



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD DECEMBER 1, 2015, AT REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN,
101 MARTIN ST., PENTICTON, B.C.**

PRESENT

Chair Doug Findlater	Regional District Central Okanagan
Vice-chair Juliette Cunningham	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Doug Dirk	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Bob Fleming	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Tracy Gray	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Andre Martin	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Sue McKortoff	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Peter Waterman	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Toby Pike	Water Supply Association of BC
Director Rob Birtles	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

REGRETS

Director James Baker	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Peter Waardenburg	Okanagan Nation Alliance

OBWB STAFF

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
James Littley	Operations and Grants Manager
Corinne Jackson	Communications Director

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Findlater called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

"THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Dec. 1, 2015 be approved."

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Nov. 3, 2015 at Regional District of Central Okanagan

Corrections regarding attendance was noted.

"THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Nov. 3, 2015 at Regional District of Central Okanagan be approved as amended."

CARRIED

4. DELEGATION

Nicole Pyette, UBC Okanagan, Groundwater contributions to Okanagan Lake

As a master's student in hydrogeology at UBC Okanagan, Ms. Pyette was awarded an OBWB grant to research groundwater flow from aquifers in Kelowna to Okanagan Lake. She was invited to present her research findings to the board.

Dir. Dirk entered the meeting at 10:08 a.m.

Ms. Pyette noted that the OBWB's Water Supply and Demand Study in 2010 determined a need for more information on groundwater. Her research monitored water flow into Okanagan Lake using seepage meters based at three stations between 2011 and 2013: at Knox Mountain, Maude Roxby wetland and at Okanagan Mountain Park.

The results show that the flow rates were lower than what was found in earlier studies and that there was great variation year-to-year.

Dir. Baker entered the meeting at 10:20 a.m.

Looking at aquifer levels from observation wells in Kelowna suggests declining levels, Ms. Pyette noted, adding the research suggests we may be overusing our groundwater. That said, further work is needed to look at groundwater-surface water interactions, she added.

In response to questions from the board, Ms. Pyette said that population growth and increased demand could affect available supply. Under B.C.'s new Water Sustainability Act, a water sustainability plan to manage water supplies in some of these aquifers may be prudent. The province may also require Environmental Flow Needs assessments to ensure enough for fish. However, there still needs to be a greater understanding of where the water flows from and where the scarcity is, Pyette added.

Dr. Craig Nichol, who supervised the research, added that because the groundwater and surface water are connected, extracting water from aquifers could affect stream or lake levels and water users (i.e. fish, licence holders, recreation, etc.).

Extractions need to be coordinated between surface and ground, it was noted.

5. STAFF REPORTS

5.1 Executive Director Report

Progress on Protocol Agreement

Dr. Sears provided an update on the protocol agreement with Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA), noting she has spoken with ONA and RDOS, who have an agreement in place. She hopes to meet with the ONA's executive director and discuss the possibility of an agreement to assist the two agencies to work together.

Water Quality Review

A list of water quality research was created in response to some requests for information. The list was provided to the board as a matter of interest.

UBCO Water Research Chair Endowment

As of 2016, the five-year, \$500,000 commitment from the OBWB to UBCO's Water Research Chair endowment is complete. This has helped trigger an additional \$94,000/year for water research in the Okanagan, Dr. Sears reported.

Polis Project on Ecological Governance – WSA Report

Dr. Sears gave a brief update on a report from UVic's Polis Project which outlines a number of recommendations to the province to successfully implement the new Water Sustainability Act (WSA), adding that the interests and concerns have been echoed by the OBWB. The five areas identified include: groundwater monitoring and Environmental Flow Needs research, the need for water monitoring and reporting, integrating water and land use decisions, and planning and governance. The WSA is still unclear as to how watershed-based plans will be put in place, she added.

Lake Water Levels Update

The board was provided an update on lake levels, noting they are still below average. And although the recent snowfall is good news, the forecast still suggests a below average snowpack (perhaps better in 2016 than 2015) but another early, warm spring.

"THAT the Executive Director's Report, dated Nov. 25, 2015, be received."

CARRIED

6.2 Water Stewardship Director's Report

Ongoing water projects overview

Mr. Jatel gave an update on various projects including the wetlands project and the development of a website to encourage people to learn more and visit Okanagan wetlands. The information will be provided in English, French and Nsyilxcen.

The OBWB will be meeting with District of Lake Country, Peachland and Summerland, looking to extend a three-year funding commitment for ongoing operation of hydrometric stations. The water data gathered from the stations are intended to help with local government planning decisions.

Work is continuing on a methodology to determine environmental flow needs on 18 strategic Okanagan streams.

Water Stewardship Council

The November council meeting included a presentation from Suzan Lapp, with Urban Systems, on recent climate change research. There was also discussion around a number of strategic issues to be tackled over the next 18 months with the help of various council-member committees.

Next council meeting will include a presentation from lawyer James Tate who will be speaking on a successful appeal by the Fort Nelson First Nation regarding the province's granting of a water licence for fracking. Council will also hear an update from Kellie Garcia on the drought management strategy being prepared for the OBWB.

There was some discussion about how the drought played out in the Okanagan, the efforts of the province, and what various water purveyors were seeing and how they responded. It was noted that Garcia has been speaking with utilities in the valley, as well as the province, in drafting recommendations.

"THAT the Water Stewardship Director's Report, dated Nov. 25, 2015, be received."

CARRIED

Dir. Birtles and Mr. Jatel exited the meeting.

6.3 Operations and Grants Manager Report

Invasive mussel and milfoil update

Mr. Littley noted the OBWB has been invited to attend an Invasive Species Council of BC (ISCBC)–Pacific Northwest Economic Region meeting regarding joint efforts to prevent invasive mussels. A full report will be provided at the next board meeting.

On milfoil, he noted that Monique Stone has been hired to assist with the milfoil control program, and UBCO will be providing a report to staff on their asset management research for the program.

Water Conservation & Quality Improvement Grant Program 2016-17 - Call for Applications

Mr. Littley reported out on the WCQI showcase on Nov. 26 adding that the call for applications to the WCQI grant program has gone out, however, the board needed to confirm strategic funding themes.

There was some discussion about the process of getting resolutions of support from local governments. It was noted that resolutions after the Feb. 12 deadline would be accepted.

Birtles and Jatel entered the meeting at 12:38 p.m.

“THAT for the 2015-16 WCQI grant competition annual theme, the OBWB seeks projects focussed on drought planning, water flow monitoring, groundwater studies, irrigation improvement, metering, and source protection; and

“THAT applications in these categories are prioritized for funding during staff review with the awarding of up to ten extra points toward the total score; and

“THAT the scoring criteria for the grant competition be maintained as outlined.”

CARRIED

“THAT the Operations and Grants Manager’s Report, dated Nov. 24, 2015, be received.”

CARRIED

6.4 Communications Director Report

Make Water Work (MWW) and Don’t Move A Mussel (DMM) 2015 updates

Ms. Jackson provided an update on the MWW (residential outdoor water conservation) and DMM initiatives, noting surveys that are underway to look at their effectiveness and next steps.

Surveys include: feedback from the 16 local government/utility partners in the MWW campaign; separate online survey of the 7 MWW garden centre project partners; and an extensive online survey of those who took the MWW pledge to determine who followed through on their pledges and if not, why not. The purpose of the pledgee survey is to help determine the barriers to behavior change to ensure greater conservation success.

In addition to continuing to use research-based Community-Based Social Marketing techniques (pledges, Plant Collection, etc.) to encourage conservation, it’s expected that in 2016 there will be an amplification of drought messaging and awareness with the MWW campaign, added Ms. Jackson.

Staff have been researching the possibility of an outreach survey regarding strategies to assist the province in helping protect B.C. from mussels, including a user-pay sticker program. The upcoming ISCBC/PNWER meeting will inform next steps.

There was some discussion around the sticker program and whether or not local boaters would support a user-pay system or if it should be tourists that bring in boats that pay.

There was also discussion about talks at the Union of BC Municipalities meeting and a suggestion from the province that the federal government should be providing greater funding for prevention.

Ms. Jackson said that the survey could be used to elicit additional suggestions. Dir. Martin added that he would take the user-pay sticker program idea to his South Okanagan chamber to determine support.

After lengthy discussion it was decided, that in addition to other efforts, that the OBWB send a letter to the newly-appointed federal ministers responsible for this file, cc'ed to local MPs, urging them to take further action on mussel prevention.

“THAT the Communications Director’s Report, dated Nov. 25, 2015, be received.”
CARRIED

7. NEW & UNFINISHED BUSINESS

7.1 Federal Mandate Letters Memo

Dr. Sears provided an overview of the federal mandate letters issued to newly-appointed ministers and the many ways they fit within the work of the OBWB and where we can request support on water issues and projects. In particular, there are a number of relevant points made in the letters to the ministers of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Environment and Climate Change, Fisheries and Oceans, Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Infrastructure, Innovation, Science and Economic Development, and Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness.

“THAT the Federal Mandate Letters Memo, dated Nov. 25, be received.”
CARRIED

8. CORRESPONDENCE

8.1 Letter from B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations to OBWB re: water protection in multiuse watersheds

The board received the letter from the ministry and suggested it be forwarded to local municipalities.

There was further discussion about the need for a trail strategy and best practices code for off-road vehicle trail development. The province began such an effort at one time, but there was concern that source protection wasn't included and others voiced opposition. Several directors noted perhaps it's time to look at it again.

It was suggested that a provincial representative be invited to come and provide an update to the board.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be February 2, 2016 at Regional District of Central Okanagan in Kelowna.

9. ADJOURNMENT

“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Dec. 1, 2015 be adjourned at 1:31 p.m.”

CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director