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RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OKANOGAN COUNTY

APRIL 15, 2024

9:00 AM Review Commissioners Agenda and Consent Agenda
9:15 AM Public Comment Period
9:30 AM Commissioners' Staff Meeting
10:30 AM Review & Consider SOQ for Award-Civil Engineering-Fairgrounds Water System
11:00 AM Executive Session-RCW 42.30.110(1)(i)-Current Litigation
11:30 AM Discussion-Janssen WA Opioid Settlement Agreement- Esther Milner
1:30 PM Discussion-Homeless Housing Partnership & Presentation-Housing Coalition
3:30 PM Briefing Among Commissioners-Discuss Individual Weekly Meetings & Schedule

The Okanogan County Board of Commissioners met for a regular meeting at 123 5th Avenue North, Okanogan, Washington on April 15, 2024 with Chairman, Commissioner Jon Neal; Vice-Chairman, Commissioner Andy Hover; Member, Commissioner Chris Branch; and the Deputy Clerk of the Board, Cameron Burnette present.

AV Capture and Zoom provided audio and video accessibility for public interaction.

Review Commissioners Agenda and Consent Agenda

Commissioner Hover spoke to the Commissioners about his opinion of an LTAC reimbursement request that was submitted by the DMO. It included airfare, food and gas, but did not have backup documentation to support it, and whether or not to pay it. Commissioners agreed it needs to have supporting documents in order for it to be paid. Commissioners discussed the need for more wildlife corridors on various highways in Okanogan County, to help reduce the amount of wildlife killed on roads.

Commissioners also made various revisions to the meeting minutes from the previous two weeks.

Public Comment Period

VIA Zoom; Emily Sisson, Ms. Jackson "Findtheright Passion", "Zoom-Benutzer (user in German)

Ms. Jackson, stated she was curious about the water issue she's been having, and doesn't feel it is in line with Public Health and she has been investigating the issue.

Ms. Sisson, did not have any comment.

Zoom-Benutzer did not respond to the request for comment, and ended up being removed for disruptive behavior after public comment period.

Commissioners' Staff Meeting

Nicholis Bates Fairgrounds Director, Tim Meadows Maintenance Director, Maurice Goodall Emergency Manager, Pete Palmer Planning Director

Mr. Bates submitted a Fee reduction waiver submitted by the support center for a networking conference to the Commissioners that was dropped off on Friday. He also had before and after pictures showing the significant issues of the trusses in the "Little Beef Barn", the after pictures showing the repairs/corrections that were made temporarily in preparation for a permanent fix.

53 Commissioner noted they need to make sure there isn't going to be a lip with the new slab laid,
54 because it needs to stay at a slope.

55
56 Mr. Meadows mentioned a resolution that was prepared for the groundskeeper wages, and the
57 numbers were confusing. The difference was about \$3,600 for the year, and will fluctuate depending
58 on the season. There was also a maintenance tech position but unfunded that could probably help
59 with the work load and to keep work in house so we aren't contracting it out, which is much costlier.
60 Commissioner Hover asked about the Auditors projects. Mr. Meadows talked to Rich at D&R Glass
61 about getting the first cabinet installed with the bulletproof glass in the coming weeks.

62
63 Ms. Palmer received an email from the GIS department, and it actually came from Roni at economic
64 alliance, and they would like someone from Okanogan County to attend the broadband meetings. She
65 felt that GIS is not really the department to be participating. Commissioner Branch asked who the
66 request came from? It came directly from Roni-Holder Diefenbach. Commissioner Branch read directly
67 from the email that was sent. Commissioner Hover suggested she talk to Mr. Thomson the County
68 engineer about possibly having Public Works GIS attend, because this seems a bit more up their alley.
69 Commissioners agreed they need some more information.

70
71 She then discussed an email that came in from Ms. Bull about the Planning Commission receiving
72 emails from Kirk Johnson making comments and suggestions to the Planning Commission members,
73 and she asked who should be responding and that he will get. Commissioner Branch had a draft
74 response to him and explains the process, as the Commissioners are acutely aware about the State
75 Law doesn't require the zoning change. Commissioner Branch will respond to him. He will be afforded
76 time for public comment at the next Planning Commission meeting, but will not be given time on the
77 agenda. Commissioner Branch would like to discuss the concept a little more. He asked what is the
78 purpose of the Planning Commission having County emails? They have to be sent information for their
79 business and their emails were shared with the public and now they are being asked questions directly
80 from members of the public. Commissioner Branch asked should the Planning Commission having
81 dialogue with the public outside of formal business, and the information being reviewed by them should
82 be done under the Planning Department. Commissioner Hover voiced his concern, like if Planning
83 Commissioners are sending information out to other members of the public it would be easier to keep
84 track of what is being sent, and that way IT could have access to be able to search their emails for
85 records requests. Commissioner Branch is concerned about the policies of business being done by
86 the Planning Commissioners and the Planning Agency. Commissioner Branches issue is not with the
87 email address but the policy of business going back and forth from the Planning Department and the
88 Planning Commission. It's not really an open conversation if people are able to talk to them directly,
89 those discussions should be done in the open public meetings held by the Planning Department.
90 Commissioner Hover stated that following the RCW's and the information that was provided is really
91 the only things they should be talking about to the BOCC, because it is not their changes to make,
92 they make recommendations, and the Planning Department then presents those recommendations.
93 Ms. Palmer recommended doing another executive session and bring in the VNF team, to go over
94 policies and procedures. She would like direction on how to move forward on getting those County
95 emails assigned to the Planning Commissioners. Michael Harr was in asking about how to schedule
96 the hearings examiner, they had changed their codes to use our hearings examiner, and she asked if
97 the changes were made to the Okanogan County Code, and they don't believe it has been changed.
98 Commissioner Hover stated there should be a separate contract for the use of a Hearing Examiner for
99 Public Health issues, because there was code that was changed for PH to use a Hearing Examiner.
100 Commissioner Branch recommended she talk to Ms. Milner about the best way to go about this.

101
102 Mr. Goodall, did not have anything, he just wanted to make sure that the Commissioners didn't have
103 anything for him. Commissioner Hover asked moving emergency management equipment is going.
104 It's gone well, he's got 3 shipping containers in the same location that are for his inventory. Is there a

105 spot that would be most efficient for the location of the containers? Mr. Goodall stated where they are
106 is fine as long as it works for Public Works.

107 Commissioners discussed the broadband participation requested by Ms. Holder-Deifenbach, and were
108 not quite sure who would be the best representative. Commissioner Hover suggested that Judge Short
109 and Judge Grim get scheduled on the Agenda so they could discuss the situation surrounding Public
110 Defense and support staff.

111
112 **Review & Consider Statement of Qualifications for Award-Civil Engineering-Fairgrounds Water**
113 **System**

114
115 A single Statement of Qualifications was received from TD&H Engineering, it was received on April
116 12, 2024 at 11:55 am in the Commissioners Office. Commissioner Neal opened the envelope from
117 TD&H Engineering, it contained a USB drive and a Statement of Qualifications. The USB drive was
118 opened and screen shared via zoom for attendees to see what the Commissioners were reviewing.

119
120 **Motion-Enter into Contract Negotiations with TD&H Engineering**

121 Commissioner Branch moved to enter into contract negotiations with TD&H Engineering to determine
122 cost. Motion seconded, all in favor, motion carried.

123
124 **Discussion-Janssen WA Opioid Settlement Agreement-Commissioners & Esther Milner**

125 Ms. Milner opened the discussion regarding the Opioid Settlement with Janssen that is opened, mostly
126 to see if the Commissioners would ever be interested in signing on to the lawsuit, if so it would require
127 a lot of discussion. It all has to be finalized and signed off by May 11th. Commissioner Branch recalled
128 a conversation in the past with attorneys, and the changing of the chairman in the middle of the
129 settlements, and they had stated it wasn't a big deal and the name of the chair can be changed if
130 needed. Commissioner Neal had also received one about Johnson and Johnson, but Ms. Milner
131 believed she had seen clarification somewhere that those were one and the same. A certain number
132 of governments have to sign on in order for it to be accepted.

133
134 **Motion-Enter Janssen Opioid Settlement Lawsuit, and Authorize Chair to Sign**

135 Commissioner Hover moved to enter into the Janssen Opioid settlement, and authorize the Chair to
136 sign any applicable paperwork regarding entering the settlement/lawsuit. Motion seconded, all in favor,
137 motion carried.

138
139 **Executive Session-RCW 42.30.110(1)(i)-Current Litigation**

140 Commissioner Hover moved to go into executive session under RCW 42.30.110(1)(i), inviting Chief
141 Civil Deputy Prosecutor Esther Milner, and Charlene Covskey, and Jenna Delrice to discuss current
142 litigation, for 30 minutes. Motion seconded, all in favor, motion carried to enter executive session from
143 11:05 am to 11:35 am.

144
145 Commissioner Adjourned for lunch at 11:35 am, returning at 1:30 pm.

146
147 **Discussion-Homeless Housing Partnership & Presentation-Housing Coalition**

148 Present via zoom: David M, Jenn Harper OCCAC, Margo Amelong, Scott Ackerson, David McClay
149 OBHC, Ashley Range Oroville Housing Authority,

150
151 Present in the room: Michelle Sandoval FYRE, Kat Room One, Nancy Nash-Mendez Housing
152 Authority of Okanogan County, Rena Shawver OCCAC Eric Hein Okanogan Homeless Shelter; David
153 McClay OBHC

154
155 Ms. Sandoval explained the purpose of the presentation and who is involved and how the presentation
156 provides data for the commissioners about systems and actions in partnership with the BOCC.
157 (attached)

158
159 Kat Room One Executive Director Twisp that serves the Methow Valley. She explained what
160 assistance is provided in the Methow Valley to its community.
161

162 The agencies introduced themselves. Ms. Sandoval presented who in the community they serve such
163 as working class, people with disabilities, people living in cars, Elders, youth and families, single
164 parents, childcare providers, food service workers, students, veterans and many more in the work
165 force.
166

167 Ms. Nash Mendez presented on the history of Okanogan County's response to low income housing
168 crisis by passing resolution 93-1996 which established the Housing Authority of Okanogan County.
169 She described how it has evolved since then.
170

171 Mr. Hein explained how the county has used its homeless housing and affordable housing funds to
172 help immediate needs instead of thinking about the future and investing the money in addressing a
173 more future minded solution.
174

175 Ms. Amelong affirmed what Mr. Hein said in that Okanogan County has used its money to band aide.
176 There is no housing that is affordable. Commissioner Branch said the original driver of the county
177 passing 93-96 was OCCAC saying we are getting out of the business of providing housing.
178

179 Ms. Sandoval explained the housing assessment in 2020 and its recommendations. Four of the
180 recommendations were relayed. 1) housing is unaffordable, 2) Demand outpaces supply, 3) Elders in
181 need, and 4) Poor housing stock.
182

183 Ms. Nash Mendez explained waitlists have doubled and currently starting to serve those on the list
184 from 2019. PIT count was 290 people experiencing homelessness. Shelter need is 8 HH shelter with
185 21 on waitlist and 8-10 new calls weekly, Housing stabilization need is 536 with 100 calls monthly
186 asking for help. OCCAC has capped the available funds that help with rental assistance. Fair market
187 value is not keeping up and is at 120%. Affordability is for working families. The Point In Time count is
188 done in January and only certain people can be counted and it does not show the reality, it is based
189 on HUD standards.
190

191 Beds for new builds are full before they are built. Meadow point 46 units 300+applicants, Oroville
192 Housing 16 units >80 needs, Wildrose 22 units >436 needs, FYRE 12 beds >185 youth.
193

194 Housing Coalition was five agencies and now there are nine and are addressing new needs that were
195 not being addressed when it was first formed. There is a rise in the need for subsidized housing and
196 rental assistance.
197

198 The who and the why the need is rising. The perception that Housing Authority only helps those people
199 not working is a myth. 50% of those who reside in HAOC currently have jobs and are working.
200

201 Ms. Shawver explained some of the stigma and negative comments from the community about "not in
202 my back yard" and the people getting help are not who they think.
203

204 The presentation data showed \$375,100 median home sold price 2023, \$828 fair market rent for 1br
205 apartment, \$96000 minimum household income needed to meet HUD guidelines based on current
206 housing prices, \$58,500 actual area median income.
207

208 Projected countywide housing needs based on user inputs where no private developer is going to
209 come and build. 85 units of subsidized units per year are needed. The coalition is asking for changes
210 from partners, different and engaged solutions. We need to act, and Okanogan county is good at

211 getting things done, but we do it without future sites that address long term goals. Where are we going,
212 we are not going in the direction that is solving this problem. Asking for bold partnership where
213 everyone takes ownership of the problem. We are not just talking about one group of people, we are
214 talking about most of the people in Okanogan County.
215

216 Looking for local lines of funding that show we are using all the money we can to build local systems
217 of infrastructure and capital projects that support housing needs.
218

219 West East will help generate shared ownership across the community for a shared solution and action
220 plan. Engage the county and city leaders.
221

222 House Bill 1590 passed in 2020 has an option for councilmanic approval to impose the local retail
223 sales tax of up to 1/10 of 1% sales tax. Around 19 communities have passed 1590. Ms. Sandoval said
224 the county could address a need or project, but what they want isn't just for a project it is about the
225 housing coalition changing and having a sustainable line of funding that will allow them to plan for the
226 future.
227

228 Ms. Shawver explained the barriers that need to be removed in order to move forward together.
229 Spearhead Effort to End Homelessness, Remove Barriers, Increase Access to Emergency Shelter,
230 Improve Coordination, Homeless Housing Plan, and it all leads to a Systematic Support.
231

232 A draft Housing Crisis Resolution was provided for consideration. (attached)
233

234 Commissioner Branch supports this idea but we have to keep in mind other proposals such as the one
235 from the Sheriff for 3/10 of 1% sales tax. His point is that sales tax is generated in the cities and where
236 retail activity happens. It is important enough that the cities try to annex sales tax businesses into the
237 city. He wants to make sure we know of the reality of the proposed, not an argument for or against.
238 He prefers to put it on the ballot and some of the realities the BOCC has to think about.
239

240 Is taking homeless people off the streets going to relieve the sheriff. If the economy and housing was
241 more affordable going to address less crimes. What is the relationship between homelessness and
242 crime. HUD says we can spend \$45000 per year and having them encounter law enforcement, mental
243 health crisis, etc.. or house someone for \$20,000 and you can have a case manager who then provides
244 access through referrals to get them stable housing and mental health stability.
245

246 Healthcare Authority requires a billable system to be able to look at partnerships and memorandums
247 to provide an intensive system to develop solid referral relationships.
248

249 Passing a housing crisis resolution will help the coalition show funders that our leaders are willing to
250 be part of the solution together.
251

252 Commissioner Hover commented on \$58,500 is household area median income, or \$34,500 for a
253 single person. The numbers are not reflective.
254

255 Ms. Sandoval said HB 1590 is not going to solve any of the housing needs, but it would allow us to
256 provide aid and it would allow other systems to pick up where it cannot solve a problem, but it is one
257 drop and one way where we can secure multiple lines of funding. It says we believe there is a housing
258 problem.
259

260 Commissioner Hover read from the bill stating it can take multiple years to build a campaign for tax
261 initiatives. The bill changed to allow a decision even though it may take awhile to build a consensus
262 for vote. He would like to change the minds of people to say yes they will spend \$22 per year to help
263 this problem. The only place multifamily housing units is allowed is in Twisp and Winthrop. He would

264 prefer not to declare a state of emergency in the resolution because it means something different.
265 Commissioner Branch discussed where he would like to focus such as wraparound services, and the
266 types of relationships between economy, crimes, and homeless.

267
268 Ms. Shawver stated we have a data problem. Ms. Nash Mendez said HB 1590 has two pathways one
269 has a path of least resistance and the other will take an incredible amount of energy and education to
270 the community when we do not have lobbyist and advocates to speak on this.

271
272 Ms. Sandoval, said having this kind of discussion once or twice or three times a year is not enough to
273 solve this problem. This problem affects at least 30% of the population. Housing is part of a community
274 system and if unaddressed does lead to an increase in crime, because if you don't have enough
275 income it leads to instability and that leads to other things. How does lack of housing impact the rest
276 of the systems. The group knows this data and uses this data. The group would like to meet more
277 regularly with the BOCC to continue this conversation. City and county leaders are the group's first
278 line.

279
280 Commissioner Hover asked Ms. Nash Mendez about the funding for Wildrose he said he wants to see
281 the project through, but mentioned a gap coverage or bridge loan could be considered. The paper had
282 an article on a substance raid in one of the Housing Authority's units but it was a visitor of a tenant
283 that was arrested. The way it was reported is part of the stigma that gets started and created and is a
284 message that needs to be turned around.

285
286 Commissioners thanked the group for their time and information.

287
288 **Briefing Among Commissioners-Discuss Individual Weekly Meetings & Schedule**

289 Commissioner Neal stated many cherry farmers lost their crop due to the cold snap in December after
290 it had been so warm. Honeycrisp and other apple crops were affected as well. Commissioner Hover
291 stated that could be a reason for a state of emergency.

292
293 Commissioners discussed councilmanic actions.

294
295 The board adjourned at 3:39 p.m.