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RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OKANOGAN COUNTY

NOVEMBER 23, 2021

9:00 AM Forest Service Building Tour-Dennis Rabidou & Commissioners-1240 3rd Ave S.
10:30 AM Discussion Non-Bargaining Wages-Crystal Hawley-Commissioners' Hearing Rm
11:00 AM Update Public Works-Engineer Josh Thomson
1:30 PM Public Comment Period
2:00 PM Debriefing Forest Service Building Tour-Dennis Rabidou & Commissioners
3:30 PM Approve Commissioner Proceedings- November 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17
3:35 PM Approve Consent Agenda

The Okanogan County Board of Commissioners met in Regular session at 123 5th Avenue North, Okanogan, Washington on November 23, 2021 with Chairman, Commissioner Chris Branch; 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.

Vice-Chairman, Commissioner Andy Hover was absent until 2:00 p.m. today due to personal reasons.

Forest Service Building Tour-Dennis Rabidou & Commissioners-1240 3rd Ave S. Okanogan
The following people attended the building tour: Judge Chris Culp, Dennis Rabidou, Michael Beaver et al, Sandy Ervin, Karen Beatty, Eric Fritts, Tanya Everett, Melanie Bailey, Felicia Chandler, Charleen Groomes, Tammi Denney, Joe Poulin, Tim Meadows, Melanie Bailey, Aaron Culp, Tony Hawley, Maurice Goodall, Lori Caswell, Teagan Levine, Laura Wright, Charleen Groomes, Jim DeTro, Chris Branch

The group toured the county's new building located in Okanogan.

Discussion Non-Bargaining Wages-Crystal Hawley-Commissioners' Hearing Rm or Zoom
The following staff were present: Leah McCormack, Cari Hall, Pete Palmer, Pam Wyllson, Kayla Wells-Yoakum, Maurice Goodall, Crystal Hawley, Tanya Everett, Lisa Schreckengost, Shelley Keitzman, Tim Meadows, Melanie Bailey, Char Schumacher, Beth Barker, Josh Thomson, Karen Beatty, Cari Hall

Crystal Hawley provided calculations from Tanya Everett regarding the cost to current expense of a 2, 3, 4, & 5% wage increase. Ms. Hawley explained the county pays \$200 more for bargaining employees' portion of insurance, represented groups also have higher wages, built in annual raises and better benefits.

The Clerk of the Board read RCW 49.46.020 and RCW 49.58.005 and the legislative intent and findings were discussed. The county's personnel manual section 3.2.1 talks about each position reflecting equitably the differences in duties and responsibilities of position and shall consider the external market, internal equity, county's financial condition and policies, turnover issues, and other relevant factors. Commissioner Branch said he will look at this to ensure the county isn't violating it. The Clerk of the Board stated most of the non-bargaining employees are women. He

52 would like to review the information to see if it is gender specific. Commissioner DeTro noted that
53 the non-bargaining didn't address the fact the CPI goes down and suggested we think about that.
54 Commissioner Branch said he attended a conference that included workshops to find ways to
55 retain staff because a lot of counties are facing staffing issues. Ms. Hawley stated the feds are
56 saying inflation is going up including interest rates. As things go bargaining contracts ripples
57 through and he doesn't see that as a bad thing or affects the BOCC decision. If things go bad, the
58 board can take actions to lay off people when revenue cannot support expenditure.

59
60 Ms. Hawley asked if there was some other revenue that could be considered for wages?
61 Commissioner Branch stated the sales tax income is flexible but as far as bringing in dollars he
62 doesn't think there are many options. He also noted that sales tax income can be influenced by
63 economic development efforts using the example of the Economic Alliance.

64
65 Tanya Everett said the other counties that have increases built in also do a road levy shift to pay
66 for it and these shifts take away from repairs to roads. Treasurer McCormack said one thing that
67 increased revenue is the assessed value of property, one negative is criminal justice funds over
68 the years is considerably less and is a huge issue for all counties. Commissioner DeTro said if the
69 county could receive its share of the Marijuana revenue enjoyed by the state. Pete said the
70 planning department raised fees to help off set costs of those employees. Consider these are the
71 people who are the back bone of the county and planning staff and other staff have taken on a
72 considerable amount of work load, working conditions have really caused a lot of stress in addition
73 to worrying about everyday living expenses and trying to keep up with costs has cause low moral
74 in her department the low wages address to the stress level and brings down production. Within
75 her dept she asked for wage analysis and on average compared to other counties her staff is
76 making \$1600-\$2000 less than those. Please take into consideration the production and work
77 loads coming out of the offices. DeTro said we are preaching to the choir. The board is considering
78 making all county employees essential and would use ARPA funds for that but that doesn't last
79 forever. Commissioner Branch stated the board should look at parity and retention and that is why
80 he is engaged at the state level and many counties are talking about this.

81
82 What is the plan? Work it through the budget. The board does not intend on putting this on the
83 back burner. It is easy to not act on the non-bargaining. Retention is more important because then
84 if you are not satisfying employees here they will leave and tell everyone and no one will apply.

85
86 Ms. Everett said from her view it is onerous to reclassify positions instead of keeping parity
87 between skilled and unskilled labor. She made suggestions to consider.

88
89 Commissioner Branch stated he wants to be fair and revamping the salary and wage system is
90 reactionary. Unions pull the board to the table and that is what we are doing here today. The board
91 hears the comments and concerns and they plan to do something and willing to look and make
92 sure we have a fair system. DeTro find a way to keep employees here. If we posted a job in Public
93 Works there used to be 50 applications and now we have postings without anyone applying for
94 over a year.

95
96 Auditor Hall said she will add the non-bargaining request to the budget. Ms. Hawley thanked the
97 commissioners for their consideration.

98
99 **Update Public Works-Engineer Josh Thomson**
100 Kent Kovalenko

101
102 **Solid Waste-Climate Commitment Act Workgroup Update**

103 Mr. Kovalenko provided his update and submitted information on California's SB2583 which
104 passed in 2016 regarding requirements for composting. He said there are two groups a food group
105 and composting group.

106
107 Legislation is being brought forward in Washington that is similar to the California rule (attached)
108 The composting rules would require municipalities to provide compost bins to be placed for
109 residents where food waste is generated. There is a waiver for low population jurisdictions which
110 Okanogan County may be able to use. Thresholds will be adjusted to meet Washington State
111 goals.

112
113 Commissioner Branch suggested evaluation of the needs of the communities. It is a big county.

114
115 Engineer Thomson provided his agenda and discussed the items listed there.

116
117 *Maintenance & Road Conditions*

118 Getting ready for winter. The high-water levels have not caused many issues.

119
120 *Open positions*

121 There are several open positions such as truck driver in area 1 and area 2 and weed and sign
122 shops are short several people. The positions have been posted with no applicants. Methow shop
123 is also short two positions, with no applicants. The opening in Tonasket has two applicants.

124
125 Commissioner Branch asked what the BOCC could do to attract more employees. Raising wages
126 is a big part of it. Engineer Thomson said many counties are seeing many employees just leaving
127 the work force. There just aren't people out there to hire. We might redo job descriptions and see
128 how we write the advertisements. We need to sell our jobs more than ever. Put a price on the
129 benefit package and include the wages and benefits and advertise that. Mr. Kovalenko explained
130 the differences in our benefit package compared to the state and ours is much better.

131
132 *Security Lights & Cameras-Public Health Request*

133 Engineer Thomson stated security lights and cameras were requested by public health tenants.
134 Commissioner Branch discussed the tour of the forest service building and explained some of the
135 ideas being explored for moving public works and public health from the public works building in
136 order to create a justice center. He encouraged Engineer Thomson to relay ideas to the board. At
137 this point District Court will stay in the courthouse.

138
139 *Road Fund 2022 Budget*

140 Engineer Thomson briefly discussed the road fund budget for 2022.

141
142 *Consent Agenda*

143 *Reject Fuel Bids*

144
145 **Public Comment Period**

146 No public wished to provide comments.

147
148 **Motion - Voucher Approval - Commissioners**

149 Vouchers certified and audited by the Auditing Officer as required by RCW 42.24.080 and those
150 expense reimbursement claims certified as required by RCW 42.24.090 have been recorded on a
151 list, and made available to the Board. As of this date, the Board did vote, by unanimous vote, to
152 approve the regular vouchers in the amount of \$569,982.03. Warrant numbers as cited on the
153 attached blanket voucher list. Motion seconded and carried.

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Motion Public Health Voucher

Commissioner moved to approve the Public Health Vouchers including regular vouchers in the amount of \$33,975.05. Warrant numbers as cited on the attached blanket voucher list. Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

Motion Public Health Voucher

Commissioner moved to approve the Public Health Vouchers including regular vouchers in the amount of \$120. Warrant numbers as cited on the attached blanket voucher list. Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

Commissioner Hover arrived at 1:45 p.m.

Motion-Failed

Commissioner DeTro moved to approve the Romeo Entertainment booking agent agreement for the Sept 8-11, 2022 fair and authorized the chairman to sign. Motion was seconded, no one was in favor due to questions and FAC should discuss the costs involved.

Commissioner Branch left at 2:00 p.m. to certify the election.

Debriefing Forest Service Building Tour-Dennis Rabidou & Commissioners

Dennis Rabidou, Michael Beaman, Teagan Levine, Josh Thomson, Leah McCormack, Joe Poulin, Rocky Robbins, Maurice Goodall, Charleen Groomes

Commissioner Hover stated he wanted to discuss the pros and cons found during the tour of the building. Commissioner Hover provided a spreadsheet with square footages.

Mr. Beaman iterated reasonable phases for this project. There is an absence of a master plan. The plan is to decentralize county government, but when they move what happens to the building. He is very fiscally conservative and aware about spending others money. He tries to reuse things where he can, but without a master plan it is hard to think that way. The challenges of the commissioners is constantly rethinking these projects as the board members change. Commissioner Hover said it is difficult, and suggested the county commissioners move out of the VG building and move the public health and public works. Beaman advised adjacencies are critical to serving the public.

Commissioner Hover said Moving Juvenile, Prosecutor to public works building. Moving Health, PW, Treasurer, Auditor, and Assessor to the VG and moving commissioners to the courthouse. In reality, the commissioners' daily business is not at the same level as the other departments.

Engineer Thomson said it would be difficult to separate PW onto two floors.

Beaman discussed the county's need for a master plan. One was started sometime in 2004. The master plan would lay out the plan to be made bullet proof so the next commissioners must abide by it and constantly moving forward to improve services and security and safety. Once the courts are removed the courthouse becomes manageable with regards to safety and security with the commissioners and sheriff in the courthouse.

Leah McCormack said she likes the idea of creating a master plan and putting departments together and hopes this can happen before she leaves. What have we really accomplished in 39 years. Right now, is the most opportune time because we have the resources and bond capacity

205 and revenue. Even though Dennis is administrator of SC and Juvenile it is also about connecting
206 with the other departments and learning what their needs are too and no one has really been asked
207 at this point. Beaman explained the process would include interviews with each department, break
208 it up into categories, then start to look at it from a thinktank point of view by a committee of county
209 decision makers, then adopt into a document direct which goes to each department who again
210 have input.

211
212 Commissioner DeTro stated the plan should be created, but the county should be transparent and
213 publish the plan for the public to see.

214
215 Beaman encouraged the county to keep the ball rolling in terms of the Justice complex, right now
216 this is the proper move. With this first move the county can now make it all work over the next 20
217 years.

218
219 Commissioner Hover discussed the concept to rearrange county offices along with the purchase
220 of the Public Works building. Public Works office must be located at the county seat. The master
221 plan would include all these plans and what we really need.

222
223 Tony Hawley asked when the master plan timeline is planned. He is spending money on a training
224 room and other upgrades in the VG building and wondered about the timeline the plan will
225 progress. January 1, he is required to video record all interviews. Commissioner Hover said the
226 county isn't talking about next month but rather a couple years. The plan will help keep the county
227 on course. Beaman said it would take about 6-months to draft the plan and 20 years to make it all
228 happen.

229
230 Beaman said people could always use more space, but the more efficient we become the less
231 space we need.

232
233 Joe Poulin explained parking and traffic flow could be a problem. If all the courts are down there
234 where will everyone park?

235
236 Beaman said first a feasibility study was completed on the building space, then a pre-design will
237 look at hazardous materials, utilities, to find out and document those things, then do the full design
238 then bid to a contract and start construction. There are a whole lot of things that happen in between
239 and an opportunity to tweak some things.

240
241 Beaman said he would like to do the county's master plan and could do it better than most since
242 his firm has worked up here over the last 25 years or more.

243
244 Mr. Rabidou said the off-site jury selection for the high-profile trial is looking good. He is preparing
245 for it now.

246
247 Rental Revenue was budgeted, but it may not be appropriate for the daycare to be located in the
248 same building as it exposes toddlers to seeing adults in shackles, it could be a concern.

249
250 Discussed remodeling certain areas to prepare for the jury selection and court functions.
251 Commissioners were alright with Mr. Rabidou discussing the plans with the tenants to move them
252 to the Public Works building in order to free up space for the court.

253

254 The Clerk of the Board and Joe Poulin will be the point of contact for building maintenance. Tanya
255 Everett asked who will be responsible for the Michael Beaman contract and paying the invoices?
256 She hasn't been involved with the project and doesn't feel it is her responsibility.

257

258 Commissioner Hover proposed to pay the architect from the Capital Improvement fund.

259

260 **Motion**

261 Commissioner Hover moved to approve the professional services agreement amendment between
262 Okanogan County and Beaman Architecture LTD in the amount of \$19,635 including reimbursable
263 expenses and authorized the chairman to sign. Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion
264 carried.

265

266 **Motion Resolution 148-2021 Reclassifications-Building Dept.**

267 Commissioner Hover moved to approve resolution 148-2021 approving reclassification of Building
268 Inspector, Plans Examiner, and Senior Plans Examiner to provide reasonable wages. Motion was
269 seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

270

271 The Clerk of the Board asked, are department supposed to come and individually ask for employee
272 reclassifications based on salary surveys and to reclassify positions instead of the non-bargaining
273 group asking for a wage increase to account for parity issues between the grades and steps due
274 to minimum wages set by L&I. The commissioners said yes.

275

276 Employees are to be set at no higher than 85% of counties surveyed. AWC book has salary
277 surveys that can be used for positions when there isn't a comparable position in the county
278 surveyed. Commissioner Hover said his priority is to address prosecutor positions and provide a
279 wage increase to non-bargaining employees.

280

281 **Motion LTAC 2022 Allocations**

282 Commissioner Hover moved to approve the LTAC 2022 funding allocations. Commissioner Branch
283 asked if the board could do anything more than approve or denies the allocations. He asked about
284 the Oroville Initiative. Commissioner Hover which was not funded because they did not have a firm
285 bid so half was awarded and they can apply for the rest next year. Motion was seconded, all were
286 in favor, motion carried.

287

288 **Approve Commissioner Proceedings- November 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17**

289 Commissioner Hover approved commissioners' proceedings of November 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, and 17,
290 2021. Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

291

292 **Approve Consent Agenda**

293 Commissioner Hover moved to approve consent agenda items 1, 2, 6, & 7. Motion was seconded,
294 all were in favor, motion carried.

295

1. Bid Rejection-Supply of Motor Fuel Bid

296

2. Appointment Letter Water Conservancy Board-Virginia O Kelly

297

~~3. Assignment & Assumption of Service Contracts 1240 2nd Ave S Okanogan~~

298

~~4. Assignment & Assumption of Tenant Leases 1240 2nd Ave S Okanogan~~

299

~~5. General Assignment of Intangibles 1240 2nd Ave S Okanogan~~

300

6. Letter of Support WA ST Broadband Office-Infrastructure Acceleration Grant Program-CCT

301

7. Resolution 147-2021 Budget Amendment- Fairgrounds Maintenance Section

302

303 The Clerk asked for direction for plowing services of the new building. She explained that currently
304 Herriman charges \$495 per plow service to plow the Forest Service building parking lot. It doesn't

305 include the costs for sanding, deicing or snow removal. Does the county wish to have the building
306 added to the 24/7 contract or does the board wish to keep Herriman this year then go out for
307 RFQ's. The Board said add the building to the 24/7 contract then go out for RFQ for 2022 services
308 next year.

309

310

311 The board adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

312