

RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OKANOGAN COUNTY

OCTOBER 21, 2019

The Okanogan County Board of Commissioners met in regular session in the Sheriff's Conference Room at 123 5th Avenue North, Okanogan, Washington on October 21, 2019, with Chairman, Commissioner Jim DeTro; Vice Chairman, Commissioner Chris Branch; and Laleña Johns, Clerk of the Board, present.

Discussion Administrative Grizzly Bear Comments

Dick Ewing and Norman McLeod

Dick Ewing stated he was asked by Commissioner DeTro to come and discuss administrative comments for the North Cascades Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Introduction Draft Plan and Environmental Impact Statement prepared in cooperation between Okanogan County Farm Bureau, Washington State Farm Bureau and Okanogan county and are supplemental to previous comments submitted. (draft comment attached)

The draft comment will be completed for commissioners' review Tuesday. He asked if the county would support and sign onto the comment that outlines the specific concerns of the plan.

Mr. McLeod explained the draft addresses four main administrative concerns even though draft says release happens in four areas, remote release corridors are 10 miles from Mazama. One location would be where the problem bears would be released. Grizzly bear ability to smell long distances and many thoughts in Canada NCE ecosystem there isn't enough vegetation there and they are carnivores and have a hard time getting nutritional value from plants. They plan on only putting vegetarian bears but come spring they are very hungry and will eat meat. They mostly in the Cascade foot hills. These bears will be emerging during calving of the lambs. The draft says no impact to Big Horn Sheep and they believe there will be. Male sheep are stupid during rut and have other things in mind and are not paying attention to predators.

A breeding range map was shown of the area we are talking about. Dick Ewing said a list of species threatened by other threatened species. The Big Horn Sheep are on the sensitive list. Commissioner Hover said an attorney from Montana prepared comments, and feels there is a predetermined outcome, to sign on to this what kind of standing does it leave us. It will be different because these are administrative arguments. The Northern Cascade is contiguous to grizzly bear habitat and if they wished to push through to hear it hasn't happened yet. Cameras everywhere bears to cross roads so that isn't the problem. The monitoring system showed a male bear going through residential area running on the road and through. They are very intelligent. Bear behavior is all over the map with some predictable and the rest not so much. A bear, named Ethyl, is known to have traveled up to 2800 miles. A few examples of bear behavior were discussed. Financially it is difficult to sign onto something like this. The Farm Bureau contacted others in the area and they are paying. Skagit County has not returned Mr. Ewing's call, but there appears to be some political reasons. They did put in their own comments. Commissioner Hover is willing to read through the material and come to a decision on whether to sign on and comment.

Mr. McLeod came up with three points from the policy manual of why they should not have embarked on this. He read these three items must be met. The species must not pose a serious threat to persons in the park or right outside of park boundaries; cannot create an unhealthy environment to visitors. Employees and public safety are core values and must not be compromised. And they did not include info on Canadian population of the Brown Bear. Sub speciation is a controversy, and they

don't believe there is enough genetic diversity to subspecies. Diet is used more than genetics. Species of least concern. The Bears will move as they are pressured to and we have seen this in other systems where they have moved. There is a lot of money involved to balance between human environment and the animal habitat.

The group will send the packet to the BOCC for review and further determination. The letter will be placed on county letterhead by tomorrow afternoon.

Discussion- Budget Briefing-Auditor Cari Hall

Auditor Hall updated the board on the status of the 2019 budget. She explained departments that have overextended budgets in areas and that will need supplemental. The Fairgrounds has only \$10,000 left to the end of the year. The fair portion of the taxes that get remitted wasn't prepared when it was supposed to. One of the biggest unknown's is the staffing. The Clerk III position was to only go through the end of the month, event coordinator is advertised for hire before the end of the year. There is enough excess revenue to handle the wonky budget. She is going to have to clean up a lot. She thinks a supplemental of \$10,500 will help through the end of the year. The Building Department Supplemental will be needed too. The Facility rentals have really been up.

We need to be sure and bill out to those who have banners for 2020. We need a list of the 15 people so we can charge them.

Central Services budget was discussed as a supplemental was requested for the payroll at about \$17,000. Excessive revenue will be reviewed for this that doesn't include contingency. The Building Department expenses were discussed and rent should be charged. Ms. Hall explained putting a cost allocation plan in place would allow us justify our rental fee if it was included, should be created.

Suggested getting rid of contingency reserve and current expense reserves and using it like ending fund balance.

Public Hearing Cont Budget Supplemental Appropriation Prosecutor

Commissioner DeTro opened up the hearing asking for staff report. Cari Hall reported their average expenditures are about \$9600 and some projected costs we know of. There were employees hired at different steps which has used up any cushion created by the resignations. The department does need a budget supplemental due to several over expenditures. Ms. Hall suggested that the new hire forms be signed off by the county commissioners rather than only by HR and the department head.

Motion Resolution 131-2019 Budget Supplemental-Prosecutor

Commissioner Branch moved to approve resolution 131-2019 a supplemental appropriation within the Current Expense Prosecutor Budget in the amount of \$20,000. Commissioner Branch further stated some control measures be instated into the personnel manual that would requires departments new hire notices to be signed off on by the board. Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

Commissioner Branch stated he would not be here tomorrow for review of the grizzly bear administrative comments suggested by Dick Ewing. The comments are about administrative processes and Commissioner Branch doesn't mind commenting on those. He didn't see anything out of sorts with the suggested comments.

Briefing Among Commissioners

Commissioners discussed the Planning Director position applications and decided to go through the hiring process themselves. Commissioners will go through and rank them then sit down on Monday and evaluate together.

2020 Budget Work Session Superior Court Clerk

Charleen Grooms, Susan Speiker, Lisa Schreckengost, Cari Hall, Leah McCormack

The commissioners went over the expense lines of the Clerk. Ms. Speiker explained the LFO accounts have gone way down due to the new law and judges are not going above \$500. District Court also uses Dynamics which is beneficial for both.

Commissioners discussed taking a \$300,000 road levy shift. Another thing to think about is Solid Waste Fund so in 2021 we will have half of our investment interest will go up. Leah stated the investment interest has gone down due to presidential election but it will go back up.

Treasurer McCormack discussed closing and moving funds such as fund 122. She thought the reason Current Expense reserve was created was for investments, but it earns interest anyway every 30 days.

Update Planning Office

Angie Hubbard updated the Board on the status of the Envoy that blew a water pump and destroyed the engine. She stated it would cost about \$4,000 to install another engine. It has 110,000 miles on it. Other departments use the vehicle and Planning pays for the repairs and maintenance. Commissioners asked what surplus vehicles the Juvenile Dept has. Ms. Hubbard said it was their only 4x4. Commissioners would like to then look into a rebuild engine over a used one that we don't know much about.

Motion Budget Supplemental for Planning Vehicle Engine Rebuild

Commissioner Hover moved to direct Angie Hubbard to work with the county auditor on a budget supplemental for the rebuild option for the Envoy. Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

Ms. Hubbard said she spoke to Vanessa on the Grant Amendment and asked about several items to see if those tasks could be worked out in the language. Our well tracking outdoor irrigation size also plays into the planning unit. Ms. Hubbard was working on the deadlines to get the short order to Vanessa.

Comp Plan Update

Critical area goals and policy were added. Wildfire goals and policies were added and most will be done by Monday when the Planning Commission meets.

Ms. Hubbard reminded the Board of the wolf recovery plan comments are due November 1 and we have some drafted that will be provided tomorrow.

The county received a response letter from the Yakama Nations. The county will discuss with the county attorney.

2020 Budget Work Session Assessor

Jan Million, Larry Gilman

Assessor Gilman explained the use of REET Funds last year of \$25,000 and why this year he cannot use REET for the software maintenance costs.

Telephone line was discussed as they will use the MiFi contract until the other one kicks in. With three new employees needing the training, more travel is needed to attend the WASACA conference training and why those costs went up. The training is often paid for by WASACA but it is uncertain for 2020.

Appraiser's field devices were discussed. Mr. Gilman said there are two situations,

He has paid all but the last payment was made on the appraiser filed devices and REET will pay for the rest in 2020. There were six appraisers and now have five. Commissioner Hover asked about the lines for Assessor in REET fund with nothing budgeted for travel and training. Leah McCormack explained she put those line in there in case. Assessor Gilman felt he had maxed out his ability to use REET fairly even though it grows annually. Most of the money came from the first five years the treasurer got a 100,000 grant and for every real estate excise tax that was processed she got \$10 per every affidavit for five years. It is to be used for electronic REET signatures to make it happen in 2020. Going forward this would be the third year of the split that goes into the fund. It must help with the annual revaluation process, no employee wages or benefits. Treasurer McCormack stated the purpose of the fund is not to build it up, it is to be spent.

Commissioner Hover wants to ask departments these questions: How much money do you want in reserves and how much money to you want for rainy day.

The Assessor is requesting an additional \$15,000 in 2020 to go with the \$15,000 already in there from 2019 but still needs to be moved. He intends to surplus high mile vehicles.

Commissioners would like to be the ones to receive the email to move the cash then forward to the Treasurer who would then move the funds. That way they know when these are going to be moved.

Change of value notices were discussed as those are usually mailed, but people can sign up for receiving only email notices which reduces the postage.

Assessor Gilman stated he has a retiree coming out and he would like to move someone to the Commercial Appraiser position sometime in July. The budget will need to be set up correctly for this goal. Commissioners budget for outcomes they are not certain of.

Since the Appraiser I passed the required course a week ago that person can go to appraiser II apprenticeship for one year then the person gets their license and can be appraiser III.

2020 Budget Work Session-District Court

Auditor Hall explained advanced expenditures is where she pays for things and where departments are billed from and the department reimburses The state examiner fund 019 was reviewed. Commissioners requested the financial breakdown for the cost of the 2019 audit. We budgeted \$60,000 but SAO increased the charges to \$65,000 and next year they said it will increase to \$75,000. The board wanted an itemized bill showing who worked on what subject for how long and what their travel cost is based on. We must articulate item by item when it is our bill. Commissioners would like to discuss this with Jake Santistivan of the State Auditor's office. Cari will arrange a meeting. Perhaps a meeting with both Brandi Pritchard and Jake Santistivan would help. They don't give hourly rates, don't state how many hours are charged, and this year they spent a lot of time on formatting documents. Are they double charging for travel when their auditors are coming here for our audit then go to another audit? They spent many hours saying we didn't balance when we actually balanced. Commissioner Hover will not support payment without itemized billing.

The elections budget was reviewed. Online filing fee changes will reduce the cost to process. It was noted that 2020 is a presidential election year and it will be much busier. Auditor Hall explained within the last 45 days, she has processed over 200 new voter registrations.

The board adjourned at 4:55 pm