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RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OKANOGAN COUNTY

FEBRUARY 5, 2024

9:00 AM Review Commissioners Agenda and Consent Agenda

9:15 AM Public Comment Period

9:30 AM Commissioners Staff Meeting

10:30 AM Discussion-Douglas County Job Description-Commissioners w/ Raven Aae

11:00 AM Briefing Among Commissioner-Discuss Individual Weekly Meetings and Schedules

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

Commissioner Hover arrived at 9:17 a.m. after a TRANGO meeting.

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

Member of the public, "Observer", and Isabelle Spohn attended the meeting via zoom.

Review Commissioners Agenda and Consent Agenda

Commissioners reviewed their Agenda and Consent Agenda, and discussed their weekends, Commissioner Branch had spent the latter part of last week at Legislative Steering Committee Meetings.

Public Comment Period

"Observer", Isabelle Spohn Via Zoom, Melvin Tibbets,

Commissioner Neal opened the public comment period, and asked Mr. Tibbets if he had comment. He has a restraint in Tonasket, he stated the City put a warrant out for his arrest for "building without a permit", he stated the Tonasket Building inspector was very aggressive with him about building a staircase that had been, and has supposedly been verbally berated by a Sheriff's Officer. He also has a Backhoe he rented to another person, he asked for a Sheriff's Deputy to come with him to help him to get it back, and they told him "we cannot do that", he was told he has to go to District Court for them to issue a warrant for them to stand by with him to get it back. Commissioner Hover asked if this was a complaint against the Sheriff, he stated yes it was. He has talked to Kathy Rodgers about this issue many times he says. He had four appointments with the Sheriff and the Sheriff did not show up any of them. Emily Sisson had a comment, she likes that they changed the camera, but they cannot see the clock, because in their minutes, they like to note the time that comments were made, so if we could please move the clock or get a new one in a place where the camera can see it. Next, they asked Ms. Harris, she said that if the clock was above the fire extinguisher it would work well. Next, they asked Ms. Spohn, she said she would call in tomorrow, about Kretz's email about lobbying that is going on, and she feels it would be very appropriate if he could visit, as there are many people that have an issue with the some of the lobbying. They asked "Observer" if they had any comments, they did not.

53 **Commissioners Staff Meeting**

54 Maurice Goodall Emergency Manager, Pete Palmer Planning Director, Charles Ford Fairgrounds
55 Manager

56

57 Community Wildfire protection plan update meeting happened, it wasn't a Community meeting, it was
58 a meeting for the stake holders to make changes. They had a survey go out, this meeting was only for
59 the cooperating agencies to work on a plan, and there will be seven meetings coming up that will be
60 public. Nothing was put in place, it was just a discussion. Commissioner Branch made a note that
61 meetings noted in the lower section of the agenda are not always public meetings, they are to show
62 that the room is reserved that day. The water system up north did open up, the other well is going,
63 and they had an emergency approval for the well to be used as drinking water temporarily as well. The
64 water issue in Riverside has been repaired. Commissioner Hover asked about the "Sun Dance" plat,
65 water issue, and it had been rectified as well. He also clarified that the County does not own or manage
66 any public water systems other than the Fairgrounds, only a septic system. Mr. Goodall explained that
67 if his office sees an issue going on in the County, they talk with the agencies involved, and gives ideas,
68 but does not solve those issues directly most of the time. Most roads in the County have a weight
69 restriction due to the high amount of rainfall affecting the quality of many roads, making them very
70 muddy and soft.

71

72 Pete Palmer was next, she was only checking in this morning to see if the Commissioners had anything
73 for her, as she did not have any updates. Commissioner Hover asked if the Planning Commission was
74 having a meeting on the 26th at 6:00 PM for code revisions, she confirmed that yes, they are.

75

76 Charles Ford next, the maintenance worked on the Agri-plex all month of January, and it looks very
77 good. Commissioner Hover commented that last year for Fair, for the Fair Fund, the FAC approved
78 the Okanogan High School Girls Basketball team to help with parking for fair, there was no contract
79 written, the approval was for the same amount of money as the previous year, somewhere around
80 \$3,500, but because there was no contract written, the payment was never remitted to the school. It
81 was supposed to go to the Okanogan Booster Club, and labeled to the Okanogan Girls Highschool
82 Basketball Team, the payment will need to be made retroactively, and they will talk to Cari Hall to see
83 how to address this, probably a resolution explaining the situation and approving payment for them,
84 possibly with a Budget Supplemental if needed. Commissioner Hover asked Mr. Ford to help solve
85 that issue.

86

87 Mr. Ford contacted Grant County, and is just waiting on a word back to attend the quest training for
88 water systems, and he is slowly working on the Well issues, he will be gone starting Thursday, for two
89 weeks for the last portion of his previous work he had agreed to. He also stated that there is issues
90 between his position and the FAC that need to be addressed before anything blows up, and he would
91 like to have an executive session at some point to address these issues. It was recommended that
92 Commissioner Neal have a discussion with Mr. Ford about this issue ahead of time to see if there is
93 anything that would need to be discussed in an Executive Session. More than anything there needs
94 to be guardrails put up to keep everyone doing their work, and not crossing lines into other jobs or
95 positions. Commissioner Hover stated there are a lot of requirements for the County to manage the
96 Fair and it complicates things, it is a lot of bureaucratic hoops to jump through, and even if it was done
97 in the past it was not necessarily done right. Commissioner Branch stated he will not be in the way at
98 all and directed Mr. Ford to have discussions with Commissioner Neal to help work out a lot of these
99 issues, they trust Commissioner Neal's judgement, Commissioner Hover agreed with Commissioner
100 Branch. There is two events coming up, at the Fairgrounds, but the March event may not happen, and
101 Mr. Ford is working with the individual to see how that all works out. They really need to work this out
102 to get the RV Show in the Fairgrounds, as this is a big event for the County and generates sales tax
103 revenue for the county, and the County does not have a lot of that coming in so it is a big deal, whatever
104 needs to be done to entice someone else to move their event they would like to explore that. The
105 Commissioners would be open to giving a discount or something like that to help persuade one of the

106 event holders to move their event to help accommodate the Sunrise RV Show. Commissioners agreed
107 that Mr. Ford should have contact with the Prosecutor's Office to help him understand legal options
108 for legal issues in the future.

109

110 **Discussion-Douglas County Job Description-Commissioners w/ Raven Aae**

111 Ms. Aae had sent attachments to the Commissioners regarding the "County Executive" position, and
112 she had done a lot of research about the various positions and she had created a compare and
113 contrast for the various positions. She also stated she is not interested in this position, and is only
114 advocating for the position within the County. She is hoping the County can see her as a Citizen
115 Partner to help provide professional input about this position. In the review of the positions, they all
116 seem to cover personnel management, public and personal relationship skills, and managing
117 confidential information. The role could play a position in the county in a way that, in some of the
118 descriptions it is included as the Public Information position, but she doesn't feel that is appropriate
119 given the other tasks. They would help obtain and manage grants regarding public housing, low
120 income, homeless housing etc. The County "Administrator" is often used to manage human resources
121 issues with Elected Officials. She asked if it would be a position that could be helpful to the
122 Commissioners and the County, Commissioner Hover stated he tried to look at the RCW's and is trying
123 to understand the correlation of the "oversight" of elected officials, and it is written in the WA State
124 Constitution that they were set up independently from each other, and through the years the
125 appointment of Sheriff's in Charter Counties. A County administrator would be a very helpful position,
126 and could help manage projects that are a burden on other departments. Commissioner Hover wanted
127 to understand how such a position would work. He asked what position she thought would have
128 oversight of elected officials.

129

130 The administrative officer Ms. Aae feels would be the best option for our County. She is not saying
131 that the position would carry out internal investigative issues within the County, but this person could
132 pass along issues to the WSP to do the investigation, they would be the project manager for those
133 issues. This person could "coordinate with other elected officials to direct the enforcement of
134 complaints to elected bodies". They would essentially be a central recipient of complaints, and without
135 bias, pass those complaints along to HR as needed. Commissioner Branch stated he has done a lot
136 of research about this position, and he was at a WSAC conference, and had an interview with multiple
137 county administrators, and he asked if it was more efficient in counties with that position, and they felt
138 that there are efficiencies to be gained by this position and they couldn't see how many counties
139 function without a county administrator. He stated he would not like to use the executive position as
140 it's often an elected position, almost like a mayor of a city, and oversees the everyday business of the
141 County Government. He stated the County Administrator could facilitate the Commissioners
142 discussions if that position was done correctly. To achieve anything, you need someone with longevity,
143 that could help the ever-changing Commissioners keep up with adequate training, in a lot of ways the
144 Commissioners babysitters, and he appreciates her bringing this issue up, as it's something he would
145 like to figure out to ensure that after he retires that the local government continues to function well long
146 into the future. Ms. Aae also stated she talked with a couple people that would be well qualified for this
147 position in this to see if this was interesting for people that are qualified, and she feels there is someone
148 who is interested and adequately qualified to fill this position. Politics often get in the way of efficiency.
149 She spoke with our Congressmen, and he stated he could help with the funding aspect if that it is an
150 issue. Commissioner Hover made the point that they very much do care about the issue that Ms. Aae
151 has brought up, and that the Administrator Officer could very much help with issues like this, and he
152 did research on what options people with this issue can do, and he found that someone could involve
153 the Department of Justice, but it doesn't give a clear path of what can be done. Commissioner Branch
154 stated that the education of elections to the public is very lacking, in schools and in the public in
155 general. Ms. Aae stated that waiting for an elections cycle to come back around is not an immediate
156 enough solution for something as urgent as her issue. She also mentioned that she is more than happy
157 to offer her services to making this position available, whether it's writing job descriptions or something
158 else to help facilitate the creation of this device. Having an administrator would help with the continuity

159 of government, and the job would be well worth it for the county to aid in that and many other aspects.
160 Commissioner Hover is concerned that this position, would not be able to handle issues such as Ms.
161 Aae's, with holding elected officials accountable to the complaints that are made against them, but he
162 very much cares about this issue and wants someone to be able to facilitate solutions and
163 accountability for issues such as this. Commissioner Branch proposed to Commissioner Neal, to move
164 to the in-prompt to executive session with Ms. Milner and he would like to have this conversation
165 continued as it's an important discussion, so they would like the Clerk of the Board to set another day
166 for this continuation of discussion.

167
168 **Motion-Executive Session RCW 42.30.110(1)(I) Legal Risk of a Proposed Action/ Litigation/**
169 **Potential Litigation**

170 Commissioner Branch moved to go into executive session under RCW 42.30.110(1)(i) for legal risk of
171 a proposed action, litigation or potential litigation, inviting Chief Civil Deputy Esther Milner for 20
172 minutes, motion seconded, all in favor, motion carried to go into executive session from 11:13 a.m –
173 11:33 a.m.

174
175 **Briefing Among Commissioner-Discuss Individual Weekly Meetings and Schedules**

176 Commissioner Hover mentioned that he will be gone tomorrow. They also discussed tomorrow's
177 meeting with Zack Kennedy about legislative updates, and the round table discussion with the finance
178 committee.

179
180 Commissioner Hover mentioned he would like to examine some funding sources for the homeless
181 housing infrastructure funding.

182
183 Commissioner Neal mentioned that orchardists have been hit hard, apples and cherries have
184 been struggling. They were curious if there is any way to declare an emergency regarding them
185 to help the orchardists receive funding from the state. Commissioner Hover stated he isn't
186 opposed to it; Commissioner Neal was just curious if it would actually have any bearing or help
187 them in any way. Commissioner Hover recommended he go down to the FSA office and see what
188 programs are available for crop growers, and ask is there anything the Commissioners can do to
189 help them get the assistance they need.

190
191 Commissioners unanimously moved to adjourn until 9:00 a.m. tomorrow.

192
193 The board adjourned at 11:54 a.m.