

Okanogan Board of Health
Tuesday, December 14th, 2021, 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), BOH Director
Dr. James Wallace (JW), Health Officer
Marianne Williams (MW), board member
Dave Hilton (DH), BOH, Environmental Health
Chris Branch (CB), Commissioner, board member
Jim Detro (JD), Commissioner, Board Chairman
Andy Hover (AH), Commissioner, board member
Chuck Zimmerman, Health District Attorney
Megan Barton, Mid Valley Hospital
Jill Gates, Public Health Fiscal Coordinator
Chrystal Hawley, Okanogan County
Jessica Kuzma, Epidemiologist

Time stamps refer to a Zoom recording on the County Watch website.

Summary of Important Discussions: *\$23M 2022 Public Health budget provides 3% cost of living increase, revenue sources include federal (ARPA) and state (Consolidated Contract and "Vape" tax) funds; staff, unable to take time off, accumulating extra hours; Board reaching out to tribes in formation of new regional board (RCW); Covid rates down, at-home tests up; storm water system poses problems at Fairgrounds; Subdivision ordinances concerning septic systems reviewed amidst debate around appeals process vs. rewriting code to allow existing systems of a certain age to continue if not presenting a danger to public health.*

- 13:07 - Budget - AH: A lot of stake for public health this year. Projected expenditures: \$3.3M. Budget for 2022 includes 3% cost of living increase. County receives 10% of annual budget from state (\$2.3M this year). Discussion on how much to put in reserve, whether it should earn interest or allow liquidity. LJ : Foundational funds started at \$42K a year and now are \$582,000, which is tied to the vape tax. That won't going away any time soon. AH : County has allocated \$1M over five years to be reimbursed by an ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) solid waste grant ; county's share will be 25%. JG appreciates AH's efforts to understand budget. JD : He's the budget pastor. AH : so we have \$600,000 in reserve. CB : So when the great recession comes we'll have six months of operation. LJ : We've had some pretty lean times. 2022 budget approved.
- 41 :00 - Consolidated contract with state DOH - Includes a \$632,000 increase of which \$532,000 is for different specific expenditures and the rest is Covid response. Approved.
- 45 :19 - *Staff unable to take vacations. There's a maximum number of hours – 240 – of « excessive compensation.* LJ : I'll take some time off at the end of the year. I have 140 hours I haven't been able to use, but we've had a big surge... I'd rather donate the extra hours.
- 47 :52 - Selection of new board member for regional BOH - Will come from the tribes and will not

be considered an elected official ; this matters because the board must have equal numbers of elected and non-elected members. Also needed is a consumer of Public Health CZ says rules to come out in January concerning board configuration ; RCW structure goes into effect July 1st. They discuss board chairman's vote, in case of tie or, as CZ recommends, in all votes, but board has an even number by design so measures will have to carry by more than one vote. . LJ would like a conversation with Chairman Joseph of the tribes, AH : What is the tribal system like ? LJ : Maternal-Child health meetings, programs we all docouldn't have done Covid without the tribes. We've had nurses from Nespelem and Coulee Dam. I was able to talk with Vickie Lowe of the American Indian Health commission, and especially Lou Schmidt from Sequim about what works and what doesn't on Covid issues.

1 :04 :10 - Community Health Update - LJ : Covid Rates are going down. We've done a « Say Yes to Test » campaign where people could order home testing, a rapid test on line and don't have to report those—we've had a lot of success giving those out. We continue with our « Mass Vax » with Mid Valley at the Fairgrounds on Fridays. *AH talks about a maintenance problem there : It's too large of project for Public Works with the limited staff they have, will probably cost about \$2.5. If there is some money we could do some preliminary work. LJ : My concern is when the water pools up and it's like driving through a ditch. AH suggests getting a storm water permit and revamping that system.*

1 :05: - Environmental Health update, discussion of appeals process (regarding existing septic system on land being subdivided)- JD : I've had discussions with our attorney and Sue Christopher withdrew her appeal on the (basis) of our conversation. The board should not be involved in appeals processes that involve land use (but rather) use the county's Hearing Examiner »... I believe we have done damage to some citizenry in the past... We should retract (that ordinance) to say « not requiring inspections of on-site septic systems unless a public health problem is present. CZ : I'd say that is a good summary... I'd change it to say that any existing structure that's a part of the subdivision that has an existing system is allowed to continue with that system as long as it doesn't create a public health emergency or a failed system. (But whoever applies for a permit must abide by the most current ordinances.) ...I don't think that your local health officer wants to spend time listening to someone's variance proposal for an on-site system. That's what your code says right now. *(He proposes changing several ordinances using the County's Hearing Examiner system,)* DH : Some do need to be updated since 2008. The 5-year ordinance was so that if the rules change and you're applying a new standard for how the system is constructed within the lot, we shouldn't be looking back five years for that... *CZ says that part should be conserved.* JD : There needs to be one page where that describes « This is a pitfall that can cost you money »... *LJ proposes a checklist. DH says Public Health responds to permits with what is required. CB : It's a fragmented system, frustrating to me. We need just one quick and easy reference to county code. MJ (or JG ?) really likes the idea of a Hearings Examiner.*

1 :27 :45 - CZ : Nobody goes to Public Health to file a short plat. Change the *(building permit)* form so the things to consider, now on page 2, are on p.1. More « user friendly ». The recent situations turn on what the board wants do with existing homes that are on 20 or 40 acres that somebody wants to subdivide. Do we want to go back and find records and find out how septic systems got ther in the first place or is this board comfortable with making sure we've allotted enough land for a new on-site system if the one that serves the home fails or needs to be replaced because the home is going to be sold ? ...The biggest thing is : does the board want to change the policy on requiring ? Now you require an on-site system if it's older than a certain year... You're making them take them out. ...Or do you want to depart and say unless there is a public health issue we're not going to make people do that ? CB : That's a good point. But chapter 13 of the code—this dates from 1985—says there is an appeals process... CZ : Those provisions should have been repealed, have nothing to do with the County. AH : I move to direct our attorney to create a draft of

the appropriate changes for using a hearings examiner process, as well as changing the code for the on-site septic system and the section on replacement during subdivision. Motion approved. *CZ will peruse the code and speak with the prosecutor ; foresees a link to public health in the code section of the county website. CB says there will be problems if all three commissioners aren't in agreement on this. CZ : I'll fix this... I wasn't elected to do anything !*

1 :39 :21 - *Meeting adjourned.*