

File a Formal Complaint - Nicole Kuchenbuch, President, Okanogan County Farm Bureau

Nicole Kuchenbuch reported 4 days ago (Thu, 16 Jun at 11:02 AM) via Portal Meta

I have included information from the ROC website which shows very clearly that they are in violation of the following:
"Washington State political committees that raise and spend money to influence certain elections must register and report in accordance with the Public Disclosure Law."

This group has a Go Fund Me account (information included) and has also accepted other funding. I believe that all totaled are to exceed \$5,000 but I do not have access to their finances.

They are using those funds solely for the purpose of paid newspaper advertisements, radio advertisements, billboards and forums that aim to attack the two incumbent County Commissioners that are running for reelection. I requested an audio file of the radio advertisements which are currently running on KOMW Omak but my request was denied. Perhaps you will have more luck getting access to those files. There are several different ads. I have included the only one that I gained access to.

The President of the ROC called my house on Monday, June 13th at 10:17am and falsely spoke "on behalf of the League of Womens Voters" to solicit funding from the Okanogan County Farm Bureau. My return call led to a lengthy conversation in which she continue to misidentify herself as a representative of the League of Womens Voters. It was through careful questioning that I discovered she was in fact not a member of the League of Womens Voters and was in fact the President of the ROC. I contacted the "real" League of Women's Voters who were shocked at what was happening and immediately they cancelled their event in Okanogan County and put out a public statement to clarify that they do not solicit funds and that the person who was making phone calls around the county to local businesses and civics groups was not a member or their organization. (documentation attached.)

I am not sure what the League of Womens Voters has decided to do about this issue but their contact information is: Ann Murphy President 509-385-8910 - cell email annmurphylwvwa@gmail.com

After much consideration I have decided that submitting a formal complaint is the right thing to do. I am in favor of civil politics, lively debates and multiple viewpoints. ROC has clearly shown a complete disregard for the laws that govern the political process and I believe their Board Members should be held accountable.

IN THE NEWS - Omak-Okanogan County Chronicle, June 15, 2016 - page A12. "Candidate forum a no go". Apparently an effort by ROC (Represent Okanogan County) to engage the League of Women Voters to moderate a debate between the 8 County Commissioner candidates has unraveled. Anne Murphy, president of the Washington State League of Women Voters, is quoted as being "concerned about Represent Okanogan County". In another quote, Murphy says "They are clearly opposed to the incumbents."

If you know any of the candidates, please tell them about this site. If you'll pick through the posts, I trust you'll see that this is neutral ground for all. It is a place where a candidate - whether an incumbent or challenger - may speak their peace without foregone conclusions and preconceptions interfering with their message. There are no set up's here, and no food fights will be allowed.

WANTED

**NEW
COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS**



ROCON2016.org

Paid for by Represent Okanogan County
PO Box 1531, Okanogan, WA 98840

Bold font is Gay Northrup. Regular is Nicole Kuchenbuch.

Transcript of message from home answering machine 06/13/2016, 10:17 am.

“Hi Casey my name is Gay Northrup and I am calling on behalf of the League of Women Voters. I believe they had contacted you (um) concerning getting questions for the forum. I have another question I need to ask you. (Um) Again my name is Gay Northrup and my number is (509)341-4867 and we are under some tight (um) timeline constraints so if you could call me at your earliest convenience I would really appreciate it. Thank you so much and have a good day.”

At approximately 12:45pm I returned the call to the above phone number. The following transcript is the conversation that transpired to the best of my recollection.

Hello.

Hi my name is Nicole Kuchenbuch and I am returning your phone call. You left a message for my husband, Casey, but actually I am the President of the Okanogan County Farm Bureau and I believe that your call was intended for me.

Oh, yes, thank you. Could you tell me your name again?

Nicole Kuchenbuch

Ok thanks for returning my call Nicole. I'm contacting you today on behalf of the League of Women's Voters regarding a couple of events that are going to take place in Okanogan County. The first is a forum that will be for Commissioner District 1 in the Okanogan PUD Auditorium on Wednesday, June 29 and the second is for Commissioner District 2 at the Methow Valley Community Center on Thursday, June 30th. We are contacting a broad range of local businesses and civic groups throughout Okanogan County and we are hoping for your support. Funding will be needed to host the out of town moderators of the event as well as to cover the costs of facility rentals and PA systems. If your organization was able to make a small donation that would be great or if you are able to make a larger donation we could probably get you some advertising.

Yes. I spoke with someone else from your organization regarding those events yesterday. My board has some initial concerns about the fairness of this event because of the group that initiated the forum. There is a lot of local concern here regarding the integrity of the group called ROC and Okanogan County Farm Bureau will not participate in an event that has the intention of sabotaging any of the candidates. We actually have our own forum for those two races scheduled for this coming Monday, June 20th. We sent out a questionnaire a few weeks ago and we will use information from the questionnaire and our own forum to make our candidate endorsements. But I would be interested in attending your event and I'm sure several members of my board will try to be present as well – just not in a co-sponsor type of capacity.

I understand and want to assure you that the intention is to put on a fair, nonpartisan forum. There is a lot of concern about the lack of transparency in the current leadership of Okanogan County

government and the success of this event will be largely due to a broad range of participation from local businesses and civic groups. I have been contacting local businesses and groups such as yours and I've only had a little bit of luck so far, I think (um) three local businesses have made donations but I also contacted the Cattlemen and I haven't heard back from them yet but we are really hoping for your support.

And what did you say your role is with the League of Women Voters?

I am helping to gather funds to promote the event and cover the costs of putting it on.

I just asked them yesterday and they said they didn't have any members in Okanogan County. I notice you have a 509 area code. So what is your affiliation to the group? Are you a member?

Actually, no, Okanogan County does not have a chapter of League of Women's Voters.

So are you a member of the ROC?

Yes I am.

Well the Okanogan County Farm Bureau does not support the actions or opinions of the ROC and quite honestly we have some pretty grave concerns about the integrity of the group. It appears that the members prefer to operate using shady tactics and negative tone and we would not choose to participate in an event that is being sponsored by the ROC.

I don't think it is accurate to say that ROC is using shady tactics and negative tone. Why do you say that?

From reading the local newspapers and reading the ROC website it appears that you have not done your due diligence to fully research the issues that you make comments on. I believe you are intentionally misrepresenting the views of the Okanogan County Commissioners and any local citizens who share their beliefs. The ROC is running smear campaigns against people who don't agree with their viewpoints and the tone is very negative. I've also done some research and it doesn't appear that the ROC is running a legitimate organization.

Why would you say that?

Well, do they have an actual board that governs their actions? Are they keeping minutes and agendas and treasurers reports?

Yes, we have an elected board and we keep minutes and agendas.

Are you filing through PDC?

Well we talked about that but we didn't think we needed to. We are not endorsing any one particular candidate.

And who is the President of the ROC organization?

Actually I am.

Interesting. That might have been a more honest way to start our conversation. In the future it would probably be a good idea for you to accurately identify yourself as the President of the ROC calling to solicit funds for these forums. It seems as though you intentionally misrepresented yourself in the message on my answering machine and also in the early part of our conversation to be someone working for the League of Women Voters.

It was not my intention to misrepresent myself. We are trying to host a quality forum to give Okanogan County a real chance to be heard and to make an informed decisions. We just want to put on a good event.

Well don't get me wrong, I'm all for a quality race and may the best man or woman win, but based upon the letters to the editor that your members have been sending out week after week and the paid advertisements that you have taken in the local newspapers and radio stations as well as a billboard up in the Methow, I don't think you are genuinely interested in fairness to all of the candidates. Your organization seems solely intent on portraying a very "anti-incumbent" message that is based upon half-truths and misinformation. Your entire tone is about disrespect and anger. When the Okanogan County Farm Bureau considers all 8 of these candidates we will be judging their knowledge of agricultural issues that mirror the policies and viewpoints of our organization and membership regardless of party affiliation. While anyone can find reason to criticize or give areas that have room for improvement it is important to treat all of the candidates with respect. You can offer insights and opinions but if elected officials don't choose to listen to them, well, that is politics! Elected officials are supposed to follow the law and due process. When you don't get your way it is not appropriate to resort to name calling, stereotyping and slander. I would encourage you to spend some time digging deeper into your issues before you form your opinions. It's important to look at them from every angle. And the next time you make a phone call to ask local businesses and civic groups for money you should probably tell the truth about who you are.

Well, Nicole, I'll let you go. I look forward to meeting you in the future.

And I will look forward to meeting you. Have a good day.

<https://www.gofundme.com/ROCon2016>

Represent Okanogan County 2016



April Wertz TWISP, WA

How important is it to you to make a change in the way our County is governed? Change happens when you become informed by listening to candidates. Change happens when you learn about the issues. Change happens when you complete your ballot and post it. We invite you to make changes in our County's government through our community organization, Represent Okanogan County by contributing to our advertising campaign.

Represent Okanogan County (ROC) is a non-partisan community organization made up of concerned citizens and voters just like you. In 2016, two of our three County Commissioners are up for re-election. This opportunity has stimulated the organization of ROC, composed of citizens who think we can do better with our county leadership. We are now building upon already existing efforts to inform citizens, who can then cast a ballot for more transparency, responsiveness, and accountability to the county's constituents.

To implement our education efforts, Represent Okanogan County is running an advertising campaign in six major county newspapers. These ads will run in March, May, July and October and their purpose is to update you on the latest candidate issues. They will also direct you to the website, www.ROCon2016.org which provides notices of voter registration events, posts reprints of articles and issue papers and shares notes of the Board of County Commissioner meetings and more.

We are asking for your help. We need to raise \$4,000 to pay for these ads, which will run in The Omak Chronicle, Okanogan Valley Gazette-Tribune, Methow Valley News, The Star, Quad City Herald, and the Tribal Tribune. Be a part of the change for a great Okanogan County by helping us get the word out to all our voters this election season. Donations great and small are welcome! If you'd like to become involved in Represent Okanogan County, contact rocon2016@gmail.com. Thank you for your support!

Help spread the word!

88 shares on Facebook

\$3,635 of \$4,000 goal

Raised by 25 people in 3 months

Created March 15, 2016



April Wertz

Charity

Recent Donations

SS

\$200

Sharon Sumpter

12 days ago

BW

\$50

Barbara Waters

17 days ago

1

KC

\$250

Keith Cowan

27 days ago

1

\$500

Anonymous

27 days ago

1

RB

\$100

Rodney Brown

28 days ago

1

ME

\$200

Mark Endresen

29 days ago

1

The current commissioners are too partisan and not responsive to voters who think differently. Bring the commission back closer to the middle.

LC

\$500

Linda Cornfield

29 days ago

1

\$200

Anonymous

29 days ago

1

\$250

Anonymous

29 days ago

1



\$250

Heidi Wills

29 days ago

1

Because I care about electing smart people to public office who aren't antagonistic to wolves in WA.

\$200

Anonymous
29 days ago

1

AL

\$200

Alex Loeb
1 month ago

1

LM

\$75

Lisa and John MacLean
1 month ago

1

DB

\$100

David Bonn
1 month ago

1

\$75

Anonymous
1 month ago

1

\$25

Anonymous

2 months ago

1

PM

\$75

Phil Millam

2 months ago

1

PM

\$100

Peter Morgan

2 months ago

1

SC

\$25

Stephanie Clark

2 months ago

1

\$50

Anonymous

2 months ago

1

JK

\$50

Jim Kalberer
2 months ago

1

\$50

Anonymous
2 months ago

1

MK

\$50

Mary Koch
2 months ago

1

TJ

\$50

Thomas Juelson
2 months ago

1

RC

\$10

Rocklynn Culp
2 months ago

1

Let's go citizens of Okanogan County!

Literally everything on their website is devoted to smearing the incumbents. These are the talking points they are using in their newspaper advertisements, billboards and radio advertisements. Their entire objective is to take out the two seated Okanogan County Commissioners who are up for reelection this year. In fact, it was this mission that birthed the new civic group ROC (Replace Our Commissioners which was later changed to Represent Okanogan County). Neither of which has filed PDC.

From the rocon2016.org website:

<http://rocon2016.org/PDF/Water%20Availability.pdf>

County Commissioners Are Not Protecting Our Water Supply

<http://rocon2016.org/PDF/LandUse.pdf>

Who Decides How Private Land May Be Used In Our County?

Legal use of private property is decided by the Okanogan County Commissioners.

<http://rocon2016.org/PDF/Emergent%20Issues%20with%20Board%20of%20Commissioners%20Final%204.20.16-2.pdf>
rocon2016.org/PDF/Agriculture.pdf

County Commissioners & Agriculture

Farming and ranching have historically been the top two economic drivers in Okanogan County. Yet recently, the County Commissioners are actually undermining agriculture in our county.

<http://rocon2016.org/PDF/Wildfire.pdf>

Wildfire Is Our Future in Jeopardy?

Our County Commissioners have refused to complete their tasks!

<http://rocon2016.org/PDF/RoadClosures.pdf>

Three Devils & Other Public Road Closures

In the past several years, the Okanogan County Commissioners have been involved in the closure of county roads, usually to the benefit of a private corporation and in spite of substantial public testimony against the closures.

<http://rocon2016.org/PDF/PubTransportation.pdf>

Public Transportation in Okanogan County

It should be noted your three current County Commissioners have opposed this public service from its beginning!

<http://rocon2016.org/PDF/PublicLandTransfer.pdf>

Public Land Transfers

In April of 2015, the Okanogan County Commissioners.....

<http://rocon2016.org/PDF/Emergent%20Issues%20with%20Board%20of%20Commissioners%20Final%2004.20.16-2.pdf>

Emergent Issues Regarding Board of County Commissioners Issue Examples/Evidence

1. Has the county developed a pattern of plunging ahead prematurely with actions and decisions which then upset constituents, cause unneeded alarm, and cause unnecessary and expensive litigation? Such actions appear to occur before considering history, prior county actions, and legalities, thus costing taxpayers unnecessarily. The abilities of the Commissioners to use good judgment is thus called into question.
1. Transfer of Juvenile Facilities to Martin Hall - Didn't consult with previous BOCC or judges before plunging into planning for possible transfer; did not make public or judges aware of planning discussions (did not appear in minutes. See 10.27.15 ROC notes vs BOCC minutes.)
2. ATV's - The commissioners opened roads under the old law just before the new law became effective. (The old law didn't have the 35 mph speed limit of the new law, so they opened lots of roads with speed limits of 50 mph.) Then the day after the new law became effective, commissioners opened all roads with speed limits of 35 mph or less. Now they are in court about this and needing to hire an expensive contracted attorney (Sandy Mackie) to help.
3. Marijuana Farms - BOCC went ahead quickly to approve Cannabis farms soon after the state law was passed, without sufficient information as to what the state requirements or support would be and without sufficient consideration of land use issues. BOCC had already been to nationwide conferences on marijuana farming and issues for counties. Now there is excessive controversy and draft Zoning Ordinance is in question, delaying other county land use processes and court decision on county Comprehensive Plan.
4. County Support of Transfer of Public Lands (TPL) to the states and counties. We await results of a public records request to see if the mandated public hearing on this issue ever occurred, as stipulated in resolution 28-2014. Related: DeTro Facebook post claiming Finicum assassination, KC Mehaffey article on Bundy/ Malheur Refuge, (ROC website), County dues and fees to American Land Council (ROC website)
5. 3 Devils Road -Immediately following legislative decision to close 3 Devils, posted closure signs requiring litigation by appellants to file a "stay." (Granted.)

Emergent Issues Regarding Board of County Commissioners

2. Has there been lack of transparency on the part of the County to the public and to county employees? Public document requests are required for information that could be made easily available on the County website or has been recently removed from the website. This causes a burden to county staff and cost to taxpayers. BOCC minutes fail to reveal important conversations that have occurred regarding public employees and their programs. There has been a huge increase in Executive Sessions since 2012. All sessions are called in regards to public employees and potential (or existing) litigation.
1. Archives of BOCC Agendas were removed from the county website last year. Now a citizen must file a public records request to read past agendas.
2. Commissioner Resolutions: A citizen must file a public records request to gain access to county resolutions. This causes a greater workload for staff in addition to time and expense to citizens. Other counties (Ferry, for example) have all Commissioner Resolutions posted on the home page of their website. The BOCC says they have been working on this for two years.
3. BOCC minutes often have no record of sensitive discussions held during BOCC meetings. Staff has been discussed during public meetings without staff knowledge. See discussions of County Engineer, Community Action, Juvenile Facilities management, and others in BOCC minutes/ROC notes.
4. A preliminary comparison of 3 months of BOCC minutes in the beginning, middle, and end of 2012 reveals only one Executive session in those three months, in contrast to an average of 3-4 Sessions per day in recent meetings. (See BOCC

minutes, Okanogan County Commissioners' web page.) 5. Compare ROC notes with BOCC minutes regarding additional cost of contracting for shop expenses vs. county employment. (See #4.) 6. See ROC chart of Executive Sessions taken from BOCC minutes showing huge increase in BOCC executive Sessions since ROC has been posting notes on website. 3. Are taxpayers paying for a huge increase in tax dollars necessary to hire expensive contracting attorneys and negotiators who are not employees of the County - and likely for unnecessary litigation or negotiations? Results of a Public Records request were recently received from the county on this topic. But ROC was advised that the county does not create summaries of amounts spent by the county per law firm, per case, or per matter, so this will require much work with the data. This involves litigation on the County Comprehensive Plan/Zoning, Vacation of 3 Devils Road, ATV procedures on road openings, and substantial unknown negotiations with county employees and unions. 4. Are County Commissioners favoring decisions which result in loss of county jobs, which often results in expenditures of paychecks outside Okanogan County as well as higher cost to taxpayers? Is there an underlying reason for the BOCC's intense focus on this issue? What could be the cost of poor employee relations to the tax payer? *See all materials on transfer of Juveniles to Martin Hall in Medical Lake (owned by a Montana Corporation) on the county Planning website * Commissioners' discussions re shop equipment 3/21/16, all BOCC discussions of contracting vs. county employment along with dislike for dealing with union issues (rocon2016.org and BOCC minutes on county website.) Consider also these recent issues of public concern: * Having an out of town attorney handle most personnel issues that had previously been addressed in-house, at a large cost to the taxpayers. (\$98,411.69 during fiscal year 2014.) *Not being able to address and resolve issues at low levels because of that. The Commissioners decided to change the hours of the landfill operations based on one or two constituents. That deprives workers of holiday weekends even when the signage indicates that the landfill will be closed on holiday weekends. *The use of County equipment and manpower to assist Gebbers and Golf Course type activities. *Road vacations because of the Golf Course *The privatization of weed control and the fact that it's not being done well, at more than the original cost. Issue Examples/Evidence Emergent Issues Regarding Board of County Commissioners 5. Have the County Commissioners shown a lack of responsiveness and respect for county residents and voters? 1. Juvenile Detention: See press coverage, rocon2016.org, County Planning website on Juvenile facilities/Martin Hall. Citizens ask: What's the point of all these meetings now? Judge Culp has already said he would not allow video conferences in his courtroom. The public has already made it more than clear that the welfare of the children is a higher priority than cost. Judges, voters, and county/state employees have made their opinions in support of local facilities more than clear on this. 2. Review local press, letters to editor, and articles on 3 Devils Road, in which numerous citizens appeared in order to testify against the vacation but were turned away. The Hearing Examiner's decision was then overruled by Cmr. Kennedy and Campbell. County Planning website, rocon2016.org. 3. Land Use decisions - Citizen input time after time regarding lack of water and its importance to future planning are ignored; agency and science input as to the same, also ignored year after year. County's refusal to negotiate with appellants at the suggestion of Judge Culp and more resultant litigation (accompanied by high outside attorney fees) is the result. 6. Has the current BOCC shown disregard for the Open Public Meetings Act? These violations are difficult to prove due to lack of public records as to when BOCC agendas are actually published, no way to discover what is discussed during Executive Sessions, and so forth. However, here is a recent example: On March 7th, the BOCC accepted comments from the public on marijuana farms although there was no

advertisement of a public hearing. Bob Tolefson, a member of the public, suggested a moratorium on new marijuana farms as a way to solve current problems. There is no mention of the discussion in the BOCC minutes. The next day, the BOCC approved a resolution implementing a moratorium on marijuana farms. This is unfortunately not a violation of the Open Public Meetings Act. But is it right not to let citizens know about this opportunity for input? 7. Has the BOCC shown a disregard for scientific data, input of government agency input, and the citizens concerned about the scientific issues addressed by these data? Do they have a professional attitude toward members of the public and toward science? *See data of water shortages (Aspect Study) on the website of the Methow Watershed Council and/or Methow Watershed Foundation. * BOCC notes record several instances of BOCC members poking fun at people who are concerned about climate change, polar bears, Marbled Murrelet, or other environmental concerns during public meetings. They have verbally refused to use any language containing the words "climate change" or global warming" on grant applications because it would "make us liars." Issue Examples/Evidence Emergent Issues Regarding Board of County Commissioners 8. Do our County Commissioners spend an excess of staff time and money on nationwide or statewide issues, causing a lack of attention and expenditures toward crucial local duties of County Commissioners? Are taxpayer dollars best spent on criticisms of state and federal agencies to the exclusion of performance of duties over which they have actual control as County Commissioners? Examples: See recent ROC chart of Travel Expense of BOCC *Dues and fees to groups and individuals supporting the nationwide transfer of federal public lands to the states and counties and training individuals to advocate for this cause totals well over \$20,000, not including dues and membership fees. Included are groups such as the American Lands Council and Stewards of Liberty, which have links to such radical groups as the Bundy family, which was active in the attempted takeover of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. According to county records, \$800 was spent in addition for personal memberships to the ALC for DeTro and Campbell, plus at least \$2,000 in dues to the ALC * A county resolution in 2013 directed staff to budget for money related to "coordination" issues with Fred Kelly Grant and to hold a public hearing on issues relating to federal lands and interaction with state governments. Neither has been done but money continues to be spent on these issues. * Recent county meetings (weeks of April 11th and 18th) have dealt with serious financial difficulties at the county, including depletion of the emergency reserve and county cash flow problems perhaps necessitating reduction in staff and/or hours. The county's financial condition is the responsibility of the Commissioners. See also copy of Spohn "My Turn" on this topic on ROC website.