

Okanogan Board of Health (BOH)

Tuesday, July 11th, 2023, 1:30 PM

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Present:

Lauri Jones (LJ), Board of Health Director
Mariann Williams (MW), BOH board member
Jim Wright (JWr), BOH board member
Jim Wallace (JW), Health Officer
Jill Gates (JG), BOH, Secretary
Mike Harr (MH), Okanogan County Health District
Jon Neil (JN), County Commissioner, BOH Board Chairman
Andy Hover (AH), County Commissioner, BOH board member
Chuck Zimmerman (CZ), Counsel to Okanogan Public Health District
Sarah Bates, Okanogan County Citizen

Time stamps refer to a recording available on the County Watch website.

Summary of Important Discussions:

- Amendment passed to allocate \$5,600 to improve childhood vaccination rates
- Foundational funds requested for "a true substance abuse prevention program" and to hire administrative help for Environmental Health director
- Short discussion on "hit and miss" aspect of food and other permits for reservation entities
- Health Officer says opioid settlement should go to those engaged in substance use recovery, announces trainings for recovery coaches; will prepare an evaluation on how things were handled during Covid; 911 calls way up from June last year (11 calls);
- Health Director Lori Jones announces mid-year figures, including 88 septic permit applications
- Long discussion with Environmental Health Director Mike Harr on streamlining building permit process: site analysis necessary early on, closer collaboration urged between his department and Planning. Attorney says homeowner must provide water adequacy documentation.

0:05 - During discussion of financial report board member JG announces that everything is balanced. CB asks about a donation to FYRE (Foundation for Youth Resiliency and Engagement).

LJ: We asked for additional foundational public health funds to help support prevention. We

haven't had a true prevention program for ages.

AH: Youth homelessness.

LJ: And substance use prevention. Home Care—they're going to be doing prevention things for us. The Okanogan County Community Health Coalition lost money from Grant Co. Health District. That's a regional grant for youth prevention programs. We haven't been able to help for lack of funds so part of the additional funds I've requested from the (*State*) Department of Health is for prevention programs. These funds have helped start Oroville Cares and Brewster's (*program*). We're in the process of starting a (*county*) coalition. We've received a donation from a private organization because they think we have been very supportive. *Financial report is approved.*

- Community Health - LJ: Amendment 15 directs \$5,600 to improving the rates of childhood vaccines in the county. \$995,000 in foundational funds are supporting all sorts of activities. One is supporting the environmental health director for non-fee administrative type work...

AH: Non-fee administration?

MH: Policy review, stuff like vector control. Not like on-site work that generates permit revenue. (*We'd*) get a temporary or part time person.

LJ (*returning to vaccines*): I don't have Krishna's plan. \$5,600 doesn't go far. She'll work with schools, Head Start, requirements for school entry... I can have her come in next month and explain.

AH: Solid and Hazardous Waste and Land Use Plan—do you have a definition of hazardous waste? What's our interaction with the tribe on solid waste?

MH: There's no interagency agreement. It's always hit or miss. If all else fails we are willing to help the tribes as well as we can.

AH: We might actually be able to find places to utilize that money to help.

CB (*to MC*): Have you had time to review the (*inaudible*) agreement? Last time they updated it it was watered down a little bit. It was an agreement that was made outside of general law, issues we didn't want to fight over between cities and towns on the reservation, on the protocol for processing permits. It specifies that if you're on tribal land you can apply to either side. The tribe doesn't have a fee schedule. When we adopted the land use plan and zoning we come up with that. It was kind of a long process. It might be helpful for the Health District to sign off on something like that. *CB mentions the lawsuit brought against the county by the Yakima tribe for not meeting the 2018 deadline for a land use ordinance*. It would be good to avoid that.

MH: When Tribal Trails went in—they don't have a food safety program at all. And the casinos. They don't obtain permits.

CB: With elections coming up every year policies can change pretty fast. *JN votes to approve Consolidated Contract Amendment 15 for the vaccine budget.*

Health Officer's Report - JW: No major health threats, low Covid cases, no new variants, a few long term care outbreaks, nothing spreading broadly. Overdose Response - I'd like to discuss an increase in the number of health care providers, behavioral health care providers, that can work with us on substance use disorder in hospitals and clinics. (*Inaudible*) Northwest is seeking applicants for its recovery coach program. It's recognized statewide; they've seen tremendous success at keeping folks engaged in recovery, bringing more people into recovery.

AH: Our county is getting those opioid dollars. So you're going to have to come up with a way to spend that money effectively.

JW: In my mind, investment should be put into supporting folks engaged in recovery, trying to

get into recovery or supporting their health conditions as they try to balance their lives, things that can be avoided or prevented, infections, other illnesses. We're a touchpoint in the county. We need to make everyone aware of the resources. Recovery coaches do that but need to make sure front desk people are aware of what exists. At the Behavioral Health workshop, with counselor (*Kara Malseff?*) we looked at our organization, and at behavioral health resources across the region, seeing where the gaps are and how we can help, county by county. It's just as bad if not worse than before Covid. We've been working with Project Pride (?) Northwest on an assessment.

0:23:44 - CB: I'm on the State Public Health Advisory Board. There's been a lot of discussion about after Covid, suggestions for moving forward. Do you have a channel or a form available to provide that information?

JW: ...I want to get a report out on the county. Let me review that by Monday and get you my feedback.

JW: Someone from WSU and from Three Rivers Hospital in Brewster reached out to me about Covid impacts. I appreciate a lot of groups asking what could have been done differently. We've had a lot of success but a lot of things could have been done differently.

Administrative report - JW agrees that the staff needs some help after the last three years together. LJ talks about someone from the WSU Behavioral Task Force who has been giving weekly trainings on Zoom to her office staff. LJ: On the overdose front, we just received from Dispatch that there have been 11 calls on 911 for the month of June. That's well above last year's June total. Since January they have issued 663 birth certificates (some to adults) and 231 death certificates; there have been 272 routine food inspections, 11 complaints. 88 have applied for septic permits with 66 pending. In 2023 there have been 677 Covid cases but no impact on hospitalizations. As for sexually transmitted illnesses, or STI, there have been 20 cases of syphilis, 17 cases of gonorrhea, and 71 of chlamydia. LJ cites five cases of resistance to antibiotics, 173 distributions of the overdose treatment Narcan.

0:34 - LJ: We're invested in youth prevention through Oroville Cares, which John Neil is invested in. And the Okanogan County Coalition. Concerning the opioid situation, people have suggested having recovery pods in jail, and social workers there. Colorado has been trying that. Like how prison used to be, the learning of a trade.

JN: We appreciate the Narcan distribution (*in Oroville*).

LJ: I appreciate you asking for it.

0:37 - Environmental Health Report - MH: It's been busy and good. Just today for \$147,000 for the next two years. I requested \$15,000 extra and they gave me \$8,000. A proposal to do some contract work, for example, with the Sheriff's department. The language was accepted by the State. We're receiving a lot of complaints, applications for septic and food inspections.

AH: We had an email from Planning about Public Health interface. Originally people came in first for a septic permit, then water rules came down from Planning, the Building department says you can't build on the property and people sue. That becomes a lawsuit and who are they going to sue, the County? The site analysis is the tool to figure out if you can build a house. If someone applies for septic, they're in the same boat as applying for a building permit. That's our check and balance on where you can build, can you build, and the regs you can build on. If you've got any ideas on streamlining, -

MH: It's been pretty smooth sailing for the north of the county, under WRIA 48. Jim has a septic application. We're pending test holes, waiting for approval by planning. We're three weeks into

it. Planning has approved that's it is a sellable lot. It's been approved that it's capable of having a well drilled on it. Which, in my opinion, is enough for them to approve the installation of a septic system. It hasn't reached that point. They're holding on to it and not issuing any approval so we can't issue a permit for Jim. The problem for us is, Jim, in the Methow, might have to wait another year. Maybe I don't understand. I've run into this case a lot: A well drilled in 1920 and not in the Well Log.

AH: It's a legal water source if it was drilled prior to 2018. There's a gray area if the paper was not submitted until six months later. They're naturally problematic through the Department of Ecology because we do well inspections and sometimes it takes four or five years before they even upload the well log into that data base system. I'm curious, if it's historically grandfathered in because it was before the time, if someone needs to write that statement out? Can it be the property owner? ...What we're asking for is a copy of the well log.

CB: I think the landowner would have to do that. And then any documentation that showed something about the homestead that happened there would help to establish that you had a basically grandfathered well.

44:00 - MH: So if it qualifies, that's enough info for us to go ahead and install a septic?

AH: Are you having those semi-monthly meetings with Planning? Because it's going from us to Pete, us to you, from you to us. I want to make sure the process is streamlined but because the site analysis is a permit of sorts, we are bound to do certain things based on that. *AH suggests that the commissioners get together with MC and Planning at a commissioners meeting.*

46:03 - MH: I want to know how it's all written in law. Maybe if I saw it I might understand it better myself.

CB: Probably not.

AH: Maybe not. You need to go through the court, that there's a legal water source.

CZ: You hit it on the head. Communication is the key. It's up to the owner to tell us what they're relying on to not have to provide a well log.... If there's a deadline, a date that's in there, we establish that there isn't a well log because it predates the date of this legal decision you're referring to. You spoon-feed the owner-applicant. Otherwise it's a ping pong back and forth.

MH: There's confusion because Planning is not spoon-feeding the information. They could smooth it quite a bit.

CB: You've got a law firm providing information—constant requests on each (*step*) of approval. You're asking questions about a grandfathered well. It's of great interest to certain groups. *JWr says something about approving a septic on an unbuildable lot.*

AH: Someone buys a lot, gets the septic in, then five years later asks for a building permit. It's all in our data base now.

MH: You give a 60-day caveat. You can't build if you can't provide water adequacy. *JWr mentions real estate.*

AH: I could care less about the sale of property. It's incumbent on the County if there's questions to answer properly. I'll tell them, "You need to get a site analysis". ...As soon as a property is advertised, the realtor should, say, pay \$90 for a site analysis.... I encourage people to have a meeting with the Planning director.

They go into a 15-minute executive session with the attorney, board members and MH.

2:48 - *Meeting adjourned.*