

**Board of Okanogan County Commissioners**  
**Tuesday October 16, 2024, AM**

Present:

Jon Neal (JN) – BOCC Chair, District 3

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

Lanie Johns (LJ) – Clerk of the Board

*Chris Branch (CB)- District 1 not in attendance*

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](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:

- HR/Risk Manager reports on research for vision care options for County Employees. BOCC approves Option 8. This affects 146 employees.
- Public Comment: Isabelle Spohn (IS) comments on Planning Commission needing to be more respectful in notifying Commission members of scheduled and cancelled meetings. Also, IS points out problems for the Public being able to access the Zone Maps in order to adequately comment on Zoning Code whose comment period deadline is coming soon. IS suggests that they extend the comment deadline due to this difficulty.
- Jill Servais reports on the Spay/Neuter event happening at the fairgrounds – shows video of the lineup of cars with dogs and cats, showing considerable interest in the event. They serve about 300 animals per day.
- BOCC approves supplemental budget appropriation for the Prosecuting Attorney's office for \$120,000
- Finance Committee: including the Aeneas Lake Irrigation District to shore up their finances and need for policy around registered warrants.
- Public Works: Withdrawal of Cameron Lake Road Project.
- Meeting recessed at 11:38

9:00

Pledge of Allegiance

AH – Changing the afternoon session around; Larry Hudson to come at 1:30, HR after that (if needed), and then Dan Higbee, building Supervisor – only leaving a paper- cancelling monthly report

*(There were some technical, audio difficulties that their IT staff were working on.)*

9:05

Shelley Keitzman (SK), HR/Risk Manager, in to share results on her research regarding vision care for County Employees. The best listing is VSP vision coverage. SK recommends Option 8, which would only be \$9.14 per month. The only in-plan places are Brewster and Coulee Dam, but the reimbursement is best on this plan. This will affect 146 employees that are in the PEBB plan. SK notes that there is a 2-year rate guarantee BOCC approve this and SK will draw up a Resolution for the Board to sign.

9:17

Public Comment: Isabelle Spohn (IS) comments regarding the Planning Commission. IS had recently spoken with Planning Commission Member, Dave Schultz (who is in his 80's) who had made a trip from the Methow to Okanogan for an evening meeting that no one else showed up to. IS felt the Commission should be more considerate of its members, especially since they have been complaining about lack of quorums. This might be part of the problem. IS – Also, on the Zoning Map, the clock is ticking. (*for public comment*). It is hard to figure out the Zoning Map. IS asks if you were looking at a dividing line for the planning areas, how would you find that one? AH responds by pulling up the website on his laptop to find it. AH – you go to GIS Mapping, and then Map Gallery. You can find that in the column on the left. Pete Palmer (PP), Planning Director, happens to come in at that time and helps AH find the Zoning Map. AH notes that it is all in green so it is difficult to discern the different areas very easily. PP and AH both note that the map is interactive.

IS – How is the Public supposed to be able to do this? It gives me my zone designation, but I have a parcel number. What about people who want to comment, but do not have a parcel number? AH – good question. AH suggests to PP that maybe the Zoning Map be on the front page of the website, consider combining some options, and swap some color codes to make it easier to see the different zones.

IS – I brought this up before, and unless people know how to differentiate the colors, they won't know how to comment. I would suggest that you extend the comment period so this can get fixed. PP – it probably won't get fixed in time. As of today, we are down to one GIS person.

9:30

Public Hearing Budget Supplemental Appropriation for the Prosecutors' Office. Teagen Levine, of the Prosecutors Office, explains they have assigned staff to civil, general, and criminal cases and needs this to fund their cases. No public Comment. BOCC approved Resolution 144-2024 for \$120,000.

9:35

Jill Servais on Zoom from the Fairgrounds (*poor connection, no audio*) at the spay/neuter event showing a video of all the cars lined up for this service and the preparation inside the AgriPlex. They service around 300 animals per day.

9:40

Beth from the Sheriff's Office reports that they have hired a former employee as a Civil Deputy and would like her to be brought in at a Step 5 due to her experience. This is the empty Records position. (*AH goes to get SK of HR who comes back and joins the meeting.*) This employee will not need to be trained and will merely require refreshers. AH asks how much difference there is between a Step 3 and a Step 5? Step 3 = \$4118, Step 5 = \$4657

AH and JN agree with this and approve this hire. Beth and SK will get the resolution together and bring back for the BOCC to sign.

9:44

LJ reports that Wayne Walker of Lifeline sent a letter with their new rates. BOCC approves the resolution 145-2024 with the new rates.

9:48 BOCC approves vouchers and payroll in the amount of \$2,266,888.00

9:52

Auditor, Cari Hall (CH) and Treasurer, Pam Johnson (PJ) arrive for the finance committee meeting with the BOCC. They are joined by 3 board members of the Aeneas Lake Irrigation District (ALID). Paige Davidson (PD), Secretary, David Gregg & Mr. Jenkins.

PJ hands out a financial report to everyone and explains what it says. PD explains that the district never received the Public Works grant that they applied for but is set to reapply in the spring again, with the knowledge of what they are looking for.

AH asks if they know about the Tech Team, through the Economic Alliance? PD – yes, we've utilized that service, and we did get some funding through the Conservation District.

PJ reports there is \$182,258.00 still left to collect from irrigators (users of the district). There are over 30 users who are delinquent. The district needs to pay back the County for the Registered Warrants in the amount of \$242,000.00. Also, the District holds a reserve fund of \$20,200.00, (*which per PJ was set up by the previous Treasurer as a fund that the County could not touch without permission of the district*).

AH asks when the water shuts down. The answer is today, Oct 15<sup>th</sup>, and it starts up again on April 15<sup>th</sup>.

AH explains that the County needs to be getting closer to paying off the warrants. This is to be only a temporary fix. AH – Do annual assessments cover the expenses? (*I never heard a good answer to that, but my internet was going in and out.*)

AH wonders about the wisdom of having the reserve fund when they are needing to run on Registered Warrants from the County. Not using the reserve just adds up interest. PJ notes that if she could take the reserve fund, they would be nearly caught up in the payments due the county.

AH asks PJ about the workload doing these warrants this way. PJ states that it is a workload, but what we need is a good Registered Warrants policy with time limits, reasons, and a plan. It would be helpful in this case if we can use the reserve fund to pay back County for the warrants that are accumulating interest.

The Aeneas Lake Irrigation District assesses \$380.00 per acre per year.

PJ will write up a letter of understanding between the County and the ALID and get back together in May, once the first ½ of taxes are in and we can see where we are then.

10:49

(*ALID folks leave, and the Board, Treasurer and Secretary discuss other financial matters.*)

JN asks CH and PJ a question about how to fund the Tonasket EMS due to missing the deadline for filing the levy. AH - Once the BOCC gets to file for a levy it won't be effective until 2026 tax year. Our reserves will be gone in 2025 due to this.

PJ states that we'll probably need to make registered warrants as a temporary fix, or borrow from other Districts who did get their funds (*if they have it*) like a promissory note.

PJ – We really need to work up a general policy regarding registered warrants.

11:00

Josh Thomson (JT), County Engineer, in to give Public Works update. There are no bids for the Central Landfill Roll-Off bins. We have advertised twice and have come up with nothing. Everyone is too busy to be able to do this. AH suggests that maybe we can just purchase them since we have called for bids twice.

AH also explains to JT that there is going to be a shortfall of money, and we will need to do some savings where we can. JT – We can tighten up some things...like no overtime on snow plowing. AH explains that there could be a ½ million \$\$.

JT reports on road conditions – pretty washboardy but no rain, so difficult to grade without the water

available. JT – the Foster Bridge project is complete, and the Loomis/Oroville guardrail project is going as planned- a few hitches with the one lane road. JN notes that he has heard some complaining about that.

JT – I'm still not clear on timing with the Public Works building. The Cameron Lake Road project is being withdrawn and we are not sure if we will get billed for some of the monies they have already expended on it. This is CRAB funding. I will need to write a letter to take to the meeting next week. AH helps JT with the language of the letter and requesting a waiver of re-payment.

JT notes that he received information about a homeless camp under the bridge in Oroville. We don't really have any policy for dealing with that.

11:38

Meeting at recess until afternoon session.