

Okanogan County Board of Health
Tuesday February 13, 2024, PM

Present:

Chris Branch (CB) -BOCC , District 1
Andy Hover (AH) – BOCC, (Chairman of BOH), District 2
Denise Varner (DV) – Board of Health, City of Okanogan (on Zoom)
John McReynolds (JM) – Mid Valley Hospital CEO (On Zoom)
Joyce Bruemmer (JB) – Public Health Nurse (on Zoom)
Kait Schilling – Legal Counsel (On Zoom)
Liz Hoxie – Member of the Public (On Zoom)
Quail Orr (QO) – Board of Health, Colville Confederated Tribe (On Zoom)
Dr James Wallace – Board of Health, Medical Director
Mike Haar (MH) – Environmental Health Inspector, Public Health
Maria Hines (MH) – Blue Sky Minds (On Zoom)
Marianna Williams, ARNP – Board of Health
Jill Gates (JG) – Clerk of Board
Lauri Jones(LJ), RN – Public Health Director
2 other unidentified staff/Board members

These notes were taken by an Okanogan County Watch volunteer via Zoom. Every attempt is made to be accurate. Notes are verbatim when possible, and otherwise summarized or paraphrased. Note taker comments or clarifications are in italics. These notes are published at <https://countywatch.org> and are not the official county record of the meeting. For officially approved minutes, which are normally published at a later time, you will need to go to the Okanogan County Health District website for the Board minutes.

Notetaker asked to be able to record this Zoom meeting and was denied this request.

Summary of Significant Discussions or Actions:

Board approves \$19,000 to be paid to Blue Sky Minds, along with Memo of Understanding to conduct an assessment of Okanogan County's food/growers needs – will report back quarterly.

Board approves procurement policy to purchase Emergency Response vehicle, preferably local purchase up to \$55,000.

Report from Dr Wallace: We're out of respiratory illness season (Covid, Influenza, RSV), ER visits have risen, hospitalization rates are down. Have been working with schools/day cares and Long Term Care facilities for outbreaks. Continued Opioid Overdose problem, along with sexually transmitted infections. Director presents power point to report on Public Health 2023 activity.& data.

Environmental Health Officer reports wrap-up of 2023; septic difficult on an acre. (100 foot radius sanitary zone needed- easier with a 2 acre minimum.

BOCC reports zone code is up for review.

Adjourn 2:58

1:30

Meeting called to order by Chairman, AH. Roll call of officers and introductions of everyone attending, either in person or on Zoom. LJ would like to add vehicle procurement policy discussion to the agenda.

There was no Public Comment.

It was moved, seconded, and carried to approve minutes as presented. Also, moved, seconded, and carried to approve the finance reports (*Board members had this information, it was not presented in the meeting – minutes or financial report*)

Discussion among members of the request of Blue Sky Minds request for \$19,000 to conduct assessment of food/grower needs within Okanogan County. They will be spreading payments out over a couple of years. Ms. Hines (MH) will do a quarterly report to the Board of Health. DV likes revision within the contract – only need to change mailing address. There is no longer a PO Box in the address. It was moved, seconded, and carried to approve the Memo of Understanding between Blue Sky Minds and Okanogan Co Health District. MH is thanked for upcoming work she will be doing on this project.

LJ – Board of Health approved procurement policy but would like to buy a Ford F-150 for their Emergency Response vehicle. She has received numerous quotes. LJ- we priced at Jess Ford, Sunrise, and 5 different bids within the county dealers, but we need the amount upgraded to \$55,000. We'd like to go with Jess Ford and a vehicle is available. AH notes that if this vehicle is bought within the county, Ok County will get the sales tax (8.7%) revenue. LJ notes that they will use foundational funds. There are two different trucks with different gas tank sizes. Deciding which is wanted – costs are more for larger tank.

It was moved, seconded, and carried to approve this purchase and up the limit to \$55,000.

Dr Wallace reports that we are out of the Respiratory illness season of Covid, Influenza, and RSV. AH asks if the common cold is one of these. Dr Wallace – yes, but not in the count. Dr Wallace states ER visits have risen, hospitalization rates are down. Looking historically, ER visits fluctuate. We are now below the threshold for Influenza and Covid. There has been a lot of activity with RSV cases. Public Health has been working closely with Long Term Care facilities, which only required 1 hospitalization with one outbreak. Protocols are more efficient. Also, working with schools & daycares for chicken pox.

There are also the STI's (Sexually Transmitted Infections) and Opioid Overdoses. We are continuing to experience high rates of overdoses.

LJ notes that we (Public Health) is providing Narcan to the jail.

AH notes that we have a Full Time RN and have approved 4 more temporary positions to deal with the jail health and substance issues.

It was noted that Dr Craig and Dr Johanson are the 2 physicians doing healthcare for the jail.

Board would like to know the percentage of ER visits due to Opioid Overdose. Dr Wallace explains they are using the RINO statewide data base system for tracking. CB talked about the numbers of Substance use/abuse/overdoses after an inmate is released.

Dr Wallace states that a lot of that is unknown at this time. The release date of the database system is still unknown.

Lauri Jones gives and administrative update (end of year data and power point, which was shared on Zoom)

First, LJ reports about an upcoming Nationwide Board of Health Conference in Nashville, Tennessee August 12th through the 14th. Marianne Williams had attended before and found the networking and

other ideas very interesting.

Power Point by LJ, District Director

Ok Co Health District has been a single District since 1985 with a 7-member Board. We have 1 vacant position that is reserved for the Colville Tribe. There are 15 Fulltime Employees of the District with a \$3.5 million budget in 2023.

Environmental Health Data;

food establishments – 504

food workers cards -2011

temporary events – 175

nightly rentals – 168

Water adequacy – 141

coliform and nitrate water testing and well head decommissioning.

Land use applications – 26

Septic permits – 226

Of note – banks are requiring on-site septic inspections for home sales. This regulation is coming in the near future,

Community Health:

Nursing assessment at Juvenile Detention – 2X weekly

Immunization Rate Improvement Project

Maternal Child Healthcare

Reportable Disease;

animal bites

salmonella

E Coli

Giardia

Hep A, B, & C

Rabies

Trichinosis

Suspected Tuberculosis\

MRSA/ VRE

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) 2023:

Chlamydia - 143

Gonorrhea - 25

Syphilis - 36 (Noted to have stark increase, nearly 6X in the last 3 years). *Nationwide increase*

Quail Orr's team has done remarkable getting people into treatment.

LJ also noted that Dr Wallace has done presentations to practitioners and other community agencies.

LJ states we have over 1000 staff calls for positive covid and have provided isolation support.

LJ – Health District has been administering the Rural Equity Grant – with outreach to homeless shelter and community events. They have provided over 400 boxes of Naloxone/Narcan & trained people on this. All this takes staff hours.

Support Services:

Birth certificates – 1254

Death Certificates – 1447

Public Record Requests – 507

Also, continued renovation of the Okanogan County Public Health facility.

LJ notes – we are a really good team.

DV asks whether there is a local Board of Health group that would not be as far to attend at Nashville, Tennessee.

CB remarks about building harmony in governance principles.

AH asks about the Public Health role in the zone code which is up for review. He asks about converting 1 to 2 acres in zoning. Mike Haar – Environmental inspector states that it is difficult to put a septic on just one acre. The requirement is a 100-foot radius sanitary zone, depending on the soil type. AH notes that people are getting upset about it.

Mike Haar and CB discuss a little about the River Road thing on the Mobile Home Park that had them out of water for 2 months. A state of emergency could be instituted but AH states that “we don't take that lightly”

Mike Haar notes there is no city water in Conconully so the wells and septic systems are on top of each other.

Meeting adjourned at 2:58.