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RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OKANOGAN COUNTY

DECEMBER 28, 2021

9:00 AM **Commissioners' Staff Meeting**
10:00 AM **Update Human Resources/Risk Management-Tanya Everett**
10:30 AM **Discussion Economic Alliance ARPA Funds-Roni Holder Diefenbach**
11:00 PM **Update Public Works-Engineer Josh Thomson**
1:30 PM **Public Comment Period**
2:00 PM **Department Head Quarterly Meeting**
3:15 PM **Department Head Evaluation-Pete Palmer**
4:00 PM **Approve Commissioner Proceedings**
4:30 PM **Approve Consent Agenda**

The Okanogan County Board of Commissioners met in Regular session at 123 5th Avenue North, Okanogan, Washington on December 28, 2021 with Chairman, Commissioner Chris Branch; Vice-Chairman, Commissioner Andy Hover Member, Commissioner Jim DeTro and the Clerk of the Board, Laleña Johns, present.

AV Capture provided audio and video of the meeting held today, while ZOOM provided best audio accessibility and public interaction.

Commissioners' Staff Meeting

The Clerk of the Board reported that she has begun pulling information for the state auditor's accountability audit of the Homeless Housing funds and the Infrastructure funds. The Clerk explained the information would be provided to the auditor this week. The Clerk also relayed to the board the pertinent results of the Board of Equalization review conducted by Department of Revenue.

Joe Poulin said the new transfer switch for courthouse generator arrived yesterday is stored in the new Justice Center for now. Commissioners discussed the need to address the buried 10,000-gallon fuel tank that used to supply fuel to the old Courthouse boiler. He would like a cost estimate to either take it out or decommission the tank. However, when decommissioned nothing should ever be built on top of the location.

Justice Center parking lot lighting quotes were received from Don Kruse Electric who quoted \$3,227.40 for barn lights and Schmitt Electric quoted \$7,337 for what appeared to commercial type lights.

Commissioner Branch asked about the "barn light" wondering why it was called a "barn light" and inquired why we would lean in the direction of the "commercial" light without knowing the difference between the lights. Commissioner Hover suggested both businesses give a quote for the same kind of lights. Both companies need to quote something that is equal in order to compare costs properly. Joe Poulin stated he was rushed to obtain quotes as the courts wished to use the building. He will obtain new quotes right away.

Commissioners then reviewed their meeting minutes and made some clarifications.

52 The Douglas County inmate housing agreement was discussed. Commissioner Branch was
53 surprised by a newspaper article that said Douglas County was going to “withhold payment”, but
54 he wanted to discuss this further to find out if they were going to remedy the situation. Booking
55 restrictions are partly due to COVID and partly due to a lawsuit from the past. A conversation
56 between the two Sheriff’s happened, then it was published that the \$30,000 Capital Improvement
57 payment would be withheld. The board decided to review the contract agreement then have a
58 conversation with the Sheriff then the other party to try and remedy the situation with booking
59 restriction.

60
61 Commissioners discussed whether or not the board would authorize a letter of support for Judge
62 Grim application for Superior Court judge together or separate. Commissioner Hover said he
63 would like to support him either way with the board on the board’s letterhead or without on different
64 letterhead. The Judicial branch works differently but under the same budget and having someone
65 in the position familiar with the constraints is important to him. Commissioner Branch stated that
66 he couldn’t agree to sign because on such short notice, he did not know whether anyone else
67 was applying for the position, and he didn’t really even know Judge Grimm aside from hearing
68 from him at quarterly department head meetings. He would have to give it some thought.

69
70 Commissioner Branch discussed the veteran’s DVA vehicle and the response given that the county
71 has no control over the use of it even though the county paid \$16,500 for half the cost. The
72 response from Eric Fritts was “DVA operates that vehicle with volunteers and the county has no
73 control over its usage nor the routes it runs. The only county asset available for transporting
74 veterans is the van that reverted to our control from the same type of grant that resides in
75 Tonasket. Talking to Tanya Everett we can transport veterans in the current van under the
76 County’s current insurance structure. The VSO office and the County are assuming the risk of
77 putting a driver and passengers on the road at that time.” The commissioners expressed that this
78 arrangement did not work for them.

79
80 **Update Human Resources/Risk Management-Tanya Everett**

81 Ms. Everett explained insurance recoveries due to equipment destroyed by the Cold Springs fire
82 of Public Works. The rest will be submitted to FEMA.

83
84 Commissioned Contract will go to mediation. Public records requests are increasing and taking a
85 lot of time. Working on making the payroll changes that were recently made. Long term care tax
86 obligations include withholding the deductions from paychecks. We still have to follow the law as
87 the Governor doesn’t have the authority to change the law.

88
89 Commissioner Branch discussed the Douglas County inmate housing agreement regarding the
90 jail improvement payments that Douglas County was going to withhold. Ms. Everett stated what
91 her inquiry to the Douglas Co. Clerk was and what the Clerk had told her. The two Sheriffs had a
92 meeting. Ms. Everett said there has been zero communication from Douglas County about the
93 situation, so she doesn’t know. Commissioner Branch explained what he knew about the situation
94 which he had reported to the BOCC at an early date and found that ran across a newspaper
95 article that indicated that the Douglas County BOCC had decided to withhold payment of the
96 Capital Improvements contribution. He had been contacted by Douglas County Commissioner
97 Chairman Straub for a meeting with him and the Douglas County Sheriff which he held with Sheriff
98 Hawley and Under Sheriff Culp present. Booking restrictions were discussed as a problem for
99 them. A copy of the agreement was requested for Commissioners to review.

100
101 **Approve Commissioner Proceedings**

102 Commissioner Hover moved to approve the commissioners’ proceedings of December 13, 14,
103 20, 21, and 22 as amended. Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

104 **Motion - Voucher Approval - Commissioners**
105 Vouchers certified and audited by the Auditing Officer as required by RCW 42.24.080 and those
106 expense reimbursement claims certified as required by RCW 42.24.090 have been recorded on
107 a list, and made available to the Board. As of this date, the Board did vote, by unanimous vote,
108 to approve the regular vouchers in the amount of \$113,964.22. Warrant numbers as cited on the
109 attached blanket voucher list. Motion seconded and carried.
110

111 **Motion Public Health Voucher**
112 Commissioner moved to approve the Public Health Vouchers including regular vouchers in the
113 amount of \$47,964.22. Warrant numbers as cited on the attached blanket voucher list. Motion was
114 seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.
115

116 **Approve Consent Agenda**
117 Commissioner Hover moved to approve the consent agenda items 1-4 as presented. Motion was
118 seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

- 119 1. Interlocal Agreement-Title III Funding of Countywide Firewise Program \$114,000-OCD
 - 120 2. Contracted Services Agreement -Homeless Housing Funds-Community Action Council
 - 121 3. Contracted Services Agreement- Homeless Housing Funds -Okanogan Behavioral Healthcare
 - 122 4. Contracted Services Agreement-Homeless Housing Funds Housing Authority of Okanogan County
- 123

124 **Discussion Economic Alliance ARPA Funds-Roni Holder Diefenbach**
125 Ms. Holder-Diefenbach, Executive Director, discussed some ideas about the utilization of the
126 county's ARPA funds. Implementation of a business center grant to host weekly hybrid resources
127 to help people with online market places to market their wares instead of shutting their doors. The
128 other part is that they offer technology and equipment that can be checked out by businesses to
129 utilize. This grant ends June 30th. If there was a way for Economic Alliance to use ARPA funds to
130 keep the business and technology center going.
131

132 The Economic Alliance was awarded a grant to start a Business Technology Center which helps
133 pay for the staff who runs the center and works on the vacant building committee. The grant was
134 a one-year grant and runs out June 30, 2022. The center is able to offer technology resources to
135 businesses to help them develop an online presence to help support their business during
136 quarantine. Ms. Diefenbach requested use of the county's ARPA funds to help keep the program
137 going. She believes continuing those services will lessen the impact of COVID to those
138 businesses. She explained the application process businesses can use for the 10 days their
139 business was shut down due to quarantine.
140

141 Ms. Holder-Diefenbach discussed their proposal for retail strategies (\$135,000) to hire retail
142 strategies to do a demographic study, and Pateros was chosen to study. The study listed a
143 comprehensive packet of all the tools needed. They also put together a package strategy for
144 Brewster and Oroville. To include the whole county would cost about \$135,000 and would help
145 her be able to look at what we should be focusing on to support our businesses.
146

147 The other thing is Broad band as she is Broad Band Action team who is in the process of
148 submitting applications to the feds and state and reconnect grant through USDA and matching
149 dollars that could be used for state projects such as Twisp, Pateros, Malott, and Aston Estates
150 and Crumbacher areas that are covered through the state broadband office. Commissioner
151 Branch would like an estimate for this next year's needs and suggested additional discussion with
152 the PUD. Ms. Holder Diefenbach stated we increased from 18 services areas to 22 plus. Fiber to
153 the premise in some of the most rural topographically challenged areas, our average was
154 expected at about \$12,000 to \$22,000 per pass. The funds would not go very far to reach some

155 of the areas. They kicked it back and said no, too expensive. But they are making broad band
156 action focus on the urban areas that already have access, not the areas that struggled. The state
157 perimeters hamstringing us in reaching the rural areas that need it most. Commissioner Hover stated
158 the Pine Creek broadband was ranked #3, and provide grant match for that project. City of
159 Brewster broad band deal and fund 10% and was ranked #4. They are getting served right now
160 by Ziplly Fiber and they applied for the NTIA grant selected by the state. Ziplly took over all the
161 areas that Frontier had Brewster, Tonasket, Loomis, so those areas are included. She will find
162 out from the city to find out if they are going with Ziplly for the upgrades. The top ranked project in
163 the county was the Pine Creek area. The application included the Aeneas Mt where the equipment
164 resides. The different grant applications Economic Alliance applied for will help complete the plan
165 and provide service to the premise.

166
167 Commissioner Hover said in looking through the different prioritized Infrastructure projects and
168 said we might have enough money within the ARPA funds to provide the matching funds for the
169 projects. Commissioner Branch asked the board to identify the amount to focus on the broadband.
170 Ms. Holder-Diefenbach will submit a request to the county of the projects that fit ARPA that are
171 still in need for consideration. Commissioner Branch thought a project selection process should
172 be considered and would like to review all the projects first because there are a lot of factors
173 involved to see where they are at in their project process. If we are a 10% piece, then the other
174 90% of the funding must be secure and project ready. Commissioner Hover said if we can tell the
175 project sponsors, if the matches are small enough, he thought we can do them all. Ms. Holder-
176 Diefenbach will follow up with all these things. Commissioner Branch thought the board could
177 have a decision by the end of January. There is some uncertainty around the Justice Center
178 building.

179
180 **Update Public Works-Engineer Josh Thomson**
181 Public Works Engineer Josh Thomson provided his agenda and discussed the items listed
182 there.

183
184 *Maintenance and road conditions*
185 Snow drifting calls coming from various areas. There were freezing rain above Oroville.
186 Insurance is paying for most of the equipment damage on Pitcher Mt.

187
188 **Aeneas Valley Rd @ Round Lake (MP 5.3) – guardrail request**
189 An email was received requesting a guard rail on Aeneas Valley Road. Engineer Thomson
190 said based on the history of accidents reported, and he didn't have the most recent history
191 information, that the installation of the guardrail is warranted. We can add an injury crash to
192 the location, it could be included in the next round application for funding cycle. Commissioner
193 DeTro said he will reply to the requestor about the funding and timelines. Engineer Thomson
194 explained the factors involved when considering these types of requests.

195
196 7/6/10 Injury/rollover Inattention
197 7/18/12 Injury/fixed object - bank DUI
198 7/16/17 PDO/fixed object - bank Inattention
199 11/3/17 PDO/fixed object - fence Exceeding safe speed and ice
200 10/9/18 PDO/fixed object - bank Inattention
201 11/20/18 PDO/fixed object - pole Ice

202
203
204

205 *Munis system*
206 Engineer Thomson commented on the research to mesh Munis with Public Work's needs.
207 Questions are being gathered and will be posed to Munis at a meeting in January. It would be
208 great if we had one system to enter and track everything.

209
210 Commissioners discussed the need to decide on the Bond. The board is still looking at the issues
211 the bond funding would address. The two public works shops are the only two things ready. Have
212 the Architect meet with the departments to identify their needs.

213
214 The board adjourned for lunch at 11:40 a.m. and reconvened at 1:30 p.m. for the afternoon.

215
216 **Public Comment Period**

217 Commissioner Branch asked for public comment. Karen Harris, via zoom, said she was here to
218 report only.

219
220 Commissioner Hover discussed the Six-year Capital Facilities Plan draft as he incorporated the
221 changes from the Sheriff and the Fairgrounds. Does the board wish to review the draft prior to
222 scheduling the public hearing? The board decided not to make the document part of its
223 comprehensive plan last time it was adopted. It provides a facility planning tool. The Capital
224 Facilities plan is an option of the comprehensive plan under RCW 36.70 and we did not use it that
225 way. Commissioner Branch stated it should be referred to as the Capital Improvement Plan.

226
227 Commissioner Branch stated he talked to Dennis Rabidou about the planning efforts on the new
228 building.

229
230 **Department Head Quarterly Meeting**

231 Present: Noxious Weed, Larry Hudson; Central Services Karen Beatty; Laura Wright; Sheriff Tony
232 Hawley; Pete Palmer; Teagan Levine; Prosecutor Melanie Baily; Engineer Josh Thomson;
233 Undersheriff Aaron Culp; Lisa Schreckengost; Maurice Goodall via zoom; Joe Poulin

234
235 Commissioner Branch said this meeting was set to share information and provide updates,
236 discuss concerns, and report on what is happening in county departments.

237
238 Auditor Hall provided her departmental update. The biggest thing is the 1.5-hour demo for Munis,
239 a new accounting program the county is considering. She hopes departments are as excited
240 about the upgrade. The current accounting program has many gremlins.

241
242 Karen Beatty provided a brief update of central services.

243
244 Judge Grim announced what an honor it was for him to serve as District Court Judge. Chancy
245 Crowell was appointed to fill the unexpired term.

246
247 Ms. Everett stated everyone worked well together this year considering the public health crisis.

248
249 Prosecutor Bailey provided a brief update and stated her office was fully staffed for a hot minute,
250 but now down one staff.

251
252 Larry Hudson provided his update of the Noxious Weed Dept. All staff came together and pretty
253 much met their responsibilities for the year. This time of year, he does the required reporting.

254 Pete Palmer provided her update of the Planning Dept. Working on the Comprehensive Plan
255 update. Have been meeting with marijuana growers every Wednesday now that the deadline is
256 approaching. The biggest challenge has been filling open staffing positions.

257

258 Engineer Thomson provided his public works update.

259

260 Sheriff Hawley provided his update. He said there are so many challenges from fires to COVID,
261 to rule changes. Body cameras have helped in many areas such as transparency. Legislative
262 decisions have put them in a tough spot but they still serve the publics expectations. Shop with a
263 cop was very successful. Commissioners thanked him for his work with the community and kids.

264

265 Kayla Wells-Yoakum provided her update of the Extension office. Losing the 4H coordinator right
266 before the fair was a challenge. Angela Shephard was hired as the new 4H coordinator. The other
267 item that happened was the vaccination mandate which affected the volunteers who help with the
268 Master Gardner program. Some took a year.

269

270 Needs assessments and survey data was wrapped up for the county and presented to the board
271 a couple weeks ago. Regional data numbers will be provided as a result of the presentation.

272

273 Joe Poulin provided the courthouse maintenance update. Heat has been an issue in the
274 courthouse north end offices due to wind and weather.

275

276 Commissioner Hover said the biggest thing was the purchase of the new building. The architect
277 suggested the county adopt a master plan which includes a surveying the departments to identify
278 their particular needs. That way when the board discusses movement of offices, that it works in
279 the end and we don't have to buy more property but rather use what we have more efficiently.
280 And, that is what it is all about. This is an opportunity to reconfigure the offices, but the board
281 does not know what it will all end up looking like, said Commissioner Branch. It is an opportunity
282 to do something about the courthouse safety concerns that have been discussed over the years.

283

284 Commissioner DeTro provided the worst thing for the county is the fire season, and COVID. By
285 far is the way the departments work together to make it all happen. He thanked everyone for
286 sticking it out when there were other opportunities out there.

287

288 Commissioners thanked the department heads for the updates.

289

290 The board adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

291