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RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OKANOGAN COUNTY

MARCH 26, 2024

9:00 AM Review Meeting Minutes
9:15 AM Public Comment Period
9:30 AM Discussion-Carelon Behavioral Health-Leah Becknell, Christal Eshelman
11:00 AM Update-Public Works-Engineer Josh Thomson
1:30 PM Bid Opening-Newspaper of Record Bids
2:00 PM Quarterly Department Head Meeting
3:00 PM Approve Commissioners Proceedings
3:10 PM Approve Consent Agenda

The Okanogan County Board of Commissioners met for a regular meeting at 123 5th Avenue North, Okanogan, Washington on March 26, 2024 with Chairman, Commissioner Jon Neal; Vice-Chairman, Commissioner Andy Hover; Member, Commissioner Chris Branch; and the Clerk of the Board, Laleña Johns, present.

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

Review Meeting Minutes

Public Comment Period

Members of the public via zoom, Ruth Hall and Mrs. Jackson present.

Mrs. Jackson asked the BOCC can we make sure the audio is working properly. She asked if that the volume be adjusted or leaders need to speak up when using mic. People would also benefit if the meeting was recorded in zoom making a zoom meeting available, with recording... with the technology, we have these days, it is so very possible to do so...Note: the county pays for and uses AV Capture to video record its meetings. Zoom is not the platform used for managing the county's recordings.

Discussion-Carelon Behavioral Health-Leah Becknell, Christal Eshelman

Prosecutor Albert Lin, Attorney Esther Milner, Dennis Rabidou,

The sign in sheet was circulated for attendees to sign in. Crystal Carelon, Brad WSAC

Leah Becknell, Christal Eshelman Carelon and Brad WSAC. OBHC David McClay

Ms. Becknell shared some background information about Carelon and where the state is going in terms of crisis services. A slide show was presented. (attached) Ms. Becknell explained the slides and went through the information. In Washington for the last 7-years, they do have some shared services and provide crisis services in other states but centrally located in Washington.

Commissioner Hover asked what Carelon's relationship with OBHC is. OBHC is a subcontractor of Carelon. Behavioral Health Administrative Service Organization (BH-ASO) responsibilities were discussed. Maintain the crisis system, behavioral health safety net, and lead community

51 forums and system development. Ms. Becknell explained what Carelon supports and what their
52 main functions are.

53 Brad said there are different regions in the state where Designated Crisis Responder (DCR's) are
54 challenged by regional geographical areas, there are not enough DCR's in the regions to address
55 all the needs. In many counties the behavioral health organization that provides crisis services is
56 under the county and have DCR providers. It is very difficult. OBHC is the agency in Okanogan
57 County that provides crisis services. Commissioner Hover stated Okanogan County had its own
58 mental health program, but now we contract directly with OBHC and the county pays OBHC for
59 some of the crisis services. OBHC then contracts with Carelon to provide. The healthcare
60 authority contracts with Carelon and they ensure delivery of integrated behavioral and medical
61 services. HCA contracts with Carelon and MCOs to deliver integrated managed care.

62
63 Who has oversight over the work product, asked Commissioner Hover. And what happens when
64 the contracted things don't happen. Ms. Becknell explained how these get worked out and are
65 not punitively worked out.

66
67 The group discussed the challenges involved and problems created by certain legislative changes
68 that compound the problems. Defense is unaffordable, prosecutors' have to decide who to
69 prosecute and when

70
71 Commissioner Hover asked about millage money that can be sent back to the state and the state
72 matches the funds, where does that money get put to use at the state level. Ms. Becknell said
73 she is not aware that any local region is sending this money back to the state. Clark County does
74 have an extensive RFP process to decide which programs to support.

75
76 Commissioner Branch discussed a system that serves us better. It is a trust issue and we aren't
77 certain what we are dealing with, those people involved need to be satisfied and people in the
78 community that are engaged, but not everyone is involved in everything but in pieces. If we
79 identified where money is used then we can create accountability and the trust issue can be
80 relieved. Commissioner Branch said many have issues beyond what Okanogan County could
81 comprehend. The issue with \$10,000 per day in Spokane county if they exceeded. In the end we
82 look at it now and ask how does it play on the ground now. We have places to send people. The
83 ITA's happen in Chelan county that we don't know about. Ms. Becknell said we have to work
84 together and address problems together. It is really the only way to make it work is to figure out
85 who is doing what and then work together to make it all happen. Each is on their own unique
86 journey. Commissioner Hover explained RCW 71.20.110 where it says the county can send its
87 millage money to the state. Brad said he thought the county local authority would give its authority
88 away to the state regarding the allocation based on whatever criteria the state sees fit to fund.

89
90 Commissioner Branch said we haven't had the opportunity to look at the model. Ms. Becknell
91 said HB 1477 is WA State Behavioral Health Crisis Response Model. Crisis hot line 988.

92
93 Brad discussed some aspirational thoughts about how the ASO could be flexible in terms of how
94 it gets its money and how it uses the money. If the model allowed the money to be used to meet
95 the needs of a particular area. We should be able to respond without having to think about where
96 the money is coming from.

97
98 Commissioner Hover discussed the challenges involved in filling positions in the jail, sheriff's
99 office and other positions like this, how can we then work with OBHC who decides the person
100 doesn't need to go to jail but somewhere else. Commissioner Branch stated Okanogan County's

101 discussion started with “A place to go” in terms of the core elements of a crisis response system,
102 which are: Someone to talk to, Someone to respond, and A place to go in that order.

103
104 Commissioner Hover asked Mr. McClay to discussed how OBHC decides where a person needs
105 to go and whether it is driven by funding. Three designated DCRs right now and they do have a
106 mobile crisis team that is funding until 2027. We could use another 3-teams to provide 24/7
107 support. The team does go out. Breaking out responses with law enforcement and without law
108 enforcement. DCRs are on call 24/7. The DCRs are addressing in the least restrictive processes,
109 but it is a balance. They do try to respond with law enforcement officers. Crisis response in the
110 areas there are a lot of problems to be worked through to get better. A Superior Court SCOMIS
111 report is provided to OBHC on responses. Quinn said it is more complicated today, he gave an
112 example of an idea that we need more DCRs. The month with the most Involuntary Treatment
113 Assessment (ITAs) was 12. Average is about 6 per month. One ITA everything three days. It isn't
114 as simple as getting more DCRs. When are they needed the most and how do we leverage their
115 time the best. We need to go back to the data to make the best decisions, when are our busiest
116 days and can we staff those? Commissioner Hover said people get conditioned that help is only
117 available during certain times, not when help is needed after hours or on the weekend. Quinn
118 replied that what has changed, OBHC does have staff 24/7 available for calls. Commissioner
119 Hover said obviously we all need to have better communication to discuss our issues in order to
120 find ways to resolve them. Also, there is the point he knows the systems because he has been
121 commissioner for years now and it is still hard for him to navigate the system and then he thinks
122 about someone who doesn't know the system and asks how do they know what to do? Quinn
123 replied the better we know each other the better we can coordinate services for individuals.
124 Commissioner Hover thought food for hungry people coming to OBHC not because they need
125 mental health but because they are hungry and have nowhere to go, couldn't the food come the
126 other agencies that provide food like Community Action Council. A program that draws them off
127 the street, feeds them etc.... and then coordinates them with programs that fit that individual's
128 needs.

129
130 Mr. McClay explained how creativity will be so important to resolving the problems. We need to
131 work together to work these out. Commissioner Hover stated the contract between Okanogan
132 County and OBHC limits the agencies in figuring things out. The county requires a contract in
133 place in order to provide money to OBHC for its services. The current contract needs to be
134 updated. Mr. McClay agreed that transparency is needed on where the funds are being spent.

135
136 **Update-Public Works-Engineer Josh Thomson**
137 Engineer Thomson provided his public works agenda and discussed the items listed there.

138
139 The vaulted toilet for Whistler Canyon estimate was \$50,000 plus annual maintenance. He said
140 a rented portable toilet would cost under \$1000 per year. Commissioner Hover asked why not
141 take the same amount of LTAC money used to improve Methow Trails to improve trails over here.
142 Commissioner Branch said in Loomis a kiosk in Sinlahekin would need to be placed on municipally
143 owned property and asked if there was enough municipally owned public owned right of way that
144 could be spared. Engineer Thomson would look into it where the county road intersection is into
145 Loomis. Commissioner Branch said there may be some county owned land that could be
146 exchanged with someone else for in order to place the kiosk on county owned land. If Fish &
147 Wildlife has property they would be willing to donate to or exchange with the county for the kiosk,
148 that would also be an option.

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152
153 **Motion Certification of Diversion and Road Fund Expenditure for Traffic Law Enforcement**
154 Commissioner Hover moved to approve and authorize the chairman to sign the Certification of
155 Diversion and Road Fund Expenditure for Traffic Law. Motion was seconded, all were in favor,
156 motion carried.

157
158
159 **Motion Certification for Fish Passage Removal Projects**
160 Commissioner Hover moved to approve and authorize the chairman to sign the Certification for
161 Fish Passage Removal Projects. Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

162
163 **Bid Opening-Newspaper of Record Bids**
164 Commissioner Neal opened up the bids received by the March 25 deadline from Sound Publishing
165 the Omak Chronicle for 2024/2025 Newspaper of Record contract. Bid award is April 1.

166
167 Sound Publishing \$5.00 per colmn inch

168
169 Omak Chronicle \$5.50 per column inch

170
171 **Quarterly Department Head Meeting**

172 Member of the public Karen Harris taking notes in person.

173
174 Since vehicle purchases are over the \$50,000 threshold all departments purchasing vehicles will
175 need to go out for a completive bid process unless purchased from the state bid. Stephen Wolak
176 asked if the total cost including outfitting costs be included in the threshold. Commissioner Hover
177 replied that if the pieces to outfit the vehicle are purchased from a different vendor then no, but if
178 they are included with the purchase price then yes.

179
180 ARPA funds used by county departments using county ARPA funds must check for debarred or
181 excluded vendors both federal and state debarments/exclude parties.

182
183 Due to the state law changes it will be difficult to pay for public defense. The county intends on
184 using county ARPA funds to offset the costs of the state required changes.

185
186 Stephen Wolak, Chief Corrections Deputy provided his departmental update. He stated the
187 mental health piece is challenging along with the drug abuse issues and with less staffing. His
188 goal this year is to hound training to the lowest level to get staff trained to the level they are
189 supposed to be and using technological solutions to streamline processes. Working with the tribe
190 on mental health pieces and working with OBHC to set up the rest of the mental health pieces.

191
192 Commissioners gave their update and goals to work together not siloed, but communicating with
193 one another and look forward to objective collaborative effort to run the county.

194
195 Treasurer Johnsons gave her departmental update stating the Tax statements have gone out and
196 receiving tax payments.

197
198 Auditor Hall gave her departmental update. She is just trying to get through the year with the
199 presidential election.

200
201 Sheriff Budrow explained how a \$250,000 grant will help the sheriff's office with some of the
202 mental health and drug abuse challenges and coordination with other agencies. He explained

203 wellness conferences for first responders. Goals are to get full staffing levels back. Wages have
204 been increased to help retain and attract employees along with the incentive programs. Working
205 with Prosecutor's office on who the prosecutor will be able to navigate prosecuting the folks the
206 sheriff brings in.

207
208 Prosecutor Lin stated the Washington State BAR passed the recommended guidelines that the
209 public defender's office was reduced from 150 down to 47. The state Supreme court has not yet
210 adopted. The number of cases per attorney will keep going down. If there are not enough defense
211 attorneys then what can we do? Discretion on how many cases to file will be his discretion.
212 Looking at other types of defenses and what can we do with the manpower we have. Working
213 with Omak PD and getting organized action on retail theft in a number of areas. Main concern is
214 whether or not the number of cases a public defender can handle, we are not yet there but is the
215 trend and will cost. The state is only providing 3% of the cost. He is going to do the best he can
216 to work with law enforcement agencies to mitigate these issues. Commissioner Hover asked if
217 Sheriff picks up a trespass and so the court say they get a public defender, how long do they sit
218 in the jail before it is not a speedy trial. It isn't determined until they are arraigned. We can always
219 find ways to prioritize cases and the prosecutor's office will always look at those in terms of the
220 safety of the community. Evaluate the cases recognizing the value of out of custody review to
221 evaluate and adjust according to schedules in both courts. He doesn't want to do it that way,
222 because the crime victims don't get their day in court as soon as possible.

223
224 County Clerk Susan Speiker, said statistics from 2014 to present and this is the largest case filings
225 in 10 years. Her office is busy dealing with those Type II domestic violence filings. It will be
226 challenging for all. Dept. Heads have worked well together to address these challenges and she
227 is happy about that. Engaged in sparking youth interest in how the court system works. Groups
228 from the high schools are scheduled throughout the year. Her hope is that some of those kids will
229 come back and serve their community in the courts.

230
231 Building Official Dan Higbee said his goal is to manage the new regulations without getting
232 shocked.

233
234 District Court Darla Schreckengast is looking forward to keeping fully staff. They are fully staffed
235 now after holding out for 6-8 months.

236
237 Central Services IT Director Karen Beatty explained a new core switch and backup system has
238 been installed. Hired a new IT person from Ferry County, Ethan. Her goal is to keep the computers
239 going and the network safe.

240
241 County Engineer Josh Thomson provided his departmental goals. There are a lot of roads in really
242 bad shape, so those need to be put back together. The purchasing policy will be getting changed
243 again due to rule changes, still figuring out how to incorporate those. Air quality grant allows
244 vegetation to be brought to the landfill, but cannot have any plastic.

245
246 Assessor Larry Gilman stated he has an open position but its been difficult to find qualified
247 applications. Association is working on changing personal property to a higher exemption, but
248 won't affect us much. The other is the homestead exemption, it has to change many things before
249 its implemented. Uniformity act changes open up income tax issues. It would be about \$700-\$800
250 relief, it is complicated. His goals is to continue working with departments. Seeing a ramp up of
251 volatility in the field, the safety of his staff is a must.

252

253 Fairgrounds Manager Nick Bates gave his update stating what he is observing and doing to
254 update the grounds.

255
256 Maintenance Supervisor Tim Meadows said his goal is to clean up exterior of the courthouse and
257 the VG building. He is getting bids for the front of the courthouse because it is a safety hazard.
258 There are a lot of years of neglect. He has enough guys to make it work.

259
260 Noxious Weed Manager Larry Hudson stated a challenge obtaining weed spray applicators
261 contractors, so his goal and priority is to find creative solutions.

262
263 County Coroner Dave Rodriguez stated a bill passed requiring his office certification levels. It is
264 a big task to accomplish. Work is starting to move north facility to new building. Demolition will
265 start soon. The goal is to have a smooth transition to the new building from the Justice center
266 once the new building is completed.

267
268 Emergency Management Lori Caswell gave a brief update.

269
270 Planning Director Pete Palmer provided an update stating she has been tunneled in on the
271 regulations and trying to address lawsuits. She thanked everyone for helping her. The Planning
272 Dept goal right now it to get through the zone code process. Getting the permit software up and
273 running is another goal. Provide a level of service by competent staff is another goal and carry
274 out the goals and objectives of the BOCC.

275
276 Commissioner Branch stated Pete has put up with a lot and taken a lot of criticism through carrying
277 out the goals of the BOCC. She was commended with applause.

278
279 Commissioner Hover commended everyone in the room for taking on the work of the county and
280 all the heat that comes with it. He appreciated everyone.

281
282 Commissioner Neal thanked everyone for making him feel welcome over the last year or so.

283
284 Sheriff Budrow thinks this year will be high fire alert and he wants to make sure we are all on the
285 same page and set up to respond. He has been coordinating with fire chiefs and all responders
286 to come up with proper protocols for everyone. Commissioner Hover stated the fairgrounds was
287 used for animals and coordination for them needs to take place. He thought a non-profit could be
288 contracted with to handle. Nick Bates stated his prior job experience in dealing with emergencies
289 for those agencies. He is good at organizing for relief efforts and has no problem working with
290 those issues.

291
292 Larry Gilman explained the Courthouse Security Committee, it is now Okanogan County Complex
293 security committee and requested every department head participate as they will be addressing
294 all areas. An email will be sent out inviting people to the meeting on the 3rd week in April.

295
296 Member of the public Karen Harris writer for County Watch asked if speakers could speak at the
297 podium it would help participate better via zoom.

298
299 **Motion**

300 Commissioner Hover moved to authorize the chair to electronically sign the April CRAB
301 certification. Motion was seconded, all were in favor motion carried. Previous motion to approve
302 the certifications are supported by this motion due to CRAB only accepting the chairman's
303 signature via electronic signing.

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Motion - Voucher Approval - Commissioners

Vouchers certified and audited by the Auditing Officer as required by RCW 42.24.080 and those expense reimbursement claims certified as required by RCW 42.24.090 have been recorded on a list, and made available to the Board. As of this date, the Board did vote, by unanimous vote, to approve the regular vouchers in the amount of \$456,602.76 and Payroll vouchers in the amount of \$2,294.31. Warrant numbers as cited on the attached blanket voucher list. Motion seconded and carried.

Motion Methow Valley EMS District

Commissioner Hover moved to adjourn as the BOCC and reconvene as the Methow Valley EMS District. Motion was seconded all were in favor, motion carried.

Commissioner Hover moved to approve the Voucher certification and authorize the Methow Valley EMS District vouchers to be paid in the amount of \$695,500. Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

Commissioner Hover moved to adjourn as the Methow Valley EMS District and Reconvene as the BOCC. Motion was seconded all were in favor, motion carried.

Approve Commissioners Proceedings

Commissioners postponed the meeting minutes.

Approve Consent Agenda

Commissioner Hover moved to approve the consent agenda items 1-4 as presented. Motion was seconded, all were in favor motion carried.

1. Cattleguard Franchise Renewals-Wade Cunningham CGF#74-73, Tom Rise CGF#15-74, Lone Wolf Ranch CGF#N-198, Lone Wolf Ranch CGF#N-192A
2. Interlocal Cooperative Agreement-Genesis Extrication Tools Equipment-City of Oroville
3. ARPA Request #2-Slope Stabilization-Town of Nespelem
4. Contract Renewal Orthographic Imagery -WA Tech

Motion

Commissioner Hover moved to acknowledge Commissioner Branch's signature March 14, 2024 on two water right applications to the Dept. of Ecology for county water banking. One application was for 5,330 gpm municipal /Domestic use and one for 11.1 cfs Municipal/Domestic Commercial, Industrial use. Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

Commissioner Branch discussed the opioid abatement funds be used for the Chelan County billing. He explained we should pay the bill out of opioid settlement funds. Commissioner Branch assured the board that the report will be submitted as a result of the payment. An MOA will need to be in place as the mechanism to be accomplish payment.

Motion Resolution 49-2024 Fairgrounds Fee Schedule

Commissioner Hover moved to approve resolution 49-2024 a revised fairgrounds fee schedule. Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

355 **Motion Resolution 50-2024 ARPA Funds Allocation for Indigent Defense**
356 Commissioner Hover moved to approve resolution 50-2024 allocating county ARPA funds for
357 indigent defense costs in the amount of \$139,500. Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion
358 carried.
359
360 Commissioner Branch discussed the LATCF funds and ARPA funds report. He will work with the
361 Clerk of the Board for the needed information for the report and provide her with the login
362 information so someone besides himself has reporting access.
363
364 The board adjourned at 3:25 p.m.