



MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD  
HELD SEPTEMBER 7, 2010, AT REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN,  
101 MARTIN ST., PENTICTON, B.C.

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**PRESENT**

Vice-Chair Rick Fairbairn  
Director Buffy Baumbrough  
Director Gyula Kiss  
Director James Baker  
Director Doug Findlater  
Director Graeme James  
Director Gordon Clark  
Director Bernie Bauer  
Director Toby Pike

Regional District North Okanagan  
Regional District North Okanagan  
Regional District North Okanagan  
Regional District Central Okanagan  
Regional District Central Okanagan  
Regional District Central Okanagan  
Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen  
Okanagan Water Stewardship Council  
Water Supply Association of BC

**REGRETS**

Chair Stu Wells  
Director Michael Brydon  
Director George Saddleman

Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen  
Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen  
Okanagan Nation Alliance

**OBWB STAFF**

Anna Warwick Sears  
Nelson Jatel  
Genevieve Dunbar  
Corinne Jackson  
Melissa Tesche

Executive Director  
Water Stewardship Director  
Office and Grants Administrator  
Communications and Research Coordinator  
Interim Office and Grants Administrator

**GUESTS**

Professor Louise Nelson  
John Janmaat  
Adrienne Skinner

UBC-Okanagan  
UBC-Okanagan  
UBC-Okanagan

1. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Vice-Chair Fairbairn called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*"THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Sept. 7, 2010 be approved."*

**CARRIED**

3. **INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS**

4. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of July 6, 2010 at

*"THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of July 6, 2010 at Regional District of North Okanagan in Coldstream be adopted as presented."*

CARRIED

5. DELEGATIONS

5.1 Prof. Louise Nelson, UBC-Okanagan: B.C. Regional  
Innovation Chair in Water Resources

Prof. Nelson addressed the board and reported on the outcome of recent meetings with the three Okanagan regional districts, regarding a proposed BC Regional Innovation Chair in Water Resources and Ecosystem Sustainability at UBC-O.

All three regional districts voted unanimously in favour of the chair and supporting it with a \$500,000 contribution over five years, noted Prof. Nelson. Approval of the contribution by the OBWB Board of Directors would make the Water Board the lead organization.

Work to bring a Water Resources Chair to UBC-O began a few years ago, she added, saying that after the initial thorough search and interview process, no candidates were appointed, so the position was re-advertised. An international search was conducted and UBC-O professor John Janmaat was chosen. While the nomination still needs to be approved by the province, Dr. Janmaat's expertise in economics, and his involvement in the OBWB's Okanagan Water Stewardship Council and with scientists at the university, will serve this position well, added Prof. Nelson.

The OBWB, she continued, will have significant input into the research conducted. A committee will be created to direct the chair and will include representation from the three Okanagan regional districts.

Dr. Janmaat also addressed directors, adding he has studied water and environmental issues in the valley and worked with OBWB staff in the past, and is looking forward to this continuing.

Dr. Warwick Sears added that the staff recommendation was initially for \$250,000 in funding. However, after Regional District of Central Okanagan directors asked for and reviewed a breakdown of what the funding would look like over three or five years, they determined that \$500,000 would be reasonable. As a result, the recommendation to RDOS and RDNO ended up being for \$500,000.

Mr. Jatel added that an advisory committee would be created and include a senior member of the UBC-O team, an OBWB staff member, and a representative of the BC Real Estate Foundation (which is providing \$250,000 in funding). There would also be input from directors representing the three regional districts, perhaps OBWB directors, to ensure their voices are also heard. The committee would meet annually with the Water Resource Chair, who would report on activities and receive feedback. There may be more meetings at the beginning as the work begins, he said.

In response to Dir. Fairbairn and a question about the program's sustainability, Mr. Jatel said it's expected the province will contribute \$1.25 million, the Real Estate Foundation has provided funding and then other fundraising will also occur. Some of the funds at the beginning will support the chair's salary, but these monies are part of an endowment so they are there in perpetuity, he explained.

Dir. Bauer made special note that it was the BC Water Supply Association that provided the initial \$1,000 towards the Water Resource Chair.

Mr. Jatel added that UBC-O will be submitting its application to the province's Leading Edge



Dr. Warwick Sears said that the committee may want the chair to look at a number of issues, but members will have to rank them and decide what are the priorities for research.

In response to questions, Ms. Adrienne Skinner, from UBC-O's Development Office, noted that funds from the Water Board will allow the university to leverage for more funding and that they can apply for funds not available to the OBWB. This will be one of six sustainability chairs in the province, she added.

*"THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board approve \$500,000 in funding over five years towards a BC Regional Innovation Chair in Water Resources and Ecosystem Management at UBC-O."*

CARRIED

Directors Bauer and Pike abstain.

6. STAFF REPORTS

6.1 Executive Director Report

6.1.1 Sewage Facilities Grants information package

Dr. Warwick Sears reported that she and Ms. Dunbar have been updating the guidelines for the Sewage Facilities Grants Program.

Staff turnover at local government offices has made it difficult for new employees to understand the requirements of the grant program. As such, a new guidebook is being developed and will be distributed to grant recipients. The new guide will also help the OBWB manage the program's cash flow better.

Dir. Baumbrough suggested some clarification was needed in the Terms of Reference for the grant regarding point source pollution. Dr. Warwick Sears agreed.

Dir. Findlater noted that biosolid plants are becoming more common and asked if they are eligible for a grant. Dr. Warwick Sears responded that the program is currently for sewer collection systems and treatment plants, but that the board could review this. However, there could be an issue around fairness for communities that have completed projects, like a biosolids plant, and not been eligible for funding, she cautioned.

Fairbairn: Is it the will of the board to review the program – is it outdated?

In response to Dir. Findlater and a question about the ability to review the program, Dr. Warwick Sears noted that reviewing programs is a good idea, but recommended waiting until a financial review of the program is completed. The review will look at how projects are expected to fall off over the next 20 years.

*"THAT the report on the Sewage Facilities Grants program, dated Aug. 30, 2010, be received."*

CARRIED

6.1.2 Water Resources Chair memo to RDNO

Dr. Warwick Sears noted that the issue was addressed following the UBC-O delegation earlier in the meeting.

### 6.1.3 Water Supply & Demand scenarios workshop

The summary report of the Okanagan Water Supply and Demand (OWSD) study was provided to board directors. The report will also be available on the OBWB website, they were told.

Dr. Warwick Sears reported that funding from Natural Resources Canada's Regional Adaptation Collaboratives (RAC) initiative will allow future scenarios work to be done as part of Phase 3 of the OWSD project. Proposed scenarios have been sent to various project partners and the project's management team will be discussing them Sept. 16.

Directors encouraged staff to distribute the summary report to local governments in the Okanagan. Dir. Findlater suggested staff also present the report at council meetings in the valley. Dr. Warwick Sears said this can be looked with the new scenarios being proposed, ensuring that local governments are receiving the latest information.

Phase 3, she continued, will focus on developing practical plans (e.g. Drought Management Plans).

The Water Board is posting a Request for Proposals this week for a technical study to support a valley-wide drought management plan, she added. Data from the OWSD study will be used in helping develop the plan. As a communication hub on water information in the Okanagan, the Water Board is looking to make this data available as widely as possible.

Dir. James entered the meeting at 11:20 a.m.

***"THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Directors review the Okanagan Water Supply and Demand Study Phase 2 Summary Report and provide input at the next meeting on how communities can best use the information.***

**CARRIED**

In response to a question from Dir. Baker about the study's information getting out to schools and into the public arena, Dr. Warwick Sears noted that the Okanagan WaterWise website is one vehicle being used to get the information out to the public. As well, she noted, Science Opportunities for Kids developed classroom materials around the Waterscape poster a few years ago. Perhaps, with a grant, additional materials could be developed.

Dr. Warwick Sears continued with her Board Report, noting she was invited to and attended a meeting of the Similkameen Valley Planning Society which is interested in forming a water agency like the OBWB.

There was some discussion about the OBWB's Letters Patent and whether it was possible to invite the Similkameen to join the Okanagan Water Board. While it was recognized that Similkameen waters do meet the waters of the Okanagan, it was noted that there would be some challenges. The Similkameen has different issues, and there is even resistance by some to being a part of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen.

It was decided that staff should create a pros and cons list for extending the OBWB to include the Similkameen if there was interest from the region, and bring it to the board for discussion.

***"THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board staff develop a list of reasons for and against expanding the OBWB to include the Similkameen, and present it to the board for further discussion."***

**CARRIED**



## 6.2 Water Stewardship Director Report

Mr. Jatel reported on the next Okanagan Water Stewardship Council meeting, noting Gabor Friczka from Environment Canada is the guest speaker and will be speaking on weather and climate forecasting and how it impacts water management.

The council will also be reviewing the Sustainable Water Strategy. The review will look at what has been done to meet the various recommendations, what partners are doing, how the SWS has influenced work in the valley, and prioritize work.

Phase 1 of the Streamlined Water Use Reporting Tool project, which determined what the tool should look like, is done. The work involved meeting with water utility managers and senior government staff who would be using and managing the data. The tool was built in July. A draft version will be ready in October and it should be launched in December, Mr. Jatel said.

A Water Pricing Survey is being done in the valley. Preliminary data should be available for this week's Annual General Meeting. The survey looks at what various water providers are charging. You would think Kelowna with largest utility would have smallest rates, he noted.

Dir. Kiss responded, saying that lower rates could encourage people to use more. A discussion around the value of water is needed, he added.

Mr. Jatel said the Water Pricing study has two parts and will look at some of these questions, such as, the cost of infrastructure and the value of water. The results will be shared with local governments. It's important to understand that they determine their own water rates and infrastructure needs. However, such information will help them understand what their neighbouring water providers are doing.

The standards are quite different between the various utilities, noted Dir. Findlater, adding the District of West Kelowna's plant meets Interior Health requirements, but it has been very expensive. Other utilities in the district do not meet the same standard.

Dir. Pike said the current system creates some unique challenges. Utilities charge users based on their infrastructure costs. Those who adopt a user-pay system want a dry summer because they rely on people to use the supply to raise the funds necessary to run their operation. The role of the Water Board is to look at these dynamics and how we can create equity.

Mr. Jatel went on to report on a project to develop road signage to be erected in the valley that shows drought levels. The project is the result of a request from RDNO. Staff with B.C.'s Ministry of Environment, the River Forecast Centre and others are in support and assisting with the project.

Development of the signs is complicated since the province and local communities communicate drought levels differently. The province's levels range from "normal" to "loss of supply," whereas communities have stages that include conservation requirements, e.g. no pool filling or turf watering.

Dir. Pike added that the challenge will also be developing something that works for everyone. For example, Kelowna has five utilities and the threat to water and clients is quite different depending on the utility.

Mr. Jatel went on to note the Rain to Resource workshop being organized by the OBWB for Oct. 28 and 29 in Kelowna, and added that board directors are encouraged to participate.

The Water Board has also been invited to apply for funding through a federal innovation in agriculture production fund. Water management is considered a fit. Staff are looking at expanding the water pricing study as a possible project. Mr. Jatel requested board support for staff to apply for the grant since funding programs often have this as a requirement.

***"THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board supports and authorizes a staff funding application to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Innovative Approaches Program."***

**CARRIED**

Dirs. Bauer and Pike abstained.

### 6.3 Communications and Research Coordinator Report

Ms. Jackson reported that in addition to day-to-day communication initiatives, much of the summer was spent working on the Okanagan WaterWise program.

The program's website ([www.okwaterwise.ca](http://www.okwaterwise.ca)) was launched, as were Facebook and Twitter accounts. Ms. Jackson invited directors to check out the website and provide feedback. They were also encouraged to "like" Okanagan WaterWise on Facebook and "follow" on Twitter, since this is the way social media works and how word about the program is going to spread.

The water bottle banner display has also been appearing in communities up and down the valley. They have been in municipal halls during tax time, and then in recreation centres, libraries, shopping centres and at farmer's markets, to catch the attention of local residents.

Meetings were also held this summer with those working in water for local government, asking for feedback on the OkWaterWise Outreach Strategy and Action Plan. The feedback was worked into some of the writing of the website, but Ms. Jackson noted that she will also be developing an addendum to the strategy to reflect the needs expressed by communities. This will be done, she added, before moving ahead with some of the deliverables identified in the original strategy to ensure buy-in from all parts of the valley and the success of the program. A committee will also be struck to provide feedback as the program unfolds, she added.

Ms. Tesche presented the Annual Report, noting the colours used reflect the dry Okanagan and is an attempt to combat the myth of abundance. The report focuses on the partnerships that have been built and the results that have come from this and the various OBWB programs.

***"THAT the 2010 Annual Report 'Growing Partnerships. Bringing Home Results.' be received."***

**CARRIED**

In response to Dir. Fairbairn and the large amount of media coverage this summer, Ms. Jackson noted there had been a number of calls to the office about the spread of milfoil in the north end of Osoyoos Lake. As a result, from a communication's perspective, it was determined that a news release would help preempt some of these calls, as well as respond to those who wouldn't bother to call even though they had questions. A news release went out noting some of the expected causes of the outbreak and measures being taken to address it. This resulted in a number of stories being done.

Also, a news release went out regarding the OBWB's Rain to Resource workshop, which was picked up by various media outlets. And, delegations to regional districts in the valley, regarding the UBC-O research chair, attracted media attention.



## 7. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### 7.1 Milfoil Program Update

Ms. Tesche reported on the milfoil program this summer, noting early spring run-off and other factors resulted in a boom in weed growth, particularly in Osoyoos Lake. In response to the problems at the north end of this lake, an extra operator, who works on milfoil control in Christina Lake, was hired to help the OBWB milfoil crew address the problem.

This summer's experience in Osoyoos resulted in a number of issues. Such as, how to access the milfoil in highly developed areas, where to place the harvested material until it's ready to be removed, and how to dispose of such large quantities of the weed. The crew was able to find entry sites to access the weed beds, but it raised an interesting question. And, the Town of Osoyoos accepted some of the weeds at their landfill, but the Water Board is also collecting names of farmers who are interested in receiving the material for compost next year.

Also, at the end of August, the Water Board received a call from B.C. Ministry of Environment, concerned about reduced flow rates in the Okanagan river channel at the south end of Vaseaux Lake. The ministry believed this was caused by milfoil growth creating sandbars. As such, the OBWB entered into a Fee for Service contract with MoE to remove some of the milfoil, Ms. Tesche added.

In response to a question from directors, Ms. Dunbar noted that MoE is reporting an increase in water flow in the channel. Sand, however, was not dredged since precautions needed to be taken to protect fish flow. With salmon spawning occurring soon in the area, there was only a small window of opportunity to complete any dredging, she explained.

Staff are continuing to develop a system to track the work of the milfoil program using Geographic Information System (GIS). Ms. Tesche reported that the system will allow the Water Board to know where and when work has been done.

*"THAT the report on the Milfoil Program, dated Sept. 7, 2010, be received."*

**CARRIED**

### 7.2 Milfoil Program Succession Plan

Dr. Warwick Sears explained to the board that a milfoil program succession plan was developed, recognizing that two of its three employees are eligible to retire as of October 2010 and there are no trained alternates if a vacancy were to occur. As well, vacation time has been built up which needs to be addressed, she added.

The Water Board is currently budgeted to hire a seasonal employee for four-and-a-half months a year to run the harvester. It was recommended that this position be extended to six-and-a-half months until there is an opening for full employment, likely within three years. The trainee would work through the winter, rototilling, and then work occasional days in summer, explained Dr. Warwick Sears. A potential trainee has come to the attention of staff. The operator who assisted on Osoyoos Lake this summer, and who works out of Christina Lake, has indicated interest in working for the OBWB, she added.

If the Water Board can provide extensive training to a new employee now, the agency will be in a much better position should one of the current milfoil crew member retires. And, if a second spot opens up, the OBWB will have the transfer of knowledge already in place, and hiring a second person who has less experience will not be a concern.

In response to questions from the board, Dr. Warwick Sears noted that having the seasonal

employee come in to allow current employees to take banked vacation time would be a good solution. This would not require an increase in the current budget, she said, adding funds are available as a result of the work provided on contract to MoE this summer.

*"THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board train a new milfoil employee to allow a smooth succession for anticipated staff retirements, by increasing the length of the seasonal employee contract to six-and-a-half months per year."*

CARRIED

Dirs. Bauer and Pike abstained.

8. NEXT MEETING


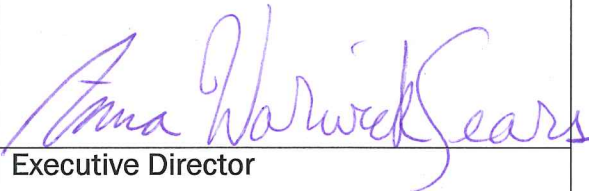
The next regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be held on Oct. 5, 2010, at the Regional District of North Okanagan.

Dr. Warwick Sears noted that this was Ms. Dunbar's final board meeting before beginning her one-year maternity leave. The board wished Ms. Dunbar well.

9. ADJOURNMENT

*"THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Sept. 7, 2010 be adjourned at 1:13 p.m."*

CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
<i>Vice-</i> Chair 		 Executive Director

Rick Fairbairn