

**Okanogan County Board of Health**  
**6/9/2020**

**Present:**

**Board of Health**

Chris Branch, County Commissioner District #1 **(CB)**  
Andy Hover, County Commissioner District #2 **(AH)**  
Jim Detro, Chairman, County Commissioner District #3 **(JD)**  
Patricia Stanton, City of Okanogan Rep, Board member  
Mariann Williams, ARNP, Board member  
James Wright, Board Member  
Kris Erlandsen, Board Member

**Administration:**

Dave Hilton, Environmental Health Director **(DH)**  
Lauri Jones, Community Health Director **(LJ)**  
Health Officer: John McCarthy, M.D. **(McC.)**

Staff: Chris and Jill

**Other (at 1:30)**

Sheriff Tony Hawley  
Marcy Stamper  
Isabelle Spohn  
Pat Leigh  
Maurice Goodall  
Heather (Eagle Sun)  
Reb.  
Lacretia Warnstaff

*Note: These notes were taken by an Okanogan County Watch citizen volunteer and posted at [countywatch.org](http://countywatch.org). They are not the officially approved minutes of the county. Every attempt has been made to be accurate. For county Board of Health minutes, normally published at a later time, see [https://okanogancounty.org/ocph/about\\_us.html](https://okanogancounty.org/ocph/about_us.html). Note taker's questions/comments are in italics.*

**Covid-19 summary:** Re volunteer safety, contact tracers work only by phone. Public Health hopes to contract with Emergency Management for use of a system allowing texting for tracking health of the infected. Increase in

Brewster cases is not from H2A workers, but from families living in homes rather than camps. All cases resulted from a family barbecue, which can typically include 30-40 people from extended family in this culture. Cases are confined and employers involved in keeping them home and getting them necessary supplies. LJ says it's well under control. Questions arose re Memorial Day influx of people. Typically, cases should show up 2-3 weeks after, and we are only at 2 weeks. McCarthy is less optimistic than LJ and expects numbers to rise in 2-3 weeks, considering H.S. graduations and good weather. LJ disappointed in reports that graduation procedures approved by McCarthy may have run amuck. We will know results in 2-3 weeks. July 4 also of concern. Current impact upon health care system is minimal, but new public health employees are essential. The virus will persist, and staff cannot work 7 days a week month after month.

### **Beginning formalities:**

**1:30 DeTro** - Call to order, introductions

**Lauri** - *(To Zoom attendees.)* Please remain muted when not speaking. We will mute you if there is background noise. Chat box is not on. Public comment at beginning. Use the raised hand feature. Or press \*9. Will make a list of those with public comment. Will lower your hand afterwards and then call on you individually. Limit is 2 minutes.

No additions to agenda.

AH - moves to approve agenda.

### **Questions from public:**

**Isabelle Spohn** -Citizen. Some of us are quite concerned regarding the increases in Brewster. Will you be addressing this in the meeting?

LJ - Yes, we will.

**Pat Leigh** - Citizen. There appear to be many volunteers from the Methow for contact tracing, etc. Is there a plan or some kind of strategic planning in mind that would keep volunteers and public health employees safe? I'm thinking of the fact that we've had threats of violence against public health workers. Thinking of all the volunteers who are in a high risk situation.

**Lauri** - We are asking volunteers to do phone calling only. So even our employees are not going out to homes at this point. If we are concerned

with daily checks, we are hoping to be able to contract with EMS, kind of like a wellness check and to keep people out of hospital, but currently are asking our volunteers to do this via phone. Because of the geography we have, we will not be going to anyone's door.

Other comments? (No.)

### **DeTro - closes public comments. Minutes, financial issues approved.**

LJ - Draft minutes. (Jill does a great job on the minutes.)

CB - Moves to approve minutes.

May 21, June 1 minutes approved.

### **Financial reports:**

Jill refers to vouchers Board has received.

Marianne - festival permits - did you return money?

LJ - Correct.

Marianne - Hepatitis B series, \$103. How many shots?

LJ - Probably no more than 2. We do first responders. Probably one or two.

Mar - On continental breakfast, what is high and what is low?

(Hilton?) - High hazard, low hazard

Marianne - Was there impact from those businesses that were not open?

Answer was no. (Hilton?)

LJ - Questions/Clarification?

JD - Discussion? All in favor?

Vouchers approved.

Lots of conversation.

LJ - Contract for a decrease in sanitary services.

Voice - Things were dropped from contract as unnecessary.

Approved.

### **Community Health Update**

Lauri - You are all very much aware we are now in Phase 2. We were never denied partial Phase 2, but Sec'y of Health knew the Gov was going to change the regulations, so he held off in presenting our application. I'm glad he did. The letter I attached or forwarded to Board, the Secy was very clear that the Duty Officer had to be notified within 6 hours of new cases. I had conversation with them on Saturday (speaking of state personnel.) We had increases on Friday and again this morning. They are aware that these are households that have been tested, and that we expected these results. The cases are contained. Public Health is working well with their employers to be sure they stay put and have the resources they need.

When I talk about a family barbecue, for me it's me, my daughter, and my husband. But these are households that are related, maybe 30-40 people at a time. Again, I feel these are contained and that we are on a good path - providing no more fallout from Memorial Day. The next issue will probably be July 4.

AH - (*I did not catch his question*) Asks about further phases.

LJ - We are not looking too far ahead at this point, will start checking soon. There are criteria involved in Phase 3.

Jill (?) - Same metrics as Phase 2.

LJ - The real concern is overburdening our hospitals. Do not want to see a burden on health care system.

AH - What is the burden of the current situation?

LJ - None, right now. This has been fairly mild. We have the flu-like symptoms. The person hospitalized here was from Yakima, a person who thought it was good to travel here.

McCarthy - Phase 3 was just reinvented this past week as far as metrics are concerned. Department of Health was up against a 3 week window.

I am more worried than Lauri is - about 2 weeks from now, due to good weather, graduations, etc. - we should be prepared for higher numbers. Realistically, we need our eyes open. I would rather be pleasantly surprised than unhappily surprised. We will be prepared with contact tracing, etc.

AH - I'm wondering about memorial day weekend, May 24th.

LJ - We are only talking 2 weeks ago.

McCarthy - We should see something, if anyone was exposed, in 2-3 weeks. My biggest concerns is asymptomatic people that will be the spreaders who will cause trouble...walk into store, etc. and that's it.

AH - This AM, I just saw an article that said WHO said asymptomatic people are less likely for transmission than they originally thought.

Mc C - That was not my read on it. I think asymptomatic are very concerning. This is not like the flu. The problem that exists is that .....Harvard study had a contrary article, but I can't find it right now.

AH - It was CNBC - Said asymptomatic spreads are very rare.

McCarthy - I would like to be wrong, and so would you. Asymptomatic spread happens routinely. Stay posted and we'll wait for what I find on this. If there is asymptomatic spread, we could have real problems.

CB - Various info that we have received.....some claims by an organization that is trying to speed up our opening. Forwarded it to Lauri, hope she has that information here. I would like to be able to respond to them if you can address this, especially re the status of hospitals.

LJ - Whatever happens, this is something we will need to deal with for awhile. I will just say we need prepare for the fact that Public Health will need bodies. Employees to help. Brian Piper and I can't be working 7 days per week like we have the last 7 weeks. We are wearing out. The burden becomes Pub Health's burden, regardless of whether we are being opened or not. Still need to do contract tracing and a lot of other stuff. Can't overburden volunteers either. We need to talk about this now.

(*McCarthy?*) I need to support Lauri. She and Chrystal are constantly working, early in the AM, every day etc. They are the ones that got us into Phase 2. They'd can't do more unless they are into martyrdom. I did just find these comments on being asymptomatic. They have walked it back. Science moves slowly, not rapidly. Being a doctor, I say the newest and greatest is generally really not that great. For example, getting the new vaccine is not really that great, etc. In order to make things work best, we will assume that there is asymptomatic spread to some degree. I want to be wrong.

Lauri - Dr. McCarthy approved all graduation plans for the school districts. I am disappointed in the things people are telling me. There were very specific plans presented, but I got several reports that things ran amuck. Thanks should go to Dr. Mc C for his work. We do have graduation in Brewster this weekend....appreciate your work on this.

(Unknown voice?) I have migrant workers coming up. (*Wants to know something about testing.*)

LJ - The US gov't and Mexican Gov'ts failed to test. The states didn't test. So now the burden is on the counties, Health Departments. These (*new cases?*) are not H2A workers. These are families living in houses, not those in the camps. Their employers are very much aware. Sometimes the employers know at the same time we do. We ask the workers to call employers at the same time as us.

Another comment - CB - (*Can't hear.*) Capacity is important. In our resolution, we permitted the *????* to do that, so who is taking this over (*????*) Would be great to get that experiment over quickly so state responds to reimbursement.

LJ - Tim Hargrave now works for Clerk's office, paying him one day/week. Talked with Charlene Groomes. Couldn't get two days from her for Hargrave. I called HR, and Joe has been working with them too. And then we're are looking at what we will be doing for very near future to get a communicable disease nurse trained. The software the board approved is being used for contact tracing. The webinar with Michael - the contact tracers can be assigned a case. You can make a text by computer - ie "How are you feeling today? Better, worse?" etc.

CB - Last conversation with Gov's office said something about the need to spend \$\$ by October?

LJ - I thought it was 2021.

CB - Let's get that clear. Scott Merriman is working on that. I didn't get a clear answer. We'd better check in more about this. Kind of curious about that.

AH - (*joke about billing the state?*)

CB - Here we are, as we incur expenses - we need to solve this.

AH - multi-year contracts (*couldn't follow.*)

AH - Just showing ideas out there. They are asking us to spend that much \$ \$ by October?

LJ - Skeptical.

CB - Let's get it straight.

LJ - I'll shout out to emergency management - if not for Maurice and Crystal doing the text stuff..... worked their butts off on the graph, etc. ...

JD - Did the South county conversation answer Isabelle's question?

LJ - The employers are really stepping up to the plate, getting them supplies, making sure they stay home....

Marianne - Several case reports that if the virus was transmitted, the only option was that it was from someone who was asymptomatic. Also, tests we do that are positive are asymptomatic. This supports the thought that symptomatic folks can spread the virus.

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McCarthy - It looks like CDC is saying 30-40 percent of cases could be asymptomatic. You are more likely to catch it from asymptomatic people than people that are coughing.

AH - I just saw that article on asymptomatic transmission, and I wanted to get your opinion on that.

### **Conversation shifts to septic system.**

AH - They have a septic system that , not sure when they put it in, not sure if pressurized. At what point do septic systems...when did we get into pressurized systems?

1994-1995 (Hilton?) *(adds more details.)*

HA - If drainfield fails, do they have to.....

DH - Whatever matches your system is what is required.

### **JD - Anything else? (No one answers.) We are good to go.**

Unknown speaker - Is Gary Robinson doing some advisory type work? Only DH doing design.

**Line goes dead, assuming meeting ends, at about 2:08.**

