

Okanogan Board of Health
Tuesday, August 9th, 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), BOH (Board of Health) Director
Mariann Wright (MW), Board Member
Jim Wallace (JW), Health Officer
Patricia Stanton, Okanogan City Council, BOH board member
Chris Branch (CB), County Commissioner, BOH board member
Jim Detro (JD), County Commissioner, BOH Board Chairman
Jill Gates, BOH, secretary
Dave Hilton (DH), Environmental Health
New Board Member (NBM)

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

Summary of Important Discussions: *LJ in Power Point presentation describes scope of Public Health, roles of Health Officer and administration, funding; Board Member Patricia Stanton seeks opinions on farmland acquisitions by China and worldwide food and water shortages she has read about on "other sources" than the mainstream media, Commissioner Detro echoes her concerns; Health Dept. has increased funds of \$995,000 from having had Covid funds to use up before touching all its foundational funding; Health Officer reports higher Covid numbers than state average but few hospitalizations, five Monkey Pox cases east of Cascades, state increase in opioid overdoses, ten recent OD's locally, some on reservation with pills shared at "farm parties", STDs also on the rise, new board member, also tribal member, urges increased vigilance for Monkey Pox during pow wow season; epidemiologist and Health Programs Coordinator hired; lull in permits other than food permits for the stampede, issues with supply and demand, prices; vandalism continues on vehicles, cameras and bush-trimming should help. Meeting adjourned at 2:27.*

4:43 - *LJ presents a Power Point describing Public Health. It's scope: state agencies, local agencies and tribe (which is responsible for the overall health of its members, works with HHS, Indian Health Service, Community Health Center and Tribal Health Clinic models.) It's role: on-site rules, disease rules, waste water rules. They are a single-county department as opposed to Chelan-Douglas' which is shared, and is quasi-autonomous from county government. It is covered by state code of law (RCW) and is funded by: state and federal governments (68%), local government (5%), foundational public health funding services (11%) and licences, permits and fees (14%). It must meet regularly and integrate community values. The Health Officer enforces rules, takes action as necessary, controls the spread of diseases. The administrative role is communicable diseases, environmental health. and children and families. LJ opens up to questions.*

- 15:11 - **PS:** I've been doing an awful lot of reading... They're talking about food shortages. This administration just sold 340 acres to China for a food processing plant in, I think, North Dakota. You got individuals that are questionable buying up lots and lots of farmland. **JD:** I know a guy, an engineer... who does exponential curves. He worked for Reagan... Worldwide production and consumption curves crossed in 2014. That means from there on you're in the crisis mode. He says it's going to come down one of these days to food. **PS:** It's going to come down to the health of the community. I'm wondering if there's any interest in this trend. **JD:** It's on the news all the time. **PS:** I don't watch the news. I have my own sources. **JD:** they're even concerned with our own Bill Gates buying up farmland because he's a proponent of artificial meat. **LJ:** I read and watched the movie *Soylent Green* so we're not far off I guess. **PS:** It's going to be a water situation. Going to have to start making plans. (*DH talks about levels of Lake Mead, says problem is never-ending.*) **JD:** We're considered as an economically distressed county and usually a drought county but we are fortunate to have water for people. **CB:** You advertising that? **JD:** No. (*Laughter.*)
- 20:13 - Administrative/Financial Report - **JD:** (*The treasurer's report*) is the best I've seen in 12 years... **DH:** Someday that well's drying up. (*Laughter.*) **LJ:** Consolidated Contract amendment #6 concerns an increase in Public Health foundational funds of \$995,000 until next—what happened is we had so many Covid dollars that we wanted to utilize first we didn't receive all of our allocation because we weren't going to send it back. We only used \$225,000 so there's a lot we didn't take. (*This will go to*) Environmental Health, Admin staff that doesn't generate revenue. *JD jokes about a contribution to their new county leer jet. CB asks if this really requires a budget amendment. JG says they're still looking good on their budget but it's there if they need it.*
- 27:31 - *DH says budget meeting coming up, they need to appoint a finance manager. AH is named in absentia. JG:* He just does a really good job. **JD:** That's why we call him "Mr. Budget" over on our side.
- 28:12 - Health Officer's Update - **JW:** I appreciate your comments about food and water scarcity. We're doing a great job of emergency preparedness right now. ...Maurice Williams (*Maurice Goodhall?*) and Lori have been working on the Public Health response plan to natural disasters, the draft looks great. We're incorporating new disasters as they come... Today is day one of the new smoke season. Across the US Covid activity is decreasing. Here Covid is still higher and plateau-ing. We're a little late, hopefully. The 7-day rate is 204 per 100,000, a little higher than the state average, with three to five hospital admissions per week. We're still encouraging methods to keep from getting infected, and reporting through Care Connect which supports people struggling with employment and food problems. We're doing contact tracing.
- 32:14 - **JW:** A lot of discussion about Monkey Pox. We're seeing more and more in the US and Washington (203 cases), only five cases on the East side. It's not as contagious as Covid, also spread by droplets but more by prolonged contact, fluid released by lesions. We have vaccinations in short supply for exposed people... They're also working on anti-viral treatment, hard to get but we'll have some soon.
- 35:11 - **JW:** EMS providers report an increase in opioid overdoses across the state, (especially) illegally-produced Fentanyl in heroin or in pills. It's much more dangerous and causing a lot more harm to our communities. Our partners are doing a great job of treating patients when they come in and getting Naloxone out. We're ready for tuberculosis, haven't seen a huge rise in cases but some of our neighboring counties might be seeing more (*as they receive*) Ukrainian refugees. There are lower vaccination rates there. We're also watching sexually transmitted diseases carefully because that often follows opioid and substance abuse epidemics like we're

seeing. We've seen increases in syphilis and other diseases here and across the state. We've got a lot on our plate.

PS: I was reading about a Fentanyl called "ISO" that's supposed to be 1000 times more potent than heroin. **JW:** We usually focus on Fentanyl because there are ways to test for it, strips that individuals can use to protect themselves. It's in almost everything. Ways to detect will be distributed. **LJ:** I heard they're using Carfentanil, what Fish and Wildlife use (*as large animal tranquilizer*) which is 1000 times stronger than the regular. **CB:** They get around how? On the street? **LJ:** Yes, everywhere. They're calling them "blues" like Oxycodon.. **CB:** Some are trading legitimate drugs among each other. It's important to recognize how it's moving through the system. **NBM:** So on the reservation right now they're having "farm parties" where they all bring a bottle of pills that are dumped into a bowl in the middle of a table and everybody starts taking it. **LJ:** That isn't new. 40:30 - **NBM:** I work with Tribal Health. We had two ODs at HUD within an hour of each other. **LJ:** Lifeline reported eight overdoses last week. **MW:** Is there any way to get Naloxone to the parties? **NBM:** We tried to get some but they wouldn't give it to us. **LJ:** Wayne Walker from Lifeline said there's a lot of (*inter-nasal*) Narcan flowing and once they get Narcan (*for overdoses*) they're gone. **NBM:** The two at HUD, (*once they were revived by Narcan*) they refused. **JD:** It leaves you with so many questions how to handle... mental health, social health. The legal ramifications. **NBM:** I have a question about Monkey Pox. I've worked for Tribal Public Health for 30 years so I was a contact tracer for quite awhile. Are you reaching out to tribal entities about Monkey Pox? It's pow wow season right now and there's going to be a lot of physical contact going on. We have our own Stampede coming up. (42:41) **JW:** That's the exact kind of input that we need. Our own awareness raised on how to invest a lot of our communications... I can reach out to Dr. Barbara and any other contacts you can recommend.

43:54 - Community Health - **LJ:** We have a new epidemiologist, hired by the region, who we will cover with regular funds... Jeff, a U of W graduate, will be working on our Community Health Assessment. We'll be sharing the cost with Chelan-Douglas counties. (*He is looking for lodging; JD will talk to a friend who rents out to doctors.*) **LJ:** We've also hired a Community Health Programs Coordinator. She has CMA certification, has been doing care navigation, contacting insurance companies. She is good with customer service. We need her for reporting. We're still looking for a nurse.

47:30 - Environmental Health - **DH:** With the Stampede coming up we have a lot of food permits so we'll have coverage down there Thursday through Saturday. But in general last week and this week have been kind of a lull (*for other permits and generally*). Usually it's the heart of the season. One issue is supply and demand. Prices are sky high. We're in smoke season so we'll probably start putting out public service alerts. **LJ:** We have two vehicles (*whose gas tanks*) were drilled. **DH:** But once it was repaired they busted open the window of the jeep and stole the battery. We were smart--hadn't filled the tanks yet. They don't get used very often. And the issue is out of hand. We're going to sell the jeep as is and pull the radio out of the other vehicle before selling it. **LJ:** We're waiting on cameras. The lighting's great but we're going to ask Superior Court or the Commissioners to trim all the bushes in the corners. **JD:** I'll have the clerk put it on the Maintenance agenda. (*CB talks about indelible gas tanks.*)

52:45 - *Meeting adjourned.*