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RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OKANOGAN COUNTY

JANURARY 8, 2024

- 9:00 AM Review Commissioners Agenda and Consent Agenda**
 - 9:05 AM Review Meeting Minutes January 2nd, 2024**
 - 9:15 AM Public Comment Period**
 - 9:30 AM Commissioners Staff Meeting**
 - 10:30 AM Discussion-Elections Processing Room Project-Auditor Cari Hall**
 - 11:00 AM Staff Update-Clerk of the Board**
 - 11:30 AM Executive Session-RCW 42.30.110(1)(i)-Prosecutor Lin & Esther Milner**
 - 12:00 PM Briefing Among Commissioners-Discuss Individual Weekly Meetings & Schedule**
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The Okanogan County Board of Commissioners met for a regular meeting at 123 5th Avenue North, Okanogan, Washington on January 8, 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 Commissioners Agenda and Consent Agenda

Commissioners reviewed their Agenda and Consent Agenda for the week. Commissioner Hover discussed thoughts he had about the Sherriff's budget and how to manage it. We need to figure out how much it costs to fund the two EMS districts 24hrs a day 365 days a year. All the Fire Districts also have projects they need done. The only way Commissioner Hover can see giving the full budget to the Sherriff's would be to increase the sales tax or cut funding from other departments or services, which will in turn hurt the public side of any services. Chairman Neal asked would this be similar to the Public Safety Tax that Omak has? Commissioner Hover stated yes exactly and there are many cities and counties that impose such tax to better fund public safety. Commissioner Branch stated that he would be willing to submit whatever the public agrees to as a reasonable number, whether its .3 or .1, something would be better than nothing. Commissioner Neal stated that for the Oroville Rural EMS District it was roughly around 1 Million Dollars a year for 24/7 coverage. Commissioner Neal noted that the increasing wages cause the funding of other departments and services harder to work into budgets, as cost of living is so much higher.

Review Meeting Minutes January 2nd, 2024

Commissioners did not have time to review meeting minutes.

Public Comment Period

Commissioner opened up public comment to the public. Raven Aae & Emily Sisson attended via zoom, Raven Aae, January is "National Stalking Awareness Month", 1 in 3 women have been stalked at one point in their lives, stalking is a serious crime and is usually a precursor to more heinous crimes. Ms. Aae and her daughter have been stalked by a man, and her daughter, she quoted Under Sheriff Yarnell, "Just wait until he finds another victim" Ms. Aae then said "which is horribly wrong". She stated that she was raised by a former law enforcement, WSP officer, and she feels that our County does not hold the Sheriff's office accountable. She is very well versed in criminal justice, and has communicated with many state and federal agencies regarding this issue, and she wants Okanogan County to find the budget to instill a new system to hold the Sheriff's office accountable outside of the office itself, an independent system to manage complaints to the Sheriff's office, and she wants the Commissioners to discuss directly to Sheriff Budrow about his lack of protecting Women and Children within Okanogan County. She had her legal protective order dismissed by the Courts which puts her more at risk. Ms. Aae feels we need to make the

55 County a place that is inhospitable for stalkers. She wants the older officers to be reeducated and learn
56 the importance of stalking and put these types of offenders in jail. Commissioner Hover stated that any
57 complaints about elected officials should be sent to the HR Director, which they had not. The complaints
58 Ms. Aae sent only seemed to go to the Sherriff's office not anyone else. There are only a couple different
59 ways, specifically at the ballot box, but there are instances where the elected official can be recalled.
60 Commissioner Branch asked if Ms. Aae had gone to the support center, she stated yes but now they are
61 telling her she knows more than they do and they cannot help her anymore. Ms. Aae has stated that her
62 life has been slightly destroyed by this situation, and she will have to continue to pour herself into this
63 issue and all she wants is to have this man put behind bars.
64

65 Isabelle Spohn commented next, and stated she thanks Ms. Aae for her comments and bravery. Ms.
66 Spohn also had an email this morning regarding who she believes is the same exact stalker that Ms. Aae
67 has talked about and this needs to be taken seriously. She then stated that Commissioner Branch is
68 listed as the point of contact for a Public Hearing Coming up regarding Planning, and she would like a
69 call back from Commissioner Branch. Commissioner Neal stated that the comment period has been
70 extended and will now end February 12th, and for the SEPA January 11th, and the Chairmanship changed
71 and Commissioner Neal is the new point of contact. Emily Sisson commented next, she stated that Ms.
72 Aae's proposal to independently hold the Sherriff's Office accountable is the most reasonable.
73

74 **Commissioners Staff Meeting**

75 Emergency Manager Maurice Goodall, Planning Director Pete Palmer, Maintenance Manager Tim
76 Meadows

77 Maurice Goodall stated that EM has been very quiet. The EM sent out a notice of Community Wildfire
78 Protection Plan update in coordination with the Conservation District. Also, there will be an Emergency
79 Services Test going over everyone in the Counties TV and Radio systems later today, so be on the
80 lookout for that. Commissioner Hover asked if it works over "XM Radio". Mr. Goodall stated he is not sure
81 and will look into it.
82

83 Tim Meadows went next, he stated that the "Work Wear Allowance" Resolution should include the
84 Janitors, because they are apart of the maintenance department and get bleach and other chemicals on
85 their clothes, and have to remove snow when it's there also. Commissioner Branch stated that they are
86 in fact a part of the maintenance department and they should be included in that, so it would just require
87 an amendment, but Commissioner Hover stated that they do fall under the "Maintenance" umbrella, and
88 that should be clear enough to include them in the "Work Wear Allowance" Resolution, #79-2021.
89 Commissioners stated that would be like an "Organizational" chart put into place for the Maintenance
90 Department at least, but for the whole of the Commissioners Office as well.
91

92 The Commissioners stated and agreed unanimously, that the Custodians are in fact included under the
93 Maintenance Department.
94

95 Mr. Meadows stated that Ms. Hall the county Auditor, would like to have licensing moved, so that there
96 is no more transfer of ballots and they could all stay within one location. Mr. Meadows stated that they
97 will be changing the codes on the vaults in the Auditors office so they can use that as a secure place for
98 ballots, and prevent the transferring of them. On the 22nd of this month there is new parking lot lights
99 going in the lower courthouse parking lot, they will be LED, so much brighter and more efficient. There
100 are 13 lights down at the forest services building, and 6 of them are strobing, so they need to be replaced
101 as well, and they have an integrated photocell and when that burns out they are done for good. So, for
102 the new lights he would like to make sure that there is a separate photocell for them, so the pieces that
103 burn out could be replaced independently and more cost effectively.

104 Pete Palmer went next with her update. She has a tidbit of information for Ms. Spohn's comment, all the
105 documents are readily available on the planning department website, so they are all publicly available.
106 Commissioner Branch had no direct emails asking for his input or response, just general staff emails that
107 were being handled by staff in the Planning Department, so he saw it was being taken care of, and there

108 was no direct email to him asking for response/comment. The Lake Management district votes came in,
109 and was a 70/30 vote in favor of reinstating the Lake Management District #1 for the Osoyoos Lake Milfoil
110 management. There was an error on the assessment rolls for 2024 from the treasurer's department, and
111 Ms. Palmer has that ready to present to the Commissioner on January 22nd.
112

113 **Motion 2024-01 Recreating the Lake Management District #1**

114 Commissioner Branch moved to approve Ordinance 2024-01, to recreate the Lake Management District
115 #1, Commissioner Hover seconded, motion passed unanimously.
116

117 Ms. Palmer then covered a letter to be sent to the LCB regarding license renewals, stating that the County
118 does not approve the renewals of three different Cannabis licenses because they are out of compliance
119 with local laws and regulations.
120

121 **Motion**

122 Commissioner Branch moved to approve the letter to be sent to the LCB and recommending denial of
123 the attached licenses, Commissioner Hover seconded, motion carried unanimously to send the letter to
124 the LCB.
125

126 Ms. Palmer followed with a request for \$47,000 to add funding for the VSP contract services.
127 Commissioner Hover moved to approve the Formal Amendment #1 K2-421 VSP between Okanogan
128 County and the WA State Conservation commission, to increase the budget by \$47,000, and authorizing
129 the chair to sign, all were in favor, motion carried with an edit on the amendment rewording "changing"
130 to "increasing", regarding the \$47,000 being added.
131

132 **Executive Session-42.30.110.1(g)-Performance of a Public Employee**

133 Commissioner Hover moved to go into executive session at 10:14 for 10 minutes, inviting Pete Palmer
134 and Shelly Keitzman. Motion seconded, and unanimously carried.

135 Commissioners entered executive session for 10 minutes from 10:14 A.M – 10:24 A.M.

136 Commissioner Hover moved to go back into executive session for 10 more minutes under the same
137 category, inviting Pete Palmer and Shelly Keitzman. From 10:24 A.M - 10:34 A.M.
138

139 **Discussion-Elections Processing Room Project-Auditor Cari Hall**

140 Auditor Cari Hall and Chief Deputy Auditor Jamie Grooms

141 Ms. Hall opened up explaining she just wanted to update the Commissioners on the elections room. Their
142 processing area has been cut in half so their workspace is very small now, they want to keep the room
143 for the signature checkers, and the other for the rest of the processing. She wanted to know if the board
144 was okay moving forward with that, and they have 3 elections they are doing at the same time back to
145 back. Commissioner Hover asked is it the glass not being in that causes the issues, what would have
146 made it so that it didn't have to be split up. Ms. Hall said if licensing had been moved to the other room
147 then they wouldn't have to separate it. Ms. Hall also stated they have someone coming to change the
148 code on the vaults because everyone seems to know it. They would like to move forward with the
149 temporary election's setup, because by this time next year the licensing should be moved to the other
150 room down the hall. They will monitor how these elections go, and if it works out well with this temporary
151 setup, then they would contemplate not moving licensing and keeping the setup how it is for elections,
152 but she feels that it would probably make more sense for licensing to be moved. Ms. Hall also clarified
153 that she would like to have cameras in the elections room, and it is not a mandatory thing, it is completely
154 voluntary to help with transparency for elections in the county.
155

156 **Staff Update-Clerk of the Board Laleña Johns**

157 Clerk of the Board Laleña Johns

158 Ms. Johns stated she in preparing agreements for LTAC awardees, and one of the contracts that she
159 needs direction on is the DMO contract. It was signed 2022 for 2022-2024, with an amendment #1 for
160 2023. Does the board wish to do the same and approve amendment #2 for 2024? Does the board want

161 language in the amendment stating the DMO has to meet QUARTERLY with the Okanogan County
162 VIC's? Commissioner Branch asked are the VIC's in agreement that they would like to meet quarterly,
163 Commissioner Neal stated he would hope so. Ms. Johns stated she has talked with two VIC's, Omak VIC
164 and the Borderlands, and they would both like help from the DMO on best ways to market and promote
165 the county. Right now, the DMO's scope of work states "annually" but our draft amendment stated
166 quarterly. Commissioner Hover and Neal stated that they believe OCTC should be meeting with the VIC's
167 quarterly. Ms. Johns stated we do two workshops to help LTAC applicants fill out their applications, and
168 answer questions, so that isn't what the DMO helps them with. Commissioner Hover stated that his
169 understanding of the DMO is that they help all other agencies within the county, specifically VIC's, to
170 promote and market tourism in the county. Ms. Johns asked where does the Destination Marketing Plan
171 come into play with OCTC as the DMO for the county, and how is the plan to be used, what is its function?
172 Commissioner Hover stated the LTAC members have discussed OCTC's marketing and the needed
173 balance of marketing between the Methow and North county areas. Ms. Johns stated they have made
174 steps to market more in the North County area. Commissioner Neal and Hover reiterated that they feel
175 that OCTC needs to be meeting with the VIC's quarterly. Commissioner Branch stated he does not have
176 the knowledge of LTAC and the DMP that he does not have an opinion on it, as its been too long since
177 he was involved with LTAC. HOWEVER, he did note that having served on the Tourism Advisory Board
178 in the past he knew about VICs feeling that the Methow was where most of the attention was placed. He
179 noted that the discussion always turned to the fact that the Methow Valley generated most of the funds.
180 He said he often argued on behalf of the rest of the county for marketing attention. He also noted that
181 he had been heavily involved in Tourism promotion for many years especially in the North County. He
182 said that experienced professionals that he'd worked with always noted the importance of product
183 development i.e., ensuring you have a well-developed tourism product to market.

184
185 Ms. Johns went on to say that we have a resolution that created the LTAC committee in accordance with
186 RCW 67.28. The last amendment adopted definitions for the at large members to represent Tourism in
187 the County as a whole. She said we must have an equal number of collectors (overnight
188 rentals/accommodations) and receivers (receivers of county lodging tax), but right now the definition for
189 Tourism Representative includes "accommodation" and Ms. Johns feel's that word should be removed
190 from the definition, because it causes the LTAC an unbalanced number of collectors and receivers. It
191 should be worded in more of a way that the representative be someone who is involved with tourism
192 activities in the county like skiing, trail hiking, rodeo, bird watching, etc... Commissioners asked that Ms.
193 Johns draft an amendment resolution to include the changes to remove the word "accommodation".
194 Commissioner Hover stated for the At Large Positions it needs to state clearly that they cannot own or
195 work for an establishment that collects or receives lodging tax funds.

196
197 We have a special occasion liquor license notice for an event going on at the Fair Grounds, and it included
198 language stating that they would be selling liquor for "off premises consumption". The Commissioners
199 stated they do not agree with that, and they would like to deny that part and request clarification from the
200 agency holding the event.

201
202 The next item was regarding the Loomis Fire District Fire #10. The county had gotten a planning only
203 grant to fund planning and SEPA reviews for a new fire and training center. The timeframe for using those
204 plans is almost coming up. Commissioner Neal stated that he talked to Rob Inlow, the chief for Loomis
205 Fire District, and the biggest issue is they do not have land to place a new fire hall on. Commissioners
206 Neal he will follow up with him to see where they are at with that issue and how to move forward.

207
208 Ms. Johns received a scope of work from Ron Gadeberg with the Okanogan County PUD No.1 for their
209 ARPA grant agreement for broadband that would serve the Conconully area residents for the Broad Band
210

211

212 project, and she has sent that to the Commissioners for their review, and she would like feedback
213 regarding that.

214

215 Ms. Johns then talked about this year's International Municipal Clerks Institute conference that is in
216 Calgary Canada in May, and she would like to attend. Scholarships are available to help pay for the costs.
217 The conference is held around the world annually and this year it is close enough to be able to attend.

218

219 Ms. Johns also has contracts she is working on for Homeless Housing and Affordable Housing Funds.
220 She provided the board with copies of the new RCW's that replace RCW 36.22.178 & 179, regarding the
221 surcharge recording fees the auditor collects, and part of those fees goes into the Homeless & Affordable
222 Housing Funds. She also forwarded the county's annual report that FYRE put together, it was also sent
223 to WestEast Designs CONSULTANT Scott Ackerson, who was awarded the contract for the 5-year
224 Homeless Housing Plan update due to commerce in 2025. The contract with the consultant would be
225 with the county not Housing Coalition. Commissioner Branch wanted to verify that Ms. Johns would be
226 the responsible person to manage the contract, if that were the case. Ms. Johns stated she feels she has
227 a great working relationship with the HC to ensure the work of the contractor is acceptable. Commissioner
228 Hover stated we can charge 10% to cover the administrative costs of Ms. Johns overseeing and
229 managing that grant. for County Administration, thus far we have been charging a percentage for Auditor
230 services.

231

232 **Executive Session-RCW 42.30.110(1)(i)-Prosecutor Lin & Esther Milner**

233 **Prosecutor Albert Lin, and Esther Milner VIA Phone Call**

234 Commissioner Hover moved to go into executive session under RCW 42.30.110(1)(i) for potential
235 litigation involving land decision, inviting outside council's Mendel Rice, Charlene Kovsky, as well as
236 Prosecutor Albert Lin, and Deputy Prosecutor Esther Milner Via Phone call, for 30 minutes, from 11:34
237 A.M – 12:04 P.M. Commissioner Branch seconded, motion carried unanimously.

238 Commissions extended Executive Session 20 more minutes, from 12:01 P.M-12:21 P.M.

239 Commissioners extended Executive Session 20 more minutes from 12:21P.M-12:41P.M.

240

241 **Briefing Among Commissioners-Discuss Individual Weekly Meetings & Schedules**

242 Commissioner Neal stated he has OCOG tonight if anyone had anything for him, the other
243 Commissioners did not.

244 Commissioners exited executive session at 12:31 P.M, and waited to adjourned until 12:41 P.M.

245

246 The board adjourned at 12:41 p.m.