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**RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS**

**OKANOGAN COUNTY**

**FEBRUARY 20, 2024**

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**9:00 AM** Review Meeting Minutes February 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
**9:15 AM** Public Comment Period  
**9:30 AM** Legislative Update-Zak Kennedy  
**10:00 AM** Finance Committee Meeting-Treasurer Pam Johnson  
**11:00 AM** Bid Opening-2024 Soil Stabilizer-PW Shasta Stidman  
**11:10 AM** Bid Opening-2024 Liquid Asphalt-PW Shasta Stidman  
**11:20 AM** Update-Public Works-Engineer Josh Thomson  
**11:50 AM** Approve Meeting Minutes February 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
**1:30 PM** Commissioners to set Wednesdays Agenda if Necessary  
**1:30 PM** Update-Central Services-Karen Beatty  
**2:00 PM** Discussion-Opioid Settlement Options-Esther Milner  
**2:30 PM** Discussion-WSU 4-H Program Update-Kayla Wells Yoakum  
**3:45 PM** Update-Human Resources/Risk Management-Shelley Keitzman  
**4:00 PM** Approve Consent Agenda

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The Okanogan County Board of Commissioners met for a regular meeting at 123 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, Okanogan, Washington on February 20, 2024 with Chairman, Commissioner Jon Neal; Vice-Chairman, Commissioner Andy Hover; Member, Commissioner Chris Branch; and the Deputy Clerk of the Board, Cameron Burnette, present.

AV Capture and Zoom provided audio and video accessibility for public interaction.

**Review Meeting Minutes February 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

Commissioners did not have time to review their meeting minutes from the previous week.

**Public Comment Period**

Members of the Public Ruth Hall, and Isabelle Spohn, both VIA Zoom

Ms. Spohn had concerns about the procedures about the Planning Commission Hearing for the Zone Code Ordinance, she had listened to the prior Planning Commission hearing, and she had not heard any comment about the BOCC receiving a draft of the changes. There was a big gap in communication from the last hearing and then, and from what she understands it was discussed amongst them that if they do not approve it, they would have to restart from the beginning. She feels the BOCC did not have an opportunity to review it adequately. She is concerned that if the Planning Commission has suggestive changes, the whole process would have to restart. The zoning map is all one color for the whole Methow, there is no difference between the MRD and the Rural 5. The map is not discerning enough because it is definitely not all rural 5, there needs to be more clarity in the colors. She went to the district use chart, and it all says MRD, which it is not. There is a huge lack of information even with her calling the Planning Department, such as how long testimonies will be tonight, and she has great concern with the general lack of information from the Planning Department.

Commissioners let her know that they do not know how the Planning Commission will run their meeting tonight, but usually testimony is kept to 3 minutes, depending on how many people are there to testify, and how significant the discussion is. But they are not sure how it will go as it's not their meeting.

Ms. Spohn stated she will plan to testify for 3 minutes in that case, considering there will more than likely be many people there testifying.

53 Ms. Spohn stated she has concern that the Planning Commission will be deliberating and deciding  
54 tonight, even though this is going to be a very in-depth discussion tonight with more than likely a lot of  
55 people there to comment.

56  
57 Commissioner Hover clarified that this is not a comprehensive zone code change. Take it for what it  
58 is, it is a living document and there will be much more done with the zone code changes, and this is  
59 very likely not going to be the final version of the document. He wants her and everyone to give all  
60 their comments and concerns at the hearing tonight, and the Planning Commission should make a  
61 report to the Commissioners, and they should be taking all of the comments into consideration. After  
62 this hearing, the BOCC will follow up with a Public hearing of their own about the Zone code changes,  
63 before formally moving forward with the final version of the zone code changes.

64  
65 Commissioner Branch wants to review the concerns from the many commenters they have had the  
66 last two weeks, and what he's hearing is that there was inadequate time to comment, and lack of  
67 information for the public to review. He feels the BOCC needs to look into these concerns and address  
68 the potential issues that are being brought up.

69  
70 **Legislative Update-Zak Kennedy**

71 Zak Kennedy VIA Zoom

72  
73 Mr. Kennedy, talked about the Frontier Counties Bill, there are economic development dollars that  
74 come from the feds that are for Rural Areas such as Okanogan County. The other thing to note, is  
75 what their doing to the budget, they are adding over 2 million to the operating budget. Next year  
76 depending on if the initiative passes, they are in trouble, there is not a lot of money as it is, and the  
77 transportation budget for most counties will more than likely be hit next year, so he says expect to see  
78 some budget nightmares in 2025. Commissioner Branch asked about HB2257 about going into  
79 executive session in legislature, does it then have to have a hearing to get out the Committee, yes,  
80 that will be the hearing to move it out of committee.

81  
82 **Finance Committee Meeting-Treasurer Pam Johnson**

83 County Treasurer Pam Johnson, County Auditor Cari Hall, Finance Manager Lisa Schreckengost

84  
85 Ms. Johnson had sent out financial reports, they have cash on hand and investments for January, it  
86 was at 5.50% for investments in January and February. Commissioner Neal asked Ms. Hall how  
87 multiple elections will affect her offices budget? She stated it will affect it pretty heavily this year for  
88 sure. Ms. Johnson asked is the BOCC ready to approve the debt policy and investment policy? She  
89 will need signatures from Ms. Hall and from the Chairman, Commissioner Neal.

90  
91 **Motion-Approve Investment & Debt Policies, Authorize the Chairman to Sign**

92 Commissioner Branch moved to approve the investment and debt policies and to authorize the  
93 Chairman, Commissioner Neal to sign, motion seconded, all in favor, motion carried.

94  
95 Ms. Johnson discussed her concerns regarding Aeneas Valley Irrigation District and their financial  
96 status due to having over \$250,000 in outstanding warrants. They do not want to raise their  
97 assessments because they are already over \$380 an acre. Commissioner Hover stated they need a  
98 grant to cover their pumps, and work they have already done. Commissioners Branch emphasized the  
99 need to address this issue before it gets worse and asked about what options the district has. He said  
100 essentially, they need a bailout. Commissioner Branch asked Ms. Johnson if she had any suggestions  
101 on how Aeneas Lake Irrigation might fix their situation. Ms. Johnson replied, she asked them to lower  
102 their expenditures and or get bailed out. Commissioner Branch requested clarification, so at the end  
103 of the year the irrigation district is supposed to be off, what are our options for helping them? Ms. Hall  
104 stated they will meet with them quarterly to help address these issues, and the State Auditor has  
105 already noted issues with this. The biggest user is the farthest behind on the assessment payments,  
106 and they continually pay the oldest years so they don't go into foreclosure, if that were to happen they

107 lose the irrigation and the land. Auditor Hall and Ms. Johnson discussed various options but would  
108 need the County to accomplish. Ms. Hall had suggested ARPA funds. Commissioner Hover discussed  
109 how difficult it is for districts to mitigate natural disasters. Maybe there is a way for the PUD or another  
110 agency to be able to help them. Commissioner Hover would try to make it down to speak with the  
111 manager. He is not opposed to finding help for them, but there needs to be discussion about it.  
112

113 **Motion-Authorize the Chair to Sign the Application for State Funding for the Fair**

114 Commissioner Hover moved to authorize the Chair to sign the future Application for The Department  
115 of Agriculture Grant for the Fair. Motion seconded, Commissioners discussed the signature line  
116 because it said "president". Commissioner Hover said Commissioner Neal should sign it and just cross  
117 out president and put Board/Chair. All in favor, motion carried.  
118

119 Commissioner Branch discussed needing clarification on funds 104, 105, and 107. He thought the  
120 revenue was from county millage. He would like to be able to, on the screen, divide those up, and note  
121 the restrictions on what those funding sources are, and then how they are distributed. He wants to  
122 make sure of what contributions are that may affect Medicaid, and wants understand fully what those  
123 allocations are. He asked if there was an RCW that dictates the breakouts and whether it done by  
124 resolution, then he needs to know that.  
125

126 Commissioner Branch would like to revisit this and asked that the discussion be scheduled. It would  
127 be sometime in mid to late March, possibly April.  
128

129 **Bid Opening-2024 Soil Stabilizer-PW Shasta Stidman**

130 Engineering Technician Shasta Stidman  
131

132 The Deputy Clerk of the Board submitted the two bid's that had been received, and were kept sealed  
133 and closed until being presented to the Chairman. One bid was from "EnviroTech Services, LLC",  
134 received at 11:15 am, February 15<sup>th</sup>.  
135

136 The other bid was from "GMCO Corporation", received at 11:58 am, February 15<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner  
137 Neal opened GMCO's bid first, bid bond was there, proposals were there, certifications were there,  
138 the non-collusion declaration was not found. Contract amount listed at \$239,972.32.  
139

140 EnviroTech Services, LLC was opened next, proposal was there, non-collusion declaration was there,  
141 all certifications were there. The bid is for Magnesium Chloride, \$288,549.96, the other was for a Dura-  
142 blend for \$268,300.84. GMCO did not have their non-collusion declaration, and Ms. Stidman would  
143 work with them to retrieve that.  
144

145 **Bid Opening-2024 Liquid Asphalt-PW Shasta Stidman**

146 Engineering Technician Shasta Stidman  
147

148 The Deputy Clerk of the Board Submitted the two bid's that had been received, and we kept sealed  
149 and closed until being presented to the Chairman.  
150

151 The first bid opened was from Idaho Asphalt, all certifications were there, total bid amount was  
152 \$1,411,500.00.  
153

154 The next bid opened was from "Ergon Asphalt & Emulsions". All certifications were there, bid amount  
155 of \$1,264,822.04.  
156  
157  
158  
159

160 **Update-Public Works-Engineer Josh Thomson**  
161 Public Works Engineer Josh Thomson, Solid Waste Director Kent Kovalenko

162  
163 Mr. Kovalenko discussed Legislative and House bills last week, the recycling bill died. The bottle bill  
164 would put a 10-cent deposit on plastic bottles, charged to the consumer. The grant they are currently  
165 doing, would contribute to moving \$115 million dollars into Okanogan county. Mr. Kovalenko discussed  
166 the EPA making changes to Air Quality Index limits. He expects this would cause burn bans depending  
167 on certain times of year, and would essentially end up prohibiting wood burning stoves if you had  
168 electric heat available. The EPA is looking into doing wood stove exchanges to get people EPA  
169 certified stoves. There is huge potential issues with moving to all electric heat because in Okanogan  
170 County we are already at a point of over usage of power, so if people moved to all electric heating we  
171 would be in a critical place for energy usage and could potentially cause catastrophic issues with the  
172 power grid. Mr. Kovalenko stated he could see this banning outdoor burning more than wood stoves.  
173 Good burning practices could help the air quality index significantly. The grant solid waste is working  
174 on would allow people to bring yard waste with no cost and the EPA would eat the cost of the disposal.  
175 He feels we need to get factual numbers that fairly and accurately track the air quality index.  
176

177 Mr. Thomson went next, maintenance and road conditions, it looks like we are getting the second  
178 freeze thaw cycle, and there is a lot of roads that are frozen over again, and there is not much rain in  
179 the future forecast. Annually, they have to have a new ER&R rates approved by the BOCC, and will  
180 be on the consent agenda. The CRAB road levy certification, needs to be approved and moved by the  
181 BOCC for 2024.  
182

183 **Motion-Approve 2024 Road Levy Certification for CRAB, and authorize the Chair to Sign**  
184 Moved to approve the 2024 Road Levy Certification and to authorize the Chair to sign the 2024 road  
185 levy certification for CRAB, motion seconded, all in favor. Motion carried.  
186

187 Public Works has two positions that people are retiring from, and they need to have those positions  
188 advertised so they can hopefully overlap those positions to get training done for the new hires.  
189

190 The Cameron Lake Road Project is still open, and he was invited to go to a meeting tonight at the  
191 Tribal Agency and he will update the BOCC on the meeting. The road is shifting where people are  
192 getting some of their property back and people are being paid fair market value any land that has to  
193 be bought for the project. The project has to be done this year and the funding cannot be extended  
194 any farther. The HB for traffic safety cameras is still alive. The Apprenticeship utilization requirement  
195 bill died as well last week. The small engine bill also died.  
196

197 The Board recessed for lunch from 11:56 am to 1:30 pm.  
198

199 **Approve Meeting Minutes February 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

200 The Board did not have time to fully review or approve meeting minutes. There were various small  
201 changes made but they would have to complete those next week.  
202

203 **Commissioners to set Wednesdays Agenda if Necessary**

204 No meeting needed to be set for Wednesday.  
205

206 **Update-Central Services-Karen Beatty**

207 Central Services Director Karen Beatty  
208

209 Ms. Beatty researched equipment for virtual attendance for the Courts but bids will take a few more  
210 weeks to create. The company she's contacted has experience setting up the systems for courts. The  
211 company that did the setup for the Sherriff's office is the same company she is working with to do the  
212 court virtual setup. The Core Switch has been installed. She hired a new person for the vacant position  
213 in their office. The new virtual meeting setup in the Commissioners Conference room was discussed.  
214 Commissioners discussed a staff-controlled camera cart for the hearing room.  
215

216 **Discussion-Opioid Settlement Options-Esther Milner**

217 Chief Civil Deputy Esther Milner  
218

219 Ms. Milner discussed the fact that she had been looking into the “Endo International” company, that was a  
220 part of the opioid bankruptcy plan, whether we vote in favor of the plan or not we don’t get anything. The  
221 state of Washington may receive money but local governments will not. Endo International was a part of  
222 the Opioid crisis bankruptcy suits that were going on. She was sent a spreadsheet and we are slated to  
223 receive \$260,000 for opioid suits from Walgreens, Walmart, and various other companies.  
224

225 Ms. Milner discussed a draft of an agreement between Chelan County and Carelon that was sent out after  
226 a meeting in Chelan County Friday. Also, an agreement between Okanogan and Chelan County is needed  
227 in order for the County to pay its portion of the SIM Mapping that was done by “Connections” for \$75,000.  
228 Commissioners discussed how the County might pay it from the Opioid fund, as its purpose is to map the  
229 various agencies amongst multiple counties to help manage the opioid crisis.  
230

231 **Discussion-WSU 4-H Program Update-Kayla Wells-Yoakum**

232 Kayla Wells-Yoakum Okanogan County WSU Extension Director, Angela Shepard Master Gardener  
233 Coordinator, Roy Keison 4-H Program Director  
234

235 Ms. Wells-Yoakum provide a 4-H update and follow up about virtual participation. She discussed the  
236 program since 2015 and how the program has grown, for all aspects of the 4-H clubs, volunteers and  
237 increased number of youths. They have an anticipated 2 more clubs to be added by the end of the year.  
238 Family clubs are clubs that consist of a household, parents and their children, not people involved from  
239 outside of each household. Commissioner Branch noted that in general, nationwide it seems that volunteer  
240 participation has dropped, not just for 4-H. Mr. Keison feels it’s very important to have in person involvement  
241 for 4-H instead of virtual participation. Commissioner Hover believes it is important to have both virtual and  
242 in person options for youth. It is allowed for people to attend virtually, but in the opinion of the WSU  
243 Extension, it reduces the value of the experience and education for the youth that join virtually. Is there any  
244 possibility with the 4-H clubs going regional? They had a regional 4-H person in Okanogan County in 2016  
245 and 2017, it was Okanogan, Douglas, Chelan, and Grant, but that person changed their region and so it  
246 was canceled. It would take a lot of cooperation between various County Commissioners, and the  
247 Commissioners feel that is more than manageable as they are always open to talk and work with other  
248 County Commissioners. They just want the extension to stay relevant in Okanogan County. WSU Extension  
249 is spearheading the “4-H needs you” campaign in Okanogan County to highlight how beneficial it can be  
250 for the person individually, but helps the 4-H club in general. They don’t have a problem finding youth that  
251 wants to be involved it’s a problem with adult volunteers, which are needed to maintain the clubs. There  
252 has been a 5-year hiring freeze for WSU, and the regional specialist that exists for Chelan and Douglas  
253 was hired 7 years ago and that position just never made it into the North-North-East Washington State.  
254 There needs to be more funding put into Extension, especially in the Counties that are major agriculture  
255 producers. The regional 4-H position is currently a position completely funded by WSU itself.  
256 Commissioners felt that since the position is funded by WSU entirely, they essentially decided that  
257 Okanogan County was not important enough to continue funding. What they need is an adult volunteer who  
258 is trusted and well rooted in the County. There are Federal 4-H standards that were not met within the  
259 County for a long time and are now being enforced and that’s something that many people haven’t liked.  
260 Commissioners suggested inviting WSU extension higherups to try to garner more support for a regional  
261 coordinator. By February 2025 there will be a training available for the Master Gardeners program, and in  
262 2 years the Master Gardeners has gone from 8 to 13 members. The BOCC would like the WSU extension  
263 to put together a job description, half time FTE or full time FTE, whatever is needed, and come back and  
264 present that to the BOCC at a later date. Commissioner Branch noted that there is some governance being  
265 taught in 4-H that is not being taught in schools anymore and it’s highly valuable for these kids.  
266

267 Commissioners discussed having the Clerk of the Board draft a resolution outlining the reasoning and  
268 situation behind waiving the \$1,500 fee for Sunrise Auto. They would follow up with the Clerk to figure that  
269 out.  
270  
271

272 **Motion-Approve Consent Agenda**  
273 Commissioner Hover moved to approve items 1-5 on the consent agenda, motion seconded, all in  
274 favor, motion carried.  
275 1. Letter of Introduction & Agreement-County Video Tour-CGI Communications  
276 2. 2024 LTAC Contract-Operations-24-004 City of Pateros  
277 3. Lease Agreement-Scanner/Printer for Commissioners Office-Xerox  
278 4. Resolution 26-2024-Adopting Modifications to the Okanogan County Safety Manual  
279 5. Resolution 27-2024-Amend Resolution 13-2020 and 54-2020 Definitions  
280  
281 **Motion-Approve Vouchers**  
282 Commissioner Hover moved to approve all vouchers, motion seconded, all in favor, motion carried.  
283  
284 **Update-Human Resources/Risk Management-Shelley Keitzman**  
285 Risk Manager Shelley Keitzman  
286  
287 Ms. Keitzman had submitted a resolution to the Deputy Clerk to create a new position at the Fairgrounds  
288 office, an Administrative Clerk, as the office desperately needs another full-time position to better serve the  
289 public. The current administrative secretary for the Fairgrounds is going to need some time off, and they  
290 need someone to get trained to fill that position. They would start at Grade 12 on the non-bargaining scale.  
291  
292 She then discussed the local records grant that she and Mr. Burnette have been working on. They've  
293 identified the main issue that can be addressed this year, which is the organizing and shelving option for  
294 records storage in the Virginia Grainger building. Commissioners were in full support of that.  
295  
296 **Motion-Authorize Risk Manager to Apply for the Local Records Grant**  
297 Commissioner Branch moved to authorize Shelley Keitzman to apply for the "Organizing the Records  
298 Room" grant application through the Department of Commerce, motion seconded, all in favor, motion  
299 carried.  
300  
301 **Motion-Approve Resolution 28-2024-Creating a Full-Time Clerk Position at Fairgrounds Office**  
302 Commissioner Hover moved to approve resolution 28-2024 adding a full-time clerk position at the  
303 Fairgrounds office at Grade 12 on the non-bargaining scale, motion seconded, all in favor, motion carried.  
304  
305 The board adjourned at 4:10 p.m.