

Okanogan Council of Governments/Regional Transportation Planning Organization
July 10, 2023 – Regular Meeting Minutes - 5:00 p.m.
303 S. Second Ave., Suite A, Okanogan, WA

(253) 215 8782; Meeting ID 929 2149 7263; Passcode: 716493; or link:
<https://zoom.us/j/92921497263?pwd=TU1wZktBZHI4SOY2UHVuMTFIRjY3UT09>

Present: Jon Neal, Okanogan County, Commissioner - OCOG Chairman
Josh Thomson, Okanogan County, Engineer - OCOG Treasurer
*Wayne Turner, City of Okanogan, Mayor - OCOG Vice-Chair
*Jackie Gleason, TranGO, Finance/HR Director
Paula Brantner-Thomas, TranGO, Clerk of the Board
Misty Ruiz, City of Brewster, Finance Director
Barry Freel, City of Omak, Council Member
Kelly Hook, City of Pateros, Mayor
Jimmer Tillman, Elmer City, Public Works Director
Teagan Levine, City of Tonasket, Council Member (joined at 5:18 p.m.)
Bobby Watkins, OCTN, Operations Manager
Maurice Goodall, Okanogan County Emergency Management, Director
Shaun Darveshi, WSDOT, North Central Region Planning Manager
Kate Tollefson, WSDOT, Tribal and Regional Integrated Planning
Gabe Philips, WSDOT, Regional Planning Manager
*Richard Palmer, Colville Confederated Tribes, DOT Director
Roni Holder-Diefenbach, Economic Alliance, Executive Director

*These participants attended in person

Call to Order/Welcome

Chairman/Commissioner Jon Neal called the meeting to order at 5:07 p.m.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Motion:

Vice-Chair/Council Member Wayne Turner moved to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Council Member Jackie Gleason.

- Agenda
- Minutes from June 12, 2023, Regular Meeting

Chairman/Commissioner Neal called for the vote; the motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment at this time.

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Update: Treasurer’s Report

Treasurer/County Engineer Josh Thomson reported the end of the biennium voucher was submitted to WSDOT today. Total expenses were \$16,341 of the \$19,310 that was available. That leaves just under \$3,000 available which will hopefully be used by another RTPO.

Update: Secretary Report

Secretary Brent Timm was not present for the meeting.

Update: Okanogan County Report

Chairman/Commissioner Neal reported the Bonaparte Lake Road was washed out again yesterday.

Treasurer/County Engineer Thomson reported on the following:

- Regarding Bonaparte Lake Road, it is now passable. There was no asphalt lost so it has been cleared and reopened, with cleanup to follow.
- The two paving projects discussed last month are now completed.
- They started work on the Twisp River Bridge today, with one lane traffic control for 5-6 weeks, and they also started the chip-seal program today, beginning in Oroville.

Update: Washington State Department of Transportation

WSDOT North Central Region Planning Manager, Shaun Darveshi, reported the following:

- He reminded everyone they applied for 2 projects which were awarded through the Connecting Communities grant. One is a pedestrian-bike feasibility study and the second is building a separate bike path along Hwy 155, with the main construction project occurring during the 2027-2028 biennium.

Chairman/Commissioner Neal asked if they are still on schedule to fix the railroad crossing south of Oroville, around the end of August. Darveshi stated no changes have been reported so it should be on schedule as far as he knows.

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WSDOT Tribal and Regional Integrated Planning, Kate Tollefson, stated they are looking forward to the new biennium for the RTPO program. Regarding the new RTPO Admin Support position, they would be happy to provide training regarding the RTPO responsibilities and requirements, if needed.

WSDOT Regional Planning Manager, Gabe Philips, echoed what Kate Tollefson mentioned and thanked Josh Thomson and Brent Timm for meeting with him to review the UPWP. They discussed digging into more policy documents, and he is happy to see the various items on this month's agenda.

County-Wide Emergency Updates/Discussion

Okanogan County Emergency Management Director, Maurice Goodall, reported on following:

- There were a few fires this past month but nothing drastic, mostly from lightning strikes. One occurred today on Hwy 153, but the rain helped to extinguish.
- River water levels are all coming down and close to record lows for this time of year.
- A few roads have been compromised, but County staff have started working on them right away.
- Last week he visited the Town of Twisp and the new City Hall which is doubling as an emergency operations center if needed.
- Sheriff's Dept. – Search and Rescue has had an uptick on missions and have been doing a great job.

Discussion: Economic Alliance – Vacant Building/Lot Committee Presentation

Economic Alliance Executive Director, Roni Holder-Diefenbach, gave a slide presentation from the Vacant Building/Lot Committee, to address abandoned buildings and vacant lots. This committee was created to provide examples, solutions and recommendations for communities to address various issues.

She provided recommendations regarding Business/Landlord License Requirements, Vacant Building Registration, Utility Fees, Creating an Ordinance on Unfit Dwellings, Buildings and Structures, Creating an Empty Building Toolkit and Updating the City Codes to Require Building Owners to Cover Vacant Building Windows/Doors in Aesthetically Pleasing Signage and Art.

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She reported her agency is available to help with addressing any of these issues and to contact her at any time and she is more than happy to provide a presentation at city council meetings.

On another note, she is meeting biweekly with a federal funding sources work group. They are discussing utilizing their prioritization projects, to identify what funding is available and match the various projects, to get more federal funding into our community. It's important to get any public infrastructure projects on the list, even if you don't feel the project might qualify, as it might qualify for other funding sources. There will be an upcoming meeting on August 21, 2023, regarding the prioritization of projects.

Action: Resolution #2023-02 – Approval of the OCOG Purchasing Policy

Treasurer/County Engineer Thomson reminded the Council that WSDOT requires a Purchasing Policy to receive funding. A draft was presented last month. He received the audit report at the end of last month which resulted in adding section #9, Protest and Appeals, to the draft. No other changes were made.

Motion:

Council Member Kelly Hook moved to approve Resolution #2023-02 as presented. The motion was seconded by Council Member Jimmer Tillman.

Chairman/Commissioner Neal called for the vote; the motion passed unanimously.

Action: Approval of Additional Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Funds for the Town of Winthrop – Riverwalk Trail Chewuch Undercrossing

Treasurer/County Engineer Thomson reported after much discussion, Winthrop has decided to table this discussion until next month.

Discussion: WSDOT/RTPO OCOG Funding for SFY 2024-2025, 07/2023 – 06/2025

WSDOT Regional Planning Manager, Gabe Philips, reported funding was approved for OCOG in the same amount as the last biennium, \$77,310. They did request an increase, but it wasn't approved. They will be working on an increase in additional funding for OCOG for the next biennium.

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Discussion: WSDOT/RTPO Agreement GCB 3859, 07/2023-06/2025

WSDOT Regional Planning Manager Philips reported they are ready to move forward and reimburse OCOG for any bills submitted. He stated there are also other funding resources, other than WSDOT, that could be beneficial for OCOG. He suggested the RTPO ask outside of the WSDOT budget, to emphasize funding needs.

Discussion: Preparation of Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Annual Report

Treasurer/County Engineer Thomson reported the UPWP Annual Report is due October 1, 2023, which he will be working on.

Discussion: Compile a 2023-2028 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP)

Treasurer Thomson reported the RTIP is prepared every year and cities must adopt their 6-year TIP plans, which he has received several so far. He will present a draft at the next meeting.

Discussion/Action: Change of OCOG Bylaws to include WSDOT as a Voting Member

Chairman Neal reminded everyone WSDOT North Central Region Planning Manager, Shaun Darveshi, mentioned it is a common practice for RTPO's to have WSDOT as a voting member. Darveshi agreed and stated most all RTPO's have WSDOT as a voting member.

After further discussion, it was agreed if Council wants to move forward with this, then a Resolution needs to be approved. The question also arose about possibly needing to change the MOU. Darveshi stated he understands there is an interlocal agreement with OCOG, but believed WSDOT doesn't have to follow the interlocal agreement as they are a state agency. He suggested consulting with other RTPO's to see how they handled this. Josh Thomson stated it would also need to be verified if other members need to sign a new MOU or amendment.

WSDOT Regional Planning Manager Philips stated he believes there are ways to make WSDOT a voting member and can look into it more.

It was agreed to table the discussion while obtaining more information to see which direction OCOG needs to go.

Discussion: RTPO Administrative Support Position

Treasurer/County Engineer Thomson reported he is still working on this matter and is waiting for final approval of the job description from the union rep. He hopes to be able to advertise soon.

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Discussion: Brewster Jail Fees

City of Brewster Finance Director, Misty Ruiz, reported there are no updates at this time. Chairman Neal would like to keep the topic on the agenda to make sure it's still on everyone's mind.

Discussion: Proposed Ideas/Changes by OCOG Members

Chairman Neal stated OCOG has primarily been involved in just transportation issues, but there are possibilities of going different directions. If anyone has any other ideas, send him an email so the topic can be discussed or pursued.

Roundtable Updates

Each agency represented was given a few moments, if they wished, to report to the group on important issues going on in their jurisdiction.

The topic of adding a pedestrian walkway on the bridge over the Omak River off Hwy 97, near Walmart, was addressed by Colville Confederated Tribe DOT Director Richard Palmer Sr. WSDOT North Central Region Planning Manager Darveshi stated they are starting a bike-pad feasibility study, which will involve that bridge. The planning study will last up to 1 ½ years. Darveshi will reach out to Mr. Palmer regarding this committee discussion. Mr. Palmer also asked if WSDOT could slow highway traffic during Stampede weekend, which would provide a little more safety.

Adjournment:

There being no further business to come before the Council, Chairman Neal adjourned the meeting at 6:21 p.m.

Approved:

Jon Neal, Chairman

Attested:

Paula Brantner-Thomas, TranGO, Clerk of the Board