



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD APRIL 5, 2011, AT OKANANGAN INDIAN BAND - HEAD OF THE LAKE HALL
118 HEAD OF THE LAKE RD., VERNON, B.C.**

PRESENT

Chair Stu Wells	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Buffy Baumbrough	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Doug Dirk	Regional District North Okanagan
Alt. Director Mike Macnabb	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
Director Gwen Bridge	Okanagan Nation Alliance
Director Bernie Bauer	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

REGRETS

Director Toby Pike	Water Supply Association of BC
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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

Chief Byron Chief	Okanagan Indian Band
James Pepper	Okanagan Nation Alliance
Shyanne Big Plume	Okanagan Indian Band

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Wells called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

"THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of April 5, 2011 be approved as amended."

CARRIED

3. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

7.4 Director reports

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of March 1, 2011 at Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen in Penticton.

“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of March 1, 2011 at Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen in Penticton be adopted.”

CARRIED

5. DELEGATIONS

5.1 Gwen Bridge, Okanagan Nation Alliance - Natural Resources Department
re: *ONA water initiatives*

Ms. Bridge described the Okanagan Nation Alliance’s work to independently develop its own Land Use Plan (LUP), recognizing the community’s needs and desires for the land.

Draft 1 of the LUP is to be complete by May 2011 and then an implementation plan will be developed. The goal, she explained, is to support bands in making decisions that: reflect priorities; support the sustainability of Syilx culture and livelihood; guide ONA activity in its administrative area; gives an overall state of the nation picture; and provide high level guidance to land management based on community perspectives. In particular there has been a focus on water and cultural perspectives, added Ms. Bridge.

Implementation of the LUP will begin in 2011 and be ongoing.

Key concerns and priorities that were heard, she noted, included the need to ensure a healthy and clean environment, access to water, access to range and other land, revenue sharing, the need for more cultural activities, and the impacts of global warming.

Water is of primary concern, explained Ms. Bridge, adding many band members in the Okanagan have to buy bottled water because the quality of drinking water is so poor. There is concern about water quality being affected by clearcut logging, agricultural runoff, inadequate sewage treatment, but also quantity being impacted by large scale water withdrawal from major ski developments, agricultural facilities, vineyards and orchards, an expanding population, and over-allocation of water permits. Further impacts from climate change and summer warming trends, also concern band members.

The LUP is supported by the Cultural Policy and the Water Policy, and other policies will be developed over time, said Ms. Bridge.

VoicesontheLand.org is an interactive website that people can use to see what water and land use is already in place, and shows the changes over time.

Ongoing activities with the LUP include digitizing the data and supporting bands to develop implementation plans.

In response to a question regarding the Water Act Modernization process, Ms. Bridge noted that ONA felt there was a lack of meaningful First Nations consultation and inadequate recognition of tribal water rights. A letter was sent to the province but there was no effective response, she added, noting that the deadline for public input was extended but all ONA could do was reiterate their wish to be involved.

In further response to questions, Ms. Bridge said that the Colville tribes in the U.S. have joined the ONA, and that U.S. tribes do have water rights which could be an effective way to ensure those rights in Canada.

6. WELCOME BY CHIEF BYRON LOUIS

Newly elected Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB) Chief Byron Louis welcomed the Okanagan Basin Water Board. Chief Louis spoke of the importance of water in the Okanagan and the need for everyone to do their part to protect it.

Water is a finite resource and the supply has been diminishing as development continues on the Westside, he remarked. It is important that OKIB and the Water Board work together to address water issues, he added.

7. STAFF REPORTS

7.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Warwick Sears reported on a recent meeting with UBC-Okanagan for the establishment of the BC Regional Innovation Chair in Water Resources and Ecosystem Management, noting an advisory committee is being established, chaired by Deputy Vice Chancellor Doug Owrap. It will include people from the community, the university and local government.

In answering a board director's question, Dr. Warwick Sears noted that potential research ideas could be forwarded to her to pass along. Dir. Bauer, however, cautioned directors that academic independence is required with this position. The Water Resources and Ecosystem Chair will consider researching what the advisory committee says is a priority, but it must meet certain academic standards.

Dir. Brydon added the significance of UBCO having this research position is it may attract grants for further study on subjects of interest to Okanagan local governments which master's students could then pursue.

After further discussion, it was agreed that Dir. Brydon and Dr. Warwick Sears would write a letter to Dr. Owrap stating the OBWB supports greater attention being given to water in the Okanagan and the significance of this alliance.

“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board send a letter to Dr. Doug Owrap, Chair of the BC Regional Innovation Chair in Water Resources and Ecosystem Management’s Advisory Committee, supporting significant attention to water in the Okanagan and the importance of this partnership as one way to address it.”

CARRIED

Dir. Bauer abstained.

Further to this discussion, Dir. Findlater suggested a letter be sent to Premier Christy Clark, asking that the position of Parliamentary Secretary on Water be reinstated, also recognizing the significance of water. The position was cut with the recent cabinet shuffle. However, it was noted that with changes to the Water Act and the overlap with six ministries, there should be some oversight of the process.

Dir. Bauer suggested that the OBWB encourage Fraser Basin Council and others to sign on also. Dir. Bridge stated that the Parliamentary Secretary did not meet ONA's needs.

“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board send a letter to Premier Christy Clark, suggesting that the position of Parliamentary Secretary on Water Supply and Allocation be reinstated.”

CARRIED

Dr. Warwick Sears updated the board on watermilfoil control operations and the Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussel issue. It is expected that the native mussel will soon be listed as an endangered species. The OBWB may be required to conduct mussel surveys in areas it wishes to work. She also explained that senior government officials are reviewing the definition of "spawning streams," for protected fish species. Because of this, the work window for rototilling is now closed along the Kelowna foreshore and the Vernon arm of Okanagan Lake. However, harvesting will be allowed following the approval of a harvesting permit.

Dr. Warwick Sears was pleased to hear Alt. Dir. Pepper note that ONA is doing a mussel survey which it will provide to OBWB.

Board members were asked for input on a letter to the Southern Interior Drinking Water Team. Once feedback is received, Dr. Warwick Sears will send it to the team.

The Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum planning committee has hired a conference facilitator and coordinator. There was some question about why there wasn't a call for submissions for topics. Dr. Warwick Sears explained a number of studies have already been conducted for the International Joint Commission to make a decision around the operating orders for Osoyoos Lake. The forum is intended to allow people to hear what the studies say and then provide input, she added. Chair Wells explained that the audience is made up of Canadian and American residents, students, and other laypeople. There are only two days, he added. Dr. Warwick Sears added that there will be an open call for posters.

The board was provided with a report on the Sewage Facilities Assistance Grants audit. Graphs were presented showing grant commitments and retirements to 2030. The board showed interest in reviewing the program, and potentially expanding it, as part of next month's Strategic Planning Session.

6.1.1 New and Ongoing OBWB Water Management Projects

A draft report on new and ongoing water management projects was presented. Dr. Warwick Sears invited feedback.

"THAT the Executive Director's Report, dated March 29, 2011, and the Executive Director's Report on New and Ongoing OBWB Water Management Projects, dated April 2011, be received."

CARRIED

7.2 Water Stewardship Director Report

Mr. Jatel noted that ecologist Lorne Fitch is speaking at next month's Okanagan Water Stewardship Council meeting at Kelowna's Best Western Inn. Please RSVP if attending.

Groundwater Monitoring Wells and climate stations are being installed at Anarchist Mountain and Twin Lakes and the committee is looking at expanding the number of stations next year.

The first water supply webinar of the year was held recently and another will be held in May. There will likely be no need for further webinars since water supplies currently appear healthy for 2011.

Dir. Bauer added that a progress report on the 2009 Sustainable Water Strategy (SWS) has been provided to the board and council. Some 45 action items are listed and graded as to progress, but this is not only to gauge the results of OBWB efforts, but also other agencies (e.g.

UBCO, local governments, provincial and federal ministries, non-profits, etc.). Dir. Bauer added that he would like to see the report reviewed as part of the May Strategic Planning Session.

Dir. Bauer also noted that council is looking at developing position papers (e.g. on hydrometric monitoring, or using groundwater monitoring wells and the cost-sharing model as a template). Any position papers would be drafted and provided to the board. He invited board members to suggest topics the board wants addressed.

Mr. Jatel added that the SWS progress report is on the Water Board website (www.obwb.ca), and that he will look at distributing the document more widely (e.g. to local governments).

“THAT the Water Stewardship Director Report from Mr. Jatel, dated March 29, 2011, be received.”

CARRIED

7.3 Communications and Research Coordinator Report

Ms. Jackson reported on World Water Week activities, noting old and some new methods used to get people engaged. As in past years, a public forum was held, but this year at a downtown café from 5 to 6:30 p.m., to attract the after work crowd.

New this year, the Water Board teamed up with AM1150's the Early Edition to provide a "Conversation on Okanagan Water" each morning, from March 21 to 25.

Also new, staff launched the Okanagan WaterWise Challenge – a website scavenger hunt for five to 15 year olds, encouraging them to learn more about local water issues and be entered to win a pool and pizza party for themselves and nine friends. There's been great uptake on the WaterWise challenge, noted Ms. Jackson, adding many children are spending 10 to 15 minutes on the website. The contest will run until May 3, with winners announced May 5, tying into Drinking Water Week.

Chair Wells was invited to sign a proclamation for Drinking Water Week, May 1 to 7.

“THAT the Communications and Research Coordinator Report from Ms. Jackson, dated March 30, 2011 be received.”

CARRIED

8. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

8.1 Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant Program - 2011 Recommendations

Ms. Tesche presented the 2011 recommendations for the Water Conservation and Quality Improvement (WCQI) Grant Program, adding the proposals were ranked using software ensuring they met the Water Board's criteria.

With \$300,000 available, the program received 35 applications with a total request of \$703,301, down from \$753,911 the previous year.

“That the Okanagan Basin Water Board approve the Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant staff recommendations for the Central Okanagan as received.”

CARRIED

Dirs. Bauer and Bridge abstained.

“That the Okanagan Basin Water Board approves the Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant staff recommendations for the North Okanagan as received.”

CARRIED

Dirs. Bauer and Bridge abstained.

“That the Okanagan Basin Water Board approves the Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant staff recommendations for the South Okanagan as received.”

CARRIED

Dirs. Bauer and Bridge abstained.

Directors discussed reviewing the WCQI grant program, in part to look at how it is over-subscribed for the amount of funding available.

Ms. Tesche said she will speak with applicants who were unsuccessful and explain why, referring those with good projects that weren't a fit to the grant program's terms of reference and encouraging them to pursue funding elsewhere. Others will be provided with constructive feedback and invited to apply again with proposals that are a fit.

Dir. Brydon suggested that directors may want to look at the 10 criteria used to weigh the grant decisions at the upcoming Strategic Planning Session.

Dir. Bauer added the grant program should be attached to the Sustainable Water Strategy since it contains the OBWB's priorities. Applicants should be encouraged to go through the strategy and say how their application is a fit.

8.2 North Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy memo

Dr. Warwick Sears told directors that she attended a North Okanagan Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) meeting. Protection of drinking water reservoirs has not been emphasized in the RGS. In response, the OBWB has been asked to send a letter noting the importance of protecting such water sources.

Dir. Findlater suggested cc'ing Interior Health, noting this method seemed to catch the attention of the province regarding drinking water contamination in the Bear Creek area.

Dir. Bridge added that the ONA would be interested in writing a similar letter.

“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board send a letter to the Regional District of North Okanagan, regarding its Regional Growth Strategy, stating the importance of protecting drinking water reservoirs and other community water sources, and that the letter be cc'ed to Interior Health.”

CARRIED

Dir. Bridge added that she would also send ONA's letter to the federal Ministry of Aboriginal Reconciliation.

8.3 Okanagan WaterWise Action Plan - Update 2011

Ms. Jackson presented the board with an update to the Okanagan WaterWise Action Plan to be discussed and potentially reviewed as part of the Strategic Planning Session.

There was a suggestion regarding the need to focus the WaterWise public communication strategy on outdoor water demand. Ms. Jackson agreed and noted that outdoor water conservation and messaging around water quantity (versus quality) needs to be the main focus. An upcoming radio and print series will be focusing mainly on outdoor water conservation, and other Okanagan water issues, but certainly outdoor use, she said.

There was some talk about how to evaluate effectiveness. That, although installing low flow toilets signal a positive change in ethics, the water savings are negligible. Dir. Findlater responded that District of West Kelowna is moving to consumption-based billing which is known to create change. Also, water restrictions are in place year-round, and when the district moves from stage 1 to 2 restrictions, water use has dropped. Ms. Jackson added that there has been research, with water utilities using emoticons on their bills to effect change. This is something she is interested in pursuing with local utilities.

Ms. Jackson also responded to concerns around the use of scare tactics to create change, and said such methods are known to disengage people and that positive messages will be important. She referred to the Denver Water campaign that is fun and entertaining, but prompts people to stop and think about their water use.

The board voted to receive the report and bring it back for discussion in June to allow more time to review it.

“THAT the Okanagan WaterWise - Action Plan Update 2011 from Ms. Jackson, dated April 2011, be received.”

CARRIED

8.4 Directors updates:

Chair Wells told the board about issues Osoyoos is having with a large residential development planned on their shoreline and plans to pump treated wastewater into their water source, Osoyoos Lake. While treatment plants are getting better at cleaning wastewater, it can't remove phosphorous properly which creates a problem with weed growth, noted Chair Wells. Osoyoos is developing a \$6 million sewage treatment plant to remove contaminants and these efforts will be for nothing if this project is allowed to proceed, he added.

Dr. Warwick Sears suggested that perhaps a higher level of water quality testing may help. B.C. Ministry of Environment's Vic Jensen will be appearing before the board in June and may have some suggestions, she added.

The impact on fisheries in Osoyoos Lake should be considered as well, noted Mr. Jatel.

9. **NEXT MEETING**

8.1 The next regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be held May 3, 2011 at Regional District of Central Okanagan.

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of April 5, 2011 be adjourned at 1:53 p.m.”

CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director