

RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS**OKANOGAN COUNTY****MAY 11, 2020**

The Okanogan County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 123 5th Avenue North, Okanogan, Washington on May 11, 2020, with Chairman, Commissioner Jim DeTro; Vice Chairman, Commissioner Chris Branch; Member, Commissioner Andy Hover and Laleña Johns, Clerk of the Board, present.

Discussion-Governor's Variance-Commissioners & Public Health

Lauri Jones, David Gecas, Maurice Goodall, Pete Palmer

Ms. Jones discussed the governor's guidance for counties under 75,000 we can become eligible to moving into phase II as long as certain criteria are met. We are moving into the right direction. She received letters from the three hospitals to work on our application. She has obtained letters from North Valley, Three Rivers, and Mid Valley Hospital as one of the steps to take. The health officer will need to sign off then board of health passes a resolution, county commissioners will also need to pass a resolution and everything gets submitted to the secretary of health. She isn't sure how long the process will take. Another county had started the process but it was stopped because of positive tests. New cases in Okanogan County, even if we have them we may still be able to meeting other criteria for variance process for Phase II. The health officer will here tomorrow but it is not clear whether he would support our application. As the positive cases are being addressed we can still move the variance process along. We would then have to get Dr. McCarthy on board with that to sign off. She assumes the board of health would move things along. She thinks the Tribal Council support would also help. We do have a quarantine and isolation plan, in case we need it. Right now people isolate in their own home even for those waiting for results. Ms. Jones discussed how contract tracing volunteers have been arranged. Commissioner Hover said there is a lot of opposition to contract tracing. He isn't sure what it all entails for those with positive tests. Ms. Jones explained the different questions posed to learn who has had contact with effected people. Where the person works, who they have been in contact etc... There are only three public health doing the tracing work. Commissioner Branch asked if tribal and others are collaborating with public health. What element of enforcement does it come with. We are convincing the governor we can do this so he also wants to be confident when he is saying that and wants to be sure we are. Ms. Jones said the health officer has the legal authority. He said the other part is he is adverse to hard core enforcement, if health or other resources were activated to help people realize the risk of running their business a certain way does the health have the capacity to watch this. Ms. Jones said they are not the ones doing the enforcing they are educating people to conduct business or no on will do business with them. Public Health is the ones trying to reopen businesses in a safe manner. Businesses that have only one or two workers are going to be able to open more safely than larger businesses. We can move into Phase II safely and she feels people have buy in to do this to put forward their plan. The message goes beyond that as the criteria is onerous, said Commissioner Branch. Okanogan County is so large and we social distance just because of how rural we are. Our cases could have been three or four times higher and she feels we can do this. Commissioner Hover

Commissioner DeTro said people are calling him saying they will not be tested, but the way it is handled is what people do not agree with. Ms. Jones said she has policy and guidelines that everyone is faced with following. Our auditor is preparing to run the elections under a lock down. Commissioner Branch said he understands where Commissioner DeTro is coming from. It reminds him that if a name isn't attached to a death, then people don't think it affects them so people don't want to know the people are dying. We have to keep tract of the fact we have not gone through this before. Commissioner DeTro said on the other hand it has been so politicized because we have similar deaths due to regular flu and then kill more babies due to abortion.

Ms. Jones said public health has been asked to advise, Okanogan County must go through public health to get a variance. Commissioner DeTro said the bulk of the questions he received were about whether the governor is bringing in the National Guard to help with contact tracing. Commissioner Hover said that was what he was trying to get to. We have no reason to bring in the National Guard to Okanogan County. Maurice Goodall and Lauri Jones said no. People here think the Guard would be used to keep people isolated. Ms. Jones said no that is not the case here, we have an alternative quarantine area for those who do not wish to bring the virus home to their family and need a place to isolate.

Commissioner Branch said as elected officials we need to send the correct message and not feed into the martial law conspiracies that some have. Respect and responsibility and we have a moral responsibility to set aside the politics because there are people actually dying and getting really sick. Find common ground to open our businesses safely, how can we do that with a unified voice instead of the partisan divide, it is her job to keep the entire population safe and how can we do that. She is willing to answer any questions, but her opinion doesn't matter. Commissioner Branch agrees that one size does not fit all, the fight should be to understand that. Some larger jurisdictions were complaining about how they would be able to meet the criteria for the next phase.

The new cases we got here recently did not originate here. Ms. Jones explained to be considered for the variance.

Commissioner Hover said the Tribal government is aligning with the governor, and they can say they are opening up as their sovereign right, there are so many differences in case counts, deaths etc.. and recognized the simplistic of the numbers. Commissioner Branch said most of his district is reservation, so to start separating those things when it is convenient or not, that is not okay. We recognize there are many who are not native living there and must be included in the big picture.

Ms. Jones said public health is working towards a safe opening of businesses and we will have all our ducks in a row. A letter from sheriff, police chief of Omak and Brewster in support of moving towards phase II.

Commissioner Branch said certain businesses are closed and others open which creates some confusion for the public and the Economic Alliance and people are saying across the state that Okanogan County is already open. The message got in their minds when the commissioners did not extend the order about OTA's and has caused businesses to open. Some overnight accommodations appear to be open.

Discussion Opening Hwy 20 North Cascades-Commissioners

Commissioner Hover discussed the opening up of Hwy 20 North Cascades. There is no way we can stop it there is commerce that requires the road be opened such as logs going to Darrington.

Retail may be open but only for curbside delivery. Commissioners reviewed the chart of Phases to try and understand why some businesses can be open and others cannot.

Roni Holder Deifenbach sated Economic Alliance is willing to draft a letter in support of the Phase II. Tomorrow would be best. She said for our area, she posted a pdf of those businesses requirements to open and she has shared those on Facebook page so businesses can go there. She also shared on Facebook the hotel and restaurant industries standards for opening up. Commissioner Branch suggested those messages state which phase we are currently in. All the industries at the national level are coming up with guidance for their particular industry then states are customizing from there. Pushing to get all the guidance out for all the industries for going into phase II so we can immediately start working on phase III. She'll make sure the Facebook info notates the phases clearly for those industries. She is also emailing businesses the let them know local mask making groups have masks

to ensure businesses knew where to purchase those. Putting together a small business loan opportunity. They took \$15,000 to start the fund. Many small businesses are worried about being able to purchase what they need in order to start up. Donations are being accepted for the fund. The website should be up anytime. Many small businesses contacted here already.

Commissioners and David Gecas discussed executive session criteria and when to use the different reasons. David had a different understanding than Commissioner Branch in terms of (f & g) RCW 42.30.110. David believed we were covered, commissioner Branch had a different understanding.

Commissioner Hover suggested that MRSC be requested to interpret the sections.

Commissioner Hover discussed dates to open the fairgrounds up. What are the plans for holding the 2020 Fair? Commissioner Branch stated we should have a contingency because it is hard to predict the future. We would need to be in phase IV in order to have a gathering of 20 or more. Commissioner Hover said if by September 4 we are not in phase IV, then we move forward with the hope we have best practices and we will be in phase IV by September. We are planning as though we will be successful in reaching phase IV.

Department Head Meeting

Judge Rawson updated the commissioners about 37 people in the courtroom. Concerned about jurors comfort level, sending out notices for July, to ease the physiological barriers. Sanitizers in the courtroom are hand pumps but no stations. Posted seats 6 feet apart and trying to accommodate social distancing in the courtrooms. Many staff are back in the office. Scheduler position is open with interviews to fill next week.

Mr. Rabidou updated the board on what is challenging for the Juvenile department. At minimum the commissioners hearing room will be needed to select juries in July. He asked if the commissioners needed anything from the courts in order to use the larger hearing room. Space is limited to conduct jury selection and avoid gathering. One murder trial in August, and that will take the majority of a week, and another scheduled in September so those will take some time. Each county in the state were allocated \$250,000 for COVID-19 related purposes, but it is not known where those funds are at. There is also the CARES Act funding for counties around \$2.5 million for Okanogan, but has not been receipted.

Challenges for the courts due to COVID-19 were relayed. Need signs, PPE and hand sanitizers for the courts.

Tanya Craig stated some hand sanitizers are on order but not available right now.

Treasurer McCormack relayed her departmental protocol. There are several large trays of property taxes being receipted. She believes we'll be close to where we usually are in first tax payment. Doors locked, people knock.

Larry Gilman explained his departmental protocol. Assessment cycle was completed on time but mailings won't go out by May 31. August 31 will be the first mailing date. Last two months of REET has exceeded last years. His doors are locked, taking appointments, or folks knock on the door. Mostly dealing with senior citizens and no penalties involved. He explained social distancing practices and that only three people being helped at a time.

Pete stated the Planning Office is fully staffed with the two planners down the hall moving into the main office. Taking appointments from the public to reduce foot traffic.

Engineer Thomson explained Public Works matters and savings that he is hoping to maneuver with staff and equipment. He doesn't want to not use the equipment he wants to maintain the equipment

use in the long run.

Dan Higbee stated his office is mostly back in business with a plan in place. Plexiglas was not going to work in his office. Many are mailing their documents in, some drop off.

Sheriff Hawley updated the board on his department. He stated the M-Tank ceiling project was pushed back. Lights won't ship till first of June, ceiling cannot be put in until the lights are put in. Project will likely not be complete until end of June. The Intake isolation protocol was discussed, with no cases in the jail. Pistol licenses are done online as are many other renewals. Fingerprints are one of the only things that people need to come in physically for.

Veterans VSO updated the board on what practices are being used for the veteran's office.

Update Planning-Director Pete Palmer

Emily Sisson, Lorah Super and Katie Haven with the Okanogan Watch Group

Pete updated the board on the Comp plan. She and Angie read through it. She felt there was a lot of policy misplaced, so much of that was straightened out. A time line was set up with the next meeting May 18 and will be held remotely in the commissioners hearing room. Some don't have internet so will be here physically. She wishes to reach out to some of the players to discuss moving forward. At the meeting pull out anything the planning commission would like addressed, June meeting will address side notes, July look at alternatives which there are four. Keep 2014 plan, outrageous alternative adding a lot, shrink it back down broaden ag lands, and proposed by Methow Citizens and looking at August for final comments with a new environmental draft for commissioners approval in November. She wanted to see an end date so we aren't just having meeting after meeting without an end date.

Saw tee quah park idea was. Commissioners discussed an intergovernmental exchange of real property. The property belonging to the county is assessed at over \$200,000.

Director Palmer stated she received a telephone call from Kimberly Peacher, the Communications Planning & Liaison Officer of the Navy about flyover training and the person provided her with information about some funds. She discussed and a map shows the tract where they fly. Work with the county to figure out permit processes to protect certain areas. Funding is available through dept. of defense with an open ended requires 10% match and is broad on what it can be used for. Staffing operating costs admin, outreach, GIS, modeling ordinance, and siting processes. There has been discussion about providing a planner in Oroville so these funds could pay portion of those costs. Director Palmer stated she was not sure if the match was cash or in kind. She asked what the county's process was for grants who applied managed etc.... Commissioner Branch said he spoke to Director Palmer about it.

WRIA 49 meeting went well last week. The facilitator did a good job. She was pleased they went through the approvals. She explained what those were. The next step will be for the consultant to start drafting the plan, then approval process. The narrative on water for water projects was interesting, stated Commissioner Hover.

Director Palmer stated she would like to recognize an outstanding employee who has really stepped up during the covid out break and chose to come to work every day to cover everyone who was out. She covered everyone's job when they were out. Director Palmer appreciated her stepping into the role on her own. She would like to recognize her for her valuable dedication to Pam Wyllson. A certificate was created.

Motion

Commissioner Branch moved to approve the certificate of appreciation to Pam Wyllson and authorized the signature. Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

Director Palmer stated she had received Tonasket EMS Life Line invoices for February and March stating that she had received the invoices in a roundabout way because she thought different departments received and the invoices eventually would make it back to her office.

Motion Tonasket EMS District

Commissioner Hover moved to adjourn as the BOCC and reconvene as the Tonasket EMS District. Motion was seconded all were in favor, motion carried.

Commissioner Hover moved to approve the Voucher certification and authorize the Tonasket EMS District vouchers to be paid in the amount of \$43,400 to Life Line for March and February Services. The Clerk of the Board stated those invoices were already processed for payment and both checks sent to Life Line. Motion was died for lack of second.

Commissioner Hover moved to adjourn as the Tonasket EMS District and Reconvene as the BOCC Motion was seconded all were in favor, motion carried.

Commissioner Branch discussed a follow up discussion about the AGO questions that were to be posed

Executive Session RCW 42.30.110(1)(f or g)

Commissioner Hover moved to go into executive session at 2:10 for 20 minutes inviting Tanya Craig and Lauri Jones to discuss complaints received against a public officer or employee. Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

Commissioner Hover moved to amend his previous motion to also invite Brian Pyper, PHN to the executive session. David Gecas provided the result of his inquiry to MRSC about inviting an employee that is directed by a board the three commissioners also sit on, i.e. Board of Health.

Commissioners extended executive session at 2:30 for another 10 minutes.

Commissioner Branch stated a new letter from Kittitas County Commissioner was being reviewed by counties of Washington state.

Review Meeting Minutes

Commissioner DeTro discussed someone called him to discuss a drain field issue who would like to discuss the issue with public health tomorrow. A decision about whether a pressurized system is required will be discussed at the meeting.

Commissioners discussed the draft letter from several Eastern Washington counties to the governor asking for local control to help our economy survive. Commissioner Hover said writing another letter when change has already been initiated our point won't get across. He feels the board of health would be more appropriate to form a letter to thank the governor for making the changes and providing a process. Commissioner Branch said if another letter is warranted, then it should clearly thank for the changes made then outline the changes that still need to be made. At some point emergencies seize to exist.

Commissioners discussed any needed public hearings regarding land use codes and interim ordinances that are in place to schedule the ones needed.

The board adjourned at 5:00 p.m.