

Okanogan County Board of Health
11/10/2020

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

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/ocph/BOHMinutes.htm>

Summary of significant discussions:

Dr. McCarthy has tendered his resignation after 16 years. Lauri Jones hopes to have interviews for next month's Board of Health meeting.

The county is seeing an increase in Covid-19 cases and plans to increase testing in every school district.

Public comments—LJ reads a letter submitted by Isabelle Spohn:

“Comment to Okanogan County Board of Health Meeting 11/10/2020, 1:30 PM.

I have been regularly monitoring and taking notes at the Okanogan County Board of Commissioners' meetings for several years. These meetings have been archived and now available to the public via the AV Capture platform since August 17, 2020. These videos reveal that two members of the Board of Health, who are also County Commissioners have not been practicing state guidelines relating to the Corona virus during Commissioners' meetings.

I believe that members of the Board of Health should be good examples of how the public can protect each other during the Covid-19 Pandemic and how Public Health recommendations can and should be followed in Okanogan County public meetings.

On Monday, Nov. 2 at 9:55 AM, there is one excellent example of the points below: *Lack of social distancing, lack of wearing masks indoors, and personal extended contact among county employees not wearing masks over a period of hours indoors. This one example is with 9 county employees in the hearing room sitting very close together at both the front table and the dais.*

Mr. DeTro *has stated that he has a health issue that prevents him from wearing a mask. But that does not prevent him from socially distancing from other commissioners during Board meetings, nor from requiring, as chair of the BOCC and the Board of Health, that employees and members of the public attending the meeting wear masks. He is indoors for a long period of time in contact with the other commissioners and county employees without adequate social distancing. His condition also does not*

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prevent him from other less effective but symbolic measures, such as a face shield. He additionally stated last week that masks are optional in Commissioners' meetings and that it is a matter of "either/or": either wearing a mask OR socially distancing is adequate. State guidelines say that both are necessary for adequate protection indoors.

Cmr. Hover stated at the Twisp Grange Public forum last October that he would support a mandate that those attending Commissioners' meetings wear masks. However, you will see in these videos that since August 17 he has rarely used a mask himself, with the exception of several meetings when he had returned from an out of state trip. During most of the meetings during that time he has also appeared to be less than 6 feet from Cmr. Branch, indoors, for much longer than 15 minutes - without a mask. You will also see that in the meetings yesterday, he randomly wears the mask and then takes it off for long periods of time, even with up to 9 people in the room. Such contradictions between what he says and what he does engenders a situation of distrust of leaders in our county and on the Board of Health.

I complement Cmr. Branch and Clerk of the Board Lanie Johns for wearing their masks almost all the time.

I believe county Board of Health officials should present a good example to the public of protecting each other and other members of the public and county government and am embarrassed that they are not.

*Sincerely yours,
Isabelle Spohn"*

Community Health Update—JMCC announces his resignation after 16 years as Health Officer. He says he has enjoyed the position but thinks he doesn't have enough time to do the job well. He feels there are several people who could take over. It's a difficult job to do when politics comes in (uses Spokane as an example) and thinks that the BOH has done all he's asked them to do. He thinks we're in a good position and is committed to a smooth transition.

Discussion about who should be on the interview board.

AH—We've talked about the budget.

LJ—Salary is approximately \$4,000/month, but we can use another source of money (note taker is unclear of this source) if we can't get someone for that amount for 10 hr/week.

AH—Moves to authorize \$48,000/year for the Health Officer's contract.

LJ—We will need a little leeway if the position required more than 10 hr/week.

Motion carries.

Interview committee: CB from BOCC, MW of BOH, JMCC, LJ, Dave Hilton of Environmental Health and someone from the medical community. The goal is to have someone for the Board to look at by the December meeting. LJ has heard for several interested parties. JMCC says they are solid ones. He leaves the meeting due to another commitment.

Administrative reports—Board approves minutes of Oct 13 and Oct 29 meetings. Board also approves the financial statement and vouchers.

Additional Community Health Update—LJ is seeing an increase in Covid-19 cases. The schools are working with the county and she likes the hybrid model. She hopes to increase testing, not just in the schools but in the whole community. Testing will be offered twice in every school district. The goal is

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2,000-5,000 tests. Funding could come from CARES money. The state Department of Health could help, too.

LJ—They are reviewing the policy for comments on the BOH Facebook page. They are looking at the comment policies of Chelan and Douglas Counties to help re-write the policy.

LJ—We have BinaxNOW Covid-19Ag cards in the lobby. It's a rapid antigen test using nasal swabs.

LJ—Our Covid page on our website is very good and she commends the person who set it up.

LJ—Contract tracing shows the kids in schools are being infected but she thinks that it's the parents who are passing the virus around by attending large gatherings in Wenatchee, etc.

LJ—The Pfizer vaccine looks pretty good and it was developed without federal money. Maybe within three months we'll have something that's effective.

AH—Why is federal money bad? If they use federal money, it gives us some say in what they can charge for the vaccine.

LJ—Federal funding can be a double-edged sword. I hope the vaccine is affordable.

LJ—Last item. At December's meeting we'll discuss next year's fee schedule and budget. So we need to have one more meeting with the BOCC to discuss this. The only fee going up is a state fee for birth and death certificates.

AH & LJ discuss possible dates.

Environmental Health Update—There is no update this month because Dave Hilton is on vacation.

LJ—To Isabelle, LJ how many attendees at the meeting are wearing masks (almost everyone) and their noses are covered, too.

Meeting adjourned.