

# West Kelowna opts to not fund water conservation campaign

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By [Wade Paterson - Kelowna Capital News](#)

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The Okanagan Basin Water Board (OBWB) wanted its Make Water Work program to work for the District of West Kelowna.

But, in the end, the OBWB's request for the DWK to match a \$2,000 grant—above and beyond the \$390,292 that the district gave the OBWB in 2011— didn't sit well with the majority of council.

Corrine Jackson of the OBWB made a presentation to council on Tuesday, describing the Make Water Work water conservation campaign.

In 2010, an OBWB water supply and demand study raised concerns about rates of outdoor water use in the Okanagan.

“The average Okanagan resident was found to be using 675 litres of water, per person per day, compared to 329 litres for the average Canadian,” said Jackson.

In an effort to educate the public, the OBWB launched the Okanagan Water Wise website. The website explains water issues in the valley.

“Taking the Water Wise campaign to the next step, a valley-wide committee was (formed) this past June to help develop a specifically outdoor water conservation message,” said Jackson.

This launched the first phase of the Make Water Work campaign, which included some media advertising, social networking and informational, easy to download, posters.

Jackson explained the plans for phase two of the campaign to DWK council. The hope was that West Kelowna would get on board by pooling funds with other communities in order to spread the message across the valley.

The OBWB was requesting that the district contribute \$2,000 into the valley-wide advertising campaign. Jackson said that there are benefits to pooling funds.

She claimed that the district could save thousands in advertising dollars by pooling its money with other communities, that those funds could be leveraged with the OBWB, other Okanagan local governments and the business community, and that the DWK would have its logo on all Make Water Work materials.

According to Jackson, Lake Country, Penticton, Armstrong, Kaleden, Oliver, Osoyoos and the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen have all shown interest in funding phase two of the program.

Deciding whether or not to participate in the ad campaign was part of council's agenda on Tuesday. DWK staff suggested that council not partake in the opportunity, noting that in 2011, the DWK funded over \$390,000 to the OBWB.

Coun. Duane Ophus was quick to move staff's recommended motion that the district opt out of the funding opportunity. He said he was puzzled by the approach that the OBWB had taken and felt that they should do the advertising campaign without trying to sell it to various communities as an add-on.

Coun. Bryden Winsby disagreed with Ophus's motion.

"I don't look at this as an extravagance; I think it's a pretty worthwhile undertaking. The more people we can get to stop wasting water, the better," said Winsby.

Mayor Doug Findlater agreed with Winsby.

"To me it is a very simple equation: Put more money into it, it levers a little bit more money and you get more advertising for what's an essential message about water," said Findlater.

A few members of council had mixed feelings on how much money, above and beyond the \$2,000, would be needed to get effective advertising value.

This was especially a concern for Coun. Gord Milsom, who also mentioned he was uncomfortable with the fact that the OBWB was asking for an additional \$2,000 after the district had already provided over \$390,000 to the water board.

"I'm sure it's a good program . . . but I don't know how the other \$390,000 is being spent, and you ask now to make a decision on \$2,000—it just doesn't feel good to me. There's just not enough information."

The motion to not participate in funding the Make Water Work campaign was passed with a vote of 4-3. Coun. David Knowles, Winsby and Findlater were all opposed to the negative motion.

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Arial; font-size: 11px; font-weight: bold; font-style: normal;} .adTitle {color:2e95d9;text-
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