes were taken by an Okanogan County Watch volunteer viz Zoom. Every attempt is made to be accurate. Notes are verbatim when possible, and otherwise summarized or paraphrased. Note taker comments or clarifications are in italics. These notes are published at <https://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://okanogancounty.org/offices/commissioners/commissionersproceedings.php>.

Time stamps below are in real time. To locate specific topics, a clock on the AV Capture video screen at <https://okanogancounty.org/avcapture.html> can assist in finding the correct spot on the video recording.

Summary of Significant Discussions or Actions:

- Public Comment: Ruth Hall comments on the County Fair and expresses criticism regarding not taking cash for admission, at certain gates.
- Public Hearing regarding purchase of 3 vehicles for the Sheriffs' Office from Juvenile for \$84,000.00
- Discussion: working with municipalities on infrastructure and annexations
- 2 executive sessions 45-minute average each – RCW 42.30.110(1)(i) potential/ongoing litigation
- Solid Waste Update: Will purchase paper composting bag instead of using plastic, landfill only takes small batteries, non-alkaline batteries need to be recycled, and grant for reducing methane gas.
- Public Works Update: Boulder Creek Road, Siwash Creek Road, has results of speed study on Johnson Creek Road – 80% of cars go 53 mph. BOCC not inclined to change the speed, but request enforcement of current speed. Discussed speed limit in front of Liberty Bell. Bureau of Reclamation to be hauling some gravel to Buckmiller Road for dam work in Conconully.
- Meeting recessed at 12:17

9:00

Pledge of Allegiance

9:15

Ruth Hall complains about not taking cash (only able to pay on-line) at the South Gate of the Fair. She stated that people don't expect to bring plastic cards to a county fair.

9:30

Public Hearing for Sheriff's Office purchase of 3 vehicles from the Juvenile Department for \$84,000. There was no public comment. Resolution 118-2024 approved the purchase.

9:35

BOCC discusses disposing of County Property to adjoining landowner. CB states that the project E-97 with JN as the applicant for the grant, since the county is applying for the grant. AH asks what is our role in city streets? Especially when we manage the grant. CB remarks that it becomes a decision of whether to build outside of city limits or improve the city infrastructure. Also, discusses cities annexing land.

LJ – Speaking of infrastructure, she has sent the BOCC a letter from the PUD asking for a letter of support for their grant application.

AH – We need more information before signing on to a grant application.

Ronnie Jackson (RJ) (*listening in on Zoom*) asks about annexing a trailer park near her on Engh Road. RJ explains that it might be good for her neighborhood to be annexed. Then, the Group A well might get fixed. She pays \$200 per month for water, which is only for 5,000 gallons per month. RJ – the power and well have been down a lot this summer. It's pretty upsetting, and it would be very difficult to fight fire if she has to count on her well.

10:01

BOCC goes into Executive Session under RCW 42.30.110 (1)(i) with Civil Deputy, Planning Director, and Jenna (?) for potential/ongoing litigation. (*This executive session last for an hour*)

11:05

Ken Kovalenko (KK), Solid Waste Manager, in for an update.

JN asks KK if the landfill purposely takes small batteries? KK – Yes, the small ones only, but not non-alkaline batteries that should be recycled. These batteries cause fires at the landfill. We have been pretty lucky this year, especially since the weather has cooled down some.

AH asks KK if the landfill takes oil-based paints. KK – Yes, you can take up to 15 containers on Saturday from 10:00 to 3:00 at the Dump. The Transfer station in Twisp takes them 2x monthly. KK states this is posted on their website.

AH – How about Latex paint? KK- The paint should be in solid form. You can pop the lid, take dirt, kitty litter or something like that to help harden it up. Dry latex is fine.

KK – Reporting on the PM 2.5 Reduction grant. I talked with Ecology because the City of Okanogan uses plastic for their organic waste but will be purchasing paper composting bags. CB explains his experience with paper bags and yard waste. KK – Doing this will be a move in the right direction.

11:17

CB explains that a gentleman from Spokane County told him recently, that they have to use plastic bags with their garbage. KK understands that keeps the garbage in place better. CB – My problem is the use of more plastic.

KK – We're also submitting for the Methane Gas Grant to reduce Methane gases at the landfill. Right now, we are flaring excess gas, but this new grant would be for underground wells to hold the gas.

11:20

Josh Thomson (JT), County Engineer reports on current Public Works Projects; they are working on the Boulder Creek Road today, then then the Siwash Creek Road.

JT – I have the results from the speed study completed on Johnson Creek Road between Miller Road and John Peterson Road. 80% of the vehicles are doing 53 MPH at the south end of the road, and 57,58,59 MPH at the north end. The speed limit is currently 50 MPH. JT – We don't normally change the speed limit when most people are doing the speed limit, but there can be other factors such as a school zone. CB suggests that enforcement might work on slowing people down that are going over. I could support changing the speed limit. I have received one comment, however, that was against lowering the speed. JN – I don't see how it can be justified at this point.

CB – Maybe more law enforcement. *CB speaks to the Sheriff who has just come into the room to see how he feels about more enforcement. He is willing to look into that.*

The Sheriff points out that the front of Liberty Bell School is 20 mph, but they cannot enforce that. AH asks the Sheriff why it is not enforceable. The BOCC sets speed limits, and they should be able to be enforced. *(I was unable to hear the Sheriff's reasoning for not being able to enforce the speed limit. He did mention something about the RCW's.)*

AH asks JT if he could look into doing a speed study by the Liberty Bell School.

JT goes on to report that there will be a reduction in funding this year for the sno parks. We'll see about that. I'm trying to get the snowmobile group involved in this.

JT – Also, the Bureau of Reclamation will be moving a lot of loads of sand to Buckmiller Road from Omak *(I believe)*. I will be working with them to see if they will guarantee to fix the road afterwards. If not, we may need to put restrictions on it.

11:34

The Sheriff reports that he is going to be hiring 2 different positions to work the Sheriff and Mental Health. We're expecting to hire them both and hopefully, start January 1st.

11:38

*****Another Executive Session under RCW 42.30.110 (1)(i) for potential/ongoing litigation with the Sheriff, Undersheriff, Esther Milner – Civil Deputy, and another Sheriffs staff member. *****
(This executive session goes from 11:38 to 12:17, then they are recessed until the Dept of Health Mtg in the afternoon.)