



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD  
HELD JUNE 7, 2011, AT REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANANGAN-SIMILKAMEEN  
101 MARTIN ST., PENTICTON, B.C.**

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**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
Alt. director Jim Edgson	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Doug Findlater	Regional District Central Okanagan
Alt. director Dan Ashton	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Alt. director Tom Chapman	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Bernie Bauer	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council
Director Toby Pike	Water Supply Association of BC

**REGRETS**

Director Gwen Bridge	Okanagan Nation Alliance
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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**

Vic Jensen	B.C. Ministry of Environment
Mike Reiner	B.C. Ministry of Environment

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chair Wells called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

***“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of June 7, 2011 be approved as amended.”***

**CARRIED**

**3. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS**

8.3 Letter from International Joint Commission

**4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of May 3, 2011 at Regional District of Central Okanagan, Kelowna.

***“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of May 3, 2011 at Regional District of Central Okanagan in Kelowna be adopted.”***

**CARRIED**

## 5. DELEGATIONS

5.1 Vic Jensen and Mike Reiner – B.C. Ministry of Environment. Overview of the status of water quality monitoring and wastewater treatment plant operating agreements and approvals in the Okanagan

Mr. Jensen noted that the B.C. Ministry of Environment's (MoE) Environmental Protection Division is responsible for pollution prevention, working to improve land, air and water quality.

The Okanagan mainstem lakes have had major problems with water quality due to nutrient loading from inferior sewage systems, leaky septic fields, and urban and agricultural stormwater runoff. As a result, MoE declared the Okanagan an Environmentally Sensitive Area in 1985.

Currently, MoE regulates effluents through the Municipal Sewage Regulations, under the Environmental Management Act. The Act allows municipalities and regional districts to develop Liquid Waste Management Plans that are approved by MoE, rather than applying for discharge permits, as done previously.

LWMPs are led by local government and linked to their Official Community Plans, and often require a number of studies before they can be completed. Once completed to the satisfaction of the province, the local government receives an Operational Certificate (OC) which regulates the quantity, quality, and location of effluent discharge. Annual monitoring and reporting is required, with any additional requirements outlined in the OC.

On average, it takes three years to complete a plan, noted Mr. Jensen. In the Okanagan, LWMPs are underway in Vernon, Lake Country, Okanagan Falls, and Gallagher Lake. OC amendments are in progress in Kelowna and West Kelowna, and an OC was recently completed in Penticton.

In response to questions from board directors, Mr. Reiner noted that Vernon uses its treated effluent as spray irrigation, but during times of very high discharge, the effluent is released into the lake. Penticton also uses some overland dispersal in city parks, he added.

Chair Wells drew attention to the plans for the OK Falls plant, where the most recent plan is to discharge effluent directly into the Okanagan River channel, rather than the original plan to discharge it into the nearby wetland to add a natural filtration step. All water in the Okanagan Basin eventually finds its way into Osoyoos, he added, saying there's need for better consultation with downstream neighbours. Mr. Reiner responded, noting that current plans for the effluent from OK Falls are similar to the methods used in Penticton, but on a smaller scale. He agreed, however, there is a potential cumulative impact that needs to be recognized.

Mr. Jensen added that it is preferred, where possible, to filter treated wastewater through a wetland. Once riparian and wetland corridors are lost, however, it is very difficult to reverse that loss.

Currently, the province operates under the principles that polluters are responsible for doing the monitoring. However, a collaborative monitoring program has been developed in the Okanagan to ensure that monitoring is accurate, the board was told.

Mr. Jensen added that the OBWB has an important role to play in helping improve and protect water quality. Last fall's OBWB Rain to Resource Workshop, this September's Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum, the Sewage Facility Grants Program, and funding of the endocrine disruptors research were all noted as important to ensuring clean water in the Okanagan.

The phosphorous load has been reduced since the 1970s, he added, noting Osoyoos Lake has seen improvements, especially in deep water. However, he said, phosphorous loads are increasing again, in part because of population growth. Skaha Lake will likely be the first to respond to this, Jensen added.

## 6. STAFF REPORTS

### 6.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Warwick Sears presented the Water Board's audited financial statements for the year 2010/11. The OBWB's financial management system, she explained, works on various financial reserves because of the fluidity of funds coming in and out. Grants to the OBWB are sometimes received in arrears and other times paid in advance, and grants awarded by the OBWB are paid out on an ongoing basis.

In response to a question regarding maximizing income from interest on reserves, it was suggested that the OBWB look at its investment options. Dr. Warwick Sears agreed to have this investigated. Dir. Findlater also asked that the OBWB's portion of the Pension Plan be clarified.

Dr. Warwick Sears reported on the hiring of two summer student interns, one to assist the Water Stewardship Council in its policy work and one to create a series of videos for the OBWB.

#### 6.1.1 Audited Financial Statements

***"THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board adopts the 2010-2011 audited financial statements as presented."***

**CARRIED**

Directors Pike and Bauer abstained.

#### 6.1.2 Strategic Planning Session Report

Dr. Warwick Sears provided Board Directors with a copy of the Strategic Planning Session Report, based on the May planning session.

***"THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board accept the Strategic Planning Session Report as presented."***

**CARRIED**

#### 6.1.3 Eligibility inquiry for grants to PIB

Dr. Warwick Sears presented a letter from Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen, requesting that the RDOS be permitted to submit applications to the OBWB for sewage facility grants on behalf of the Penticton Indian Band (PIB). According to RDOS, its tax requisition on the PIB includes a levy for the OBWB. The request is similar to the funds Westbank First Nation (WFN) is eligible to receive as a result of tax levies it pays to the Regional District of Central Okanagan, Dr. Warwick Sears added.

Following some questions about the age of the area the PIB is looking to upgrade, directors asked staff to look into the year the affected properties were built and whether they are eligible or not.

***"THAT Okanagan Basin Water Board staff gather more information on the work proposed by Penticton Indian Band and report back to the board."***

**CARRIED**

#### 6.1.4 Sponsorship of water-conserving gardener education event

Dr. Warwick Sears presented a resolution that the OBWB provide a \$500 grant to the Kelowna Garden Club to sponsor a xeriscape gardening presentation by Dr. Dotty Woodson in June 2012. She noted the OBWB has a \$3,000 budget for sponsorships that is available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Directors requested that more information be collected from groups applying for sponsorship of events. Staff agreed that a formal event sponsorship application would be useful.

***“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board provide a \$500 grant to the Kelowna Garden Club to sponsor presentations by Dr. Dotty Woodson in June, 2012.”***

**CARRIED**

Directors Pike and Bauer abstained.

***“THAT Okanagan Basin Water Board staff develop a formal application for approval of event sponsorship.”***

**CARRIED**

Dr. Warwick Sears reported on a recent meeting of the Southern Interior Drinking Water Team (SIDWT), noting that the group was interested in the opinion of the OBWB Board of Directors on zoning to protect water intakes. The interest comes out of research by Heather Larratt who recommends 85-metre buffer zones, added Dr. Warwick Sears.

Dir. Baumbrough noted that the City of Vernon is looking at zoning its foreshore, especially with respect to building docks. The concern, she added, is that enforcement of any bylaw can be costly.

Dir. Findlater exited the meeting at 12:03 p.m.

Dr. Warwick Sears noted that the SIDWT also talked about backcountry use and that off-road vehicle regulation is being considered. One of the obstacles is the problem created when one ministry promotes tourism and backcountry ATV use and another ministry is responsible for legislation that is seen as impeding the efforts of the first ministry.

Dir. Pike felt that buffer zones are worth pursuing, which would put the onus on watershed users to get permission for activities like putting in trails.

Dr. Warwick Sears completed her report to Board Directors stating that a review of the Water Management Program will be provided at the next meeting in July. In the meantime, she has been holding one-on-one meetings with the mayors of Vernon, Kelowna, West Kelowna and Penticton and regional district board chairs to inform the review process.

***“THAT the Executive Director’s Report, dated May 31, 2011, be received.”***

**CARRIED**

#### 6.2 Water Stewardship Director Report

Mr. Jatel reported that the May Water Stewardship Council meeting included a presentation on source water protection, which has been a focus of the council, along with groundwater, the potential for an agricultural water reserve, and hydrometric monitoring.

The OBWB applied for and was successful in receiving a \$12,000 grant from Environment Canada to hire a recent university graduate for six months. The student will assist with ongoing research and projects. Mr. Jatel added that the WSC is working on a few position papers that he hopes will be ready for the board to review in September.

Last year, the Groundwater Well Monitoring Committee identified 15 sensitive aquifers in the Okanagan. The committee has installed six monitoring wells in the past year (at Anarchist Mountain, Twin Lakes, and Oliver) and is looking to install five more this year (at UBCO, Joe Rich, West Kelowna, Summerland, and Penticton). Mr. Jatel noted that municipalities have been keen to participate since their \$6,500 contribution results in a \$20-30,000 monitoring station that provides them with valuable data on their water supply.

***“THAT the Water Stewardship Director’s Report, dated May 31, 2011, be received.”***  
**CARRIED**

### 6.3 Communications and Research Coordinator Report

Ms. Jackson reported on the wrap-up of the Okanagan WaterWise Challenge, an online quiz for five to 15 year-olds that required participants to visit the OkWaterWise website and go through its pages to learn more about Okanagan water issues. Some 205 young people participated and nearly 100 more people took the survey without entering to win a prize. The average time spent on the survey was about 15 minutes, added Ms. Jackson, noting that the feedback was very positive and staff will be looking to do something similar next year to engage youth. The contest began during World Water Week, at the end of March, and ended during B.C. Drinking Water Week in May.

Drinking Water Week (DWW) was spearheaded by the B.C. Water and Waste Association. As part of the province-wide DWW committee, Ms. Jackson provided an Okanagan perspective and worked with the team to ensure the message and outreach materials would work here. Staff distributed materials to several communities throughout the Okanagan for use during outreach events. Staff also assisted with promotion of the events, including tours of water treatment plants, and with the creation of a one-page DWW advertorial in community newspapers in Vernon, Kelowna and Penticton. The BCWWA is looking at the OkWaterWise challenge as a template for a province-wide contest next year.

Ms. Jackson reported that Mr. Graham Campbell, a UBC Okanagan student, has been hired as a summer intern to produce a series of videos for WaterWise, encouraging water conservation and water quality protection. He has also been asked to create an informational video on the Water Board’s milfoil control program and an instructional video to assist users of the OBWB’s Water Supply and Demand Viewer website.

Work is underway to create a valley-wide ad campaign for water conservation. An ad-hoc, short-term committee of water suppliers/municipal communications staff has been created to help ensure an effective campaign is developed.

***“THAT the Communications and Research Coordinator’s Report, dated May 31, 2011, be received.”***

**CARRIED**

## 7. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### 7.1 Updating Terms of Reference for Sewage Facilities Grants

Dr. Warwick Sears reported on the update to the Sewage Facility Grants. The original Terms of

Reference were updated in 2007 to include the one-hectare policy. However, following a staff audit of the program last fall, updates to the program were recommended.

Currently, the OBWB pays 18% of the total project cost of eligible sewage upgrades, with the community first paying 2.5 mills of the converted assessment amount, which is capped at 105% of the 1988 converted assessment amount for the properties being serviced. Staff noted that these figures are now outdated and difficult for communities to determine with any accuracy. The elimination of the 2.5 mill requirement was suggested, with a reduction of the grant to 16% of the total project cost, which would keep the value of future grants consistent with the amounts awarded under the old terms of reference.

***“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board adopt the revised 2011 Sewage Facilities Grants Terms of Reference as presented.”***

**CARRIED**

Directors Pike and Bauer abstained.

## **8. CORRESPONDENCE**

8.1 District of West Kelowna letter to B.C. Premier re: Parl. Secretary on Water

The board was provided with a copy of a letter the District of West Kelowna sent to B.C. Premier Christy Clark, requesting that the position of Parliamentary Secretary on Water be reinstated.

Dr. Warwick Sears noted that the letter originated with a discussion at the OBWB board table about the need to keep this position. Staff were drafting a similar letter on behalf of OBWB when they learned that Clark had reinstated a similar position. As such, staff suggested it might be more appropriate to send a letter urging the province to continue its focus on water issues.

8.2 Draft OBWB letter to B.C. Premier re: water in the Okanagan

The board was presented with a draft letter from the OBWB to Premier Clark, regarding the importance of continuing to focus on water issues.

Mr. Jatel noted that the letter is intended to introduce the Water Board to the new premier and note some of the issues in the Okanagan.

After some discussion it was decided that the letter should be edited down, noting the significant issues facing water in the Okanagan and the importance of continuing the province's Water Act Modernization process.

It was suggested that the letter be cc'd to local MLAs, and if there is an opportunity, that the OBWB have a face-to-face meeting with Premier Clark.

Staff were asked to revise the letter, e-mail it to directors for input, and then send it to the premier.

***“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board send the letter to Premier Christy Clark as amended.”***

**CARRIED**

8.3 Letter to OBWB from IJC re: Correspondence on renewal of Operating Orders on Osoyoos Lake

Dr. Warwick Sears spoke to a letter sent from the International Joint Commission in response to correspondence the Water Board sent to the IJC. The OBWB's original letter spoke to concerns

about the potential for flow rates to be considered as part of the renewal of Operating Orders on Osoyoos Lake, taking it beyond the current regulation of lake levels. The IJC's letter said it appreciated the input and would be going through a full review and consultation.

There was some question at the board table as to the likelihood that flow rates would be considered when the operating orders are renewed. Chair Wells and Ms. Jackson noted that comments they have heard suggest it is likely to be discussed.

Dr. Warwick Sears added minimum flow levels might appeal to farmers who draw water out of the U.S. Okanagan River, as well as Okanagan Nation Alliance who are concerned with the protection of fish in the river. She noted that inclusion of flows rates could have big implications for the whole Okanagan.

Directors were informed that early registration for the Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum (Sept. 18 to 20) has opened. Students can register for free, and residents of Osoyoos, Oliver and Oroville will receive a special rate. The forum will include an opportunity for residents to provide input to the IJC regarding the renewal of Operating Orders on Osoyoos Lake.

***"THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board receive the letter from the International Joint Commission."***

**CARRIED**

**9. NEXT MEETING**

9.1 The next regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be held July 5 at Regional District of North Okanagan in Coldstream, B.C.

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

***"THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of June 7, 2011 be adjourned at 1:36 p.m."***

**CARRIED**

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director