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**RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS**

**OKANOGAN COUNTY**

**NOVEMBER 20, 2023**

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8     **9:00 AM**     **Review Commissioners Agenda and Consent Agenda**  
9     **9:15 AM**     **Public Comment Period**  
10    **9:30 AM**     **Public Hearing-Current Expense & Miscellaneous Funds 2024 Revenue Sources**  
11    **9:45 AM**     **Commissioners Staff Meeting**  
12    **10:15 AM**    **Public Hearing-Budget Supplemental Appropriation Infrastructure Fund 117**  
13    **10:20 AM**    **Public Hearing-Budget Supplemental Appropriation Oroville Rural EMS**  
14    **10:30 AM**    **Discussion-Title III Proposal Allocations & Budget-Commissioners**  
15    **To Follow**    **Briefing Among Commissioners-Discuss Individual Weekly Meetings & Schedule**  
16    **11:00 AM**    **Update-Public Works-Engineer Josh Thomson**  
17    **1:30 PM**     **Update-Central Services-Karen Beatty**  
18    **2:00 PM**     **Discussion-Registered Warrants Policy-Aeneas Lake Irrigation District**  
19    **2:30 PM**     **Discussion-Hearings Examiner Services-Director Palmer**  
20    **3:30 PM**     **Public Hearing-Budget Supplemental-Elections 027**  
21    **3:40 PM**     **Executive Session RCW 42.30.110(1)(iii)**

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23    The Okanogan County Board of Commissioners met for a regular meeting at 123 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
24    North, Okanogan, Washington on November 20, 2023 with Chairman, Commissioner Chris  
25    Branch; Vice-Chairman, Commissioner Andy Hover; Member, Commissioner Jon Neal; and the  
26    Clerk of the Board, Laleña Johns, present.

27  
28    AV Capture and Zoom provided audio and video accessibility for public interaction.

29  
30    **Review Commissioners Agenda and Consent Agenda**

31    Commissioners discussed the auditor and assessor's office posting that their elective offices will  
32    be closed at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, the day before Thanksgiving.

33  
34    Commissioner Hover stated he is willing to allow these offices to close early that day.

35  
36    **Motion Early Closures**

37    Commissioner Hover moved that any county department that has posted the appropriate closures  
38    on their door be allowed to close early the day before Thanksgiving 2023. Motion was seconded,  
39    all were in favor, motion carried.

40  
41    **Public Comment Period**

42    Emily Sisson member of the public via zoom, said she had no comment.

43  
44    Commissioner Hover discussed a road levy shift to pay for Sheriff deputies. Commissioner Neal  
45    stated with the number of open positions that are not getting filled he did not see why additional  
46    funds should be taken with a Road Levy Shift for additional positions as the Sheriff could not fill  
47    the open positions they already have authorized. He was certainly not against the Sheriff having  
48    a full staff of well-trained deputies.

49  
50    Commissioners discussed paying for the training so the open positions could be filled. The  
51    timeline for the training is unknown. Commissioners discussed the road deputy position that was  
52    requested. Discussed state highway staff helping Sheriff with county roads investigations.

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**Public Hearing-Current Expense & Miscellaneous Funds 2024 Revenue Sources**

Commissioner Branch opened up the hearing stating this is a hearing is on revenue that the County's Current Expense, Miscellaneous, and Road Fund budgets are primarily funded by taxes and charges and reflect the provision of ongoing services. Member of the public Emily Sisson, via zoom, did not provide comment. Public Comment was closed and opened up to the board.

**Motion Resolution 167-2023 Current Expense 2024 Levy Collections**

Commissioner Neal moved to approve the Current Expense 2024 Levy Collections resolution 167-2023 including the increase of 1% as allowed by law and directed the Clerk of the Board to submit the resolution to the Assessor's office as required. Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

**Motion Current Expense Levy 2024 Certification**

Commissioner Hover moved to approve the Current Expense Levy 2024 Certification in the amount of \$6,996,262 and directed the Clerk of the Board to submit the certification to the Assessor's office as required. Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

**Motion Resolution 168-2023 Road Levy 2024 Collection**

Commissioner Neal moved to approve the Road Levy 2024 Collection resolution 168-2023 including the increase of 1% as allowed by law and directed the Clerk of the Board to submit the resolution to the Assessor's office as required. Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

**Motion Road Levy 2024 Certification**

Commissioner Hover moved to approve the Road Levy 2024 Certification in the amount of \$5,727,100 and directed the Clerk of the Board to submit the resolution to the Assessor's office as required. Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

Commissioners continued discussing a Road Levy Shift. They discussed the idea of a levy shift that deputy positions be filled before considering authorizing more deputy positions.

Commissioners discussed the rescheduled Board of Health meeting and the purpose of that meeting.

**Commissioners Staff Meeting**

Fairgrounds Manager Chuck Ford

The arena lights have arrived at the fairgrounds and will need some work to install, but that could be accomplished internally.

Commissioner Hover discussed moving the Hearings Examiner Discussion up on the agenda to right now.

Planning Director Pete Palmer updated the board on the meet and greet with Dept. of Ecology. Section Manager Heather Simmons, Wells management Nigel Kingsbury water master etc..... Chris Duncan well construction manger and discussed their roles. They gave the county info on who to contact with questions. They are starting an application process for further north of Tunk to revisit old water right applications. There are no mitigating factors the landowners could put forth; water rights cannot be issued and will be given due process for those with applications to learn if they are still interested in a water right who have not acted on their application. Mitigating

104 factors of approval or denial. The DOE will begin to move south after. Would not include Tamarack  
105 springs area. Their plan is to Complete WRIA 49 and moving into WRIA 48 after that. They are  
106 interested in connecting with the different communities. Ms. Palmer has gotten many calls from  
107 the residents on the reservation as a result of the DOE contacting landowners about this.

108  
109 Scriveners Error correction on the October 30, 2023 Lake Management District V-Cert was re-  
110 signed.

111  
112 Director Palmer stated the resolution of intent for the Lake Management District has been  
113 advertised and available for comment. The public hearing for the roles is December 4 as is the  
114 District re-newel hearing at the city of Oroville council chambers.

#### 115 **Public Hearing-Budget Supplemental Appropriation Infrastructure Fund 117**

116 Commissioner Branch opened up the public hearing to the public

117  
118  
119 **Motion Resolution 170-2023 Budget Supplemental Infrastructure Fund 117**  
120 Commissioner Hover moved to approve resolution 170 – 2023 a budget supplemental to the  
121 Infrastructure fund 117 in the amount of \$37,200. Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion  
122 carried.

#### 123 **Motion Oroville Rural EMS District**

124 Commissioner Hover moved to adjourn as the BOCC and reconvene as the Oroville Rural EMS  
125 District. Motion was seconded all were in favor, motion carried.

#### 126 **Public Hearing-Budget Supplemental Appropriation Oroville Rural EMS**

127  
128 Commissioner Branch opened up the hearing to the public, seeing no public who wanted to  
129 comment he closed to the public and opened to commissioners' discussion.

130  
131  
132 Commissioner Hover moved to approve resolution 3-2023 a budget supplemental appropriation  
133 within the Oroville Rural EMS District budget for the increased Life Line contract service costs.  
134 Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

135  
136 Commissioner Hover moved to adjourn as the Oroville Rural EMS District and Reconvene as the  
137 BOCC. Motion was seconded all were in favor, motion carried.

#### 138 **Discussion-Title III Proposal Allocations & Budget-Commissioners**

139 Chief Balam discussed the Search and Rescue proposal. (attached) It included a budget for the  
140 full amount in the notice (\$174,980). Search and Rescue was the only applicant submitting for  
141 2024 Title III funding.

142  
143  
144 Commissioner Hover stated the actual amount of available funding for 2024 is \$128,000 and it  
145 includes the ending fund balance.

146  
147 Commissioner Hover went over the 2024 Title III Budget and stated the actual amount of carryover  
148 to be allocated for 2024 for Search and Rescue use. A budget adjustment may be needed later  
149 for actual amount if different.

150  
151 All funds allocated must be spent in the funding fiscal year. The Clerk of the Board will draft the  
152 resolution to allocate \$128,000 to Search and Rescue proposed uses in 2024.

153  
154

155 **Briefing Among Commissioners-Discuss Individual Weekly Meetings & Schedule**

156 Commissioner Branch discussed the recent Leaders Conference attended. One issue was  
157 following Robert's Rules of Order which are not always easy to do. He discussed the difficulties  
158 dealing with amendments to motions. How are the amendments to amendments tracked and  
159 taken in order? Political differences and what those mean as a unified organization are critical.

160

161 **Update-Public Works-Engineer Josh Thomson**

162 Engineer Josh Thomson provided the public works agenda and discussed the items listed  
163 there.

164

165 *Maintenance and road conditions*

166 Most of the trucks are ready for snow, but there isn't any in the forecast. The costs are  
167 \$215,000 average for November but last year was over \$500,000 for the same time.

168

169 *STBG federal funds exchange pilot program*

170 He discussed this exchange, but now moved to all or nothing situation. We had money  
171 allocated to different projects and isn't sure if Winthrop would be willing to swap. Take state  
172 money we are not eligible for state redistribution. Engineer Thomson explained how that  
173 would work. Adams county spent ahead and got \$2 million extra, we are a little bit ahead  
174 comparatively speaking. He hoped we could have used the exchange for the Twisp River  
175 Road but that isn't going to happen as we don't know if federal funds carry over. He explained  
176 using funds for another project and other possibilities. He would like to see the pilot program  
177 be successful, but....

178

179 *MRSC Small Works Roster, purchasing changes*

180 Presentation about purchasing changes July 1. Required to have a small business utilization plan  
181 and changes to small works category for certified small businesses. There are different  
182 requirements based on how many are in a small category. If its \$150,000 or less we can select  
183 the business we want, but if between \$150,000 and \$300,000 then requires a different process.  
184 MRSC provides a small works roster and isn't costly to participate and could be a good move for  
185 us. Commissioner Branch stated everyone on our current roster should be added to that. MRSC  
186 also has electronic bidding process and integrates with their small works roster. He explained  
187 how that system works and how bidders and plan holder notifications work. It does cost a bit to  
188 utilize but it would be worth it in time and resources. He will look more into both and come back  
189 with a recommendation for use county wide. Depending on the decision our Purchasing Policy  
190 would need to be amended accordingly.

191

192 Commissioner Branch discussed a possible Road Levy Shift but would be contingent on Sheriff  
193 filling currently open positions. Engineer Thomson stated he does not believe the Road fund is  
194 responsible for paying for road policing.

195

196 Commissioners recessed at 11:25 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.

197

198 **Update-Central Services-Karen Beatty**

199 Director Beatty provided the Central Services department update.

200

201 Upgrading computers countywide to speed things up on the users end. Replacing computers as  
202 well. Over the year added Microsoft office 2015s and incorporated Adobe Pro signatures,  
203 Laserfiche upgrade to newest version, licensing has changed name user license for the power  
204 users. It will do retention as well and we don't know exactly how it will look but intended to keep

205 things cleaner and offload to other locations. Will bill non-current expense for their expense. Core  
206 switch will need to collaborate with 911 since it will take their systems down, and elections portion  
207 will be difficult to upgrade. Plan to do that after the new year.

208  
209 Revise website in April 2024 we will have it four years, they said they would do a redesign for us,  
210 but behind the scenes are very difficult technical support is difficult and many things she is not  
211 crazy about. Go away from them hosting the site and look at hosting it ourselves and possibly  
212 looking at another vendor by April next year. We previously received a quote from Civic Plus but  
213 it was more expensive.

214  
215 Ms. Beatty is exploring Microsoft phone systems to augment with our other Microsoft item. She  
216 attended a Microsoft workshop with other counties and cities from local government. There are  
217 pros and cons to it switching everything to Microsoft. As an alternative some counties use star  
218 link or Spectrum as a backup if their provider goes down. She is looking for redundancies.

219  
220 In 2024 looking towards two big projects finalized and getting users trained on the new resources  
221 we have and how it can help them. Looking at TEAMS to see if we can replace Zoom with TEAMS.  
222 Commissioner Hover stated TEAMS is very difficult to use and has a lot of hoops the public would  
223 need to jump through to join a public meeting. If you don't have TEAMS on your computer, then  
224 using it is difficult to get into. Commissioner Branch stated he uses the ap but it seems to want  
225 to take over everything. Commissioner Neal said if all our eggs in one basket and then there is an  
226 issue then what? Zoom is used by different agencies it is working well.

227  
228 **Discussion-Registered Warrants Policy-Aeneas Lake Irrigation District**  
229 Auditor Cari Hall, Finance Manager Lisa Schreckengost, Aeneas Lake Irrigation District Paige  
230 Davison, David Craigie, Jenkins, Denison chair

231  
232 Commissioner Branch stated it was brought to the attention of the BOCC regarding their  
233 registered warrant situation and wanted to hear what the plans are to keep the district solvent and  
234 to share with them our interest in the situation as well as the users.

235  
236 Treasurer Johnson provided information on their September 2021 with an outstanding balance of  
237 over \$189,000. The previous treasurer set out a 3-year time frame to take care of the outstanding  
238 balance. Right now, they have a balance of \$227,290.24 in registered warrants and we fear they  
239 won't be able to meet the 3-year goal to bring it to zero by next year. Our interest rate is going up  
240 whatever the state pool is and looks at around 7%. So far in 2023 warrants issued is \$543,232  
241 and their assessment is \$398,094 so we are short \$145,138. This is amount is just to cover the  
242 2023 billings.

243  
244 Commissioner Hover stated the question is when you reach a threshold to where you cannot pay,  
245 get everyone together to have the conversation that we just can't continue. Unless there is some  
246 sort of big change in operations

247  
248 Mr. Denison said they are working on that. Lack of maintenance over some years and finally to a  
249 point of repairing they are in maintenance mode. Costs were mostly repairing equipment, and this  
250 year they nailed down cheaper maintenance. Their normal operating electrical costs are around  
251 \$230,000+ with \$28,000 employee costs. Mr. Denison stated working with PUD to get kickbacks.  
252 They received \$40,000 this year. Commissioner Hover asked about a solar system to provide  
253 power or lessen the power bill. They have into looked into that option, but have looked at pump  
254 change overs to VFD drive. Estimate from PUD were not provided. Treasurer Johnson said  
255 repairs and maintenance costs were about \$205,000. The other expenses like ditch walker

256 insurance fuel, professional services, communications, and also the DOE loan payments through  
257 2035 at \$10,067 per year are all factors. One irrigator makes up 80% of the district alone.  
258 Breakdowns have been happening over the last few years, and now the district feels they are  
259 close to feeling better about it. There is about \$60,000 outstanding. The other problem is that they  
260 cannot shut them down or lock them out of the system as it isn't set to do that. They are stealing  
261 water from the district when they do not comply with the do not use water order until they pay,  
262 said Commissioner Hover.

263  
264 Their general fund collected in 2023 \$359,021 and their power bill is \$200,000. Treasurer Johnson  
265 did reach out to Washington Federal for a loan for the district but due to not being fiscally solvent  
266 they were denied a loan. Can they try to ask other local banks to ask for a loan then increase  
267 rates to pay the loan they might be able to get some help. Paige said they did vote to not raise  
268 the rates because people just cannot pay an increase and the district stands the chance that no  
269 one will pay. Commissioner Hover said the only thing is they need a two-year rate hike in order  
270 to pay the loan. The main user is a tree fruit grower. Commissioner Branch asked if they were  
271 using the full extent of the water right, yes for the most part they are. If the district does shut down  
272 we still have to assess the users to pay the debt down, said Treasurer Johnson. The finance  
273 committee can decide that the district can no longer be on registered warrants and then they  
274 would go bankrupt. If they could get users to pay 100% they could continue to take the baby steps  
275 to pay down the debt, but they need more time. Commissioner Hover recommended a  
276 membership meeting to relay implementation of a two-year price hike to pay the debt down to get  
277 the district going again. Auditor Hall said the State Auditor is going to lean on the county to figure  
278 this out. It is a fine line to advise the commissioners on the fiscal responsibility of the county and  
279 to be aware of how the ongoing registered warrants reflect on the county's fiscal responsibility.

280  
281 Treasurer Johnson relayed how projects might be funded rather than paying out of pocket.  
282 Commissioner Hover wondered if the tree fruit association could help. Something has to be done.

283  
284 Several things in the works to save money in the future, but must be approved for the projects  
285 upgraded piping, VFD booster to maximize efficiency of electricity, and in the middle to see how  
286 those affect costs. Figure out how much money they can start putting forth towards the registered  
287 warrants. The state auditor is going to want to know what the plan is. Expenses will be minimal  
288 until March, so meet again with the county finance committee then. The season runs from April  
289 15 through October 15.

290  
291 Commissioner Hover would like to meet again in the future to discuss improvement plan.  
292 Commissioner Branch agreed that some plan be put into place that might include sale of water  
293 rights or bank the water. Metering costs money. Commissioner Hover stated he would look into  
294 USDA funding and suggested Jon Wyss since he is involved with the Farm Services.

295  
296 Commissioner Branch stated MRSC has some good financial plans on their website that could  
297 help develop one for registered warrants.

298  
299 **Executive Session RCW 42.30.110(1)(i) (iii)**

300 Commissioner Hover moved to go into executive session at 2:42 p.m. until 3:00 p.m. inviting  
301 county attorney Esther Milner to discuss litigation under RCW 42.30.110(1)(i) (iii). Motion was  
302 seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

303  
304 Commissioners extended executive session at 3:00 until 3:10 p.m.

305  
306 Executive session ended at 3:10 p.m. no decisions were made.

307 **CANCELLED-Discussion-Hearings-Examiner-Services-Director-Palmer to be Rescheduled**

308

309 **Public Hearing-Budget Supplemental-Elections 027**

310 Commissioner Branch opened up the public hearing to public comment, seeing no one to  
311 comment. Katie via zoom was not interested in submitting a comment she was here to observe  
312 only.

313

314 **Motion Resolution 171-2023 Budget Supplemental-Elections 027**

315 Commissioner Neal moved to approve resolution 171-2023 a budget supplemental appropriation  
316 within the current expense Elections budget in the amount of \$20,000. Motion was seconded, all  
317 were in favor, motion carried.

318

319

320 The board adjourned at 3:31 p.m.