

OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD HELD ON JANUARY 9TH, 2001, AT THE BOARD ROOM, REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN, 101 MARTIN STREET, PENTICTON, B.C. AT 10:00 A.M.

<u>PRESENT:</u>	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 (Vice Chair)	O.S.R.D.
	Alternate Director J. Piazza	O.S.R.D.
	Director J. Coady	O.S.R.D.
<u>STAFF:</u>	G. Armour	Field Supervisor
<u>OTHERS:</u>	Jim Mattison	Director, Water Management Branch,
MELP		
	Dr. Stuart Cohen	UBC
	Bill Barisoff	MLA, Okanagan Boundary
	Brian Symonds	MELP
	Dr. Jim Bryan	MELP
	Vic Jensen	MELP

MINUTES:

Moved by Director Hein and seconded by Director Hansma:

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

CARRIED.

DELEGATIONS:

Mr. Jim Mattison, Director, Water Management Branch, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks – Protection of Drinking Water Sources:

Mr. Mattison addressed the Board on measures being taken by the provincial government to deal with the recommendations of the Auditor General relating to protection of drinking water in BC. He noted that the 1999 report placed the emphasis on source protection and that the Premier had subsequently made a commitment at UBCM to better protect the water resources of the province.

Mr. Mattison explained that while existing legislation established many protective measures, recent events such as Walkerton and various outbreaks of waterborne disease in BC suggested that the safety of our water supplies cannot be ensured by treatment alone.

Mr. Mattison outlined the elements of the Drinking Water Protection Plan being developed by the Province. (attached) He noted that eight public meetings will be held including one in Kelowna on January 31st to receive input from local government, stakeholders and the public on how water supplies might better be protected.

The Chairman advised the Board that the UBCM executive has participated in this process since November and will make sure its members are kept informed.

Director Hein asked if the costs associated with measures to ensure water quality would be from funds additional to Infrastructure Grants. He also observed that the time line seemed very limited given the scope of the work to be done and secondly that crown leases to private enterprise impacted greatly on some watersheds.

Mr. Mattison responded that any funding would be new dollars and not from existing programs. He stated that other uses of watersheds have to be assessed as to their compatibility with the supply of high quality water. Some problems can be dealt with through education as it is not realistic to ban all other uses of watersheds.

Director Hein asked how authority would be delegated to local government to control activities in watershed outside its boundaries.

Mr. Mattison said he was unsure exactly how this would be accomplished. He noted that the Province and UBCM are working together to develop this legislation but that there were still many unanswered questions. He posed the example of whether local government should have a say in timber harvesting plans in crown watersheds. He said that it is necessary to find out what the community thinks they require to protect their water source, what resources are available, and what the cost of banning certain activities will be.

Director Hein commented that the Water Board is looking at a role as a coordinating agency to ensure that money is spent to the best advantage.

Director Klim said that the Province should take responsibility for setting standards and providing the funding to maintain those standards. The cost should not be downloaded onto local government.

Director Hansma stated that Spallumcheen has sixteen water districts and is currently trying to structure a municipal water authority. Funding is required to improve local infrastructure to meet government criteria.

Alternate Director Piazza noted that Osoyoos still has an unresolved problem with unsewered residences surrounding the north end of the lake. Financing is needed to deal with this problem and it must be done in the near future.

Director Novakowski asked for clear leadership from the province on managing water. He noted the current shared responsibility among many government ministries. He asked if the emphasis now being placed on addressing this issue was likely to change or disappear with political changes.

Mr. Mattison explained that the Public Accounts Committee which oversees the measures taken to address the Auditor General's concerns is chaired by an opposition member. He added that any program implemented now to improve the protection of water should endure if it is a good program.

The Chairman added that the water issues raised today are long standing. With over seventy watersheds in the valley which are all vulnerable, this is an urgent matter. He said that UBCM wants any legislation to be permissive in allowing those who see a need to participate. There is concern about funding and about leadership since there is as yet no clear spokesperson for the water resource within government. The emphasis and focus placed on water by the process outlined by Mr. Mattison is appreciated.

Dr. Stuart Cohen – Climate Change and Potential Effects on Okanagan Water Supplies:

Dr. Cohen gave an overview of the project funded by the Climate Change Action Fund, to examine the potential effects of climate change on water supplies of the Okanagan. He presented a series of slides which summarized preliminary data collected in the valley and explained how this information would be used to model possible scenarios for water supplies in the future.

He informed the Board that three focus group meetings would be held – January 23rd in Vernon, 24th in Kelowna and 25th in Penticton. These meeting would serve to inform water purveyors, users, and managers of the climate change information and the projected effects in the Okanagan. He explained that he is looking for feedback on how these projected changes could impact water management in the valley and thoughts on how these impacts might be dealt with. This would lead to a march workshop at which the basin adaptation responses would be presented.

Chairman Hobson asked how certain the group is that climate change is occurring as a result of human activities, and not just part of a natural cycle.

Dr. Cohen responded that a component of global warming is human while some is a natural process. He noted that the human component is increasing.

Director Hein commented that we may have to look at additional water storage to contain early season flows and make water available for use later in the year when low flows occur.

Director Klim questioned whether the amount of water would increase with greater evaporation from the oceans with higher temperatures.

Dr. Cohen replied that the situation was complex and the balance between increased rain and increased evaporation and evapotranspiration due to a longer growing season would require scientific modeling.

Chairman Hobson commented that impacts of climate change would affect our water conservation strategies, various species at risk, and our fisheries. He thanked Dr. Cohen for his presentation to the Board.

Director Klim left the meeting at 12:15 p.m.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**Water Management Partnership Proposal:**

Chairman Hobson informed the Board that incorrect information regarding the proposal had appeared in the Vernon media including discussion of commitment of local funds not agreed to by the Water Board. He advised the directors that he had contacted Vernon mayor Sean Harvey as a result and they had agreed to meet so that the errors could be corrected and any of the concerns of Vernon Council addressed.

Alternate Director Hackman read the report he had given to Coldstream Council to the Board. He advised that his Council favored Water Board involvement in milfoil control and sewage grant funding only. There was a concern that the province would allow us to assume a more prominent role in water management only to pull out resources at a later date as happened with the weed control program.

Director Hansma advised that he had not made a report to his council on any project details as he felt this was premature. He noted that the report from Westland is a first draft to which the Board had

ordered changes and that the process should be to seek buy-in from senior government prior to advancing the project to local government for ratification.

Director Coady added that the partnership is not a proposal for a study or for expenditure of more local funds. It proposes reallocation of existing resources for more efficient use.

Alternate Director Slater agreed that it seemed that erroneous information had been communicated as it is our intention to channel the dollars already being spent to where they are most needed. He reminded the Board that it had become involved in this process as a result of being made aware that some of the money being put into valley water resource work was being wasted on overlapping projects. All parties wanted to see the best and most efficient use of resources.

Director Novakowski stated that he felt Westland had adopted a cautious step by step approach on behalf of the Board. This was not to seek justification of our mandate and he said that the fact that we currently deal with aquatic weeds and sewer grants does not preclude us advancing other uses of the Board with the consent of the regional districts.

Director Hein stated that the correct message did not go out in the North Okanagan and he wondered if a spokesperson for the Board should correct this and how it should be handled. He said that he believed that we had an interim report and had certainly not bought into any additional local expenditures. He recalled that the Board agreed at the December meeting that the report required changes before any presentation was made. He said that if forced to a choice he would see the first priority of the Water Board as being water quality and not weeds.

Chairman Hobson said that a response from the Board would be needed to councils and that since we have not yet submitted a proposal to senior levels of government we cannot comment on their support at this time. He advised that the Water Board was not established to cut weeds and give out sewer grants; it was to be the water management authority for the Okanagan Valley.

Director Hein suggested that it would not be appropriate to deal with the revised Westland Report without the full Board being present. The Board agreed.

There was discussion as to whether a presentation to the North Okanagan Regional District would be appropriate at this time. The Board agreed that since the proposal was still in draft form, it should be finalized before any presentation. The Board agreed to send a letter to the City of Vernon outlining the process being undertaken to look at a water management partnership.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Schedule of Water Board Meetings for 2001

The Board reviewed dates for water Board meetings for 2001 and adopted the attached schedule.

Community Futures Development Corporation of the Okanagan Similkameen

The Board received a letter commending it on its efforts to initiate a water management partnership to advance cooperative and efficient control of the resource in the Okanagan Valley.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**Signing Officers**

Moved by Director Hansma and seconded by Director Coady:

"That Alternate Director Doug Hackman be appointed as a signing officer for the Okanagan Basin Water Board in place of Director Jack Borden."

CARRIED.

Sewage Grants – Historical Information

The Field Supervisor presented information on the amounts paid into the sewage grant fund since 1975 versus the funds received for Vernon, Armstrong, and Spallumcheen. He noted that the Fund had done what was initially desired in that small communities were able to implement sophisticated sewage treatment systems with the help of taxes collected basin wide. In this way, everyone in the valley who benefits from maintaining high lake water quality pays for the cost of infrastructure, rather than just the area served. If the latter had remained the status quo, many of the systems could not have been constructed and the valley as a whole would have suffered.

The Board asked that similar information from Central Okanagan and Okanagan-Similkameen Regional districts be obtained for the next meeting.

2001 Aquatic Weed Control

The Board agreed to send a letter to the Minister of Environment advising that we are finalizing plans for 2001 milfoil control and that due to reduced budgets, our schedule does not allow work in front of Provincial Parks.

Well Protection Toolkit

Mr. Armour provided the following information on the Well Protection Toolkit which Director Hansma had brought up at the December meeting.

He advised that the series of publications described how to develop and implement a well protection plan. There are about 750,000 people in BC who use groundwater for their drinking supply and the best way to protect aquifers from contamination is by implementing a well protection plan.

The idea originated in 1995 when the Fraser Valley Groundwater Monitoring Program recommended well protection steps for that area

The information contains six steps to well protection planning each described in a comprehensive booklet:

- Form a community planning team – sample well assessment forms, contact #'s, forming a society
- Define the capture zone or recharge area of the well – some hydrogeology made understandable by diagrams and examples
- Map potential sources of pollution in the capture zone – past, present and future. Point, non-point and line sources.

- Develop and implement protection measures to prevent pollution – develop public support; Existing legislation.
- Develop a contingency plan against any accidents – to minimize contamination, to provide an alternate source, train responders.
- Monitor, evaluate and report on the plan annually – steps for evaluation and reporting; outline of an annual report.

Director Hein asked for a copy of the information.

Moved by Director Hansma and seconded by Alternate Director Slater :

"That the Okanagan Basin Water Board endorse the Well Protection Toolkit and inform its member municipalities of the availability of this information."

CARRIED.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Water Management Meetings, Forums, and Workshops

The Field Supervisor noted the following upcoming water management related events:

- Ministry of Agriculture – Water Management in Agriculture – February 6th at the Summerland Research Facility
- Okanagan Nation Fisheries Alliance – Ecosystem Planning Session – February 7th in Kelowna

ADJOURNMENT:

The Okanagan Basin Water Board meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY