

**Board of Okanogan County Commissioners/ Board of Health Mtg
Tuesday January 10, 2023 1:30 PM**

Present:

Okanogan County Board of Health Board:

**Laurie Jones (LJ) – Public Health Administrator
Dr James Wallace (JW)– Health Officer - by Zoom
Marianne Williams (MW) - Vice Chair BOH– by Zoom
Jill Gates (JG) – Clerk of the Board of Health
Jim Wright (JW) – BOH
Michael Harr - Environmental Health
Chuck Zimmerman (CZ) – BOH Legal Counsel
Sara Bates – NCACH (listening in) by Zoom**

**Andy Hover (AH) – BOCC Vice Chair, District 2 (Newly elected Chair of BOH)
Chris Branch (CB) – BOCC Chair, District 1 - By Zoom
Jon Neal (JN) – BOCC, District 3**

Public Attendees via Zoom:

**Mike (not obtained) - OCP
Kelly Le
Mrs. Jackson
Isabelle Spohn
Ruth Hall**

- **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 Board of Health Meeting. For officially approved minutes, which are normally published at a later time see Okanogan County Public Health website.**

Significant Discussions or Actions:

- Election of Chair and Vice Chair for new year – 2023,
- Public Comment period: *Mike (never caught last name with OCP by name)* brought up a proposal regarding when it is determined that people need to be isolated or quarantined, *(due to health concerns)* that the Sheriff needs to be consulted for Constitutionality as he is the Constitutional authority.
- Financial Report,
- Update from Health Officer: Respiratory illness, Covid, and Influenza peaked in early December – we were hit harder earlier, numbers are going down and less hospitalizations, Also discussed Opioid overdoses reported in the County – averages 2 per week. Lots of collaboration between agencies, \$48,000 per year for 15 years are allocated to Okanogan County to help with Opioid OD problem.
- Discussion from Environmental Health Officer regarding role of water adequacy vs water quality. Health Dept's role in water adequacy/water quality to be discussed more in depth in a future meeting.
- Executive Session regarding possible litigation.
- Adjourned 3:00

1:30

AH started out the meeting asking Clerk, JG to chair the meeting so that the Chair and Vice Chair can be elected. AH nominated himself and was seconded. MW interjected a point of order as she is the current Vice Chair and should be leading the meeting. AH explained that the Clerk does this for the BOCC, but MW took exception to this procedure as being different from the BOH procedures. Vice-Chair should chair the meeting and oversee the election of officers. CZ explained the procedure based on resolution 100-2022 to the charter which states that officers are elected January of each year. MW fine with that but concerned about who should preside until elections held. CB also agreed with MS's assessment of the situation.

MW took over chairing the meeting until AH was elected the new Chairman of the BOH, and approval of the upcoming agenda with addition of an executive session at the end. MW also presided over the Public Comment Period.

Public Comment: Mike (*last name not obtained*) (OCP): Is making a suggestion regarding procedures for isolation & need to quarantine to be brought to the newly elected Ok County Sheriff to determine constitutionality first. He cited WAC 246-100-040 Section 3 as the reasoning behind this. Public Health Officers are not elected – they are only appointed. He stated the Sheriff would concur with this recommendation as he determines what is constitutional. MW asked Mike if he could put this in writing to submit, and he stated that he would.

No other Public Comment.

Back to elections: Andy to preside over the meeting. He opened nominations for Vice Chair. MW was nominated and a second.

Moved, Seconded, and Carried for MW to be Vice Chair.

Next was the financial report; questions re Care Connect for \$15,000. LJ explained that this is Covid dollars to help with food, bills, etc for people who have needed to quarantine due to loss of health. Moved, Seconded, and Carried to approve Treasurers Report, along with the vouchers and payroll.

Moved, Seconded, and Carried to approve Contract Amendment #11 for \$25,878 regarding the office of drinking water group B

Dr JW gave a report on current trends, illnesses, and strain on the health system. Respiratory illness, Covid, RSV and Influenza peaked in early December. These illnesses hit harder and earlier than usual. Influenza #'s are trending down now, as are Covid #'s. Hospitalizations are down now, but EMS are having to transport longer distances so the system is still stressed. Clinics have been providing the numbers. Covid is low right now; 30 cases per 100,000 – 7 per day. Compared to the Delta variant where there were 30 hospitalized patients per week. There is a new variant that is more infectious, but it is mostly in the northeast now, but does expect to see some in the future. JW wants to spread the word that people need to stay home if they are sick and recommending masks again when around many people. Also, reminding people to stay up on their booster shots.

Another concern is the Opioid Overdoses in the County. There are around 2 calls per week. Expect there are a lot of OD's that are not being tracked as unreported. Family/friends administering Naloxone. There are a lot of community partners engaged with this problem. AH reports there is \$48,000 per year for 15 years, allocated to the County from the Opioid Settlement.

AH states there is a need for a board to oversee these funds. Dr JW states there are a number of County agencies that could be involved in this, and we will need to discuss how best to be stewards of this money.

LJ spoke to new County Commissioner JN regarding the previous collaboration with healthcare partners that had been happening. Also, explained some of the data results; we can see when heroin and fentanyl came into the county. CB states this is all due to date. CB also questions how many people are administering their own medication and not getting reported. Also, stated that people who are suffering with the disease could easily lose track. Dr JW: it is usually a family member administering the dose.

LJ states that the year-end statistics will be available next month.

Environmental Health Officer, Michael Harr is concerned about the Health Dept's role in determining water adequacy, especially when people are requesting a variance. He feels this should not be a Health Dept decision – just the water quality. This should be completed by Planning or another agency. AH stated that he thought there was some stipulation through the Clean Water Act about the Health Dept establishing a minimum 300 gallons per day per person for adequacy and quality. Michael states this is not a term for the health dept.

AH states there are 2 standards for water; 1 by the BOH for water quality.

CB states that in his experience, variance needs to be fair. We could come up with something, but Environmental Health shouldn't be signing off on this, I propose working with Planning.

CZ, Legal Counsel, suggests this be a topic for a future meeting as it is about policy, and nothing will be resolved today. AH states we may need to change policy on variances.

2:41

Moved, Seconded, and Carried to have an Executive Session under RCW 42.30.2110 (1) (g) until 2:55 for possible litigation.

2:55

Back in Session.

It was Moved, Seconded, and Carried to approve a separation agreement based on Counsel's recommendation and authorize the Chair to sign.

LJ, Public Health Administrator brought up the need to make some duty changes for interim administrator and the Environmental Health Officer d/t nepotism. We'll take this up at the next meeting. AH would like to make some time next month for more discussion.

MW wanted to put on the agenda next time, a possible Board retreat.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:00