

OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD HELD ON OCTOBER 3, 2000, AT THE BOARD ROOM, REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN, 101 MARTIN STREET, PENTICTON, B.C. AT 10:00 A.M.

PRESENT:

Chair R. Hobson	C.O.R.D.
Director W. Hansma	N.O.R.D.
Director A. Klim	N.O.R.D.
Alternate Director D. Hackman	N.O.R.D.
Director R. Hein	C.O.R.D.
Director L. Novakowski	C.O.R.D.
Alternate Director J. Slater	O.S.R.D.
Director J. Cardoso	O.S.R.D.
Director J. Coady	O.S.R.D.

STAFF: G. Armour Field Supervisor

OTHERS: V.N. Sutton RDOS Administrator
Craig Nelson Okanogan Conservation Authority

MINUTES:

Moved by Director Hein and seconded by Director Hansma:

"That the minutes of a regular meeting of the Okanogan Basin Water Board held on July 5th , 2000 be adopted as circulated."

CARRIED.

DELEGATIONS:

Craig Nelson, Manager Okanogan Conservation Authority

Mr. Nelson reviewed the Okanogan watershed Water Quality Management Plan prepared by the Okanogan Conservation District. He noted that the three year process was funded in part by the Washington State Department of Ecology.

Locally developed plan that:

- ◆ Characterizes current watershed conditions
- ◆ Identifies water quality problems
- ◆ Develops voluntary solutions to the problems
- ◆ Recommends a strategy to ensure completion of tasks
- ◆ Stakeholder's Advisory Committee composed of representatives of local organizations and government representatives with land management responsibilities
- ◆ Technical Advisory Committee composed of representatives of local, state, federal and tribal agencies with water quality protection responsibilities

Data was limited or non-existent for some areas and the objective for data collection was to keep characterizations specific, not to complete extensive inventories.

Result is a comprehensive characterization utilizing existing data:

- ◆ Developed from characterization and local knowledge
- ◆ Problems represent risks to water quality and are real or potential sources of pollution
- ◆ Problems were identified by sub-basin
- ◆ Action items developed to address specific types of problems
- ◆ Action items are to be implemented on a VOLUNTARY basis only
- ◆ Items are ranked for priority of implementation
- ◆ Items have a lead group identified

The plan is intended to be a "living document":

- ◆ Implementation Committee developed to track progress
- ◆ Implementation Committee will also update the plan as new information is developed

This is a locally developed plan to be implemented voluntarily by watershed residents. Implementing this plan is the key to minimizing regulatory efforts. Simply put, the plan is asking everyone to be good stewards of the land and water resource.

Director Hein asked if any monitoring of the effects of recreational activities on lakes in the system was being done.

Mr. Nelson said that no data on the lakes had been collected except for the U.S. portion of Osoyoos Lake. He noted that preliminary monitoring is underway to characterize the status of three lakes.

Director Cardoso questioned the degree of compliance by undertaking voluntary actions and also asked about any plans to work with British Columbia.

Mr. Nelson advised that cooperation with B.C. is part of the action plan and that although actions are voluntary, there are strict state regulations which must be met.

Chairman Hobson asked about the Implementation Committee overseeing the recommendations of the Plan.

Mr. Nelson said that the Committee consists of twenty-five members from government and various stakeholder groups. He added that while the Conservation Authority has a major role in many of the recommended actions, staff consists of himself and two others. He informed the Board that the Conservation Authority was established some sixty years ago and is a political subdivision of state government authorized through enabling legislation. It is a grant funded agency and does not tax. (although this is legally permitted) Money comes from the State Department of Ecology and the Washington Conservation Authority. He receives about \$90,000 annually in operating funds to work with the agricultural and ranching community to develop and implement conservation techniques. The population in the watershed is only about 28,000.

Director Coady wondered if BC Environment had cooperated in the initiative.

Mr. Nelson replied that Dr. Jim Bryan, of Water Management Branch in Penticton had supplied a tremendous amount of information on BC government activities.

Director Hein asked how enforcement of the plan objectives was achieved.

Mr. Nelson responded that while peer pressure and a general desire to do things in an environmentally acceptable manner are effective, the State Clean Water Act allows for fines of \$10,000 per day for violations. Normally, the State will investigate a complaint and if it determines that action is needed, it is referred to the Conservation Authority. They have up to 18 months to assist the landowner in bringing the situation within State guidelines.

Director Coady asked if the Conservation Authority has any control of water flows.

Mr. Nelson commented that they are working with the International Joint Commission but little has been accomplished yet.

Chairman Hobson wondered if there was any skepticism about local involvement in watershed protection and feeling that it is more of a State problem.

Mr. Nelson said this question was frequently asked but there was a feeling that the Conservation Authority had been given the opportunity to develop local solutions to problems whose source was often diffuse and difficult to identify. The alternative would be to have the State take a regulatory approach and while the Department of Ecology characterizes areas by sampling for a 'total maximum daily load' it would be difficult to pinpoint and fine the offenders in many cases.

Chairman Hobson commented that this approach of acting as a conduit for funding from other agencies to be put to work on the ground was on role being considered for the OBWB.

Mr. Nelson noted that the U.S. Federal Government cannot pay money directly to private citizens, but can fund efforts of the Conservation Authority.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Nelson for his presentation.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Fiscal Year 2001-2002 Provisional Budget

Mr. Armour reviewed the proposed Provisional Budget for Aquatic Weed Control for Fiscal Year 2001-2002. He noted the following:

- Includes proposed salary and wage increases
- Includes \$53,000 contribution to equipment reserve
- Separates Field Supervisor salary into weed control and administrative components.
- Is about \$12,700 (3.1%) higher than FY 2000-2001 budget.
- Changes to line items (such as addition of 'communications' category for cellphones, etc.) which do not affect the budget total.

Director Hein wondered what the result would be if in the absence of any provincial funding, the OBWB abandoned aquatic weed control. He surmised that this might force the province to reconsider its current lack of support.

Director Klim said while she would not support stopping weed control, she agreed that we needed to try to bring the province on-side again, perhaps by asking for incremental support.

Alternate Director Hackman stated that the adverse effect on tourism might prove too much.

Director Cardoso noted that staff and wages form a big part of the budget and he would support a review of the funding of the program.

Director Novakowski commented that it might prove hazardous to reduce weed control as it would be local government that would suffer. He agreed that there should be more effort to have the province again help out.

Director Hansma supported Director Hein and said that it was time to take a firm stand on having the province contribute. It is unfair that the Water Board is left as the sole caretaker of a provincial resource. He noted that we must weigh the importance of water quality protection against aquatic weed control.

Director Coady agreed that a strategy to get the province back to the table should be developed. She suggested that we notify Provincial Parks that we will no longer provide free weed control to their parks.

The Field Supervisor suggested that we apply for provincial grants to do this work, rather than stating that we would not do it at all. He advised that in the case of previous provincial funding shortfalls, the majority of complaints from the public regarding lack of aquatic weed control had been directed at local government rather than at the Province.

Alternate Director Hackman commented that a change in government might result in a different policy.

Chairman Hobson noted that we must deal with the provisional budget now.

Alternate Director Slater advised that he was worried that any significant reduction in weed control would have a major impact on the tourist based economy in Osoyoos.

Director Coady noted that she would like to see a 15 percent reduction in the weed control budget to reflect not scheduling weed control in Provincial Parks.

Director Klim agreed that we should either have a contract with parks or not do the work.

Director Novakowski reminded the Board that there is an obligation to look after the interests of local taxpayers and businessmen.

Director Coady suggested that there would be public support of channeling some funds into water quality measures at the expense of weed control.

Director Cardoso agreed that the Water Board could gather support in describing new priorities for water quality.

Chairman Hobson supported the water quality approach noting that any move by the Board in a new direction will result in reallocation of resources. He suggested that we put money from weed control into a water quality fund and ask local government to re-assess local priorities for weed control and indicate their reaction to a reduced program resulting from lack of provincial support.

Moved by Director Hein and seconded by Director Hansma:

"That fifteen percent of the proposed 2001-2002 Aquatic Weed Control Budget be set aside for water management improvements and that the Okanagan Basin Water Board inform the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks that free aquatic weed control service to Provincial lakefront parks will no longer be provided."

CARRIED.

Moved by Director Hansma and seconded by Alternate Director Slater :

"That The Okanagan Basin Water Board arrange a meeting with the Minister of Environment at UBCM and request from local government a resolution supporting the Water Board in seeking renewed provincial support of the aquatic weed control program."

CARRIED.

Director Klim suggested that the successes of the weed control program be documented at the UBCM meeting.

Mr. Armour reviewed the provisional Sewerage Assistance Fund budget and noted

- Does not incorporate the \$70,000 requisitioned in 2000-2001 for water stewardship/management work. (\$15,000 of this has been allocated to the contract underway to prepare the proposal for Environment Canada) The remainder can either be applied to reduce the requisition, or retained for additional similar work.
- Represents a 21% increase over the 2000-2001 requisition. He explained that this increase was mainly necessary due to the artificially low level of requisitions for the previous three years established to use up reserves. In addition, the debt produced by new projects is larger than that being retired as the new works are much more expensive.

The Board agreed to requisition \$2,271,301 for Sewerage Facilities Grants for fiscal year 2001-2002.

Annual report for Okanagan Basin Water Board

The Board asked the Field Supervisor to prepare a brief summary of the accomplishments and activities of the Water Board during the year as background for the provisional budget to be sent to regional and municipal government.

First Nation Involvement with Okanagan Basin Water Board

Director Hansma advised that he had discussed possible First Nation participation in Water Board activities with the Chief of the Okanagan Indian Band. It was suggested, by Chief Wilson, that an invitation be extended to Byron Lewis.

Mr. Armour reported that the Okanagan Nation Alliance had been invited to send representation to the October 31st workshop and noted that Mr. Lewis works for the Okanagan Nation Fisheries Commission.

Osoyoos Lake Water Quality

Director Cardoso provided the Board with a copy of a publication from the Osoyoos Lake water Quality Society providing information on water resources and Osoyoos Lake.

Hot Sands Beach Weed Control

Chairman Hobson referred to correspondence forwarded by the City of Kelowna from a resident concerned with proliferation of weeds at Hot Sands Beach. He noted that Mr. Armour had responded but asked that he follow up on the suggestion that the SCUBA club be approached to assist in clean-up of the area.

Integrated Management of BC's Drinking Water Sources – Draft Report from Auditor General

The Board received the draft document for information. A Provincial representative has been invited to address the Board after policy decisions are made.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Westland Resource Group Ltd. – Water Management Partnership Proposal

Mr. Armour informed the Board that the subcommittee established at the July meeting had selected Westland Resource Group Ltd. to prepare the proposal for broader based water management to be submitted to Environment Canada.

Chairman Hobson added that preparations for the workshop to be held October 31st were underway and reported on a meeting he attended with the Federal Deputy Minister of Environment.

Hon. H. Dhaliwal, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans

The Board received the letter in which the Minister acknowledged and supported the Okanagan Basin Water Board effort to advance water management in the Okanagan.

D. MacTaggart, Municipal Financial Services - Copy of Letter to District of Coldstream

Alternate Director Hackman explained that a letter received by the District of Coldstream from the Province concerning a land subdivision, seemed to contradict the message give by Director of Municipal Engineering Services, Eric Bonham, at the May meeting of the Board.

Moved by Alternate Director Slater and seconded by Director Hansma:

"That the Water Board write to the Executive Director of Municipal Financial Services expressing disappointment with the apparent relaxation of the standard outlined at the May meeting, noting that local government had acted on this statement and the follow up letter by enacting appropriate bylaws and regulations."

Alternate Director Hackman noted that he was not in agreement with the motion and felt the Ministry had made a wise decision in this case.

Director Klim agreed noting that the letter allowed local government flexibility to make site specific decisions.

Director Cardoso opposed the motion stating that the letter was a clarification of the intent of the Ministry and not a contradiction.

Moved by Director Klim and seconded by Alternate Director Hackman:

"That the motion be tabled and the Board ask for clarification of the apparent contradiction in Ministry of Municipal Affairs policy concerning lot size for properties served by on-site systems."

CARRIED.

R. Mayer – Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen – Liquid Waste Management

Moved by Director Hansma and seconded by Director Coady:

"That letter from the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen be received and dealt with as part of the October 31st workshop discussion concerning the role of the Water Board."

CARRIED.

R. Mayer – Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen – Aquatic Weeds

Moved by Alternate Director Slater and seconded by Director Hansma:

"That the copy of the letter from the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen concerning proliferation of noxious weeds on crown lands be received."

CARRIED.

Audited Financial Statement for FY 1999 - 2000

Alternate Director Hackman advised that he had a conflict with this item and left the meeting.

Moved by Alternate Director Slater and seconded by Director Hansma:

"That the audited financial statement for fiscal year 1999-2000 be accepted by the Okanagan Basin Water Board."

CARRIED.

Resignation of KPMG as Auditors:

A letter of resignation was received from KPMG, the firm that prepared the audited financial statement. Alternate Director Hackman noted that as a retired KPMG partner he continued to undertake some contract work on behalf of the firm and this was deemed to be a conflict of interest.

Moved by Director Klim and seconded by Director Novakowski :

"That the resignation of KPMG as Okanagan Basin Water Board auditors be accepted."

CARRIED.

Moved by Director Hansma and seconded by Director Coady:

"That BDO Dunwoody be appointed as external auditors for the Okanagan Basin Water Board."

CARRIED.

Alternate Director Hackman returned to the meeting.

BC Watershed Stewardship Alliance – Watershed Initiatives in the Okanagan

Moved by Alternate Director Slater and seconded by Director Novakowski:

"That letter from the Watershed Stewardship Alliance be received and dealt with as part of the October 31st workshop discussion concerning the role of the Water Board."

CARRIED.

State of The Fraser Basin Conference

Moved by Director Novakowski and seconded by Alternate Director Slater:

"That the Board authorize Chairman Hobson to attend."

CARRIED.

In Camera:

Moved by Alternate Director Slater and seconded by Director Novakowski:

"That the Okanagan Basin Water Board meeting continue in Camera."

CARRIED.

Matters Arising from In-Camera Meeting:

Moved by Director Novakowski and seconded by Director Hein:

"That the wage adjustments approved by the Board and described in the attached memorandum from Mr. Armour be incorporated into the Provisional Budget for Aquatic Weed Control."

CARRIED.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Okanagan Basin Water Board meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY