

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
Tuesday, June 25th, 2024, 9:00 a.m.

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Present:

Chris Branch (CB), BOCC District 1
Laney Johns (LJ), Clerk of the Board
Jon Neal (JN), BOCC District 2
Mike Worden (MW), Sheriff's office, Dispatch
Luis Rodriguez (LR), architect, MJ Neal Associates
Justin Borst (JB), architect, MJ Neal Associates
Stacy Nicole McClellan, Clerk's assistant
Colin Baker (CGI), CGI (*video company updating county's website video*)
Cari Hall (CH), Auditor
Pam Johnson (PJ), Treasurer
Lisa Shreckengost (LS), Treasurer's office
Larry Gilman (LG), Assessor

Time stamps refer to the time on the wall clock. An AV Capture archive of the meeting on this date is available at:

<https://okanogancounty.org/departments/boards/livestreamingofmeetings.php>

Summary of Important Discussions:

- Demolition of morgue/sheriff's storage building halted to sub-contract removal of over-threshold asbestos and lead*
- County website video being updated to include new clinic on reservation, RN training program, outdoor recreation, national jet ski championship; will highlight local meat and produce*
- Commissioner Branch called to emergency meeting about future of Economic Development district*
- Vague discussions about Branch's chairing of Workforce Development Council, his experiences with state legislature*
- Reference made to courts remaining in courthouse, Planning, Building and Public Works sharing space in new building*
- Departments should learn proper language for making requests for budget supplements*
- Aeneas Irrigation to receive letter of support for \$110,000 grant*
- Assessor discusses possible land purchase in Ellisforde for EMS district*

8 Meeting adjourned at noon

9:00 - Discussion, Morgue/Sheriff's Storage Building Demolition - MW: The demolition at the 269, Railroad Ave. property—two tanks that were near the barn, the road oil tanks, we did not pass the codings, the insulation on the tanks, so we had (inaudible) come down from Wenatchee to come test it. Multiple tanks had over-threshold lead paint, and one of them had insulation that came back over the threshold for asbestos. ...I haven't heard discussion of a change order to deal with the materials, but there's that potential. *(inaudible)* So this is the larger concern *(looks at the screen)*, and you see in the photo the tar paper's exposed. And and I don't know if the asphalt paper in center of the picture is the issue but they're concerned that that might have asbestos as part of its material. In discussion with the forman yesterday, the testing was happening today or yesterday. If it comes back over threshold, they've got to get a sub-contractor in to remove that. Obviously the roof is half-down so nobody's going to go up there, so they've got to take it down. Somebody can then extract it safely. There's potential for stand-by time with the demo outfit, then the sub-contractor to remove the material that comes back hot, so I'm certain that will result in a change, plus the additional testing... *There will be a visit to the site with the architects from MJ Neal later in the morning so they'll discuss further what is the game plan. He is not surprised, given the age of the building. They're adjusting. CB is curious about the demolition permit itself and what the city required for the permit. Typically the permit addresses the issues beforehand. In his experience these things were dealt with early on.*

LR: We did a survey of the site early on, we just didn't look at the tanks and test them, or access the roof to examine the materials. *CB wonders how much the demolition permit cost. Between \$2,200 and \$2,300. JN and CB exchange cynical comments. MW hopes for a solution and change order to keep the demolition moving. CB thanks them for the heads up. The three men leave. No public comment at 9:15. 9:27- CB and JN discuss the planning process, CB has looked at the Dept. Commerce website for some insight on people's role in local planning. JN feels like people are on the board more to prevent change than to allow it, even if it doesn't meet legal standards.*

CB: We always used to do land use inventory: what have you got? What do you want? And what does it take to get there? ...What do you want is the tougher one, what does it take, too. One of the past planning commissioners was my friend... and he said, "Do what you want, but don't mess it up." If you messed it up with your neighbor, if you didn't do any enforcement, that would cost more than getting the permit.

JN: That's one thing I'm hearing a lot of right now. They're looking at the box of what they're trying to do but they don't look outside the box to see how it affects everybody else.

CB: That takes some real discussion.

9:30 - Updating of County Video for Website - CGI: I hope I'm not interrupting. *He asks if they've viewed the copy of his video. They find it on their computers. They should tell him if they would like any changes. This one is very similar to the last one. He got some new mountain shots, and one of hydropower infrastructure.*

CB: Is there a shot of the business districts? I don't know off the top of my head who

you're getting for sponsors, but I would think that the business districts, North Omak, for example—*CGI says there's something in there, any particular businesses would be at their discretion. They're going to have to use stock photos for schools and the college and not film actual classrooms. They'll include a new clinic on the Colville Reservation, and the RN training program, skiing, mountain biking, horseback riding. They'll need some recent event photos. CB will arrange for him to get footage from the Tourism Counsel of people hiking.*

JN: Do you have footage of jet skis on Lake Osoyoos? *He does.* I can probably get you footage of the national championship for jet ski races on the lake in August, or from last year's competition.

CGI: I'll read you the script: "With an ideal landscape and climate conditions, agriculture is not only a leading industry in Okanogan County but a way of life." So we're trying to show big landscapes, crop fields, irrigation systems. That would be great. If we manage to get... something spouting out water, that would be great. I do have stock footage of that. We also have stock footage of farmers working in the field. "The county also takes pride in the availability of locally grown meat and produce. Local farms, orchards, bakeries and more bring their bounty directly to area farmers markets, fruit stands and local co-ops." *They want shots of these things. He asks when the farmers markets are. He'll put stock shots of "farm to table", unless the county can provide some. CB asks if it would be helpful if restaurants provided footage, like Gamble Sands or Lone Point Winery. CGI says it will only be a couple of seconds; they should understand that. CB says they'd be told the photos are supposed to be generic and not advertisements. JN says the scenery from those two locations would be good. CGI will get footage of Maria Hines who is doing the food assessment. He would welcome harvest photos. JN says they'll be harvesting cherries during his upcoming visit. CGI will send them his "shot list". Leaves the meeting.*

9:57 - CB: Sewage discharge—I'm going to try to get down there and look yesterday but I ended up with an emmerging issue with the Economic Development District relative to its existence in the future. The board of directors had an agreement with the Port of Authority and a contract with the executive director. He's been on the EDD for 14 years, I think, and works for the Port district and they made an agreement with the EDD that he would provide the contract. They didn't do anything. No money to pay him. Yesterday they decided to send a letter to the Port District to do a contract with them. ...Ron Holder Diefenback is on that executive committee and *(inaudible)* from the Tribes is the chair. That was a tough one for him. That guy did more than any executive director we've ever had. We just had a couple of issues. We had an emergency meeting yesterday.

JN: Speaking of fairgrounds, the director sent me a message asking what the plan was for the old bathrooms that are closed.

CB: Just get rid of it. *He says it could be used for storage. A wash station had been discussed, leaving one wall of it. Others have said it should go away. CB agrees. There had been plans to do more there, it would have been good for the RV park, but they pared down the plans. The bathrooms are small and hard to work with. The DNR left the RV park because of that. CB says Omak's RV park brings in money. JN says Oroville's does as well, though Covid hurt. It's often 70% full. CB tells of cyclists who he guided to Okanogan's American Legion park. He goes on to talk about being the chair for the*

Workforce Development Council. He suggests JN or Commissioner Hover maintain a relationship with that council. CB: By the way, I (inaudible) has been able to describe the process they went through to finalize those proposed by-law changes. He said he would be very happy to engage with us. He's my go-to guy when I want to know what happened.

JN: One would make you nervous. (inaudible) The way it's worded.

CB: There's some other provisions that may balance that out. ...The results of what we did at the legislative steering committee showed that there's a real interest on working with us. There's a chance that King County comes back in, which is, our (inaudible) can be seriously affected by some of that stuff but making sure that (we all) it's the policy we talked about with that (inaudible). I got to know a few of those executives and just to see where there at with that. They all have rural areas in their counties too. They have a big interest too in making sure that their agenda items in legislature (inaudible) and there are things we might in rural counties go "why would we care about that?" Mass transit. Some of that's growth management... When it comes to stuff that we need and want, you wonder why would they oppose it. I've never seen anything like that. It's relevant to what they need... Some of the biggest things is the distribution of dollars out of the legislature, who I give priority to. When were in the RTPO (*Regional Transportation Planning Organization*) we used to prioritize funding. We ended up getting a lot of dollars and those guys ... were getting a little frustrated. Then they went to a federal designation.

JN: Last year they re-structured the (RTPO) funding to "help rural areas". At the end of the day it changed our funding back and Seattle metro area got a bunch more dollars. CB says *it's a struggle to reach parity in these things.*

LJ: I got some really good feedback from those two architects here. All the pieces are getting to be (inaudible), more little tweaks are happening, those spaces are coming together in a way that's really functional and addresses some of those concerns (inaudible). (*Is she talking about the Courthouse building?*)

10:16 - JN: Where are they at as far as do they want the other building?

CB: The courts?

JN: I think if they can move some of the other parts down there that would be better

LJ: So we can put that back in the architects' (inaudible) that in order to make that work they'd have to move some of those departments that were going to be (inaudible) spaces down there, and we might need to come back and talk with the board and arrange for a meeting with the other half of the departments that would be going in there to kind of do what we did today and (inaudible) the courts, see what (inaudible) down there.

JN: Would we want to move Building/Planning down there so it's a one-stop-shop?

LJ: Lauri and Josh are meeting with Josh this afternoon to see about moving Public Works in the Health building and the commissioners had mentioned last week that Planning and Building might get their space down there with them. So they're meeting with Public Works and (inaudible). CB thinks that would be productive. That would be

very beneficial to the public, I think. It would free this building up for satellite offices... Communications, being near the Sheriff's office, that would be an option for that.

10:44 *(There has been a cut in the recording. CB is in mid-sentence when it starts again.)*

CB: It's just an enlightening experience when we ended up giving *(inaudible)* that water right to Curtis'. When we started getting into this water banking idea and what was going on with big entities wanting to buy it out of the basin it was pretty easy to go "yeah, I can see why that would happen." We have this watershed stakeholder that the watershed planning unit needs to be established. It needs to be established in such a way as there's an interest in what we're doing.

JN: And what your goals are.

CB: That's right. So you're a planning commissioner. But you shouldn't be pointing to the planning commissioner, you should be pointing at the officials who are appointing them, because first of all you have to appoint the right people. It's going to make a difference in what you do from that point on. ...It's okay to tell the planning commission that but let's think about what we're trying to do.

JN: Which can be difficult when you have nobody applying for (planning commissioner). *CB says you have to recruit people, provide them with information.*

CB: ... Because t The process for appointing a planning commissioner, I'm joking about this but you may still see it, that is, a paper that comes to the board, because sometimes that needs to be an agenda item, that says "this is what we're going to discuss for this long and I want to do that" and I have to put it on there and it would be "potential violation" and you look at that provision and it says "we nominate—and we submit it to the chairman. *(JN goes out. Chit chat with SNM, LJ and CB. The recording stops again and starts again mid-sentence.)*

11:05 - CB: ...prepare a document to change things. We need to make sure that there's a really good history on the recital so that when others come ... we're not all guaranteed to be there.

CH: It's our job to review all the claims based on policy and laws...

LJ: Sometimes those resolution drafts are made by the department head and handed in to HR. And so when the board talks to that department about creating a resolution it would be helpful for the board to discuss that report to the recitals to them so that they can draft something that has some meaningful (language?) in it.

CB: I don't mean to say that nobody's listening but it becomes part of your institution to do those things.

LJ: I'm drafting a budget supplemental appropriations resolution *(she depends on that description, and sometimes there's not enough information).*

CH: I understand, the problem is department heads don't *(inaudible, static, microphone not loud enough. She says she doesn't get all the information. People don't know how to word things. It needs to be simple. It doesn't need to be three paragraphs. CB says they*

need to tell people how to write the recitals.

CB: It's an institutional issue. Everybody does work for somebody else that might need to know that part of their job, and they're going to continue to get someone else to do it.

CH: ...It would be nice if there were a policy put into place by the commissioners that says "This is what we require for the process for: supplementals, request of positions, all this stuff that we say "go talk to so and so. The commissioners come up with some kind of policy that says "This is our expectation". By RCW budget supplementals aren't required to come to the commissioners but our commissioners want them all to come through them. They also want the auditor's office to review the bars codes to see that they're accurate. Maybe it's something to talk about at a round table, the huge lack of written process at least... They used to get handed a policy manual. We don't have that here.

CB: When you have a new sheriff, ...there's not an institutional memory. You risk then muddling up a process.

CH: It's not that we're complaining, we'll help any way we can, but it's getting close to audit time and I constantly every year get pointed out to me, just for my office, being a single point of failure... *CB appreciates the round table.* That is a misconception, that we have ultimate control over the budget but... we're advisors...

PJ: It looks like our (bond) investment interest is going to hold at 5.5%. We're still struggling with interest rates starting to go down, but nobody can tell me by how much or when. Also, Commissioner Hover had asked about our current expense fund in our local assistant and the LTGO, what was budgeted, what we've received so far, how close we are, so that's in our little packet here. Only a couple of months are over budgeted but everything else is close to what we have (*inaudible*). ...

CH: Next month we'll all come in with the preliminary based on the first six months, just kind of where we're projected to be, it's supposed to be informational for the department heads and everybody. Just a projection...

PJ: We have received our national opioid money. That came in at \$338,417, so that has then receded into the 173 fund.

CB: In 173 there was a collective amount, it was accumulating?

PJ: Yes. Right now it's at \$775,369. That was done in the middle of June. It's not the final, we don't know what we've spent.

CB: There was a proposed expenditure that we hadn't verified complete whether or not it was eligible. There was a list of eligible costs there that just went on and on, but the guy that manages the distribution said, "I would read this very literally, he was almost alluding to the fact that you couldn't do it. But I found categories where it looked like you could. There's going to be a spending plan... We're working with that regional group that you have to go through. *CB says there's a lot of unknown, they'll have to consult with the Attorney General.*

PJ: Page, from the Aeneas Valley Irrigation district, was distributing grant forms to the

Public Works Trust Fund and she would like a letter of support. She's going for a grant to switch to BFD pumps. She's going for \$110,000. I did up a letter of support, and calculated out for the last five years. Just the utility expenditure of her budget was 47% of her budget every year. Her average utility expense alone was over \$204,000. I wrote, if it were to go down, how it would affect ranchers and orchardists... and how this would help them...

CB: Do you know if she's submitted it or not?

PJ: I'm not sure... She was needing it last week to get submitted. *CB suggests if it hasn't been submitted, that she also get a letter of support from the commissioners. PJ has only asked for loans from this trust fund in the past.* We are supposed to be getting our federal (*inaudible*) from the Bureau of Land Management, the site says sometime before the end of June. I'm not sure how much we'll be getting. We have budgeted \$3M. *CH asks if the commissioners have heard about this. CB knows it was being debated. PJ said it had been agreed upon.*

CH: For Munis (new accounting software system) we're still hoping to go live January 1 2025 but decisions need to be made. Do the commissioners want to approve the vouchers on Munis, which is permitted by the state auditor, with my office still (inaudible) resource, that kind of stuff? If so, there's some required things ... We need to be able to scan the invoices in, which is a great feature. Also I can show... how it looks, what's going on. It's my process, but you guys approve it, so what might work for me might not work for you. So I was hoping we could talk about it. ...The process to do it electronically, they could still override that but there are things my office could do...

CB: We'd have to have a little pro and con.

CH: We're not experts but we've been buried in Munis for years now so we could definitely— *CH explains there will be pushback because departments cannot have multiple miscellaneous codes anymore, there are other ways to track. She's done here best to accommodate everybody. She's done 11 versions.* It's been quite interesting. I'm only looking at it from what we need to do as a county. ...We need to have a couple of hours to dive into this, probably at the beginning of August. Budgets will be rolling out to department heads by July 9th, then we'll get all to you. Lisa and I will be doing dual entry. *They changed project manager so they won't be able to do the whole budget on Munis as they'd hoped. LJ proposes an August 13th discussion to get the board's input. She apologizes for the time it's taken to get the Munis project ready to go. CH asks to have a noon meeting with the HR director and CB. She and LS leave.*

11:35 - LG: Commissioner Hover sent (*PJ*) and I an email asking about a piece of property for the EMS (Emergency Medical Services) district, possibly. It's US property. The problem is there's four types of US properties. I went through records and records and the neighbor property was part of that property, and I found a deed for the neighbor's property. Whereas an order authorized by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (*BIA*) is now deposited and the Bureau of Land Management (*BLM*) directing to an e-packing claim to get people (*inaudible*) is now transferred to the *BIA*, I think it is, down by the river like that, so we would have to somehow approach both entities if you guys want to acquire that triangle piece.

CB: I wasn't made aware what piece was being discussed.

JN: That's right at the entrance to O'Niel Road?

LG: There's a triangular island (*there*) that belongs with—across the highway. And that piece was also part of another piece, another section over the river, but somehow it was deeded out of that status in 1954. ...So they did relinquish it and there's a possibility that the county can acquire it but you're going to have to go through the proper channels. So both entities are tied up in BIA and BLM. ...It's about 20 acres with access to O'Niel Road and Highway 97. That's all I could find on it. (*He's given them a map.*) I was going to say Thorntons are leasing that. They own the adjacent river parcel. That's all I have. (*LG and PJ leave.*)

1:38 - *CB proposes, since Commissioner Hover is absent and JN has been absent for a month, that they postpone the approval of the minutes. Asks JN if he's talked to the representative of High School Rodeo. She's texted him.*

1:43 - *CB: I couldn't remember what the firearm safety (inaudible). It's one of those things where you say, "I'm approving something, I'd like to know what I'm doing here". I don't think I'd have any problem approving it.*

LJ: I've got a letter of support for our courtroom renovation grant that I'm working on this week for DHP (Department of Historical Preservation). (*inaudible*) is submitting that grant application Friday. So I'm hoping to have that letter of support when we leave today. Doing that over the lunch break. I also have the MOU (*motion of understanding*) between the commissioners and Search and Rescue for Title 3. We hadn't gotten a copy back from the Sheriff's office with the uses. I might have that as well this afternoon. *JN asks about correcting something to do with the Bailiff, and LJ says it's all straightened out.* We're rescinding Res. 22-2024 that was approved, creating a timeline for this one.

CB talks about not completely understanding a certain court program though he says nothing but good can come out of it. He mentions a workshop including the Health director and WSU coordinator that had to do with using computers, drawing. CB has a State Health Advisory Board meeting at 1:00. They'll talk about replacing his position on the board. Consent agenda approved.

LJ: So, no commissioners meeting tomorrow. *Confirmed.*

12:00 - *Meeting adjourned until 1:30.*