

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
June 10, 2024 AM & PM

JN—Jon Neal, BOCC, Chair, District 3—absent
AH—Andy Hover, BOCC, District 1
CB—Chris Branch, BOCC, District 2
LJ—Lanie Johns, Clerk of the Board
EM—Esther Milner (Chief Civil Deputy Prosecutor)
MG—Maurice Goodall, Emergency Management
PP—Pete Palmer, Director of Planning
CI—Camden Irwin, GIS Specialist, Planning Department
NB—Nick Bates, Fairgrounds Manager
PJ—Pam Johnson, County Treasurer
AL—Albert Lin, County Prosecutor
TC—Teddy Chow—Assistant Prosecutor
PB—Paul Budrow, County Sheriff

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://okanogancounty.org/offices/commissioners/commissioners_proceedings.php

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Summary of significant discussions:

- Pete Palmer, Planning Director, brings Camden Irwin to show the Commissioners the interactive map he’s created. The map shows the zoning for any parcel number in the County.
- Nick Bates, Fairgrounds Manager brings several problems to the Commissioners:
 - The woman who has a concession stand at the Fair says she wants to set up several days early, and that she’s set up early for the last 30 years. The Fair Advisory Committee (FAC) doesn’t want to allow her to set up early. The commissioners want all the concessionaires to be treated equally.
 - Ticket Tomato, an on-line ticket sales company, presented the FAC with a contract that contained changes from what NB thought was agreed to in a zoom meeting. The commissioners will accept one change but not others.
 - The High School Rodeo hasn’t paid for all the RV spaces they reserved for their event. They say that the RVers didn’t pay them. The Commissioners will decide this issue next week.
- BOCC goes into executive session under RCW 42.30.110(1)(i)—potential litigation, inviting Esther Milner (Chief Civil Deputy Prosecutor), Albert Lin (County Prosecutor) Teddy Chow (Assistant Prosecutor) for 45 minutes.
- Albert Lin, County Prosecutor, and Teddy Chow, Assistant Prosecutor, demonstrate a new case management software to use in court, saying the software they use now is too cumbersome and slow.
- Sheriff Budrow discusses staffing shortages in his department with the Commissioners. The commissioners discuss possible solutions, such as hiring six temporary officers for the jail for one month from the Department of Corrections, establishing a regional jail with Douglas and Chelan Counties and an increase in the sales tax to fund new hires.

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- Meeting adjourns at 2:38.

-3:21:15—Pledge of Allegiance

CB discussed the sign on the kiosk in Loomis with AH.

CB—There were some issues with it that involved the public works guy there. There's a man who has a piece of land near the property and he's willing to lease it for 99 years for \$1.00. I researched the control that the county would have. There's an AGO (Attorney General Opinion) from 2000 that says it's a leased property, you have an ownership in the property. The piece is 15 X 15, right across from the store. A lot of people stop there.

AH—I'd support that.

CB—He said if we can do a quick lease agreement, nobody would be paying anything. He's Jerry Ogle. Discussion where the property is—near the store.

LJ—I think the kiosk is being built right now. I sent the LTAC (Lodging Tax Advisory Committee) the invoice we received last week, and part of it was for design for the Loomis kiosk.

Commissioners discuss getting EM to draft the lease agreement.

CB—Also, I'm on the Public Health Advisory Board, and my term ends on July 25. I told them I wouldn't renew it.

AH—What are you going to do when you get done with this (being a commissioner)?

CB—I'm going to catch all the fish before you get there.

AH and CB Discuss the merits of white tail deer vs. mule deer.

-3:06:45—Public comments.

Ms. Jackson asks the commissioners what they earn and do commissioners also hold jobs. Also, since Chris Branch is also on the Board of Health, how will he be replaced?

AH—Our salary is 40% of a Superior Court judge's salary. That was set a couple of years ago. After some calculations, the commissioners are currently earning \$86,956.40. We can have other jobs. I farm, for example, but the Commissioner job takes precedence.

AH—Commissioners are de facto members of the Board of Health, so whoever replaces Commissioner Branch will automatically be on the Board of Health.

CB—But I was talking about a different thing. I was appointed to a state board to review the actions taken during COVID.

Ms. Jackson—Thanks. I've been trying to learn the system. I think your job is valuable and I thank you for doing it.

CB—There was that email about the appointment of a Fire District 3 commissioner. One of the commissioners passed away, and they only had two to begin with. I'll call (*inaudible*) and remind him he needs to submit a name.

CB—Also, I forwarded the latest information about the LSR report from the Forest Health Collaborative. They had to do the Late Successional Reserve thing. They finished the report. It's been helpful because now they can do some things in the LSRs they couldn't do before because the Forest Plan had a different plan. Now it reflects more of the existing circumstances especially since fires have gone through a bunch of them, and there are barred owls there.

-2:51:45—AH—Maurice?

MG—I'm Maurice Goodall, Emergency Management.

MG—I met this morning with the Fire Advisory Committee. We're still going with the 15th.

MG—There was a fire near (*inaudible*). I think they've got it contained.

MG—That's all.

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AH and MG discuss a fire on Rising Eagle Rd caused by a downed power line. They discovered there was a glitch of the Emergency Notification System, but now it's been tested, and it works the way it's supposed to. AH and CB opine that everyone should be on the Emergency Notification System. MG leaves.

2:47:35—AH—Pete, how much stuff do you have?

PP—Maybe five minutes. And I'll give a majority of my time to Camden (Irwin, GIS Specialist, Planning Department) because he's got a thing he's built.

PP—Good morning. I'm Pete Palmer, Director of Planning. Camden has been doing a lot of training on his own. He took a class and built a really cool mapping tool. I think it'd be great for the public on our web site.

CI shares his screen on zoom.

CI—You can search by address, parcel number or (*inaudible*).

AH—Sweet!

CI—It zooms to the parcel, shows address information and you can see what zoning the parcel is in.

AH—That's awesome. People have been wanting that for a long time.

PP—Our permitting software won't give us this detailed, but will give you permitting information, what permits have been applied for in the past.

AH—Can you link to the zoning?

CI—We can link to other sites, and we'll look into linking to the permitting software.

CB—Someone asked me the other day what Commissioner's District he was in, so that'd be good, too.

CI—I have a list of layers and I can add Commissioners' Districts, too.

PP—We've got it downloaded on our phones and have been testing it all around the county. It's real useful on the phone. And right now, when you go to the county website and the zone code information pops up, we're looking at replacing that link with this map.

PP—I think it's going to be a great tool.

CI—People can't see the zoning on the PDF map because it's so dense, but now they'll be able to see it.

CI—Towns have their own zoning, and it's not on this map.

PP—So I'm really proud of Camden. He's had lots of training, and he created this tool.

AH—I have an email from the Mazama Advisory Committee, from Claire and Jim, thanking you for finding the intern. They need \$500 for a zoom subscription and tech support for an on-line survey. I assume the \$500 could be absorbed by your budget.

PP—We have a zoom platform they can use. Just forward the email to me and I'll see where to find the money.

AH—OK. Thank you very much.

-2:35:00—AH—Nick?

NB—I'm Nick Bates from the Fairgrounds. I've got several things to ask you about.

NB—Weed control. I contracted Larry (Hudson, Noxious Weed Board), and he gave me a list of contractors. I got bids from three of them.

Commissioners and NB discuss the bids. NB will get some more information and clarification and bring them back. Then the Commissioners will make their decision.

2:25:25—NB—A woman came to the meeting with Commissioner Neal, me, Larissa (Fairgrounds employee), the president and vice president of the Fair Advisory Committee (FAC), MG and Laurie (?). MG was showing drone pictures of the fairgrounds, so we'd know where things were. The woman has the concession Country Buns. There was a comment about her coming in on Thursday to start setting up, instead of Monday at 8:00 AM, which is what the contract says. She says she's set up early for the last 30

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years. Mike (FAC Chair) had called her and told her set up starts at 8:00AM on Monday. It got pushed to me.

AH—It shouldn't have been.

NB—I looked at the contracts, and the only change from last year is the dates. I have to go by what the contracts say, but she's always come in early. So I'm bringing it to you.

AH—I think the FAC should settle the issue, but if we have to, it has to be equal for everyone.

CB—I think the main issue is that if people come in early, it's hard for others to set up their stuff.

NB—They can start selling food on Wednesday.

AH—Whatever we do, everybody should get to do it. (To CB—Do you agree?)

CB—Yes. If it's going to be a big fight, NB won't be the only one coming in here. If they let everyone come in, they'll have to change the set-up schedule for other Fair events. But she has been doing it for 30 years.

-2:18:40—NB—We found another water leak where two lines join. It leaks at the couplings. We got them fixed.

Lengthy discussion of new lights in the parking areas.

-2:03:00—NB—The FAC voted to have Ticket Tomato (on-line ticket sales company) sell the tickets for the Fair. But the contract they sent had several items not mentioned in the zoom meeting. They want a two-year contract. They wanted motels and food. Pam (Johnson, County Treasurer), Commissioner Neal and I would like to send the contract back for some changes.

PJ—My personal frustration is with the FAC. They're supposed to be negotiating the contract, and I emailed them to see if they were OK with the changes. No replies but in the last meeting, I asked them about a two-year contract, and they said—well... We're getting no response from them.

AH—They an advisory committee and we should treat them like that. I can see why a company would want a two-year contract, and I'm OK with it. Did they give the FAC a price and is it inclusive of the other things they're asking for?

PJ—Yes and No. Lodging and travel is already filtered in. But in the contract, it says the rooms will be deducted from the close-out cost. We can't do that.

AH—OK, so we just tell them—you book the rooms, and we pay you \$X.00. What are they supposed to provide?

NB—They were going to provide seven people—two for each gate and a runner. On-line ticket sales.

AH—The Auditor and Treasurer are still involved.

PJ—They're just replacing the group that sold tickets before. We still have to do all the audits just like before.

After discussion, the Commissioners are OK with a two-year contract, but won't pay for the rooms and food. EM needs to be in the loop, too.

-1:47:30—NB—I have one last thing. The High School Rodeo hasn't paid its bill. We blocked off spaces in the RV park and have video of all the spaces full, but they say some of the RVers didn't pay. I say—to bad, you have to pay for all--\$4,700, but she collected only \$1,050 or so. What do we do?

AH—Can you bring this up next week?

CB—We can reflect on it a little.

AH—I got the email from her. Can you find out for sure that they wanted the whole place blocked off, and if it's in writing?

NB—It's probably not in writing, but I'll look.

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NB—Now there's a new group that wants us to block off a bunch of spaces, but I put in writing that if they block off spaces, they *will* pay for them.

NB—See you next week.

-1:44:10—AH—I move we go to executive session under RCW 42.30.110(1)(i)—potential litigation, inviting EM, Albert Lin (County Prosecutor) Teddy Chow (Assistant Prosecutor). Off they go. The time is extended, so they're gone for approximately 45 minutes.

-1:37:35—AL—We need new case management software. What we've got, JustWare, doesn't work well, especially in court. It's slow and hard to navigate. JustWare is no longer supported. We'd like to get [Prosecutor by Karpel](#).

TC shares his screen and demonstrates the difficulties with JustWare.

Also, TC has problems with his laptop itself. It frequently crashes even though it's brand new.

Karpel is used by other counties.

AL--Two pricing scenarios—Perpetual licensing. We buy the program--\$87,000 one time cost and then \$14,000 per year.

AH—What's JustWare cost?

AH--\$12,000? So we're \$2,150 more per year and it would be a lot easier to use.

TC—And it keeps getting updated. With JustWare we store many terabytes per year. But with Karpel, it's in the cloud.

TC—39 other jurisdictions use it in this state. AL and I came from a jurisdiction that used it and it worked fabulously in court.

AH—The annual cost isn't that bad. The \$87,000 is a big deal, but I think we can come up with it.

AL—We can split the \$87,000 over two years, too.

AH—What's the learning curve for the other lawyers.

TC—We learned it in Franklin County, and it only took a couple of weeks.

TC—JustWare works fine if there's no time pressure, but in court, it doesn't work.

CB—If inefficiencies are huge that ends up meaning you need more people.

AH—Talk with IT and explain your thoughts. They'll have questions about security, etc.

CB—They can check with the other jurisdictions.

AL—King County, Franklin, Walla Walla, Pierce, etc. Many counties use it.

AH—Can you make sure this will work with the Public Defenders' Office?

TC—Yes.

AH—Just talk to IT and the Public Defenders.

AL—Come back next week?

AH—Or the week after. When do you want to implement it?

TC—The minimum time right now is next February.

AH—Oh, that's next year's budget.

TC—A lot of the big-time lag is the data migration.

TC—Thanks. I'm going to go see IT now about this laptop. It feels hot right now.

AL—I don't like mine because the battery sucks.

After more discussion of laptops not working, they leave at 11:49.

-1:13:05—LJ—The sheriff will be here at 1:30.

AH—We're doing well with interest. As of May 31, with the LATCF (Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund) interest, we budgeted \$330,000 for the year and have earned \$283,000. And for Current Expenses, we budgeted \$1,200,000 and we've earned \$860,000.

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Adjourn for lunch until 1:30.

-1:08:35—AH—It's 1:30 and we're back in session. We've got the Sheriff.

PB—Dave Yarnell won't be here. What do you want to talk about first?

AH—Let's talk about the jail first.

PB—Staffing levels are declining. We can't find anybody to apply for the jail positions, so the people we have are being overworked. People can't continue to work the amount of overtime they're working now. We're going to go to a Civil Service Meeting and get the minimum age limit lowered to 20. Some places start at 18, but I'd rather not. We'll try that.

PB—Next level—we just lost one officer, and others are thinking about leaving. We may have to lower the bed capacity because we don't have enough employees.

AH—There's got to be a point where no matter how few people are in jail, there aren't enough employees.

PB—We're trying to figure out that that number is, but we're getting there.

PB—I asked the National Guard, but they don't do anything about jails.

PB—We asked MG and contacted DOC (Department of Corrections)—trying to get six bodies for one month, just to give my people some rest. The numbers I got was \$750/12 hr shift/person, \$59/day for meals, \$107 per night for lodging. Total for 6 is \$5,496/day times 30 days = \$164,886.

AH—That's basically 3 positions per month, and we're down below that now. As something to give people a break, this is a possibility.

PB—What if we contracted our inmates to another jail? I haven't tried that yet. But most of the jails have the same problem we have.

AH—No wonder there are so many criminals running around—we can't afford to defend them, can't afford to house them. We can hardly afford to prosecute them.

PB—And we just in one month had 7 bad guys go to jail, and they're pending trials, so they won't be getting out anytime soon.

CB—It feels like a band-aid.

PB—Six guys for \$165,000 is a band-aid.

CB—We've talked for a long time about a joint facility with Douglas and Chelan Counties, and we need to accelerate that.

AH—We've been talking about the .3% sales tax for a while. A full .1% is less than \$1,00,000, so we'd get less than \$3,000,000 for the .3%. If we took the increase and bonded against it. These proposals are just hypothetical, but we're getting to the point where they might become a reality. If you mothball a jail, with just a limited staff for intake. Shift the money into the Sheriff's Office, and bond against the tax. Bonding agencies want to know that you have a revenue source. Then pump a few million dollars a year into a facility somewhere else.

AH—Right now the jail costs just a little over \$4,000,000/year. You're still going to have costs associated with it, but you could cut it way down.

CB—And that's without fixing the things that need to be fixed.

AH—When you talked to Chelan, is their jail privatized?

PB—No.

AH—How are they able to get employees? I know there are more people to draw from. We *have* to do something. The overtime reports are ridiculous—from the safety aspect.

AH—Where are the closest facilities?

PB—Skagit, Whatcom, Chelan. Everything outside of that is pretty long distance. Most counties have a facility.

Someone suggests a look at the Colville facility.

PB—We can ask the Prosecutor which people we could transfer to other jails.

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AH—And there's lots of technology for remote stuff.

AH—We need to take action for the sake of safety.

PB—I don't know if the DOC one month solution is viable.

AH—Ask the Auditor to run a percentage used report for the correction officers' lines. There's money we budgeted for salaries that we didn't use.

CB—You were talking about some places going down to considering 18-year-olds. And you wouldn't have to hire someone who seemed immature.

-49:20—PB—The next topic will be creating a lieutenant's position in the sheriff's Office. The main focus is to take some of the stuff off of Jody's plate. There were seven crimes last month—five murders and two attempted murders. We have only a one-man detective division and moved other positions around. So our regular case load isn't getting done. The lieutenant position would take over oversight—making sure things aren't being dropped through the cracks.

AH—What's the recruitment strategy?

PB—Offer the position outside, but guys on the inside can also apply.

AH—A union position?

PB—Yes. Undersheriff Yarnell has crunched the numbers with human resources, the auditor and treasurer. You've got this info in your packets. Also pay differences between other positions.

Discussion of pay steps, benefits and what the pay situation would be with external applicants vs in-house applicants.

Discussion about positions currently open.

PB—We think we can fund this lieutenant's position this year, and we'd have to look at the situation at budget time at the end of this year.

AH—The lieutenant position will help because you (Jody) are covering for several people.

AH—How is recruitment going on the patrol side?

Jody—Really well, I'm happy to say. One lateral guy started last week. A new entry level deputy started today. At 3:00 I have an interview for another person, and later this month maybe two more laterals.

There looks like a little relief in sight. Two people to graduate from the academy this July.

AH—How about Tonasket?

Jody—Still looks like it's going to be the fall, if we continue on this streak we're on.

CB—Where are the laterals from? The west side?

Jody—No. The one that just started was in Pend Oreille County and then worked for the tribe. The other one I'll interview today is from Ferry County. He's currently working as a park ranger and not enjoying it.

CB—So they're used to rural.

-34:20—AH—Just so I understand the proposal for the lieutenant position—will that bump your pay and your pay.

PB—It would just incrementally bump. We'd have to fix the resolution you passed and add lieutenant between sergeant and chief.

AH—What's the entire budget impact? Put them in-between?

PB explains whose pay gets bumped.

AH—Can you figure out what's the total budget impact? That'll go on for years.

PB—Will do. I'll talk with the Auditor and get it in a spreadsheet.

AH to CB—How do you feel about it?

CB—Move forward. We have to do something.

AH—We talked today about contracts with other agencies for employees.

PB—It'd cost about \$100/day to get somebody working on his/her days off.

AH—Can you get back with us tomorrow?

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AH—I want to make sure positively this fits in the budget.

PB—I'll check and will know by tomorrow.

They do some wordsmithing on the resolution creating the new Patrol Lieutenant position they hope to pass tomorrow.

PB—We'll be back tomorrow.

AH—Just show up when you have it, then we'll just need the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) to amend the contract.

PB and Jody leave.

-17:35—CB—I'd like to talk about a diversion facility. We'd like to say we're more serious about it and would like to see the numbers if the other two counties are interested.

AH—Have Douglas and Chelan Counties talked about it?

CB—They've talked about it a lot. We've talked a lot about diversion, but the jail is Douglas County's conversation. Kevin (?) mostly talks a lot about building a joint facility. And keep the door open for a diversion facility.

CB—You have to throw ideas out there.

AH—No matter what, we've got to do something about the jail. Its useful life will be over at some point. With the low population, lack of funding puts all our eggs in one basket—will we still be able to run the jail at all.

CB—When we're trying to keep people out of jail—diversion—you've got to have housing for them.

AH—I'm talking about housing for working people.

CB—Even when I was working on housing in Oroville, we talked about opening up more housing stock for people.

AH—When will you talk to them next?

CB—Probably Thursday.

AH—I'd like to start looking at it intensely. Not so much numbers, but what's the concept we're looking at? A regional jail? Just an intake portal? Is it going to have a mental health wing?

CB—I say—just grab a concept. There will be a lot of "yeah, but"s on it. Like a regional facility in Pateros. The city owns a big chunk of land just across the Methow River there. I asked Pateros about putting a jail/diversion facility right there. They said, "we're ready". Everybody will have to transport. What will it cost? But Douglas County doesn't have any option now but to pay Chelan County, and how long until it's at capacity.

AH—The only thing I'll say about that—the land is a good place, but commuting, it's a terrible place. The commute to work needs to be short enough to pull people in there.

CB—The correctional unit in Spokane Heights has a lot of houses built around it. How many of these guys work at the jail?

AH—But it's right next to Spokane. It's a longer drive from Okanogan to Pateros or Wenatchee to Pateros.

CB—But Pateros might say—this will help the town grow because of the employees.

JN zooms in while on vacation.

AH—Are you calling in to gloat?

CB—Maybe he's drinking Scotch. He's in Scotland.

CB—We were talking about a regional jail facility. It's hypothetical.

AH—It's just about over because I have to buy twine and bale hay.

JN wants to be updated on the Prosecutor's request for new software. CB mentions that the LACTF money has earned a lot of interest so far this year.

CB—I'll meet with Community Action Council about space in the building they're planning for emergency management.

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CB—See you tomorrow.
JN leaves.
Meeting adjourns at 2:38.