

**Okanogan Board of Health (BOH)**  
**Tuesday, March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 1:30 PM**

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**Present:**

Lauri Jones (LJ), Board of Health Director  
Mike Harr (MH), Okanogan County Health District  
Andy Hover (AH), County Commissioner, BOH  
Jim Wright, BOH board member  
Jon Neil (JN), County Commissioner, BOH board chairman  
Chris Branch (CB), County Commissioner, BOH board member  
Jill Gates (JG), BOH, Secretary  
Denise Varner (DV), City Council representative (Zoom)  
John McReynolds, CEO, North Valley Hospital (Zoom)  
Kait Schilling, attorney, Ogden Murphy Wallace  
Bill Vallance, Local Emergency Response Coordinator (LERC) appointee (Zoom)  
Julie Ogden, Public Records Officer (Zoom)  
Find the Right passion, local resident (Zoom)  
Brock Hires, editor, Omak Chronicle (Zoom)  
Krisha Warnstaff (KW), Okanogan Public Health (Zoom)

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

**Summary of Important Discussions:**

- Resolutions passed involving: Public Records Act, Organizational chart, Claims Officer, Group B water systems
- Covid allocation extended to June 30th, Cases number 10-12 a week
- Commissioner Hover expresses support for freedom of choice regarding vaccines
- Salary of new Local Emergency Response Coordinator discussed
- New legislation requires septic inspections for every transaction, cloud data base discussed; system failure reported near Oroville, hook-up to sewer extension possible, grouping several would lower the cost

**2:53** - KS: The Public Records Act says we have to have records dating from 1973 on. This would be difficult for our Public Records Officer so... The resolution you have before you is waiving that and adopting the Public Records Act policy.

AH: That doesn't mean we don't have a lot of public records, but that we don't have an index. *JN asks who their officer is; LJ says it's Julie Ogden. Resolution 2024-2 is passed.*

**4:49** - Resolution 2024-3, Organizational Chart - LJ explains that in 2023 they didn't know if they would have funds for an Emergency Response Coordinator (LERC) so this is the new organizational chart which includes this person who reports directly to

*the administrator. Motion passed.*

**6:33** - Resolution 2024-4, Designated Claims Officer - KS explains that the person filling this function is no longer there. CB is curious about who this person is supposed to serve. KS says the claim is usually for a person who is wrongfully terminated. Resolution is carried.

Consolidated Amendment 18 - Resolution 2024-3 is a consolidated contract for Group B water systems, says MH. The state gives \$25,000 a year for Public Health to implement these. They've discussed dialing back this regulation to state requirements; the money paid out under the current regulation doesn't really justify it. They would amend requiring engineering plans on some submittals. MH has been working with the planning director, going through their codes. He will prepare a draft amendment with KS.

LJ says an amendment to the Covid allocation just came out. It provides \$25,000 through June 30th, 2024. The original allocation of \$934,000 ended last December. They are getting between 10 and 12 Covid cases a week. (There will be no Health Officer's update because Jim Wallace is busy.)

**16:00** - AH: Public Health used to do childhood immunizations.

LJ: In the mid 2000s we were supposed to establish a medical "home": clinic, doctor's office. We did monitoring of childhood vaccinations. We would sometimes do hepatitis A. We used to do travel shots but it wasn't cost effective.

AH: A person who had never got immunized, Dr. Wallace didn't give them the possibility to opt out. There's a lot of people who, for whatever reason, don't want to do vaccines. That's their choice. It would behoove clinics to say, "These are your options, this is what could happen." LJ agrees with him.

**19:49** - LJ: This brings us to our staff spotlight. She introduces Community Health Nurse Krisha Warrenstaff.

KW: ...I've been a public health nurse for 8 years. Before that I worked in obstetrics, the Navy, home health, grants, and, long ago, was a marine. My passion has always been community nursing.... I did home visiting, child welfare visits, taught parenting. Maternal/child care is my passion. If a child is born with a disability, I remove barriers to care... *She talks about substance abuse.* KW: We're trying to get our child death review re-established, how children are dying, also looking at maternal death, and how these can be prevented. *She talks about doing juvenile hall assessments, helping children get immunized before leaving pre-school, and tests for lead in the blood, and substance abuse. MH says she was a front runner to get waste water surveillance.*

*Administrative Update - LJ shows the trailer for a public health film "Invisible Shield" shot partly in Okanogan Co. with views of the river and the clock.*

**40:06** - The Board approves a resolution setting the new Local Emergency Response Coordonator (LERC)'s salary at step 5, grade 27, on account of his 25-30 years in the field of public health. LJ: He's very, very qualified. He has more experience than any

other LERC.

*LJ says there's a resolution to allow the Board Chair to sign time sensitive material.*

AH: ..that we'd have to ratify. I want to make sure there's a discussion. *He is okay with the administrator signing material when deadlines are in conflict with the meeting schedule, for a building contract, for example. If it's about a salary, they would ask for a discussion of the board past step 3, otherwise the administrator would be allowed to sign. The secretary will provide a draft resolution for next meeting.*

**49:12 - Environmental Health** - MH: We'll have a resolution on water recreation facilities. They were last updated in 2005. This month or next month there's state on-site WAC that's going to be adopted and there's some significant changes that will affect us as a county. One of the big things, whenever there's a transaction it's going to require an inspection of the on-site septic system with a certified operation and maintenance person... All those forms have to be maintained and managed through local public health.

AH: Without any extra funding.

MH: (Right.)The records requests, if we don't do any on-line deal, are going to significantly go up. So we're looking at some on-line recording where O and M people can go and upload inspection reports under this cloud based data base. Realtors would be able to log in... *He says they might have a sub-committee of the various actors come in and "dial in what the procedures are going to be". It will take effect in January 2026.*

*MH talks about an 8-hour class he went to for (septic?) installers. Some were excited and some complained. They talked about different technology, drip systems, different options they don't see over here but will in the future.*

CB: When the banks require it, are they required to report to Health when a system is—

MH: Not necessarily. It's kind of a contingency thing.

**55:24 - JW:** If there's some obvious problem we go and repair so it's ready before the new family comes in.

CB: When a system fails and there's required distance from a public system is it you that says you have to connect to that system?

MH: It would be at our discretion. The law says if you're within 200 feet from a public water system, you have to connect. If it's "anatomically friendly". That's a challenging one. ...I got a call from a system in east side Oroville that's failing big time. It's an actual pressurized line and there's no feed into it so they have to run a probably a 500-foot line to the pump chamber.

CB: It's something to talk about. Eventually, over time, you can do something with the infrastructure to make that happen, because there's other homes there... If there wasn't that challenge of a pressurized system, there was policy set by the

commissioners a few years ago, what condition would require a connection to that system. I'm not sure if there was a resolution.

MH: A little guidance from the commissioners would be helpful (*when he must announce a costly adjustment to the home owner*).

CB: If there are barriers there are things we can do to overcome them... People want to know if they're actually using that (*sewer system extension*) which is under-utilized. *AH imagines that it would be too expensive for one person to hook up but if there were several that were going to fail, they should all go into the city's system.* CB: There's also the system development fee.

AH: It's cheaper than a new system. *CB talks about possible aid for low-income residents, doing a survey and applying for grants for clean water.*

*LJ reminds them of the passing of Dan Boyle who worked many years for Behavioral Health and made a big difference in the lives of addicts.*

*MH asks if an interim Hearings Examiner has been chosen. CB answers that the one who has been selected will act as the interim during the hiring formalities.*

**1:03:12** - Meeting adjourned.