



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD DECEMBER 6, 2016, AT THE 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 Cindy Fortin	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Tracy Gray	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Ron Hovanes	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Sue McKortoff	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Toby Pike	Water Supply Association of BC
Director Brian Guy	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

REGRETS

Director Bob Fleming	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Peter Waterman	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Lisa Wilson	Okanagan Nation Alliance

OBWB STAFF

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
James Littlely	Operations and Grants Manager
Corinne Jackson	Communications Director
Kellie Garcia	Policy and Planning Specialist

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Findlater called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of December 6, 2016 be approved.”

CARRIED

3. DELEGATION

3.1 Lisa Scott, Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society (OASISS) re: 2016 public outreach for Zebra/Quagga mussel prevention

OASISS receives funding from the OBWB to assist with prevention work (e.g. water sampling for mussels) and additional public outreach with the Water Board’s “Don’t Move A Mussel” (DMM) program. Ms. Scott provided an overview of OASISS’ 2016 outreach efforts and began with a review of invasive zebra and quagga mussels noting their ability to survive in brackish water and up to 30 days out of water. It was also noted that the inability to see the mussels at their youngest stage makes the practice of “clean, drain, dry” very important.

The board was reminded of the risks the mussels pose with their ability to deplete food sources for local species such as salmon, litter beaches with sharp shells, and create toxic algae blooms.

The Okanagan is also more vulnerable than some areas because of the high calcium and PH levels in our waters, ensuring greater viability for the mussels.

Ms. Scott clarified provincial and OBWB-study figures on the cost of invasive mussels. While B.C. has suggested it would cost the province \$42 mill. annually, it has also noted this doesn't include the cost to fisheries, tourism and property values. An OBWB study, which did consider these costs, suggested the overall price would be \$43 mill. annually to the Okanagan alone.

It appears the level of knowledge at the Coast is much lower than in Okanagan, added Ms. Scott, noting the importance of reaching tourists, not just locals with the mussel message.

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

The board was also provided an update on the mussels found in Montana and the state's declaration of a state-wide natural resource emergency. Currently, the mussels are known to be in four locations and additional water testing is being conducted.

Montana has inspection stations but was unable to stop the mussels. The concern now is ensuring they do not make their way over the Continental Divide, putting all other parts of the Pacific Northwest at risk.

Ms. Scott noted that collaborations continue to be key. B.C. had eight inspections stations operating April 1 to mid-October, 2016. In that time, 24,500 inspections were conducted; 17 watercraft were confirmed carrying adult invasive mussels; 92 required decontamination; 63 were quarantined. For its part, OBWB funding allowed OASISS to conduct mussel monitoring and public outreach at various locations in the Okanagan. In all, OASISS reached 1,800 people at outreach events and had 1,460 boater interactions. Staff also distributed DMM materials to the public as well as water-recreation related retail outlets, yacht clubs, tourism offices and more.

Based on boater surveys (local and visiting), it appears mussel awareness is growing, up from 48% in 2015 to 76% in 2016, she said. When asked where people are getting the message, responses included boat launch signs (18%), inspection stations (17%), radio (13%) and billboards (13%). Based on the efforts of the DMM campaign and its use of boat launch signs, radio, billboards, and more, it would seem to indicate these are working, added Scott.

According to those surveyed, 35% of out-of-province boaters said they did not encounter an inspection station. This indicates there are some holes in our inspection system, but also the importance of outreach at boat launches, she said. Some of the other identified gaps include ongoing funding for various programs, limited inspection hours makes it easier for infested watercraft to get through, Canada Border Services officers are not all fully trained to address the mussels, there are still some boaters who do not understand the issue.

Possible solutions, said Ms. Scott include more boat launch signs, provide information to car wash stations, marinas, yacht clubs and others, and increased mussel monitoring.

Directors had a number of comments and questions. Dir. Guy reiterated past comments that mussel education should be part of the boat licencing program. Mr. Littley noted this has been put to the province and the Invasive Species Council of BC to look at promoting but it's unclear where this is at.

It was suggested that with the provincial election coming up there should be some push to get this addressed as part of the government's pre-election budget. The board also voted to send a letter to the province and federal government to increase funding to address the issue.

“THAT the OBWB send a letter to the province and federal government re: increased funding for enforcement and education.”

CARRIED

The board was told of an upcoming emergency call on Dec. 9 to discuss the Montana situation and response from others in the Pacific Northwest. It's expected that a call to action will be developed and sent to senior levels of government. It was suggested that the call be circulated to the board and, if approved, that the OBWB request that it be added as a signatory.

“That the call to action be circulated to the board and, if approved, that the OBWB request it be added as a signatory.”

CARRIED

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Nov. 1, 2016 at the Regional District of Central Okanagan in Kelowna.

“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Nov. 1, 2016 at the Regional District of Central Okanagan be approved.”

CARRIED

5. STAFF REPORTS

5.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Sears provided a brief overview of a meeting staff had with Okanagan MLAs Norm Letnick (Min. of Agriculture) and Steve Thompson (Min. of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Ops) to give an update on various local water issues. She also noted a discussion with the B.C. Assistant Deputy Minister of Environment at a recent B.C. Water Funders meeting, and their interest in the OBWB's response to the new Water Sustainability Act and invasive mussel issue. There are still questions as to how the province is going to implement portions of the WSA, Dr. Sears added.

Following up on last month's discussion regarding confusion around groundwater licencing, directors were told that information will be developed for domestic well owners and posted to Water Board websites.

“THAT the Executive Director's Report, dated November 30, 2016, be received.”

CARRIED

5.2 Water Stewardship Report

Mr. Jatel noted the election of a new Water Stewardship Council chair, Brian Guy, and vice-chair Denise Nielsen, for the next 18 months.

This month's council meeting will hear presentations from Environment and Climate Change Canada's Stewart Cohen, an expert in climate change, and West Coast Environmental Law's Linda Nowlan on recommended updates to the federal Fisheries Act, reintroducing protections that were removed under the previous federal government. The council will follow this discussion up with a letter to the board which will include recommendations regarding the federal legislation.

The BC Water Use Reporting Centre web tool, initially developed for water utilities to help manage and report their water use to the province, and then recently expanded for agricultural water users, is now being considered by the province for a pilot by the Oil and Gas Commission.

Staff held a wrap-up meeting with the Environmental Flow Needs team to review the work in 2016 and consider improvements for 2017, including ensuring data collection is accurate so that it can stand up to challenges.

“THAT the Water Stewardship Director’s report, dated November 30, 2016, be received.”

CARRIED

5.3 Operations and Grants Manager Report

Mr. Littley told the board that a federal permit has been received, allowing for milfoil control in Vaseux Lake and that the OBWB is now waiting on provincial approval to begin work in 2017. Staff will be attending a residents meeting in Ok Falls tomorrow to discuss the issue.

The board was provided with a five-year asset replacement schedule. In response to questions, directors were told that borrowing is not being considered. Chair Findlater suggested that staff look at possible grants.

“THAT the board approve the 5-year asset replacement schedule and that staff seek approval from the Regional Districts for the 5-year replacement schedule as presented.”

CARRIED

“THAT the Operations and Grants Manager’s Report, dated November 30, 2016, be received.”

CARRIED

5.4 Communications Director Report

Ms. Jackson provided an update, noting the launch of the new OBWB-funded BC Wildlife Federation app, allowing users to report environmental infractions to the province, such as mud bogging and cattle in fish-bearing streams. An overview was also given on the Water Board-sponsored “Flow’NGrow” workshop co-presented with the Partnership for Water Sustainability in BC and the Irrigation Industry Assoc. of BC. She also noted the “Alien Invasion” invasive species exhibit at the Environmental Education Centre of the Okanagan, which staff provided input and support.

The board was given a brief update on the Make Water Work and Don’t Move A Mussel campaigns. With a budget of \$48,000 for MWW (\$1-3,000 from local government and utility partners and matched by OBWB-Okanagan WaterWise), and more than \$32,000 provided in-kind by contest and media partners, the 2016 campaign was worth more than \$80,000. As for DMM, OBWB’s OkWaterWise spent a little over \$47,000, and with more than \$58,000 provided in-kind, staff delivered a program worth over \$105,000. Full reports on both programs will be provided at the next meeting.

Ms. Jackson also reported on meetings re: invasive mussel outreach, the DMM campaign and ways to collaborate with the Central Kootenay Invasive Species Society and Formula 1 power boat racing’s Mike McLellan.

“THAT the Communications Director’s Report, dated November 30, 2016, be received.”

CARRIED

5.5 Policy and Planning Specialist Report

Ms. Garcia updated the board on a workshop regarding the Okanagan Mainstem Lakes and River Drought Triggers project. While water suppliers support the concept of drought triggers there was some debate about the guidelines. These are now being reviewed, recognizing that the waters of our valley are all connected and the need to work together to address drought.

Work on the Agricultural Drought Status Outreach project is continuing. The consulting team has been interviewing growers about the best way to receive drought communications from their utility, and will be talking with pilot project partners, RDNO-Greater Vernon Water and Penticton, about logistics for communications. The consultants will present their findings to the oversight committee next week and plan to have outreach materials ready for an April pilot.

“THAT the Policy and Planning Specialist’s Report, dated November 28, 2016, be received.”

CARRIED**6. NEW & UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

6.1 In-camera session

A resolution was presented that the board go into closed meeting at 12:57 p.m.

“THAT the board meeting be closed under sec. 90 (2) (b) of the Community Charter.”

CARRIED

Moved to come out of in-camera at 1:01 p.m. and rise and report.

“THAT the OBWB approve the ‘Okanagan Basin Water Board Milfoil Control Equipment Trust and Agency Agreement’ as presented and forward it to the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen for its approval, and when this is secured, to the Regional District of Central Okanagan and the Regional District of North Okanagan.”

CARRIED**7. CORRESPONDENCE**

9.1 Okanagan Canadian Standards Association Sustainable Forest Management Public Advisory Group

“THAT the letter from Okanagan Canadian Standards Association Sustainable Forest Management Public Advisory Group be received.”

CARRIED**8. NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2017 at the Regional District of Central Okanagan in Kelowna at 10 a.m.

10. ADJOURNMENT

“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of December 6, 2016 be adjourned at 1:06 p.m.”

CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director