



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD FEBRUARY 1, 2011, AT REGIONAL DISTRICT CENTRAL OKANAGAN
1450 KLO RD., KELOWNA, B.C.**

PRESENT

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

OBWB STAFF

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
Melissa Tesche	Interim Office and Grants Administrator
Corinne Jackson	Communications and Research Coordinator

GUESTS

Carol Teschner	RDCO Special Projects Accounting Analyst
----------------	--

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Dr. Warwick Sears called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

2. APPOINTMENTS TO THE OBWB

2.1 Board Appointments and Elections for 2011

Regional District of North Okanagan

Director Rick Fairbairn
Director Buffy Baumbrough
Director Doug Dirk
Alternates – Mike Macnabb, Wayne Lippert, Shawn Lee

Regional District of Central Okanagan

Director Graeme James
Director James Baker
Director Doug Findlater
Alternates – Jim Edgson, Keith Fielding, Charlie Hodge

Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen

Director Stu Wells

Director Gordon Clark

Director Michael Brydon

Alternates – Mark Pendergraft, Dan Ashton, Tom Chapman

Okanagan Nation Alliance

Director Gwen Bridge

Alternate – James Pepper

Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

Director Bernie Bauer

Alternate – Ted Van der Gulik

Water Supply Association of BC

Director Toby Pike

Alternate – Bob Hrasko

3. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Dir. Baker nominated Dir. Wells as Chair. Seconded by Dir. Pike.

There being no other nominations, Dir. Wells was declared Chair by acclamation.

Dir. Baker nominated Dir. Fairbairn for Vice-Chair, seconded by Dir. Clark.

There being no other nominations, Dir. Fairbairn was declared Vice-Chair by acclamation.

Dr. Warwick Sears turned the meeting over to Chair Wells.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Feb. 1, 2011 be approved as amended.”

CARRIED

5. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

8.2 Water Act Modernization update

6. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

6.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Dec. 7, 2010 at Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen in Penticton.

“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Dec. 7, 2010 at Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen in Penticton be adopted.”

CARRIED

7. STAFF REPORTS

7.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Warwick Sears introduced discussion around the monthly financials update, provided by RDCO Special Projects Accounting Analyst Carol Teschner.

Dir. Fairbairn noted that he asked for the financials because of questions that he has received from Regional District of North Okanagan, asking for an update on projects. However, he added, perhaps monthly isn't necessary.

Following discussion, directors suggested that the update should be more than financial and include a reporting on activities, explaining to directors, their boards/councils and their constituents what projects are underway, where they are at, and how the work is benefitting their communities.

Directors agreed that a mid-year report would suffice, but also requested that staff provide additional updates if there is a budget variance of 10% or more over projected amounts.

“THAT Okanagan Basin Water Board staff provide the board with a mid-year report with a financial update and a description of projects. Further, that staff will provide additional updates if there is a greater than 10 per cent variance in the budget for a given program.”

CARRIED

Dirs. Bauer and Pike, and Alt. Dir. Pepper abstained.

Dr. Warwick Sears noted that the audit of the Sewage Facilities Grant Program is nearing completion and directors will receive a report at the next board meeting.

The milfoil control crew is continuing to rototill where the lakes are not frozen. Staff have a meeting with Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the B.C. Ministry of Environment in March to ensure that it receives a work permit as soon as possible while addressing concerns around species at risk, she added.

Chair Wells was provided with a copy of a Memorandum of Understanding to sign, between the OBWB, and similar agencies in B.C. and the northwest U.S., agreeing to share information and best management practices for control of invasive aquatic weeds, including Eurasian Watermilfoil.

Dr. Warwick Sears reported the Osoyoos Water Science Forum will be held Sept. 18 to 20. Alt. dir. Pepper accepted an invitation to sit on the planning committee and accepted.

Chair Wells noted that, although the International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control (OLBC) has traditionally looked at lake levels, a recent U.S. study suggests that it consider negotiating flow levels. This has significant implications, added the chair. Brian Symonds, Director of Regional Operations with B.C.'s Ministry of Environment and who sits on the international board, will be addressing Water Board directors at their March meeting.

Dr. Warwick Sears said that she reviewed and provided comment to the U.S. study's report, noting it does not consider climate change or flows for fish upstream. However, Summit Environmental – which worked on the Okanagan Water Supply and Demand Study – is providing a report to OLBC and will be looking at the impacts of climate change on Osoyoos Lake water supply. These reports will be provided at the forum, allowing public discussion before any decisions are made, she added.

Dir. Clark exited the meeting at 11:01 a.m.

After further discussion, board directors asked staff to write a letter to Okanagan-Coquihalla MP Stockwell Day and Canada's Foreign Affairs Department, encouraging them to stay apprised of negotiations and ensure the protection of Okanagan interests as the U.S. and Canada renew operating orders for water levels on Osoyoos Lake.

Dr. Warwick Sears said she would draft a letter and bring it back to the board for review at the

next meeting.

Dir. Bauer suggested that provincial staff involved in the B.C. Water Science Symposium be made aware of the forum as well.

Dr. Warwick Sears told directors that the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE) has asked the OBWB to help host a water governance workshop, looking at natural resource conflicts in relation to water (e.g. between fisheries, forestry, mining). The workshop will discuss how collaborative governance can help achieve effective, efficient, and equitable water use by these sectors.

The workshop will be held at the En'owkin centre in Penticton, Feb. 22nd. Similar workshops are being held in Alberta, Quebec, and Nova Scotia. It is interesting that the Okanagan has been noted as a region of interest, she added, explaining that each workshop is focusing on one specific watershed.

The executive director provided an update on the Regional Innovation Chair in Water Resources and Ecosystem Sustainability, noting that UBC Okanagan is now waiting for the Leading Edge Endowment Fund external review to be completed. It will then go to the full LEEF board. UBCO hopes to have approval by the end of March.

“THAT the Executive Director Report from Dr. Warwick Sears, dated Jan. 24, 2011, be received.”

CARRIED

7.1.1 Water Supply & Demand (WSD) update

Dr. Warwick Sears provided an update on Phase 3 of the Water Supply and Demand Study. Whereas Phase 2 looked at conservative estimates of conservation and population growth, Phase 3 will recreate the drought levels experienced in the Okanagan in the 1930s and look at the effects of urban sprawl. The scenarios are expected to be completed by May 31.

The impact of lake evaporation on the Okanagan's water balance is poorly understood and is one of the major information gaps in the OBWB's Water Supply and Demand study. After several years, recognizing the need to study this, Environment Canada is expected to conduct lake evaporation studies on Okanagan Lake this summer. The OBWB will be helping with logistics and taking researchers out on our milfoil boat as needed.

Responding to a question about how the study can be used by local government, Dr. Warwick Sears said that a report is being developed, describing what information agencies can expect to find that will help plan their communities.

“THAT the Executive Director Report from Dr. Warwick Sears on the Water Supply and Demand Project, dated Jan. 25, 2011, be received.”

CARRIED

7.2 Water Stewardship Director Report

Mr. Jatel reported that the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC) meets next week and will be focusing on groundwater. Oleg Ivanov, with B.C.'s Ministry of Environment and who sits on the council's groundwater sub-committee, will be making a presentation.

The OWSC is focusing on four issues this term: groundwater, source water protection, the need for an Agriculture Water Reserve, and Water Act modernization, added Mr. Jatel.

Dir. Baker referenced the B.C. government's proposed new Water Sustainability Act and noted that District of Lake Country is concerned about the potential commodification of water and water trading. The district has gone to the Southern Interior Local Government Association and the Union of BC Municipalities about this, he added.

Others also voiced concern on this issue. However, Dir. Pike suggested that it is of little use to speculate and respond to what might be proposed. We need to see the proposed legislation, he added.

Mr. Jatel reported that Kirsten Harma will be presenting research at next week's council meeting, having worked with software that will be used for the OBWB's hydrologic connectivity study.

The Streamlined Water Use Reporting Tool (SWURT) will be launched this Friday at a news conference. It will allow water utilities to record and report their water use to an online database on a monthly basis, instead of by submitting paper forms once a year. The initial launch is aimed at the 25 largest utilities in the basin. Smaller utilities haven't been asked to report at this time, but we will be working to get them online next year and the OBWB has a small budget set aside to do this, added Mr. Jatel.

The Groundwater Monitoring Program was designed to be a three year program, installing five wells per year. The program drilled its first two wells in Oliver last month and is set to have six drilled in its first year. Spallumcheen has said it would like a monitoring well set up in Year 2. RDCO is also interested in having one in Joe Rich and one near UBC-O.

Referring to the OWSC's December minutes, Dir. Pike noted that it was suggested that the study of an Agricultural Water Reserve should consider the needs of B.C. The interests of B.C. are not always the needs of the Okanagan, he said, adding that if the OBWB is looking at an Agricultural Water Reserve it needs to ensure the region's interests are looked after.

7.2.1 Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) Innovation Fund grant proposal update

Mr. Jatel provided a report on the Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) Innovation Fund grant proposal.

The project is now for \$520,000, with \$50,000 contributed by the OBWB. The proposal focused on two issues: identifying an agricultural water reserve and developing a guide for water pricing.

"THAT the Water Stewardship Director Report and AAFC grant proposal update from Mr. Jatel, dated Jan. 26, 2011, be received."

CARRIED

Dir. Dirk exited the meeting at 12:08 p.m.

In response to questions from the board, Mr. Jatel added that the AAFC project will be for two years and staff should know shortly whether the OBWB was successful.

7.3 Communications and Research Coordinator Report

Ms. Jackson reported on preparation for the launch of SWURT on Friday, including arranging the venue, and preparing and sending media advisories and news releases.

Staff are also helping organize World Water Week (March 20-26) and Drinking Water Week (May 1-7) events.

Ms. Jackson noted the media attention given to water issues over the winter holidays was significant, adding this is usually a slower time. Part of the reason was a news release that went out regarding milfoil control on Osoyoos Lake and another regarding the Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant program.

In reviewing the Okanagan WaterWise website and links to its partners, it was noted that a number of partners have not linked to the WaterWise site yet. In an effort to promote valley-wide messaging around Okanagan water issues, Ms. Jackson asked that board members request their local government/agency link to the site if they have not already done so. Dir. Brydon requested an e-mail be sent to board directors with the url information to be forwarded to the right people in their agencies.

Dir. Pike asked about web traffic to the WaterWise and OBWB corporate site. Ms. Jackson said she would look into this.

“THAT the Communications and Research Coordinator Report from Ms. Jackson, dated Jan. 25, 2011, be received.”

CARRIED

8. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

8.1 Farm classification in times of severe drought

Mr. Jatel presented the board with a draft letter to be forwarded to the province, requesting the B.C. government waive the farm income requirements to maintain farm status in regions affected by drought level 3 or higher.

In responding to questions from directors, Mr. Jatel said such a declaration would be made by the River Forecast Centre for the whole Okanagan Basin. Directors noted that this would not be effective since conditions aren't usually the same throughout the valley.

The board asked that a new letter be drafted that provides general support for a change in the farm income requirements that encourage water conservation in times of drought.

“THAT staff draft a general letter of support to the province, encouraging a change in the B.C. government's farm income requirements as a measure to conserve water in the Okanagan during severe drought.”

CARRIED

8.2 WAM update

Mr. Jatel provided an update to the board on the Water Act modernization process, noting that the province has released a draft of the legislation, renamed the “Water Sustainability Act.” The deadline for responses is Feb. 21, he added, recommending that staff develop a submission and circulate it to the board for feedback, ensuring it is submitted by the deadline.

Directors agreed with developing a submission, but also noted that they were initially told by Okanagan MLA John Slater, B.C.'s Parliamentary Secretary on Water Supply and Allocation, that there would be an additional opportunity for response. The draft legislation, released in December, is the first document to provide some details, but some directors felt there are still

many unknowns. The board asked staff to send a letter to Ministry of Environment, requesting another opportunity for feedback, and that the letter be cc'd to MLA Slater, each Okanagan regional district, the Water Supply Association of B.C. and Okanagan Nation Alliance.

“THAT staff send a letter to B.C. Ministry of Environment, requesting an additional opportunity for feedback to the proposed Water Sustainability Act; And, that the letter be forwarded to Okanagan MLA and B.C. Parliamentary Secretary on Water Supply and Allocation, John Slater, each Okanagan regional district, the Water Supply Association of B.C. and Okanagan Nation Alliance.”

CARRIED

8.3 OBWB Goals and Objectives 2011

Dr. Warwick Sears provided the board with a copy of the Goals and Objectives for 2011, noting many of them are ongoing. However, she added, the Water Management Program is up for renewal as of April 1, 2012. As such, there needs to be a review of the program and a report to the three Okanagan regional districts. A strategic planning workshop in May might be useful to discuss direction and get feedback from directors, she added.

Following on comments from directors, Dr. Warwick Sears explained that the Goals and Objectives are intended to be operational and indicate to the board the direction of staff activities for the coming year. Dir. Bauer noted that it may be useful to differentiate between staff goals and board goals, and break them out as operational goals and strategic goals. Dir. Baker agreed with this approach.

Directors also suggested that in speaking to the regional districts, it may be useful for staff to talk about the “on-the-ground” work of the OBWB, what effect this work is having on the everyday person and improving their life. It was also noted that while there is a need for research, that perhaps there needs to be more money given for grants and other projects.

Dirs. Brydon, Pike and Fairbairn spoke in favour of a strategic planning session.

Dir. Pepper exited the meeting at 2:06 p.m.

Board members suggested that while some municipal councils will want to hear a report from OBWB staff directly, as part of the Water Management Program, many will not require it. It may be easier to report to the three regional districts and offer to meet with individual communities on request, they noted.

Dr. Warwick Sears told the board that staff will look at how they can better improve communication on what the OBWB is doing, how it is benefiting each of the Okanagan's communities, and how local governments are accessing OBWB work and research to improve their communities. Dir. Baker noted the Foreshore Inventory Maps are a good example of research the Water Board supported, that may not appear to be “on-the-ground,” however, it is assisting Lake Country staff create better development plans.

Dir. Pike added that the Kelowna Joint Water Committee also accessed a lot of information as a result of the OBWB's Water Supply and Demand Study. It is important for local officials to know the value of this, he added.

9. NEXT MEETING

9.1 The next regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be held March 1, 2011 at the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen in Penticton.

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

"THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Feb. 1, 2011 be adjourned at 2:17 p.m."

CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director