

RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS**OKANOGAN COUNTY****MARCH 11, 2019**

The Okanogan County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on March 11, 2019, with Chairman, Commissioner Jim DeTro; Vice Chairman Commissioner Chris Branch; Member, Commissioner Andy Hover, and Laleña Johns, Clerk of the Board, present.

Review Commissioners' Agenda and Consent Agenda

Commissioners reviewed their agenda and the items listed on the consent agenda.

Briefing Among Commissioners—Discuss Individual Weekly Meetings & Schedules

Commissioners discussed their individual weekly meetings attended.

Legislative Update – Potts & Associates

Jim Potts, Zach Kennedy via telephone conference call.

Potts and Associates provided the commissioners their legislative update. (attached) The group discussed funding requests that are not moving along. Mr. Potts said the transportation budget funding is moving, but nothing else looks very good. The language regarding fish barriers did not identify soluble upstream or downstream solutions. The carbon tax was discussed and how Governor Inslee is running for president and how he is really pushing for the tax as it supports his platform. If authorized it would touch everything with sweeping affect with great monetary impact. If the carbon tax going down a route for passage the government will need to acknowledge hydroelectricity is a renewable source of energy as it is a big point they are making and will hopefully force a conversation about it, at least.

Legislators are proud to pass bills, but the bills have nothing to do with any fiscal notes. A couple bills, 1105 and 1796, talk about provisions for affordable housing, but the fiscal note in the language is very code for the counties are going to pay for it.

Mr. Kennedy discussed the Wrongful Death bill stating a letter of support would be helpful in moving it along.

Motion Wrongful Death Bill Support Letter

Commissioner Hover moved to sign on to the letter supporting the Wrongful Death bill. Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried. A letter will be prepared for signature.

The PILT bill was discussed. Every lobbyist in the county is pushing it along, so there is hope it will pass.

Discussion-Public Works Internet Solutions-Randy Clough, Josh Thomson

Director Clough explained the direction he needs from the board regarding the Public Works Building internet solutions.

Director Clough explained two options, one is a permanent wireless solution and would cost about \$14,000 and would provide about 650Mbps and requires a preliminary survey at about \$1000. The second option is a permanent fiber solution with a cost of \$21,500. It would provide 1000Mbps with our existing equipment, and upgraded switches. This solution would provide extra secure connections, faster speed, and is the recommended solution based on quality and cost.

Engineer Thomson explained Public Works has budget set aside for the upgrade. Commissioner

Hover explained his concern about not spending early in the year until property tax revenues come in. Engineer Thomson will review the budget and determine what is available for the public works building upgrades. If the budget is used for the internet solution, a supplemental may be needed for the other building repairs. Commissioner Hover agreed that a supplemental appropriation from current expense may be considered later for the other building repairs.

Director Clough said he obtained three telephone quotes from vendors to provide the replacement services. They were:

Spokane Network Cabling, Spokane, WA responded they were not interested in the project.

Pacific Communications, Seattle, WA quoted \$35,000-\$45,000 for the fiber solution.

NCI Datacom, Omak, WA quoted \$20,000-\$21,500 for the fiber solution.

NCI Datacom was determined to have the lowest cost.

Motion Staff Direction on Internet System Replacement

Commissioner Hover moved that Public Works process the invoice for the fiber internet solution from the Activity fund 427 to pay for the new fiber line to public works and request a budget supplemental later in the year when the window and HVAC upgrades are to be done. Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

Commissioner Hover discussed a request to tie elected officials salaries to the judge's salaries and wondered how other counties are handling this.

The request was to base the salaries of elected's on a percentage of what the Superior Court judges receive by the state salary commission. Any salary increase of the Commissioners would not take effect until the next term.

Commissioner Hover discussed how the salary could affect young people's interest in running for county government. The wage should be competitive with other types of private jobs. Commissioners discussed what city administrator wages are and how those compare to commissioners wages. Commissioner Branch stated he believed the functions of the positions are very different and the commissioners are not in the office 40 hours a week. Commissioner DeTro explained in the past, when discussion about tying the elected official's salaries to the judges' salary was discussed, it became very controversial. Commissioner Hover said he isn't sure how the board would address the request since the commissioners cannot give themselves a raise that would be effective in their current term.

Public Health Official Dave Hilton met briefly with the commissioners to explain his concern about the quality of the internet services provided to the Public Works building. He said because the lack of consistent internet services, it is difficult for staff work to function normally.

Update – Planning – Perry Huston

Planner Angie Hubbard and Planner Rocky Robbins were present.

Members of the public Steve Devin and Gina McCoy were taking computer notes for Okanogan Watch Group.

Planner Robbins provided a copy of a memo regarding nightly rentals. (attached) She explained the difficulty she had in discovering how many nightly rentals are in Okanogan County. The City of Twisp and Winthrop are the only towns in the county that regulate nightly rentals, so it is hard to tell which are within city limits and which are not in other towns.

Planner Robbins said she consulted with Auditor Hall and Treasurer McCormack on what the county receives as hotel motel tax revenue. She was told the county also receives a small percentage of the city's hotel motel taxes, but wasn't sure where that is reflected. Commissioners asked if it was more difficult to identify nightly rentals in the Oroville area compared to the Methow area due to Methow area being more regulated than others. Planner Robbins said many nightly rentals have a two night minimum. One theme she is coming across is how the nightly rentals are affecting affordable housing as fewer and fewer houses are available for long-term rental or purchase. The average rent for a 3-bedroom house is over \$1,000 per month. Planner Robbins explained how the Airbnb and VRBO and Home2Go sales tax. She said there doesn't appear to be any requirement for transparency on the end of Airbnb, in terms of who they collect taxes from. Airbnb pays the sales tax for the home owner and sends in the taxes to DOR on behalf of the homeowner. The homeowner gets a report from Airbnb showing what was paid on their behalf.

Complaints are coming from those who pay the tax about those who have not. The commissioners made a commitment to follow up on non-licensed nightly rentals and the community has also said when a complaint is made that the county will follow up on those. Planner Robbins said it appears they are being followed-up on. Commissioner Hover suggested annual review of all the nightly rentals in the county to ensure our records are current.

Commissioner Branch explained the possible concerns of neighbors because near-by houses are being rented on a nightly basis with someone different staying every night. He discussed how nightly rentals affect affordable housing and the legislators who are addressing affordable housing in the state. Commissioner Hover noted it would be detrimental to use LTAC funds for affordable housing.

Planner Hubbard updated the board on the single family dwelling permits for the whole county during 2010-2018. She presented the map that showed the WRIsAs in the county and red dots indicated by reach the total number of Single Family Dwelling Units and the number of units replaced in each reach for WRIA 48 and WRIA 49.

Commissioners discussed their viewpoint on the buildable lands/building permit history presentation.

Review Meeting Minutes

Commissioners reviewed their meeting minutes.

The board adjourned at 3:45 p.m.