

Okanogan County Board of Health
12/8/2020

JD—Jim DeTro, BOH--absent
AH—Andy Hover, BOH
CB—Chris Branch, BOH
MW—Marianne Williams, BOH
JW—James Wright, BOH
LJ—Lauri Jones, Community Health
JMcC—John McCarthy, Health Officer
DH—Dave Hilton, Environmental Health
PS—Pat Stanton, BOH
DrW—Jim Wallace, Family Health Center

These notes were taken by an Okanogan County Watch volunteer. Every attempt is made to be accurate. Notes are verbatim when possible, and otherwise summarized or paraphrased. Note takers comments or clarifications are in italics. These notes are published at <https://www.countywatch.org/> and are not the official county record of the meeting. For officially approved minutes, which are normally published at a later time, see <https://okanogancounty.org/Commissioners/Minutes%202014/March%204,%202014.htm>

The time stamps refer to the times on the AV Capture archive of the meeting on this date at <https://okanogancounty.org/avcapture.html> To locate items in real time, the clock on the wall in the AV Capture screen can be helpful.

Summary of significant discussions:

BOH approves minutes, Treasurer's Report, vouchers, changes in the Public Health fee schedule and the 2021 budget.

The Board has a long discussion concerning LJ's request to be allowed to carry over her unused vacation time for 2020 into 2021. They end up deciding to gather more information regarding legal aspects of the situation before making a decision.

Community Health update—The area hospitals are at capacity. An extended care facility has had 15 deaths in the last week. Also, a 58 year old woman has died on the Colville reservation. CB reported that Salvador from the Governor's Office called to ask his reaction to the Colvilles imposing a curfew in one area. They have 60 active Covid cases on the reservation and 47 are in this area. This is pretty drastic measure. The curfew is 9PM to 6AM.

After a 20 minute executive session, JD announces that Dr. Jim Wallace of the Family Health Center is being offered the job of Public Health Physician. Dr. Wallace accepts the offer.

0:00—LJ proposes additions to the published agenda: a resolution and a discussion of the policy for annual leave overages. Additions approved.

0:40—JD—Any public comments? No comments.

1:00—JD—Administrative reports and actions. Minutes from Nov. 10 amended a bit and then approved.

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3:00—Treasurer’s report. We balance. Everything looks good except we’re waiting for the CARES dollars to come in.

AH—That money should be here next week. You should have a check on 12-23.

JD—Cash on hand? Is \$122,460 right? Yes.

AH—I know the coming payment is \$48,000.

LJ—We already received that.

?—The next two payments will be just over \$500,000 in total.

6:50—JD—OK. Vouchers. Discussion of various expenses. Vouchers and payroll accepted.

10:10—Health Care Authority (of Washington State) contract K-4654.

LJ—it’s an ongoing agency agreement for a Medicaid administrative match. We’ve been doing it for a long time, and will continue to do it. Just an extension of the contract. BOH approves extension.

12:20—JD--Next is Resolution 2020-09 to rescind 2020-07.

LJ—Resolution 2020-07 was to approve a stipend for an employee, but it turns out that Chelan & Douglas Counties pay that stipend. We haven’t paid it, so we need to rescind that resolution. BOH approves 2020-09.

13:10—JD—Resolution 2020-10, for the 2021 Public Health fee schedule.

LJ—This is a public hearing for the proposed changes in the fee schedule and the budget. We’ve advertised it as such. So we need to open it to public comments.

JD—Open to staff.

LJ—I’m Lauri Jones, Community Health Director. We have no changes to the fee schedule for Environment Health or Community Health. The only change is for vital records. Birth and death certificates will cost \$5.00 more. This rise is because of the state’s Department of Health.

LJ—The finance committee met.

AH—Yes. Jim, LJ and I met to go over the budget. All grants accounted for, expenses were correct—payroll, etc.

JD—No public comment.

AH—move to accept 2021 fee schedule and 2021 Public Health budget. Both pass.

AH—I want to say is that Okanogan County puts \$145,000 in to Public Health, which is not a lot. The cities don’t actually put money into the Public Health budget, and those within the city limits receive value from Public Health. That’s something that should be discussed with the cities. All of Public Health’s budget except for the \$145,000 is from grants and fees. So it’s important that we look at that.

Due to wi-fi difficulties, note taker was unable to record approximately 10-15 minutes of discussion. Much of that discussion concerned LJ’s request to be able to carry over into 2021 vacation time in excess of 240 hours.

21:14—Discussion of carryover policies with exempt employees. AH—I don’t have enough information to vote on this.

JD—I have to abstain because I’m PERS I.

LJ—I didn’t know some of this information but I don’t think it’s just to be in the middle of a pandemic and not be able to take any time off. And then to be penalized by losing the leave because I couldn’t use it, I don’t think that’s fair. Sorry.

AH—I think you’re doing an excellent job but you’re also getting a stipend for the extra hours.

LJ—I would rather be non-exempt and go back to regular hours. But I’ll just take the time off.

AH—But you said “I don’t like it.” I’m not saying it to try to be mean. The reason I’m stating the policy is because the HR director told us to conform with the laws. So I’m asking you to work with Tanya (Craig, in HR) to see what’s appropriate.

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LJ—It'll be January before that will happen so it's not worth it. That's fine.

?—AH said he needed more information. What information do you need?

AH—#1, I'd like to see how this is set up for exempt employees.

LJ—What about Sheriff's deputies?

AH—They're different. They're hourly and have a union contract. I can ask Tanya about exempt employees.

?—I appreciate what you're saying. And I also appreciate what's going on with LJ.

JD—I abstained and AH has his position because he thinks that's what we're supposed to do. The board has the option of overriding that and approving the motion.

CB—AH's information implies that it's illegal to do what LJ has asked. Is that correct?

AH—I'm not going to give a legal opinion because I don't have enough information.

LJ—I don't have a contract.

AH—I'll also bring up that next year exempt employees will have to earn \$58,000 per year and \$79,000 by 2028. So that's a budget consideration.

LJ—We can table this.

CB—There's a motion on the floor and if it's uncertain that it's legal, I can't vote for it myself. We have to answer that question to be able to vote.

AH—I'll ask Tanya.

LJ—When I talked to Bev in payroll because I've never had any vacation in previous years to carry over. I'd always used it. But Bev said I couldn't carry it over without the Board's approval. But I didn't know we'd have to contact Tanya or anything.

LJ—Years ago we have an employee who took advantage of exempt status and so we started to make even exempt employees use leave for parts of the work day. For example—2 hours if you were gone to the dentist.

JD—Is this part of your written policies and procedures?

LJ—Don't know.

JD—We've got 9 different union contracts that we have to take into account. And there's the minimum wage.

?—Isn't there a worksheet from Fair Labor Practices that you can fill out to see if an employee is exempt?

AH—There is.

?—Can we table this and vote on it when we get more information.

LJ—I can live with this.

CB—Given the amount of time you've worked, I suggest that you take the time off. Plus, what would happen if you were sick and couldn't work. We need you, but we also need to be able to get along without you.

AH—I agree with CB 100%. You've been working so much but time off is important. It's three days and you should take it.

JD—You can't table motion. You have to complete the action. Take an up or down vote, and if it's down, you can move to check with HR to get more info. BOH votes on motion. AH & JD abstain and all others vote no.

?—I'll move to direct staff to check with HR to check legalities of carrying over annual leave.

JD—Motion passes.

41:32—JD—Community Health updates.

LJ—Where to begin. I direct you to our Covid county web page.

LJ—Two doctors pleaded with Chelan, Douglas and Okanogan Counties. Hospitals are at capacity.

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LJ—Our hearts go out to North Valley Extended Care. 15 deaths as of Monday in just over a week. Their capacity is 42, and they have over 33 tested positive. There's another death of a 58 year old tribal member, and we're waiting for confirmation from the tribe to announce.

LJ—We're doing lots of community testing. Over 12,000 tests. They're at Collee Dam tonight and will be in Oroville, Tonasket and back to Omak. Trying to figure out if there are hot spots. Don't have percentage of positives yet. We're still calculating.

CB—Can I add something? I got a call from Salvador in the Governor's Office asking about my reaction to Colville imposing a curfew in one area. They have 60 active Covid cases on the reservation and 47 are in this area. This is pretty drastic measure. The curfew is 9PM to 6AM.

LJ—The only other thing I want to say about how this impacts the health care system is that the cancelled all elective surgery at Confluence. Also someone called to ask if there was a quarantine facility for when we let people out of prison. We hope they won't be letting anyone out of Coyote Ridge (a correctional facility in Connell, WA, near Tri-Cities) any time soon, as they have over 541 cases.

47:05—Environmental Health report. DH—I've got nothing. In the January meeting I'll have the roll-up for this year and we're still doing field work.

47:40—JD—We have an executive session under RCW 43.30.110 g. Performance of an employee.

AH—Executive session for 20 minutes.

49:39—Executive session over.

LJ—(to JMcC)—We were singing your praises.

JD—Thank you for your services, all you've done. I appreciate having worked with you.

LJ—Dr. Wallace, we have you on speaker and the BOH would like to say something.

JD—This is Commissioner DeTro. After review, we offer you the position of our Public Health Physician.

DrW—I'm honored to be invited to fill JMcC's shoes and I humbly accept your offer with the assurance you'll grant me a little bit of grace time to attain the level of wisdom and integrity JMcC had, but I'm excited to begin the process and I'm happy to be able to serve the county this way.

JD—The vote was unanimous.

LJ—I'll be in touch.

54:12--?—So the pandemic shows the weakness in the public health system. So that we can make improvements, I propose a retreat or a workshop with DrW to review our mission and goals and to consider a plan to be more proactive in public health in the county.

LJ—Routinely what we do in the first BOH meeting of the year is elect officers. We could do something then.

AH—If you think it will take longer than the usual time, could you let Lanie know?

LJ—See you next month.

Adjournment