

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday June 11, 2024 AM

Present:

Chris Branch (CB) – BOCC, District 1

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

Jon Neal (JN) – BOCC Chair, District 3 (attends by Zoom @10:28)

Lanie Johns (LJ) – Clerk of the Board

LJ is also training a new deputy clerk.

These notes were taken by an Okanogan County Watch volunteer via 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/commissioners_proceedings.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: Ms. Jackson asks if Commissioner candidates have to undergo a background check. Not to begin with, but during the campaign, things are usually revealed per CB & AH.
- Director of WSU SNAP Education program explains her work with the schools to the BOCC, along with the Advanced Food Safety Training for restaurants.
- Board received a letter of interest for Fair Advisory Board – some discussion regarding whether to do background checks for appointed committees, boards, commissions, will check with HR.
- WSU Extension director in to discuss creation of a half time position for 4-H programs in the County.
- Public Works: Chip seal starting up again in certain areas, getting paperwork completed for easement with Wildlife Council/ shooting range, staffing needs, and comparison of wages in other counties.
- Meeting adjourned 11:38

9:00

Pledge of Allegiance

CB and AH review old minutes

Public Comment: Ms. Jackson (MJ) asks if the County Auditor does background checks on County Commissioner candidates? AH states that no one does background checks on these candidates. MJ asks if a person can have domestic violence on their record? Both AH and CB state that usually these things come out during the campaign MJ states that she is new to politics and believes we should know these things.

9:30

Discussion/update topic: Nutrition & Food Safety programs with Kayla Wells-Yoakum (KWY), WSU Extension agent for Ok Co. The Director of the SNAP-Education program for Chelan/Douglas Counties, Margaret Viebrock (MV). MV reports that this education grant through USDA has been going since 1990. MV works with families and school districts offering nutrition education classes. We go into the schools and do 6 classes per school year, mostly the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades education, and also work with adult audiences. During Covid, she did an online program and we had a good response. MV- Sometimes, we go to farmers markets and food pantries. We give recipes and cook food for people to taste.

Tyler Demmit (TD) has just been hired as a new nutrition educator for Okanogan County. She is currently in training, but by fall will be in the schools/ TD introduces herself and states that she is learning the resources of the area and the curriculum.

AH asks whether they know about the food assessment that is happening in the county with Blue Sky Minds. KWY is familiar, but TD will need to learn about that and will be contacting them.

MV reports that there is an Advanced Food Safety class for businesses that is now a requirement (due to legislative action), and the student gets a national certification. MV has been doing this for Okanogan and Grant Counties also. She has used the 12 Tribes building and has been having an 85% pass rate, which is really good.

MV – My biggest problem is no bilingual staff to teach the restaurant owners that speak Spanish. MV- I usually teach 2 classes per month, and I work closely with Patrick Dunn at the Health Department. The Health Department and Legislature require this class for restaurant proprietors.

MV thanks the BOCC for their continued support of the WSU Extension program in Okanogan County.

9:42

LJ has some things to report to the BOCC; she has been meeting with the architect and people who have responded for other courthouse projects, and they will be putting in bids. She is talking with Pioneer Waterproofing, who will be coming back to finish up

this year and giving a new bid for that as it wasn't covered initially. LJ will be bringing bids in the next couple of weeks.

9:50

LJ – We have received a letter of interest for the Fair Advisory Board. Do you want me to schedule an interview? AH – I think we should do a background check on people who want to be on committees. We can, at least, ask HR about it, especially if there is something bad on their background check. AH also considers how you can implore people to do service? CB – It's a recruiting process. When it comes to the Planning Department, the mission statement needs to be considered.

10:00

Public Hearing Budget Supplemental Appropriation BECCA Fund 113* Mike Beaver
This is funding for helping students with absentees – jail from BECCA bill. Transferring from Contingency Reserve \$14,000. No Public Comment. Approved Resolution 78-2024

10:05

Public Hearing Budget Supplemental Appropriation Water Conservancy Board Fund 139. This was discussed by the Finance committee per LJ. We have been doing this 2 years in a row – paying some administrative costs. Public Comment: Ruth Hall makes a statement that she feels it should be self-funded since this is only to benefit the person who wants to move their water rights. AH and CB discuss how it used to be under the Department of Ecology and now, this Water Conservancy Board is a group of volunteers doing this. Moved, seconded, and carried to approve Resolution 79-2024 for \$7000.

(AH and CB have quite a discussion about the fees associated with this board function. They feel it should be self-funded.)

10:14

Mike Beaver (Juvenile) comes in after hearing occurred. AH asks him whether the BECCA fund is doing what it's intended. He said yes.

10:18

(There is more discussion between CB, LJ, and AH about what kind of background check might be needed. Some background checks can be done online. Others, including fingerprinting could be done through the Sheriff.)

(JN joins the Zoom @10:28.)

10:30

KWY from the Extension Office is back to discuss a 4-H staffing request. KWY has been researching for a ½ time position to be a 4-H coordinator. WSU will pay the benefits, but the County will need to pay the salary. KWY was thinking someone

between \$21 - \$26 per hour. My request today is to create and fund this position. JN asks whether KWY knows anyone personally to fit this position? KWY-No, it will be a full search. AH wants to know if there are any grants to help fund this, possibly through the USDA? KWY-I haven't looked into any. I just did a grant application to help fund my position. This was a first for me. I'm not very experienced. I do know, however, that there are no grants until we have this position in place. Then, I can look for other funding opportunities.

AH explains his fear of future possible budget shortfalls, especially with the Sheriff's Office being so understaffed. It is a reality where we are financially. I really want to do this but I'm wondering if this position could be funded differently in the future. I think 4-H and Extension is important, but it's not what it used to be. I really want to know whether there are funds out there.

10:45

CB talks about his experience with grant writing and administering grants.

AH – Let's just do some thinking about it. I'm not ready to approve this today.

AH – We should be putting money into our kids, though. People need to know the realities about farming. People are having to sell off land to keep their farm business.

KWY explains that she has been working on creating a farm family finance class.

JN wonders whether the local school districts would be interested in partnering on this.

We do need to keep kids out of the justice system.

KWY- I don't know much about the funding schools have, but I will do some more research and re-schedule a time to discuss this with you later.

KWY tells CB that she is a trainer for “Guiding Good Choices” class. She has done approximately 20 training courses since 2019. Part of my position is to provide service. There are not local studies completed, that I know of, correlating 4-H type activities with keeping kids out of jail, but there is a national study. I will e-mail that to you.

11:00

Public Works, Josh Thomson (JT): Chip seal beginning. Still working with the Okanogan Wildlife Council on the paperwork for the easement to the gun club. JT – Also, have made a comparison of wages with other counties in order to help us recruit people for our positions. We have 3 openings.

AH – We have to be able to compensate people for their work and experience. I would be in favor of increasing wages to get people to do the work here.

JT – The design tech position has been vacant since January and others are longer vacant.

JT states that he will begin working with HR to draft a proposal.

(JT, CB, and AH are talking about a piece of County property that an adjacent landowner is interested in.)

11:24

AH tells JT about the Patterson Lake Road sign that needs to be replaced. Some of the lettering is off. JT will look into it.

11:26

It is moved, seconded, and carried to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

1. Contract – Tunk Mountain improvements notice to proceed – Global Tower Services
2. Contract – Loomis-Oroville Rd Drainage-CPP no. 9425-26 Rudnick & Sons, LLC
3. Contract – LTAC #24-025 Capital Improvements, the Oroville Initiative
4. Contract -LTAC #24-021 Marketing & Promotion -Oroville Chamber of Commerce
5. Contract -LTAC #24-023 Marketing & Promotion Confluence Gallery and Art Center.
6. Contract -LTAC #027 Marketing & Promotion -Highland Community Support Coalition
7. LTAC #24-024 Marketing & Promotion the Merc Playhouse
8. Board of Equalization – Re-Appoint Ruth Hall

11:28

It was moved, seconded, and carried to approve the minutes for June 3,4. & 5

11:28

Approve payment to MV EMS District/ Aero Methow for \$89,449

11:29

Approve payment to Tonasket EMS/Lifeline \$16,200

11:29

Approve payment to Oroville Rural EMS District for \$18,44521:38

11:35

Approve payment vouchers for payroll \$1,786,835

LJ reports that she hasn't received the resolution from the Sheriff's Office yet. However, the BOCC is meeting this afternoon.

11:38

Adjourn for lunch. Public Health at 1:30 & more business at 3:00

