

Board of Okanogan County Commissioners
September 15, 2020

Present:

Jim DeTro (JD) - BOCC Chair, District 3.
Chris Branch (CB) - BOCC Vice-Chair, District 1
Andy Hover (AH) - BOCC, District 2
Lanie Johns - LJ Clerk of the Board
Pete Palmer - PP Director of Planning
Josh Thomson- JT County Engineer/Public Works
Tanya Craig - TC Risk Management, Human Resources
Dave Gechas - DG, Deputy Civil Attorney

Notes were taken at this meeting by a county watch volunteer. 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, see the Okanogan County Commissioners' website at <https://www.okanogancounty.org>.

Summary: Board of Health: Agenda, treasurer reports approved. No public Comment. Resolutions # 2020-5, #2020-6, #2020-7 passed in relation to payment for huge amounts of overtime for certain salaried employees due to Covid-19 necessities. Maurice Goodall and "Chrystal" were added. One firefighter sent home due to Covid-19 symptoms, although testing negative. **Schools reopening:** Covid Data discussed, parental and staff reactions varied, preventing some schools from reopening. Data needs to be 75/100 thousand for hybrid opening, 25/100 thousand for actual reopening, over 2 weeks' time. Schools can go against Public Health recommendations, as the Methow is doing. McCarthy will meet with all Superintendents tomorrow (Wed) AM. He inspects plans, determines whether or not they are reasonable. Other Covid data discussed; increase in cases expected due to early numbers resulting from Labor Day. **3 more deaths** will be announced all under the age of 70, bringing county total to 12. One was a popular man who did a lot of coaching in the Brewster area. The others were females. Small rise in **Health Insurance costs** - question as to whether to raise caps. Administrative leave for evacuated employees. **Microphone malfunctions, new mics, sound systems discussed.** BOCC decides to look for a sound system company as consultants to take the burden off Central Services.

1:30 PM Special Board of Health Meeting (Rescheduled from 9/8/2020.)

In attendance:

Andy Hover (AH) -Health Board, Board of Commissioners
Chris Branch (CB) - Health Board, Board of Commissioners
Jim DeTro - JD - Health Board Chair, Board of Commissioners
Jim Wright - JW -Board member
Dave Hilton - DH - Environmental Health Director
Jill Gates - Jill (doing work of auditor)
Laurie Jones- LJ - Public Health Director
Maryann Williams MW - (Board member)
(Kris Erlandsen - Board member, absent - out on fires)
Chrystal - operating computer and documents.
Dr. John McCarthy - JM - Health Officer

Board Meeting:

1:35 Agenda approved

1:38: Public comment -None

1:39: Treasurer's report - Vouchers, Expenses, Covid-related including Zoom, Health checks, Covid website, etc. reimbursements from Commerce; how it's spent/reimbursed. Questions/answers.

Resolutions 2020-5, 2020-6, 2020-7 passed, with Jim DeTro voting no. Possibly another voice objecting, could not hear.

DeTro - Refers to the opinion he expressed about this last month.

LJ - Jim on #06 & # 07 - You got me thinking about this. For the past several weeks, Maurice Goodall has work side by side with us and deserves whatever we can do for him. We couldn't have done this without his alert systems, daily briefings...we wouldn't have the web page without Chrystal working tirelessly. It's over a 9-5 job for 8 months straight.

Discussion on how to pay them.

Jill - from CARES act money? The money is there if we bill for it? (Yes) If we don't bill, we don't get it (Yes.)

AH - Must not be budgeted funds . Ends Dec 21, 2020. We might need to review. I think everything must be submitted by Nov. 30.

LJ - I was told it could be December 31.

AH - Needs to be true.

JD - I think we are going out on a limb and are setting precedent for people who are salaried. If we do it for one, we will probably be asked to do it for all. Be aware. (Explanation for "no" vote.)

LJ - If everyone had worked as hard as us for 8 months.....it's a specific situation, not regular year-round.

Approved. Jim DeTro and ??? Do not approve.

Discussion as to whether JD can vote.

LJ - Asks Maryann if she can stop by to sign.

1:54 - Firefighters and Covid:

LJ - We had a firefighter who lost taste and sense of smell. She went to mid-valley and tested negative. My recommendation was a to send her home. Other 3 in her unit were asked to monitor themselves. Maurice and myself were on the Covid calls on Palmer Fire every other night. Able to test all who left and call them with results on the way to the Oregon fires. Will do the same for anyone else. We put out smoke advisories. Very nasty out there. Maurice - talked with Secy of Health asking for more K- and N-95's - he said to order more for Maurice. We appreciate the cities being receptive and working on this.

Schools and Covid-19 Data, Requirements

McCarthy - 1:58. Meeting tomorrow with all school Superintendents tomorrow morning.

AH - We are down to 44 cases per 100 thousand. What are we looking for re schools? Went from 990 per 100 thousand down to 94 per 100 thousand.

1:59 - Mc Carthy - Crystal needs to go thru data. It has changed because testing has changed. Disturbing because conclusions are not always correct. Needs to go below 75 for hybrid style, otherwise below 25. Working closely with Methow District - they are paying for their testing because they can. Staff first. Expensive testing - antigen testing not ready yet. Good for symptomatic people, not asymptomatic people. You need to speak to asymptomatic. I will be talking with schools on Thursday.

LJ - CDC guidance talks about symptomatic kids rather than asymptomatic.

AH - Where do we need to be in OK county to allow schools to have kids at school?

JM - Special needs kids are at schools now. The schools can ignore public health recommendations, like the Methow District is doing.
Goal 75 per 100 K for hybrid instruction, 25 per 100 K for regular instruction.

Data on chart shows # of cases in 2 week period so we can compare with other counties.

Various Covid Data:

LJ - Mid-July /August over 1,000. Almost as fast, it was reduced. Now at 44. Past 2 weeks - when John said 75, we must be there for 2 weeks for schools for re-opening. Full reopening, 25 for 2 weeks. Now, it needs to be below 75 for another 10 days.

JM - we've done a super job but need to be careful. Looking at Whitman County - best in state, went to worst in nation. Need to pay attention. It's been a great response, but be aware of these numbers.

Maryann - Can we keep numbers down if we do not have mass testing?

JM - This is incidence rate per 100,000. Must test those who are symptomatic. Mass testing plays a role, but not on the incidence rate.

Seeing Impact already from Labor Day - of concern.

LJ - I'll be very interested in the next week. I can see by today's results that Labor Day may have started to rear its ugly head. So far the several positives we have gotten today have traveled.

Mc C - I have the Pullman group - numbers will increase, hopefully not very much .

Chrystal - Shows other slides. Cumulative tests performed. August to late Aug , shot up. Community testing went up. Past week - a spike where we did community testing. Testing has dramatically dropped off . Data probably not complete yet because it takes awhile to get in.

% positive in Ok county. The question - % positive is the % of positive tests compared with total done. State wants to see for one positive test, we should have one negative test. From mid-August til now, we are very close now. Good that we have stayed down on target rate.

AH - We tested 25% of people in county.

LJ - Medicare/medicare is demanding testing in facilities. Very difficult, but Important that we encourage testing wherever we can. Agreed . 1/4 of population tested.

3 More Deaths

We will announce 3 more deaths, all under age of 70. One is very well-known in Brewster as a coach. Tragic. Others female. All had several underlying conditions. No doubt the one wouldn't have died if he hadn't caught Covid. Number of deaths now: 12.

Level of Parental Concern?

2:12 - CB - Question for McCarthy : Any expression of level of parents' concerns regarding kids going back to school? Trying to get a feel for amount of concern re confidence of testing regime if kids are allowed to go back; is testing adequate for comfort level of parents?

JM - Considerable concern on all sides - too much testing, not enough, teachers have their own set of concerns. I'd say everyone is concerned. Some opening schools have had insurrection (not in our county), so they are not opening. We are trying to work with the schools, will look at plans as to whether reasonable or not. I've gone both ways after looking at a number of them.

CB - It's a mixed bag.

JM - Yes. Methow vs Brewster - different financial issues. Every place is unique and needs to be treated that way. Admins are struggling as to what is best for community.

End of community health.

Environmental Health

2:15 - DH - will toss in the Air Quality aspect. Some potential problems for next year - counts won't be accurate, some historical permits now closed because of Covid . Some activity in land use/wasate water - close to 200 mark. We budget is for review .

AH - will you budget going back 12 months?

DH- Yes and no.

AH -When you come up with your formula, can you write it down for me?

DH - It will be 12 months back, but worth a grain of salt.

AH - You might think of going back to 2019 ,rolling.

DH - We might. We don't know when it's going to be lifted.

Health Board Budget Discussion

2:18 - LJ - need to start looking at budget for 2021. Would like to start working with finance committee now. Dave and I want to know if we can use same committee - JD and AH - or if others want to be on it?

AH - whenever you get primary budget, let me know. Jim and I will look at it.

Questions on phone, Maryanne?

Superintendents - if there are possibilities of additional programs that need additional dollars, we don't want to just throw \$ out there - the additional \$100,000 coming in,if it's worthwhile, that 's where the money goes.

JM- It's the one point in time that matters. What you test today doesn't hold true for the next few days.

AH - Branch means we want to get kids back and we've been given money. High priority.

CB - If money is a barrier, let's be aware that if we don't spend the \$\$ we have, we've lost it.

AH - Prudent spending of \$\$ -

LJ - Not prudent now. Could be down the road, if it's cheaper, etc. (???)

2:23 - Board of Health Board Meeting ends.

3:00: BOCC - Tanya Craig, Risk Management

3:00 - Asking Tanya to ask Josh about architectural firms - how chosen? (All architectural services for county building.

TC: Based on the SOQ.

Tanya Craig - Modest rise in Health Ins. Should caps be raised?
2021 medical rate - didn't go up as expected. Increased \$12+ per month. \$760. 09.
Would you consider raising the caps?

AH - Wants to see non-union figures. All caps are below 760?

Yes.

AH - would like to look at this later.

TC - Wants a decision before December.

Administrative Leave for Employees being evacuated:

TC: BOCC signed resignation on admin leave during fire, etc. for people unable to do jobs. BOCC agreed to supply admin leave if they couldn't supply service to public. Confusion - thought it was clear. Some folks who had to evacuate. Historically, annual leave then sick leave was allowed. Clarify - what is the intention?

AH - on one of those days, shut down at 3PM so people could evacuate, etc. To me, I can't see punishing and extreme case like this. Who had to evacuate. When we have bjduted for it - it won't happen all the time. I would like to say if you had to evacuate, you can use .

TC - will write resolution for particular fire. Payroll coming to a close that captures that time period.

AH - moves to allow employs to use admin leave for that purpose cold springs fire.

TC - One employee lived in Bridgeport.

AH - Either cold springs or pearl hill fire .

Passes.

Nearly all spreadsheets done.

That's all.

3:12 - Proceedings approved for Aug 31 and SEPT 1.

3: 14 - Dave Rodriguez enters, describing a good deal on a new acquisition that pleases him.

3:16 - LIST OF EMS VOUCHERS & PAYROLLS APPROVED.

Microphones, operation of new sound systems.

L.J - Karen from Central Services came by: There will be upcoming challenges on mics. These mics will be mobile. She requested that as we work on that for people to use the podium while people are talking to you. People at the table need to be either sitting at the table or at the podium, not roaming around the room.

The problem is the feedback that happens when the mics are in front of the speaker is the problem. She is going back to the office to work it out, but it may take some time.

AH Suggestion: When we did the sound system at the fairgrounds, Maurice called a sound company out of Spokane. Can we tell her to go out and look for a sound company so we can get everything? They might recommend something.

LJ - I also asked her to get a camera for this computer so the audience can be seen on ZOOM. We will be able to turn it to anyone out there and to the podium. It will avoid things like Maurice sing his phone camera to let commissioners see everyone.

AH - Maurice knows the name of the sound company.

LJ - We had someone in when we had these mics installed. Unfortunately, they disappeared and couldn't help us any longer.

AH - Talking not necessarily proprietary equipment - but a consultation.

CB - Agrees with AH. It just will take a burden off Central Services to get this thing straight.

LJ - Meeting tomorrow? Any need to do anything tomorrow?

AH - No, unless something comes up with fire needs or reaching community.

LJ - "As needed." Do I need to be opening zoom up for that?

(She will be working at home for the first half of the day.) AH says no

3:31 - Meeting adjourns.

Note: There is a quorum of the commissioners still there (AH, JD) when JD says, "I don't like the way they handled that." The virtual meeting is cut off while AH and JD appear to be discussing this.

