

Okanogan Board of Health
Tuesday, December 13th, 2022, 1:30 PM

These notes were taken by a County Watch volunteer. Every attempt is made to be accurate. Notes are verbatim when possible, and otherwise summarized. 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>.

Present:

Lori Jones (LJ), Board of Health Director
Mariann Williams (MW), BOH board member
Jim Wright (JW), BOH board member
Jill Gates, BOH, Secretary
Sabrina Smith, Okanogan County Health District
Mike Harr (MH), Okanogan County Health District
Chris Branch (CB), County Commissioner, BOH board member
Jim Detro (JD), County Commissioner, BOH Board Chairman
Andy Hover (AH), County Commissioner, BOH board member
Quail Orr, HHS Community Health Representative, Colville Tribes
Sarah Bates, North Central Accountable Community of Health
Jeffrey Meyers
Chuck Zimmerman, Legal Advisor, Chelan Co. Public Health

No recording was made of this meeting.

Summary of Important Discussions:

- *Due to staffing problems at large institutions, problems transferring patients out. First flu death, 62 positive cases out of 139 tested. 131 Tonasket students affected.*
- *Osoyoos home owner agrees to decommission illegal cesspool; funds needed to encourage connection to municipal sewer system.*
- *Applications received for Environmental Health Officer*
- *Confusion over septic permit application form being remedied*
- *Malott's sewer system "a train wreck".*
- *Strategies for addressing code infractions: round table discussion with Sheriff's office, Planning, Building and Public Health, possible hiring of wastewater treatment manager; "badge back-up" needed.*

After introductions the board goes into a half-hour executive session with Jeffrey Meyers and Chuck Zimmerman to discuss the performance of a public employee.

Community Health Update - LJ: During COVID we had weekly meetings, then monthly, now every other week because of the flu, and. Wayne (*Palmer, Mid Valley Hospital*) said they've had to take people to Tri-Cities and Seattle. Mid Valley had five who should have been transferred out but couldn't be for lack of staffing. We've had our first flu death. (*Someone asks how many have gotten the flu shot.*) **LJ:** We've given 139 flu tests. Since November 13th we've had 62 cases of flu A, one flu B and two RSVs (*respiratory syncytial virus*). There is a stockpile of vaccines that the state can access. ...Chelan Co. has had an incredible amount (*of flu cases*). **MW:** There are 131 kids out with the flu in Tonasket.

Environmental Health Update - **MH**: The land owner we talked about last month (*with a non-covered septic pool near the Osoyoos shoreline*) agreed to decommission the tank. (*Also*) we're making it more clear between the septic permit and the septic application forms (*some people have thought they got a permit when it was only the checklist*). We're building cooperation with Planning. There's work to do on the county code. **AH**: They're not spelled out. State code is different from county code. ... We had environmental code with the county code; now we've got rid of that. Probably a lot of cross- (*inaudible*). **CB**: I don't know how the district is dealing with it, but there has been passive enforcement on hook-ups on Osoyoos. **MH**: If they're within 20 feet of the shoreline they need a hook-up to the municipal system. We're trying to get people to go on. **MH**: If we can get money to extend the sewers- **AH**: Since we're paying for that system and we had an agreement (*that future hook-ups would help reimburse its cost*).

LJ: We have some applicants for Environmental Health Specialist. (*The application period*) closes Thursday. (*LJ says something about putting foundational funds on the agenda.*)

MH: (*The sewer system*) in the town of Malott is a train wreck. If we could find funds for a municipal system, that would benefit the community. *CB says every land owner is his own wastewater treatment manager but not quite sure what that is.* **LJ**: Mike will be involved in upcoming legislative committee stuff. They pay attention to rural. *In the absence of Health Officer Jim Wallace, she transmits his thanks to retiring Commissioner and BOH Chairman Jim Detro for his public health support.*

MH: We had talked about enforcement. I'd like to get a round table discussion with Public Health, the Prosecutor's office, Planning and the Building Department. *AH says they need to make non-compliance of Health Department regulations a civil infraction instead one incurring heavier penalties. (They have already discussed this. The person would receive fines that would get higher and higher, much like a traffic violation. This would free the court system somewhat and hopefully encourage more compliance.)* **MH**: (*We need*) a solid waste enforcement officer, maybe through a grant, if we could qualify, and we could share the position with (*the fore-mentioned departments*). **CB**: Just something to chew on- a code enforcement officer would be embedded in a department. We'd have to make sure they don't become a target. *He remembers when the new Marijuana laws were passed and people in the highlands were worried code enforcers were going to come up there.* **MH**: It's a tough position to be in. We don't have an enforcement background. (*He has already told the BOH of being barred from properties by hostile land owners.*) **CB**: You get that "badge back-up"- We'll have that conversation with the sheriffs. **MH**: I was thinking about that over the last month or so.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 2:45.