



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD MARCH 2, 2010, AT BENVOLIN HERITAGE CHURCH – REID HALL,
2279 BENVOLIN RD., KELOWNA, BRITISH COLUMBIA**

PRESENT

Chair Stu Wells	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Vice-Chair Rick Fairbairn	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Buffy Baumbrough	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Gyula Kiss	Regional District North Okanagan
Director James Baker	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Doug Findlater	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Graeme James	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Michael Brydon	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Gordon Clark	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Bernie Bauer	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council
Director Toby Pike	Water Supply Association of BC

REGRETS

Director George Saddleman	Okanagan Nation Alliance
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OBWB STAFF

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
Genevieve Dunbar	Office and Grants Administrator
Corinne Jackson	Communications and Research Coordinator

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Wells called the meeting to order at 10:03 am.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Director Baumbrough

Seconded by Director Baker

“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of March 2, 2010 be approved as amended.”

CARRIED

3. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

Item 7.4 Sponsorship requests
7.4.1 Environmental Mind Grind, changed from 8.2
7.4.2 CWRA

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Feb. 2, 2010 at the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen.

Moved by Director Fairbairn

Seconded by Director Baumbrough

“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Feb. 2, 2010, held at the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen be adopted.”

CARRIED

5. **STAFF REPORTS**

5.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Warwick Sears noted that the meeting’s guest speaker, Dr. Jeff Curtis, was to report on the findings on the Okanagan Endocrine Disruptor Research Project. However, Dr. Curtis was unavailable due to family matters. The OBWB is now working to reschedule the presentation for the April board meeting.

Dr. Warwick Sears explained how Chief Fabian Alexis of the Okanagan Indian Band had been in contact with the OBWB, requesting support in the band’s quest to protect its source of drinking water in the Browns Creek watershed. The band is currently in a dispute with Tolko Industries Ltd. over logging in the watershed. She added that she recognizes that the dispute has become a political issue over land title, however, the concern around water quality is consistent with the OBWB’s interest in source protection. Dr. Warwick Sears asked for the board to respond.

Board directors agreed to send a letter, but cautioned against stepping into the politics surrounding the issue. Instead, it was agreed that the OBWB send a letter to the province asking that the concerns of OKIB be considered and ensure the Browns Creek water source is protected. In addition, Dr. Bauer suggested that the letter should recognize the OBWB’s respect for multiple uses in Okanagan watersheds.

Dir. Clark requested that the letter be sent to MLA John Slater and cc’d to Tolko.

Moved by Director Baker

Seconded by Director Clark

“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board send a letter requesting the province to carefully evaluate the concerns of the OKIB in the Brown’s Creek with respect to logging and other activity in their community watershed, and ensure that the band’s community water supply is protected.”

CARRIED

Dr. Warwick Sears announced that the launch of Phase 2 of the Okanagan Water Supply and Demand (OWS&D) Project is planned for March 26 at 10 a.m. The date was chosen so MLA John Slater, Parliamentary Secretary on Water Allocation, could attend. The media will be invited. The message will be that our water supply is at risk, that we all need to do our part, and that local government needs to be cautious with its planning.

A two-minute film is being produced around the agricultural demand model. The film is part of the process of being named a finalist for a Premier’s Innovation and Excellence Award. Dr. Warwick Sears noted the film will be useful with the OBWB’s outreach work with the model.

Dr. Warwick Sears attended a meeting of the Southern Interior Drinking Water Team at which they referred to a letter from the City of Kelowna, inquiring about a source protection plan for Okanagan Lake. She said that she would contact the city and note the OBWB’s interest in being involved in such a project.

Dir. Findlater noted that the Westbank Irrigation District’s Powers Creek plant is using filtration and UV to meet IHA standards and offered the board an opportunity to tour the facility. The OBWB will look at arranging this as part of its May board meeting.

5.1.1 Update on Phase 3 Water Supply and Demand Project

Dr. Warwick Sears reported that the OBWB has \$30,000 in confirmed funding from B.C. Ministry of Environment to complete Phase 2 and is hoping to have \$200,000 confirmed from Natural Resources Canada for the next three years for Phase 3.

Moved by Director Baker

Seconded by Director Baumbrough

“THAT the Executive Director Report from Dr. Warwick Sears, dated February 23, 2010, be received.”

CARRIED

5.1.2 Okanagan Water Supply & Demand (OWS&D) Data Access by Local Governments

Dr. Warwick Sears stated that a training session to run the OWS&D data will be provided to researchers and government staff at UBC-O, and offered on a cost-recovery basis to contractors. The OBWB will maintain the basic information and the database, she added, noting that if someone needs specific information and to have the models run, they will be charged. The OBWB's data sharing protocol states that the OBWB will seek to defray a portion of the costs for local governments to access the data. Dr. Warwick Sears presented the board with a tiered cost-sharing formula based on the costs of the individual project.

Moved by Director Kiss

Seconded by Director Baker

“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board accept the cost-sharing funding formula for Water Supply and Demand Data Retrieval by local governments as recommended by staff.”

CARRIED

Directors Pike and Bauer abstained.

5.2 Water Stewardship Director Report

Mr. Jatel reported that staff from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts were invited to appear at the last Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC) meeting. There was productive discussion around backcountry use and watershed concerns in Bear Creek, and it appears these concerns are going to be addressed.

The membership of the OWSC is composed of organizations rather than individuals, and is reviewed every 18 months. There is a certain amount of appointment turn-over within organizations. As such, there are two new representatives. They are Douglas MacLeod from Okanagan College and Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo with the Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program.

The Ministry of Environment's Celine Davis, Manager of Science and Adaptation, will be the guest speaker at next month's OWSC meeting. Board directors are welcome to attend. Ms. Davis will be speaking on the province's drought strategy.

There were 11 proposals received for the Streamlined Water Use Reporting Tool (SWURT) project. SWURT's selection subcommittee chose Spot Solutions, which has offices in Vancouver and Victoria. Bruce Wilson has been subcontracted to assist with the work as a local resource. Wilson is the former manager of the Rutland Improvement District and is very familiar with the local water supplier community. Spot Solutions is in the business of developing website reporting tools and had excellent references. The first water supplier/user workshop is planned for March 29. Invitations will be sent once everything is finalized.

The first Okanagan Water Supply webinar was held on Feb. 20. A lot of valuable information was provided, pointing to the likelihood of water shortages this year unless we have a wet spring, said Mr. Jatel. There are no constraints on the number of people who can dial in and listen to the webinar, he added, explaining how he was expecting 25 attendees and there were 30. Dir. Baker noted that he phoned in and found it interesting, and encouraged others to participate in the next session.

Dr. Warwick Sears added that after the webinar, the B.C. River Forecast Centre's Bill Kunke noted that funding for hydrometric monitoring has dropped and that not enough monitoring is being done. Yet, he added, the Okanagan deserves greater attention since it is the most compromised area of B.C.

Dir. Bauer said he also logged onto the webinar and noted it was interesting to hear that the data being used for forecasts overestimates the snowpack because it doesn't show the mid and lower elevation snow information.

Dir. Findlater added that this information is important since most forest fires start at mid-elevation. If we know water levels in these areas sooner we can better predict and prepare for such fires, he said.

OBWB staff suggested that perhaps directors should ask the Water Stewardship Council to provide a recommendation that the board can forward to the province on improved hydrometric and meteorological monitoring.

Moved by Director Baker

Seconded by Director Pike

"THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board requests the OWSC provide an updated recommendation on hydrometric and meteorological monitoring and a strategy for action."

CARRIED

Moved by Director Baker

Seconded by Director Clark

"THAT the Water Stewardship Director Report from Mr. Jatel, dated February 24, 2010, be received."

CARRIED

5.3 Office and Grants Administrator Report

Ms. Dunbar reported that the deadline for submissions to the Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant program has passed and that applications are now being put into an inventory database. There were 37 applications, requesting a total of \$807,000 with only \$300,000 available. In the past, when there was \$800,000 in requests there was \$500,000 available. The awards are merit-based, added Ms. Dunbar, noting that some of the projects will not receive the full amount requested so that the funds can be more widely distributed.

Moved by Director Clark

Seconded by Director Kiss

"THAT the Office and Grants Administrator Report from Ms. Dunbar, dated February 24, 2010, be received."

CARRIED

5.4 Communications and Research Coordinator Report

Ms. Jackson noted the first draft of the Okanagan WaterWise website site map has been completed and forwarded for feedback.

Moved by Director Bauer

Seconded by Director Findlater

“THAT the Communications and Research Coordinator Report from Ms. Jackson, dated February 23, 2010, be received.”

CARRIED

6. DELEGATIONS

6.1 Dr. Jeff Curtis, UBC Okanagan: Okanagan Endocrine Disruptor Research Project

Dr. Curtis was unavailable to attend the OBWB meeting. Mr. Jatel gave a brief update on the project.

The plan is to provide an informal debriefing in April to the OBWB chair, and staff and elected officials from the three municipalities whose water systems were tested. They will then be given a tour of the UBC-O lab, along with representatives of the project's funders – the Okanagan Indian Band and Health Canada.

The next day, a presentation would be given to the OBWB at its regular board meeting.

Dir. Bauer noted that this has been four years in the making and this is just Phase 1 – reporting on whether or not endocrine disruptors exist in the water systems of these three communities. At this time, it does not look at what, if any, risks they pose to the public. Dr. Warwick Sears agreed and noted that there is still much to be determined.

7. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

7.1 Draft letter to Dr. Larder – follow-up from February OBWB meeting

Dr. Warwick Sears spoke to a letter drafted to Dr. Larder and noted that it suggests the OBWB is in favour of high water quality standards but requests clarification on Interior Health's filtration requirement, staying away from the financial issue for local governments.

Dir. Brydon suggested that the letter be amended so that it is less rigid with its request for clarity on specific questions. Dir. Bauer added that it should simply ask for the ambiguity to be addressed.

Other directors noted that it was a board issue since the OBWB represents local governments throughout the basin who are frustrated with the lack of uniformity on the filtration policy.

Moved by Director Kiss

Seconded by Director Baker

“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board forward a letter to Dr. Larder requesting clarification of Interior Health's filtration deferral policy.”

CARRIED

Directors Brydon and Bauer opposed.

7.2 BC Water Act Modernization recommendations from Stewardship Council to OBWB

Mr. Jatel introduced draft recommendations from the OWSC to the board. Once the board has

provided feedback to the council, its members will review the document once more, make any necessary revisions and then forward it to the board for final submission to the province, he explained. The deadline is April 30.

Dir. Clark asked if the views expressed in the document were in line with other basins in the province. Dr. Warwick Sears responded that the document was meant to address Okanagan issues and some of these are consistent in other areas (e.g. groundwater), but it definitely represents local issues. OWSC members have been encouraged to provide further input for their individual organizations, she added, noting this document represents issues where consensus has been reached around the stewardship council table.

Discussion ensued regarding what the recommendations should be for water governance and several other issues, but no specific changes were recommended on the draft document.

A consensus document is very important, Dr. Warwick Sears stated, adding that if we can show that there is this level of agreement among directors from throughout the valley it carries much more weight. It is important to remember that these are only recommendations from the OWSC and that this will be a document coming from the board.

Moved by Director Baker

Seconded by Director Baumbrough

“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board receive the draft recommendations from the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council on the Water Act Modernization and forward it back to the council for further comment with particular attention to the Governance arrangements.”

CARRIED

7.3 Update on the NASA project

Mr. Jatel provided an update on the NASA project, noting significant funding opportunities in the U.S. to assist with the development of remote sensing technology to support Phase 3 of the Okanagan Water Supply and Demand (OWS&D) project. The project would respond to the need for more data, Mr. Jatel added, and already has letters of support from some U.S. partners.

NASA has funding through their ROSES (Research Opportunities in Space and Earth Sciences) initiative. The deadline for project notices of intents is March 15. As such, Mr. Jatel requested that \$20,000 of 2009-2010 Phase 3 budgeted funds be dedicated to support this project as the OBWB's contribution to leverage further funding.

Also, because the development of the scoping phase of this initiative requires a detailed knowledge of the OWS&D project and the ability to deliver in a timely manner, Mr. Jatel recommended that the contract be provided to Summit Environmental Consultants Ltd.

If the funding application to ROSES is unsuccessful, it will be a shovel-ready project for other funding sources, US or Canadian, as they become available, he concluded.

Moved by Director Fairbairn

Seconded by Director Baumbrough

“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board approve development of a scoping study for a remote sensing project to support Phase 3 of the Okanagan Supply and Demand initiative, leveraging the substantial resources available from the US and Canadian governments. And, that the board approves \$20,000 of 2009-2010 Phase 3 budgeted funds be dedicated to support this project.”

CARRIED

Moved by Director Baumbrough

Seconded by Director Baker

“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board award a contract to Summit Environmental Consultants Ltd. to develop the scoping phase of the NASA remote sensing initiative.”

CARRIED

7.4 Sponsorship requests

Dr. Warwick Sears recommended the OBWB sponsor the Environmental Mind Grind for \$900 and provide \$1,300 to the CWRA conference. In the latter instance, she added that the OBWB would be providing a three-hour session on the OWS&D Study at the conference. This is great promotion for the OBWB and its work, she noted.

Moved by Director Clark

Seconded by Director Baumbrough

“THAT the OBWB award \$900 to the Environmental Mind Grind and \$1,300 to the CWRA conference as sponsorship to these events.”

CARRIED

8. **CORRESPONDENCE**

8.1 MLA Steve Thomson response to OBWB letter to province re: Drought Proofing the Okanagan Recommendations

Moved by Director Baker

Seconded by Director Kiss

“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board receive the correspondence from MLA Steve Thomson in response to the OBWB letter to the province regarding Drought Proofing the Okanagan Recommendations.”

CARRIED

9. **NEXT MEETING**

The next regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be held on April 6, 2010, at the Regional District of North Okanagan.

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Director Fairbairn

“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of March 2, 2010 be adjourned at 2:20 p.m.”

CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director