

RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OKANOGAN COUNTY

SEPTEMBER 14, 2020

The Okanogan County Board of Commissioners met for a Regular Meeting session at 123 5th Avenue North, Okanogan, Washington on September 14, 2020, with Chairman, Commissioner Jim DeTro; Vice Chairman, Commissioner Chris Branch; Member, Commissioner Andy; and Clerk of the Board, Laleña Johns, present.

Fire Briefing with Fire Commissioner Hilary Franz-Omak Stampede Grounds
Commissioners attended the fire briefing with Fire Commissioner Hilary Franz of the Department of Natural Resources at the Omak Stampede Grounds.

Review Commissioners Agenda and Consent Agenda

Commissioners were given an update on the changes to the agenda that were updated on the commissioners' website.

Discussion Annexation Process Assessor & Auditor's Offices

Deputy Auditor Jamie Groomes, Assessor Larry Gilman, and Deputy Assessor Jan Million

Commissioners arrived at 11:25 a.m. and began the meeting to discuss Annexation Process.

Commissioner Branch noted that process beginning isn't always the taxpayer wanting to petition. The process needs to start at the fire district by the property owner wishing to annex into the district.

Assessor Gilman noted that even districts are considered tax payers taxpayer may not be the appropriate term. Property owner is the appropriate term. When defining the process, the fire district may not want the annexation as proposed. Commissioners asked about the different processes for annexation. The assessor discussed the RCW's that provided the various ways for annexation the districts may use. The RCW's dictate how taxpayer may choose to be part of the district. The Assessor prefers the petitioner consult with his office first to be provided the appropriate options. Once filed there are only 15 days for the Auditor to verify signatures before sending the certification to the county commissioners for final approval.

Commissioner Branch stated the MRSC Annexation Handbook hand book, nor the fire district handbook provides guidance, so the bottom line is very definitive and easy to use and for whatever reason it is not in there we could create our own handbook that is distributed to our fire district so the process is clearer for them and what their options are in terms of the process.

Commissioner Branch went into the detail of annexations for cities and towns and explained the similarities and how the process could be better defined for all involved. He wants the process to be accurately defined, before AND after being engaged with the Assessor's office.

It was agreed that property owner may a better way to describe the petitioner.

Discussion Fairgrounds-Naomie Peasley

Ms. Peasley updated the board on use of Fairgrounds by the Long-Term Recovery Group of the Palmer and Cold Springs Fire who want to take over the fairgrounds.

Ms. Peasley explained the Fairgrounds is not taking cash donations from anyone. She is referring victims to Valley lumber and Feed and Supply where accounts can be created to receive the specific

donations. The fairgrounds is only dealing with the livestock and pet relief donations and they are streamlining that relief through the fairgrounds. Okandogs is working to purchase hay and she is directing where to drop off to ranchers. Fairgrounds is documenting amounts of hay and where it is going. Intake forms are being used to document the assistance.

Commissioner Branch asked if there was a list of people with needs for hay, the joint decision is being made by Ms. Peasley and Kevin Cunningham. He is concerned there could be a rub there by others who are also affected and may not get the help they expected.

Commissioner Hover said this relief is for the short term and there is only so much time to address the short time needs. Ms. Peasley explained the concern that relief hay intended for one victim is being diverted to someone else unbeknownst to her. That has happened five times recently due to a tablet that was taken from the fairgrounds office and used to circumvent the and diverting the delivery of the hay. Commissioner Branch said it would be worth our while to receive some legal direction in terms of the hay ownership and when that is finalized.

Ms. Peasley said the group she was working with is short term and Carlene Anders group is long term.

Commissioners discussed the Emergency Manager involved with the process of distribution. Commissioner DeTro asked the Clerk of the board to invite the Chief Civil Deputy and Emergency Management Maurice Goodall to the 3:00 p.m. discussion with Kathy Powers group this afternoon.

Commissioner Hover stated the county's short-term efforts will end on September 30, 2020 and commissioners wish to turn it over to the Long-Term Recovery Group Carlene Anders. It was Ms. Peasley's recommendation to turn the efforts over to them as they have the most experience with long term recovery.

Ms. Peasley stated a campaign manager contacted her about using the fairgrounds for raising funds for their elections campaign and cattle ranchers affected by the fire. Commissioner Hover and Branch stated this short-term recovery effort of the county is a separate issue and did not wish for county owned property to be used for this purpose.

Commissioner adjourned for lunch at 12:30 p.m. Commissioners reconvened at 1:30 p.m.

Commissioner Hover noted that the Okanogan County Fire Watch group wished to speak to their relief efforts for the Palmer Fire.

Stacy Storm is from Okanogan Highlands Fire Watch Tonasket and doing Long Term Recovery Relief for the Palmer Fire.

Ms. Storms commented about seeing cash donations being accepted at the fairgrounds by Naomie Peasley Commissioner Branch stated there was a problem with that but has been addressed so the fairgrounds are not taking donations, but recovery groups are taking them. If there were dollars that were donated to the fairgrounds he requested those be listed and noted and turned in. Ms. Storms said the money was funneled through one person there at the fairgrounds and now there isn't any information as to where it went or who it went to even after the person was asked.

Commissioner Hover said it was relayed to the fairgrounds manager that anything being donated and issued by the fairgrounds be documented as to how much, and to whom and when.

Emergency Equipment Solutions out of Oregon is donating a lot of hay, said Okanogan Highlands Fire Watch Daniel Platt through Kathy Powers and Shauna Beaman. Commissioners do not know anything about this effort specifically. Okanogan Highlands Fire Watch is working through a nonprofit.

Commissioners noted that the county hopes other groups will step in after September 30th to help distribute the needs and coordinate the efforts.

Daniel Platt and Stacy Storms both said they hope a hand book could be created that would help everyone know what to do who is involved with fire relief and the steps to take to organize the groups offering relief.

Daniel Platt asked how Emergency Management can be brought into the 21st century with regards to notifications to the public when there is no power, no WIFI, no cell phone, and people who are not technology oriented. He said Facebook page is where people are paying attention. He would like to work together to help the communities. This issue will continue to grow. He would like a better communication line with the county. Commissioner Branch stated he would like to discuss further and requested the group be on the agenda.

Update-Planning Director Pete Palmer

Planning Director provided her agenda and discussed the items listed there.

Department Vehicles-Next steps, Surplus Old, and Budget for new

Director Palmer discussed the costs through ER&R for one vehicle would be \$28,000 and \$5,000 annually for maintenance and fuel. The old vehicles will be surplus.

A public hearing will be scheduled and the Resolution to surplus the vehicles will be drafted by the Clerk of the Board.

Recreation Plan-Out for SEPA Review

No SEPA comments were received. The comments will go to the Planning Commission on Sept 28, as will the WRIA #49 plan, Recreation Plan, and Zoning Plan and will also be addressed at that time. Commissioner Hover discussed the Shorelines Master Plan to the state there was an addendum with goals and policies that he was not aware of and were not contained in the plan. Commissioner Branch said they should be. Commissioner Hover explained he never saw those. Director Palmer said they were two stand-alone documents. The goals and policies were not reviewed by the commissioners and were part of the last adopted plan in 1972. Commissioner Branch proposed to see what was transmitted to the state so the board can go over those to ensure they were not deceived in anyway.

Commissioner DeTro said in 1972 when the Shorelines Program was presented to the commissioners, they were presented with the nuclear model and this is the second time around.

USBR Cabin Conconully Cabins Update

Ms. Palmer said she spoke to the realtor about the Conconully Cabins and explained one cabin was replaced without regulatory authority and it does not meet the regulations for shoreline. She said the Bureau has the authority they would afford us the jurisdiction of those lands to assert our county rules to those shorelines, and said they would enter into an agreement with the county for the county planning to start issuing permits for those properties around the lake. Commissioner Hover asked that site analysis be done first to identify what that would entail. Commissioner Branch stated it is hard to now go back and try to apply the regulation.

2019-9 District Use Chart-Next Steps

We still have the district use chart Ordinance 2019-9 that has not yet been updated all other have but this one has not. She would like feedback on picking that back up.

Discussion BioChar Local Production Facilities Gina McCoy

Josh Thomson Tom McCoy

Executive chair of C6 Forest to Farm, Mr. Tom McCoy, presented his company's Bio Char

presentation. (attached) Mr. McCoy said he is trying to figure out what to do with all the forest waste materials due to fire over the last twenty years. BioChar benefits were explained as it would entail Forest restoration on a massive scale. Most states are spending over half their budgets on fighting fires. The BioChar process heats the woody debris up to 1000 degrees. Commissioner Hover asked if this process would kill such organisms as apple maggot? Yes it would said Mr. McCoy.

Commissioner DeTro thought state DNR Fire Commissioner Hilary Franz would be interested as she has a short term and long-term recovery plan for the state. It was suggested Mr. McCoy contact Wildland Fire Advisory Committee led by Alan Lebowitz as he would be a good contact and is our new leadership on that committee and co mingles with both sides effectively.

Gina McCoy requested the commissioners consider a letter of support for the project either individually or as a board that would help them approach legislators and funding sponsors. A copy of some language was provided to the board.

Ms. McCoy asked the county to consider allowing the company to lease county property to stockpile the debris. Engineer Thomson explained the bid process to make it fair for everyone. Commissioner Hover asked if the county did consider a lease with C6 Forest to Farm, would they trade for the lease, the services to biochar the county's woody waste materials? Ms. McCoy said yes.

Ms. McCoy requested support of the commissioners during legislative session. This is like coal mining in reverse where the carbon is put back into the soil where it helps retain soil moisture and can reduce water usage on sandy soils, as it is a real thing and can be measured and it could be seen as a water conservation treatment such as for WRIA #49 as it can be quantified.

Discussion Long Term Recovery Group Omak/Okanogan

Kathy Power Kory Heindselman Long Term Recovery Group
David Gecas, Maurice Goodall, Josh Thomson, Pete Palmer

Ms. Power provided information about the relief group she is part of and what they are trying to accomplish in terms of coordination and use of the Fairgrounds for longer term fire relief efforts to have a place to stockpile resources and coordinate long term recovery needs.

She requested the county provide a roll off bin to be set in the Ellisforde area for fire Palmer fire debris. Commissioners discussed their preference that debris be dropped off at the central land fill as was done in 2014 and 2015. Ms. Power asked the board to consider a fire debris fee waiver.

Kent Kovalenko explained what was done in 2014 and 2015. Engineer Thomson stated the best way the county can provide a waiver is if debris is brought to the central landfill. Commissioners discussed what information would be needed for the waiver process such as parcel numbers and an approved list of volunteers. Competition with local haulers was discussed, Mr. Kovalenko will have a conversation with them.

Commissioner Branch discussed having a metal drive and what that market would be like for both fires and if someone would benefit. Ms. Powers reminded that in 2014 and 2015 the metal market dropped out due to the fires.

Mr. Heindselman defined his group's support role for the short- and long-term recovery When the county's program is over in Sept his group would like to continue the relief using the fairgrounds for that purpose. Can they use the fairgrounds for storage and office space for this effort?

Commissioner Hover stated the plan for fairgrounds was to use it for only for the short term for short term animal relief efforts He recommended that all the groups come together to get on the same page. He said another place would be best for this facilitation. Ms. Power stated she is working on the short

term and there is 1000's of tons of hay that needs to go somewhere to be distributed. They are thinking in the six-month time frame. The biggest issue is the storage and distribution of the hay for the ranchers who lost graze land.

Commissioner Branch asked what the reinstatement of the Long-Term Recovery group would look like. Ms. Powers explained that each of the group was a subset of that group and run by different directors. Commissioner Branch explained his concern with the group taking over who doesn't represent the county there is a grave concern no matter what the intent is. Ms. Powers thought that is what the county wanted was for them to step into that role. Commissioner Branch said no, that was not what he stated when he attended the meeting at the fairgrounds, the BOCC collectively would need to be requested by an accountable group representative in order for that role to be granted.

Commissioners discussed whether an executive session would be best to discuss the legal implications.

Motion Executive Session RCW 42.30.110 (1)(i)

Commissioner Branch moved to go into executive session at 3:50 p.m. for 10 minutes under RCW 42.30.110(1)(i) inviting legal counsel attorney David Gecas and Emergency Management Maurice Goodall to discuss potential litigation to which the agency is or likely to become a party. Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

Commissioners extended executive session at 4:00 p.m. for five minutes.

Executive session ended at 4:05 p.m. no decisions were made.

Commissioner DeTro stated nothing in executive session can be discussed at this time. No liability has been determined, but the county does wish to work with the group for the short term. The County Commissioners asked to the groups together including Palmer Lake fire and the Cold Spring Fire groups that will need long term attention. Everyone who is involved with the long-term recovery/relief should be gathered to discuss the plan going forward.

Commissioners asked Emergency Management to arrange for those organizations to meet with the board next week.

The board adjourned at 4:45 p.m.