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**RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS**

**OKANOGAN COUNTY  
APRIL 2, 2024**

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**9:00 AM** Review Meeting Minutes  
**9:15 AM** Public Comment Period  
**9:30 AM** Discussion-Finance Round Table-Aeneas Lake Irrigation District  
**10:30 AM** Update-Communication/Dispatch-Mike Worden  
**11:00 AM** Update-Public Works-Engineer Josh Thomson  
**1:30 PM** Update-Human Resources/Risk Management-Shelley Keitzman  
**2:30 PM** Update-Department of Ecology-David Bowen  
**3:30 PM** Approve Commissioners Proceedings  
**3:40 PM** Approve Consent Agenda

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The Okanogan County Board of Commissioners met for a regular meeting at 123 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, Okanogan, Washington on April 2, 2024 with Chairman, Commissioner Jon Neal; Vice-Chairman, Commissioner Andy Hover; Member, Commissioner Chris Branch; and the Clerk of the Board, Laleña Johns, present.

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

**Review Meeting Minutes**

Commissioners discussed a proposal from the city of Okanogan’s Fire Chief to expand their fire station. The city inquired about the county’s parking lot on 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave that is used for courthouse parking.

**Motion Room One ARPA Request**

Commissioner Hover moved to direct the Clerk of the Board to work with Room One on the contract necessary for a \$100,000 ARPA allocation for \$50,000 in 2024 and \$50,000 in 2025 and extend the original draft contract end date to December 31, 2025. Motion was seconded, all were favor, motion carried.

**Public Comment Period**

Members of the public Ruth Hall had no comment.

Mrs. Jackson asked about burning at night whether there are restrictions or not and if there were laws prohibiting it. She lives within the county. A landowner from Seattle is doing a lot of stuff here, she has questions about rust falling into her well, she lives in a trailer park, she saw flames at night from someone burning across the field from her house. She tried to call someone but instead she called 911 as the fire was quite large and disturbing. She said no one was at the fire site and there was no water either at the site.

**Discussion-Finance Round Table-Aeneas Lake Irrigation District**

Treasurer Pam Johnson, Auditor Cari Hall, Finance Manager Lisa Schreckengost  
Economic Alliance Roni Holder-Diefenbach

Aeneas Lake Irrigation District Members: Page Davis, Matthew Jenkins, Chairman etc...

51 Ms. Holder Diefenbach provided funding program info for Drinking Water and Wastewater  
52 projects. (attached)

53  
54 Treasurer Johnson stated we are here to discuss Aeneas Irrigation District registered warrant  
55 situation. The financial situation was discussed and cash on hand total was noted. Commissioner  
56 Hover discussed putting in a more efficient electrical system. The cost was too prohibitive.  
57 Commissioner Hover stated a loan program was available from IACC that Ms. Holder Diefenbach  
58 provided information about. The irrigation is a public entity and was formed by petition the county  
59 in 1969 RCW 87.03.020

60  
61 The irrigation Chairman explained some efficiencies that were made since the last meeting. There  
62 is still paperwork to finalize. Ms. Davis stated that VFD falls into the incentive program provided  
63 by the Okanogan PUD.

64  
65 The district has \$80,000 in reserve, how much is the district comfortable using to pay back the  
66 registered warrants. Ms. Davis said the main reason is being able to have funds to pay their  
67 employee. The Chairman said the users were invited to the meeting but they did not come today.  
68 The biggest user does send someone to most meetings. The breakdowns are what put the district  
69 into arrears, now that the biggest issues have been addressed the district should be alright. If the  
70 district was taken off registered warrants would they be able to operate. Once late assessments  
71 have been paid, and money from property being sold can be used to pay the late assessments.  
72 The district puts water back into the aquifer from overflow by keeping the pond/lake full which  
73 helps with residents and development in the area. They pump more water than what is used and  
74 the extra water feeds the lake. What would the level of the lake be if this was not happening.  
75 Member said it would be low due to residents' wells sucking it down.

76  
77 District member said there is 1974 Documentation that showed log reports and history of how and  
78 where the water comes from and goes, but since then there are many more users. In the State of  
79 Oregon Water reserve areas have helped fund the aquifer recharge areas and the reserve area  
80 collects an assessment from the water users the area benefits. If the lake isn't recharged it could  
81 affect those other residential wells.

82  
83 Commissioners want the district to come up with a payback plan. Chairman stated the PUD rates  
84 went down to \$22,000 since pumps are more efficient now. If the second 600 is needed then the  
85 expense goes way up. The smaller pumps do not have soft starts, but the larger ones do.

86  
87 The Chairman stated he would like to see how things go this year, then do a rate increase to pay  
88 down the warrants if things don't work out. Commissioner Hover noted it was the Treasurer's  
89 decision. \$260,000 in registered warrants. Commissioner Hover stated he would like to see the  
90 district capped at \$300,000. The warrants are paid in chronological order of due date, so if there  
91 are larger bills next in line she has to wait until there are sufficient funds to pay.

92  
93 Commissioners discussed the residential water component that we could prove clearly that this  
94 will affect if it doesn't work we might be able to get another grant to help efficiencies. Matthew  
95 asked if drinking water is affected by the levels of water provided by the irrigation district is there  
96 a way to attach the irrigation water that supplies drinking water in wells so the district could tie  
97 that together in order to get grants or loans.

98  
99 Treasurer Johnson said the interest rate changed 7.4%. But, she will stay the course and hopes  
100 the district limits what is being spent. The district has brought in \$35,000 at end of March plus  
101 they have \$80,000 in reserve. The district cannot pick and choose which warrants are paid. They

102 are paid in chronological order. Every voucher sent to the treasurer is put on registered warrant.  
103 The invoice for soft start pumps could not be paid until the warrants before got paid. The group  
104 discussed how the invoice could be paid with cash on hand or with a grant or loan. The PUD is  
105 paying an incentive to the district because of the installation of the soft start efficiency.

106  
107 Commissioner Hover commended the district for sticking it out and helping the users understand  
108 the situation. The district thanked the county for help in understanding how the county needs to  
109 handle the situation and in working with the district to help figure out solutions.

110  
111 Commissioners would like the district to come back

112  
113 **Update-Communication/Dispatch-Mike Worden**

114 Chief Communications Deputy Worden provided his update.

115  
116 He updated the board on the construction progress. Assess current interest rates to figure out the  
117 costs. The states supplemental budget included \$1 million and that will be applied as needed  
118 available in July. Monitoring the congressional allocation of federal dollars contingent on the feds  
119 adopting the federal level budget.

120  
121 Time to finalize the contract for construction.

122  
123 The railroad property permitting process was discussed. Commissioner Hover stated the county  
124 has to spend all of the bond money by April 2025. Posting demo bid request in newspaper  
125 Wednesday, April 3. Most of the equipment and departmental stuff has been removed to prepare  
126 for this. Site visit is scheduled for bidders.

127  
128 The radio tech van is working well. The new tech is demonstrating a high level of knowledge.

129  
130 Commissioner Neal asked if the best number to report controlled burns was 911 dispatch. Worden  
131 replied yes, he explained it is the best number to call.

132  
133 Worden expressed a need to update county code because currently it doesn't provide a process  
134 for certain safety functions the public would benefit from.

135  
136 **Update-Public Works-Engineer Josh Thomson**

137 County Engineer Josh Thomson provided his agenda and discussed the items listed there.

138  
139 Engineer Thomson discussed roads that have no gravel under them and will need to be  
140 addressed. A Durapatch type machine was rented in the past that put some layers down. He said  
141 the machine is no longer rentable. He is exploring some used machines to purchase in the  
142 \$30,000-\$35,000 range. He added Nealy Road and Dry Gulch extension Road this year so we  
143 don't lose those roads. Durapatch is the way to go. Commissioner Hover asked about several  
144 roads in his district. He asked if the agencies have arrangements to snow plow that own  
145 noncounty roads could grade the roads annually.

146  
147 Engineer Thomson stated the Noxious Weed Board is proposing certain rules about weed free  
148 requirements targeting large fills that must be certified weed free. Agriculture seems to be  
149 targeted. He thought Public Works might be noted exempt if that goes through.

150  
151 Brewster Old 97 project plans to start in April 15.

152

153 Engineer Thomson explained the three projects for 2024 that are moving along.

154  
155 Mrs. Jackson, member of the public, asked whether or not her road off of Omak River Road is a  
156 county road or not. Engineer Thomson explained big C and little c roads stating those have not  
157 been accepted into the county system for county maintenance because they did not meet county  
158 road standards by the developer which is required for the designation of county road.  
159 Maintenance is the responsibility of residents. She went on to describe the run-down water issues  
160 with the water that serves the development in the low-income trailer court she lives. She described  
161 interactions with officials that do not directly provide the needed information, the issue that rent  
162 gets raised when maintenance is asked for. She is waiting for responses to her records requests  
163 from agencies involved. She is trying to learn in order to help.

164  
165 Commissioners recessed at 11:46 a.m.

166  
167 **Update-Human Resources/Risk Management-Shelley Keitzman**

168 Jail Administrator Stefan Wolak

169  
170 Ms. Keitzman stated the risk pool will reimburse the county up to \$25,000 for certain Jail detection  
171 technology.

172  
173 Mr. Wolak said the technology would be installed in the holding cells and in the high-risk medical  
174 cells and would monitor heart rate and respiratory rates. It monitors whoever is the cell. It can  
175 also help detect suicide and would give an alert that someone potentially stopped breathing. This  
176 one is expensive for six cells \$86,100.

177  
178 The other would be used for people with medical issues and is comprehensive monitor it is like  
179 an ankle bracelet. Seven units is just under \$25,000.

180  
181 Commissioners discussed the minimization of liability these devices provide. Commissioner  
182 Hover discussed the funds that could be used to pay suggesting fund 160. He also suggested  
183 authorizing both systems and an RN staff who could assist with this technology. Commissioner  
184 Branch asked if we purchased the technology would Risk Pool consider the reduction of liability  
185 when setting our rates.

186  
187 Mr. Wolak stated three attempted suicides were caught by staff in addition to other things needing  
188 immediate response. This is the sort of solution that he what he has been looking into that would  
189 reduce liability and consider the safety of staff. Commissioner Hover reviewed the ending fund  
190 balance for LATCF fund at \$12,119,893.

191  
192 **Motion**

193 Commissioner Branch moved to approve the purchase of both monitoring systems for the Jail  
194 and to process a budget supplemental from LATCF fund to pay for the costs. Motion was  
195 seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

196  
197 Commissioner Hover stated a budget supplemental would be needed to take the needed funds  
198 from the LATC fund to pay for the technology and work with Auditor Hall on that. Commissioners  
199 stated Esther Milner will need to determine sole source once the form is completed and submitted  
200 to her.

201  
202 Mr. Wolak updated the board on Jail staffing and the training timeline that will help staff the jail  
203 with 5-additional academies. He isn't sitting horrible; the bottleneck is getting people through the

204 academy since other agencies are also trying to get their people through. He discussed having  
205 our own academy authorized. CJGC Academy, not everyone will start at 100%, but it is an  
206 everywhere problem. The staff who are leaving have family-oriented reasons, and he isn't seeing  
207 the main reason for leaving is that they are discouraged by the sheriff's office.

208  
209 Ms. Keitzman explained the Risk Pool is going to a fiscal year and will look like our premium due  
210 in sept and the rest in May. We can budget knowing what the rates will be for ensuing year. Flat  
211 to plus 15%. Property premium will be about 5% increase, however property reassessed at a  
212 higher-level property so that will come into play since things are worth more now.

213  
214 She asked that the Public Records Coordinator position be reinstated due to the volume and types  
215 of requests are taking a long time to fulfill and departments are struggling and is taking more and  
216 more of Cameron Burnette's time thereby takes away from his ability to fulfill his Deputy Clerk of  
217 the Board duties. Looking at documents stored in the basement there is a great need to archive  
218 and organize them. The less we have on site the better and is something that needs more time  
219 to take care of. She talked about a grant that could help next year to archive.

220  
221 **Motion Resolution 53-2024 Reinstating Public Records Coordinator**  
222 Commissioner Branch moved to approve resolution 53-2024 reinstating the Public Records  
223 Coordinator position. Commissioner Hover discussed where the funds would come from Current  
224 Expense Reserve to cover this year, then budget accordingly next year. Motion was seconded,  
225 all were in favor, motion carried.

226  
227 The Clerk of the Board explained now that the position is reauthorized Cameron Burnette plans  
228 to apply for it since he has achieved most of the points needed for WAPRO certification, if he is  
229 selected she will be down two people in the commissioners' office.

230  
231 Ms. Keitzman explained the conversations about going towards County Administrator position.  
232 She said there is work loads that are drawing us in this direction. There are many resources that  
233 would benefit the county and community if the county could go after some of these funds. A  
234 committee could be put together to see where the meat is and how we can do a position like this  
235 that would help fund it. It should be looked at closer to determine. Commissioner Hover stated  
236 the conversation with department heads would be good. Commissioner Branch would like to look  
237 at it from a strategic point of view and the board has not done that. Look at it what the risks are if  
238 we do not have someone and go forward with something solid. Commissioner Hover stated some  
239 items have been brought up that are tough when the commissioners change and then the entire  
240 process changes. There is a lot to be said about someone involved in the day to day business  
241 who provides consistency. All the capital projects, who does these? It is contract management  
242 who has time to monitor these? Commissioner Branch said how long has it been since the  
243 personnel policy has been all in one place? Complete proposal to be reviewed by chief civil  
244 attorney.

245  
246 Commissioners would like to start by creating a committee who can provide what the department  
247 head needs are. Commissioner Branch would be willing to sit down and put some framework  
248 around this. The goal is to get this down by the end of the year.

249  
250 Ms. Keitzman is planning vacation April 15-19.

251  
252 **Motion - Voucher Approval - Commissioners**  
253 Vouchers certified and audited by the Auditing Officer as required by RCW 42.24.080 and those  
254 expense reimbursement claims certified as required by RCW 42.24.090 have been recorded on a

255 list, and made available to the Board. As of this date, the Board did vote, by unanimous vote, to  
256 approve the regular vouchers in the amount of \$300,770.84 and Payroll vouchers in the amount  
257 of \$1,364,889.90. Warrant numbers as cited on the attached blanket voucher list. Motion seconded  
258 and carried.

259

### 260 **Approve Consent Agenda**

261 Commissioner Branch moved to approve the consent agenda items 1-7, as presented. Motion  
262 was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

263

- 264 1. ARPA Req#2-Professional Engineering Services, Gray & Osborne-City of Okanogan
- 265 2. Interlocal Agreement-Infrastructure Funds Twisp Emergency Egress Project-Okanogan County  
266 & Town of Twisp
- 267 3. Agreement-Additional Funding for Public Defense Services-Anna Burica
- 268 4. CDBG PS Req#20-General Admin, Public Services-Community Action Council
- 269 5. Cattleguard Renewals-CGF#5-98, #6-89
- 270 6. Ratify Letter of Support-Appropriations Request for Nespelem Convalescent Center
- 271 7. Proclamation-WASAC Executive Director, Eric Brian Johnson Day, May 31, 2024

272

### 273 **Motion**

274 Commissioner Branch moved to approve and authorize the chairman to sign the Confidentiality  
275 and Non-Disclosure Agreement (Form 10 0032) for the Clerk of the Board to access the  
276 Department of Revenue tax information for the County of Okanogan. Motion was seconded, all  
277 were in favor, motion carried.

278

### 279 **Update-Department of Ecology-David Bowen**

280

281 Mr. Bowen is the new Washington State Department of Ecology Central Region Director. He  
282 provided some background information. He has been with Ecology for quite some time. He served  
283 as county commissioner and county auditor in Kittitas County some years ago.

284

285 On air quality, EPA decisions and Ecology maps were discussed. Wood Stove exchanges are  
286 voluntary. Commissioner Neal stated there is one air quality monitoring station and it is located in  
287 the most depressed area where all the smoke settles. Mr. Bowen will address that. Commissioner  
288 Hover would like to make sure he understands there is no way people can do without their wood  
289 stoves. There are many residents who live off grid. It is a very common source of heat for many  
290 residents. He understands that.

291

292 Mr. Bowden discussed Cannabis soil tracking.

293

294 The department is still in a drought declaration, and it is likely the whole state will be declared and  
295 that conversation is happening right now. The water resources department has had a lot of staff  
296 change overs. Trying to get applications to fill those opening.

297

298 Commissioner Hover discussed the Methow Watershed Council facilitating discussion with  
299 Washington Water trust and Ecology on drought related issues.

300

301 Conconully Dam will participate in safety enhancements. Enloe Dam is planned to be removed  
302 and it doesn't look like many are concerned about that. There has been soil sampling there and  
303 there may be more if the samples are not adequate. Commissioner Hover wants to make sure ag  
304 rate payors do not have to pay more.

305

306 Commissioner Hover discussed RCW 90.94 that involves a \$350 fee going to ecology he would  
307 like to know where the funds go?  
308

309 The commissioners asked if there was any funding for Water Conservancy Boards because it  
310 takes time to resolve the transfers over several years and the initial fee collected doesn't cover  
311 all the work over time?  
312

313 Okanogan County water banking was briefly discussed. Commissioner Hover stated the county  
314 submitted applications for Sullivan and Pine Creek recently and BOCC ratified last week.  
315

316 Mr. Bowen discussed the proposal to declare Lake Roosevelt region as super fund site as a result  
317 of mining up there. It was unknown how expansive the declared area would be.  
318

319 Commissioner Neal discussed Aeneas Lake Irrigation and asked whether or not there were funds  
320 available for irrigation water. The district has to pump up into Aeneas Lake to serve its users but  
321 the water also recharges the aquifer which ends up in the river. The county is trying to help the  
322 become solvent. Commissioner Branch stated there has been work done in 1974 that defined the  
323 systems and showed recharge of the lake due to the water the district was pumping into the lake.  
324 There are many more homes in that area that rely on the water. The district is providing a benefit.  
325

#### 326 **Motion**

327 Commissioner Branch moved to approve and authorize the chairman to sign the grant contract  
328 between Okanogan County and the Dept of Agriculture Grant for the Fairgrounds Safety Grant.  
329 Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.  
330

#### 331 **Approve Commissioners Proceedings**

332  
333 Commissioner Hover moved to approve March 18 and 19, 2024 Meeting minutes.  
334 Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.  
335

336 Commissioner Branch moved to approve March 25, 2024 meeting minutes. Motion was  
337 seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.  
338

339 Commissioner Branch moved to approve the March 26, 2024 meeting minutes as revised. Motion  
340 was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.  
341

#### 342 **Discussion Juvenile/Superior Court administrator Position**

343 Judge Grim has been working on a job description separating the position into two separate  
344 positions. Shelley Keitzman and Judge Grim discussed the salary \$6720 per month for Superior  
345 Court Administrator and for Juvenile a salary survey was found to be \$8700 per month.  
346 Commissioners discussed the budget impact. The desire would be to hire someone now to cross  
347 train before Mr. Rabidou leaves June 5. Judge Grim said internally there is interest already for  
348 one of the positions for Juvenile if the commissioners sign off on the salary. Commissioner Hover  
349 stated both positions should be posted internally then externally if not filled.  
350

#### 351 **Motion HR Direction Superior Court/Juvenile Admin Positions**

352 Commissioner Branch moved to direct Shelley Keitzman to draft a resolution and prepare  
353 documents job descriptions to be adopted by future resolution. Motion was seconded, all were in  
354 favor, motion carried.  
355

356 Commissioner Hover stated the BOCC will need to know how much money to move from unspent  
357 wages from unfilled positions to those new position lines. Judge Grim stated there are several  
358 open positions that have not been filled.

359  
360 The Clerk of the Board mentioned a new DAHP grant cycle and wanted to hear from Judge Grim  
361 and Judge Short on some historical preservation projects to refurbish of the courthouse and  
362 courtrooms. Commissioner Hover stated we should not push for the grant if we don't have a plan  
363 in place to remodel the courthouse courtrooms.

364  
365 Commissioners discussed a time for Superior Court to provide their update noting whatever  
366 works. Judge Grim said Tuesday's at 8:30 works. Commissioner Hover likes to have a designated  
367 time.

368  
369 Commissioners discussed where all the stuff stored at the Railroad property that is going to be  
370 demoed be stored at the "Justice Center" that belongs to the Coroner, Communications, and  
371 Emergency Management.

372  
373 Maurice Goodall Emergency Manager was asked to discuss his plan for storing stuff. He said  
374 there are sand bags he can store in shipping containers. Commissioners said if things need to be  
375 stored they can be stored in the steel building at the justice center. There are some expired PPE  
376 items that will need to be disposed of. He doesn't know who it came from. The container will be  
377 stored out of the way in a secure area.

378  
379 **Motion City of Okanogan Building Permit Application-Courthouse Window Replacement**  
380 Commissioner Hover moved to approve and authorize the chairman to sign the City of Okanogan  
381 Building Permit Application for the Courthouse Window Replacement project. Motion was  
382 seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

383  
384 The board adjourned at 3:56 p.m.