

RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS**OKANOGAN COUNTY****SPECIAL MEETING****SEPTEMBER 11, 2020**

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

The special meeting was noted on the commissioners' website 24-hours ahead of the meeting, posted on both exterior doors and faxed to the media who requested a notice of such special meetings.

Special Meeting Fire Resource Coordination Cold Springs Fire

Commissioner Branch physically present, Commissioners DeTro and Hover on ZOOM

A sign in sheet was circulated and attendees introduced themselves.

Commissioner Branch explained why the meeting was called was to provide a needs assessment.

Updates on the fire were provided by Okanogan County PUD commissioner.

Nespelem valley electric provided information on damages and number of power poles available, infrastructure damages and estimated repair needs.

Steve Taylor working together with Nespelem Valley Electric. Power is on through one feed, two of the three are down. We could go black at anytime they are working to stop that from happening. Sunday's power outage happened but Monday's fire took the power out. Estimating cost around 7 million rough estimate due to rough terrain. Took main feed down by foster creek sub station near Chief Joe Dam. Reserve power don't use it if you can. Restoration of Foster Creek Transmission pray nothing happens by then to have it up by next week.

Cell phone problem is because tower is on hill that is burnt. Jack ass butte burned completely down. Verizon is okay because their tower didn't burn down. Jack ass butte is a priority. Should have power up in many areas by Saturday and fiber by Sunday night.

Monse and Malott was biggest hit area with down poles, do not go near it!! Stay away from them.

Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary France, DNR. Ms. Franz provided her update. She spoke about the family that was missing and found and the tragedy of the lose of their child has been the worst part. Her heart goes out to everyone.

Visited city of Malden with 21 homes gone. Complete devastation. Over the last last 72 hours over 626,000 acres burned across Washington state. This is just half of what burned in total and has surpassed the 2015 fire just in the last 72 hours. With hurricane winds and hot temperatures it has been impossible situation. People being evacuated everywhere. The fires started fast and furious dry temps, winds made it extremely hard to fight. Air support was not possible. Initial attack was impossible with 12 significant fires just in our area, visibility is hampered by smoke coming from our fires and Oregon fires. Ms. Franz will be here in Okanogan county Monday, Sept 14.

There are little to no resources to be had due to California and Oregon fires, she will not stop on this fight and will raise importance to our state agencies on getting the resources.

George Deputy wildfire program provided input on lack of resources and dampening their efforts. 32,000 fire fighters on the ground. We are lucky to have additional resources with aircraft and federal shifts and Montana and Canada also providing support.

Having a list of resources would be helpful. Fire chiefs are helping with that. Will be here Monday as well.

DNR provided on the ground information about areas burned. Soil damages are a big concern, many structures burned with assessments continuing. Rugged country is a challenge. Many have lost everything in the Cameron Lake area. Livestock grazing is completely lost and above Omak lake suffered the most. Anyone who can offer a place for folks to stay, generators etc.... Hay started rolling in with truck loads going to the ranches directly. The burn area won't be able to be grazed until next fall at the earliest. The fire moved so fast but the rekindle at the saw mill was the most challenging and most damaging. Kudos to the crews that are out there.

Sheriff Hawley thanked everyone. Sheriff helped with evacuations going door to door deputies were out Sunday until Wednesday doing door to door. Keep the roads closed to keep people out of the way safety is priority and keeping those out who do not need to be there. Investigation is going on as quickly as possible to be done right and ensure other entities are involved who need to be. The missing family was located and flown out and are recovering, but the investigation is continuing as they work on that. There is a lot going on on Facebook so give best wishes and respect the family.

Many lost and if we can help we will step up to help. Communications systems greatly hampered by the fire and very challenging with rerouting of systems to Rivercom. We lost communications to Oroville and emergency services greatly hampered this fire affected the whole county and recovery will take a lot of time.

Chief Worden explained the damages to communications and fiber burnout. Solutions were to reroute. 911 is back and telecom is back as well as radio systems. AT&T still impacted, but most up and functions although not 100%. Fiber should be up soon. Pushing against the wind.

Tribe updated on the their challenges. With the timber shoots into the Omak Lake . Once secured and under control the BEAR team will survey to address stability of slopes and stream beds to rebuild the infrastructure.

Conservation District Craig Nelson updated on steep slope evaluations for reseeding. Emergency watershed protections around fire perimeter for debris flows. Call out to request emergency feed for livestock. Donations are great every little bit will be needed. NRCS for alternative grazing for the up coming grazing for livestock since some areas may not be utilized for 2-3 years. Fences livestock water stocks and weeds then hazard trees around homes.

Larry Gilman, Assessor updated on property tax reductions on destroyed property. It is not a concern right now. Personal care is number one. Come talk to them, dealing with Palmer Mt fire. Reductions will be made for structure loss, taxes that have been paid for second half will receive refunds.

Naomie Peasley updated on the Fairgrounds evacuee coordination of livestock, farmers, and focusing on animals. Housing displaced animals with 12 severely injured animals three vets have been helping and going out in the field. Evacuees are staying on the grounds. Taking donations for them and ranchers. Getting hay water troughs, deliveries are going out non stop through out the day. Helping short term but also gathering info on long term. Monetary funds are being donated for supplies to help keep animals safe and fed and placed. Getting non profits to open accounts for the needed items. Water is being delivered by Public Works as are others. Winter hay is going to be needed, next year feed is also a concern since hay supplies have been burned.

Larry Tribal is helping to put people up in hotels, stampede grounds but waiting to see how they can help. Thanked everyone for putting forth the efforts. Donation center is set up on Dayton street. Generators are really needed. Set up water stations for those who are staying to protect from looters.

Carlene Anders Long Term Recovery Group explained disaster case management and working on that for the last six years. Intaking and working with red Cross. Sooner they get the assessment the sooner their partners can help Team Rivercom various groups that have helped in the past. They need to know how many homes the sooner those pieces will come. In competition with California and Douglas County is ahead of us in that regard. 846-5101 email jessicaocdcm@gmail.com stream anyone into those folks for help for finances.

Josh Thomson Public Works. Main objective to stay out of the way running water trucks on the roads, road barricades, not a lot of damage right now, but looking for where the debris flows will occur. Hazard trees are also a concern.

Kent Kovalenko solid waste hasn't seen any one yet bringing in debris that will be address later.

Community action is helping place folks in hotels but many are coming out of Douglas county. When the power went out that became difficult. tents have been set up for migrant workers affected. All state routes are open in our county.

Mr. Goodall said EOC is looking for generators, tents for school grounds, shower trailer are needed.

TMobile did respond within 24 hours helping now with WiFi. How do we move forward communicate our information, assess houses, what is missing, long term recovery, anyone here should say what is missing.

Chief Communications Worden call center PUD is operating 24/7 and managing their own phones through their own people. Initial assessment for the state is needed for the state and federal so people need to call it in to Emergency Management. Safety is number one. Incident action plan is needed said Mr. Worden.

Carlene Anders asked if Okanogan County Douglas County and Tribe a joint thing. Everyone is mixed in for the state level. It will likely be separate, said Mr. Goodall but he doesn't have the answer if it will be individual. Carlene said she thought Douglas county already has put in for their support and it is coming.

Lauri Jones said masks are being requested as Ag Workers. N95 masks are coming and there is some heavy smoke coming in. Reach out to EM for masks.

PUD is overwhelmed with 7 outside crews, distribution center and pole yards are busy and temporary stations are out there. Stay away our line is a very long extension cord and we used to have three and now there is one. Report anyone around the drop yards. If it isn't a power crew they should not be in there. Airbnb has offered several houses for those displaced. Long term housing is going to be an issue, but we need to make sure we address that.

Larry Tribe requested a safety message to go out there that the ground is hot and burning debris and folks should not be going home due to potential safety issue.

Tribe commended the team, we are not out of the woods in Haley Creek and Diestel area are not out of the woods. Burnout by Omak lake will make it safer but that hasn't happened yet. Resources to do the burn out would help.

Commissioner Hover asked if there was anything the commissioners can do to get more crews are they needed or do we have enough. Klickitat PUD is coordinating and cooperatives, PUD is alright. Jen Tack is meeting the needs. Large Pole sizes are a challenge and the hardware that goes with those. Working from the road and from the field so folks need to stay out of the way. Give them room to work.

Carlene Anders asked how long the outlying areas and are generators needed for the long term. PUD biggest concern is along hwy down to Monse and Malott but Nespelem will likely take longer. Those will be a long time maybe a few weeks, but there are crews pounding the repairs out.

Commissioner Branch said if a legislator called what would the agencies tell them. OK PUD has a list. The numbers will be very important when they ask. Senator Murray asked and he said for communications systems was around \$12 million. PUD is at \$7 million and one third of what Nespelem is.

Sheriff Hawley asked for clarification. Who is putting in for funds to move forward with out county. EM wasn't sure what they put in for because the assessment is what gets that going.

Larry Gilman has been in contact with Douglas assessor, they have not started yet neither has Whitman County and that information is needed. The official value will come from the assessor. This is the first time Tribal properties are so involved so Tribal coordination in the final numbers will be needed. The tribe said they have their supervisors gathering information that will go back into the GIS layer which will help create the table and addresses.

Mr. Goodall asked for input from anyone to move forward with assistance with generators, tents, etc.....

BAR funding is limited and federal and have to compete with others and may be hard to get money since so many are affected in the west. We need to be prepared for erosion that will happen. Emergency stabilization is the designed to safeguard the public from eminent damage due to wildfire. Categorizations are made. There is a tight timeframe to get the data, so in the next week those assessments will be gathered. Craig Nelson said he will work and coordinate and try and get funding if needed.

Commissioner Branch said if support is needed from the political side please reach out and discuss. He works with a lot of people and encourages people to talk about the needs and opportunities at the legislator's level. A refined approach and specifics are important. Identify programs, numbers etc and have the right people also contact the officials. Send emails about how we can be better coordinated reach out to the commissioners for help.

Commissioner Hover agreed they supportive at the higher level. Don't wait for them to come out but send it to them as quickly as possible so we can compose letter and get things flowing as fast as possible.

Commissioner DeTro gave a comment to close the meeting.

The board adjourned at 5:00 p.m.