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**RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS**

**OKANOGAN COUNTY**

**OCTOBER 25, 2021**

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**9:00 AM Review Commissioners Agenda and Consent Agenda**  
**9:30 AM Briefing Among Commissioners-Discuss Weekly Meeting & Schedule**  
**10:00 AM Discussion-Architect Estimate-Equipment Shelter/Morgue/Coroner Facility- Worden**  
**11:00 AM Discussion-Water Banking-Conservation District-Craig Nelson et al.**  
**1:30 PM Discussion-Remuneration Revision-Variou**  
**2:00 PM Discussion/Update-TV District #1-George Thornton**  
**3:00 PM Update Planning-Director Pete Palmer**  
**4:00 PM Review Meeting Minutes**

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The Okanogan County Board of Commissioners met in Regular session at 123 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, Okanogan, Washington on October 25, 2021, with Chairman, Commissioner Chris Branch; Vice-Chairman, Commissioner Andy Hover; Member, Commissioner Jim DeTro and the Clerk of the Board, Laleña Johns, present.

AV Capture provided audio and video of the meetings held today, while ZOOM provided best audio accessibility and public interaction.

**Review Commissioners Agenda and Consent Agenda**

Commissioners reviewed their agenda and consent agenda. Commissioners discussed redistricting process and whether or not

Commissioner Hover asked for executive session to discuss the performance of a public employee.

**Motion RCW 42.30.110 (1) (g)**

Commissioner Hover moved to go into executive session at 9:40 a.m. to discuss the performance of a public employee for 5-minutes. Motion was seconded all were in favor, motion carried.

Executive session was extended at 9:45 for another 10 minutes.

Executive session ended at 9:55 a.m. no decisions were made.

**Briefing Among Commissioners-Discuss Weekly Meeting & Schedule**

Commissioners discussed county matters.

**Discussion-Architect Estimate-Equipment shelter/Morgue/Coroner Facility-Chief Worden**  
Sheriff Hawley, Undersheriff Culp

Chief Worden provided information on the quote estimate for the equipment shelter/morgue/coroner facility received from Beaman Architect. (attached) The bottom line amount quoted was \$198,969 for the design of the sheds and shelters. Demolition cost and activity is outside of the scope and quote. Commissioner Hover explained the project cannot be split up into multiple projects to deal with the demo portion as one project and construction portion into another. The MACC quote was \$1,492,100 with the design portion being \$198,969 for the

52 architect design service portion. Material rates are high right now. Commissioner Branch stated  
53 he isn't sure how much design would be needed for the demo portion, but do consider asbestos  
54 mitigations that may be needed.

55  
56 Commissioner Hover explained the Bonding solution includes a few projects in the bundle. Chief  
57 Worden was concerned that other bundled projects would interfere with scheduling of the  
58 equipment sheds or morgue structures.

59  
60 **Discussion-Water Banking-Conservation District-Craig Nelson et al.**

61 Lorah Super, Planning Commission Chairman Albert Roberts, Okanogan Mayor Jon Culp,  
62 Planning Director Pete Palmer

63  
64 Okanogan Conservation District (OCD), Craig Nelson, stated this conversation is about water  
65 banking. He explained what has happened since this was first mentioned and what OCD's main  
66 goal is to prevent water rights from being sold out of county. OCD is committed to keeping the  
67 water in the county and hopes to partner with the county to dedicate the water banked to ag use  
68 to the maximum possible. Agriculture viability is a big consideration. There are some rights that  
69 can be used for other things. How can a bank fulfil the needs of the county, how would it fulfil the  
70 needs of the ag community? Keep ag water ag water, any projects the county can help influence  
71 water direction or fund salmon recovery or projects that can physically create more water, then  
72 that water is stored year-round and could be put into a use priority use of group domestic use or  
73 non-ag use.

74  
75 Dept of Ecology funding requirements were discussed and what that would cost in water rights.

76  
77 Commissioner Branch asked, are there expectations that competition will be created by the  
78 county creating a water bank. There are already water banks operating in the county with interests  
79 and needs for whatever they want to use it for, said Mr. Nelson. Mr. Nelson said the closest we  
80 can operate a bank to will be net zero. It needs to be the smallest amount possible with openness  
81 and transparency about our goals. Make it work the best we can and take local control of it.

82  
83 Lorah Super said everyone expects Crown Columbia is not gone forever. The money for the  
84 banking project at headwater basins was to make us competitive and the market still exists.  
85 Centering it in public agencies for the purpose of serving constituencies. Adapting as time goes  
86 on, how do we provide for that adaptation in 5,10, 20 years and ensure we have the ability to do  
87 so in the plan. Should there be a formal agreement between OCD and the county that lays out  
88 expectations and roles each entity is to play with regards to water banking.

89  
90 Commissioner Hover explained he previously discussed with Watershed Council and Mayor Ing-  
91 Moody to ask for recommendations for policy language. He is hopeful some bullet points will be  
92 provided by both. The groups involved should identify the long-term objectives, discuss goals to  
93 accomplish and how to accomplish those and make the policy clear, said Commissioner Branch.  
94 Mr. Nelson suggested another meeting to develop the agreement. Commissioner Branch said it  
95 was a no brainer that the county desires to keep the water in the basin.

96  
97 Commissioner Hover said a policy that needs to be in place is that if you have access to irrigation  
98 in one of the irrigation districts then one cannot obtain water from the bank for irrigation. Mr.  
99 Nelson will be in touch to schedule time to go over language for the agreement. Commissioners  
100 wants to ensure the county's attorney looks at whatever draft is created before it is approved.

101  
102

103 **Discussion-Remuneration Revision-Various**

104 Crystal Hawley, Lori Caswell, Maurice Goodall, Tim Meadows, Tanya Everett

105  
106 Ms. Hawley presented a group signed petition signed by most bargaining employees regarding  
107 the wages of non-represented employees. She provided the signed petition stating non-  
108 bargaining wages have not kept up with inflation or cost of living and appears to be at least 10.5%  
109 behind what other employees enjoy. Since 2018 minimum wages have gone up but the county  
110 has not equitably provided wage increases to non-bargaining employees to help keep up with the  
111 rising costs and inequity being created by increased minimum wages.

112  
113 Ms. Hawley explained a pay scale that would be more consistent to provide better equity.

114  
115 Maurice Goodall said a study should place the value on the work being performed not compare  
116 salary data of other counties but rather to ensure equity in the pay scale for the same work. There  
117 have been small increases but not enough to keep up. We should pay good employees good  
118 wages. A 1.5% raise doesn't keep up with the cost of living and inflation increases.

119  
120 Commissioner Hover said the county is on a fixed income as far as revenue goes and based on  
121 previous year's collection the county has no way to address the cost of our services. We never  
122 compare how much money those comparable counties are collecting.

123  
124 Mr. Goodall asked how bargaining employee wages have changed compared to the non-  
125 bargaining wages. Commissioner Hover asked whether the board wanted to open certain  
126 discussion points made in closed session in open session. Commissioner Branch said one  
127 important thing to see is the comparisons between the groups.

128  
129 Ms. Everett said she has the figures for the surveys. It is hard to understand the domino affect  
130 when one position gets a raise. It's not just a 2% raise.

131  
132 Over the last five years' salary increases given to bargaining employees has been between 8-  
133 10% annually compared to the non-bargaining employees getting 1.5%.

134  
135 Commissioner Hover discussed the county's budget and said there would be a big impact to the  
136 budget if the county provided a 2% raise. He suggested the county cut services as a way to  
137 provide wages to the non-bargaining group. He is glad this group has come to discuss this with  
138 the board as it hasn't happened before. He said he is looking at 2% increase, a 5% increase, and  
139 a 10% increase to see how much it will cost.

140  
141 Commissioner Branch said he would like to review the situation and information provided. Mr.  
142 Goodall asked what employees can expect, how can we be ensured this doesn't get put on the  
143 back burner. Commissioner Branch said there are some other things going on with new hires and  
144 other situations to provide new hires with a sign on bonus and provide finders fees to employee  
145 who find new hires. He said if employees need a better understanding how revenues work in the  
146 county, then that can be arranged. Commissioner Branch said it is hard to get people to work for  
147 us, recruitment will be more difficult too. Retention is horrible, said Commissioner Hover. Priorities  
148 are different.

149  
150 Ms. Hawley asked the commissioners to consider the request for consideration as the disparity is  
151 being felt by current non bargaining employees.

152  
153

154 **Discussion/Update-TV District #1-George Thornton**

155 Victoria Veletegui

156

157 George Thornton provided the TV District #1 update. (attached) The problem is the turn around  
158 time between payment and reimbursement. The tower collapse was part of the declared January  
159 2021 emergency. The FEMA can reimburse up to 75% of the cost of the damages but FEMA  
160 requires the money to be spent first and submitted to FEMA for reimbursement consideration.

161

162 Commissioner Branch stated the county funds is strictly for restoration. But if the county can allow  
163 its Infrastructure funds to be spent on other things as needed rather than on a reimbursement  
164 basis, that would provide the flexibility the district needs to juggle around the funds.

165

166 Commissioner Branch discussed other funds the board could consider to help the district with  
167 their project.

168

169 Mr. Thornton said management and content is outside the TV District's job. They provide the  
170 infrastructure for whatever content is secured. Something has to be figured out.

171

172 Mr. Thornton said he is looking for tribal members to sit on the TV District Board. There are two  
173 names and he is waiting for some kind of bio as a follow up.

174

175 Commissioners invited Chief Civil Deputy David Gecas to discuss executive session matters with  
176 the board.

177

178 **Motion Executive Session RCW 42.30.110 (1)(i)**

179 Commissioner moved to go into executive session at 2:40 p.m. for 20 minutes inviting David  
180 Gecas to discuss RCW 42.30.110 (1)(i). Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

181

182 Commissioners said this session was specific to the county's Building Permit Moratorium and  
183 threatened litigation.

184

185 **Update Planning-Director Pete Palmer**

186

187 Director Palmer was asked to read the resolution that waives the requirement of having a valid  
188 Washington State Driver's license for someone the planning Department wished to hire.

189

190 **Motion Resolution 135-2021**

191 Commissioner Hover moved to approve resolution 135-2021 a one-time waiver waiving the  
192 requirement that the new Sr. Planner have a valid Washington State Driver's License. Motion was  
193 seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

194

195 The GIS department is currently closed due to staffing.

196

197 **Motion Resolution 136-2021 Authorizing Additional GIS Tech in Budget**

198 Commissioner Hover moved to approve resolution 136-2021 authorizing an additional GIS Tech  
199 position in the budget. Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

200

201 **Motion Resolution 137-2021 Planning Dept Fee Schedule**

202 Commissioner Hover moved to approve resolution 137-2021 adopting a revised fee schedule for  
203 the Okanogan County Planning and Development office. Motion was seconded, all were in favor,  
204 motion carried.

205 The official resignation of the natural resource sr. planner was received. The position will be  
206 advertised as soon as possible to hire someone right away. Job duties will be reallocated to  
207 spread the duties around. The planner will take some time to bring the department up to speed  
208 on what she was doing. She wants to put the county through the least amount of trouble.

209  
210 The Planning Commission member recently resigned. The commissioners asked that a notice be  
211 published by the Clerk of the Board to solicit membership for the Planning Commission member  
212 representing Commissioner District #2 position.

213  
214 Director Palmer went through the Comprehensive Plan update timeline. December 27<sup>th</sup> will be a  
215 special Planning Commission meeting with the plan to transfer the results to the Commissioners  
216 on December 29. The commissioners are not holding the public hearing as the plans have gone  
217 through the required process. The intent and purpose have not been changed. The legal review  
218 was a good process.

219  
220 **Motion Mazama Advisory Committee Member #7 CB Thomas**  
221 Commissioner Hover moved to approve the appointment letter of Carter B Thomas to the Mazama  
222 Advisory Committee. Motion was seconded, all were in favor, motion carried.

223  
224 **Review Meeting Minutes**  
225 Commissioners may have reviewed their meeting minutes.

226  
227 The board adjourned at 3:33 p.m.  
228