

OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD HELD ON FEBRUARY 14TH, 2001, AT THE BOARD ROOM, REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL OKANAGAN, 1450 KLO ROAD, KELOWNA, 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.
	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.
	Director J. Cardoso	O.S.R.D.
	Director J. Coady	O.S.R.D.

<u>STAFF:</u>	G. Armour	Field Supervisor
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APPOINTMENTS TO THE BOARD:

The appointments to the Water Board by the regional district boards were unchanged from last year.

ELECTION OF CHAIR:

Director Novakowski nominated Robert Hobson as Chair of the Okanagan Basin Water Board for 2001.

There were no other nominations and Mr. Armour declared Robert Hobson elected Chair.

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR:

Director Hackman nominated John Slater as Vice Chair of the Board for 2001.

There were no other nominations and Chair Hobson declared John Slater Vice Chair.

MINUTES:

Moved by Director Hein and seconded by Director Coady:

"That the minutes of a regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board held on January 9th, 2001 be adopted as circulated."

CARRIED.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Sewage Facilities Grant Payments – Historical Information

Mr. Armour circulated a summary (attached) with a description of the rationale behind the sewage facilities grants instituted in 1975. He noted the results in terms of effectiveness in cleaning up the lakes and in establishing tertiary sewage treatment throughout the valley. The second section of the summary provides information on the amounts paid into the fund by member municipalities and the total grants received. Mr. Armour commented that the grants had followed the original premise that everyone in the

Okanagan benefited from clean lakes and everyone should pay regardless of whether they were to receive sewers or not.

Director Hein noted that this information should be made public as a success story of the efforts of local government and the Water Board to address a lake water quality problem.

Director Novakowski asked why some areas have not received grants. Were they just late in commencing projects?

Chair Hobson replied that in all likelihood, many rural areas will not be sewered but have paid into the grant function to ensure the benefit of clean lakes. He added that the question of the future of the grants faces the Board. Is there a need to turn this funding mechanism to non point pollution sources in order to retain the gains we have made in reducing input of nutrient pollution into the lakes. Chairman Hobson mentioned storm water management as being an area where minimal attention has been given to date. He added that in rural electoral areas, the Ministry of Highways has jurisdiction over subdivision and standards may be quite different.

Director Hein asked how development on Indian reserves was dealt with

Chairman Hobson advised that Federal standards apply on reserves and any treatment and collection works are not eligible for Water Board assistance.

Director Hein stated that we should ask the federal government what they plan to do to address sewage problems on reserves.

Director Coady noted that the Penticton Indian Band is interested in extending community services to the reserve and it is probable that money will be the deciding factor.

Alternate Director Slater asked if storm water management projects were eligible for infrastructure grants.

Chair Hobson responded that such projects would likely receive lower priority than sewer projects and thus not qualify for the limited funds available.

Moved by Director Hein and seconded by Director Coady:

"That the Okanagan Basin Water Board approach the Federal Ministry of Indian Affairs to obtain current information on programs to address sewer issues on First Nation Lands."

CARRIED.

Director Novakowski asked how non point source pollution problems could be addressed by the water Board.

Chairman Hobson noted that there are a number of questions to be considered in any effort to address non point source (nps) problems. The issue of old problems versus new areas is one. He added that this might be an item for a water management partnership to address in setting some goal for the valley and to approach senior government with a priority list for actions.

Director Hein noted that the Ministry of Highways remain a major polluter with the run-off of road salt and oils into the lakes. They should be at the table if the issue of nps problems is discussed.

Director Cardoso expressed concern that rural areas have received no funds from the Water Board. He

commented that there should be financial incentives to upgrade on-site systems. Director Hansma favored this idea and said that many old areas which will not be sewered contribute to the pollution problem in the lakes.

Chairman Hobson advised that this is a possibility, but that the areas could not be destined at any time to be sewered as the enhanced on-site upgrade would only delay the community sewer remedy.

Director Novakowski added that the goal of the Board is for better quality effluent and these suggestions all fit that criteria.

Moved by Director Hansma and seconded by Director Hackman:

"That the Water Board invite the Ministries of Health and Environment to provide information on new on-site regulations and options for enhanced treatment systems."

CARRIED.

Director Hackman added that the enhanced systems could serve single or multiple units. Cost effectiveness would be a factor.

Director Coady said this is not just a rural consideration and that there are also areas of on-site systems within municipal boundaries which will likely not receive sewers due to economic reasons.

Moved by Director Novakowski and seconded by Alternate Director Slater:

"That the subject of drainage and non point source pollution be considered in the same manner as on-site sewage disposal regulations and the Okanagan Basin Water Board obtain information from municipal engineering departments regarding their drainage policies and issues. In addition, that the Water Board consult with the Ministries of Transportation and Highways and Environment, Lands and Parks for current policies."

CARRIED.

Director Hansma noted that non point source pollution from drainage and on-site systems fits into the Board mandate to protect the lake waters from degradation.

Drinking Water Protection Plan – Draft Document

The Field Supervisor informed the Board that he had attended an information session sponsored by the Province and held January 23rd in Kelowna to consider the draft Drinking Water Protection Document. He expressed concern that the document proposed that watershed assessments be carried out by local government and/or purveyors using and unspecified help from province in regions where much of the land is under the control of the province. Also there seemed to be no indication of how Province proposed to deal with its own lack of coordination of water legislation and authority as made evident in the Report of the Auditor General.

Chairman Hobson advised that UBCM had expressed these concerns to the Directors Committee in charge of responding to the Auditor General's report. There had been assurances that funding to carry our assessment had be sought from Treasury Board.

The Board discussed whether any legislation would be passed prior to an election.

Chairman Hobson stated that it was unlikely that local government would have much opportunity to comment on draft legislation if it is to be considered in the next legislature sitting.

Director Cardoso wondered if the proposed drinking water legislation would directly affect the Okanagan Basin Water Board.

Chairman Hobson advised that the effect would be on local government, allocating more authority over what happens in watersheds beyond municipal and regional boundaries.

Moved by Director Hein and seconded by Director Coady:

"That the draft Drinking Water Protection Plan be received."

CARRIED.

Aquatic Weed Control – Program Expenditures Update

Mr. Armour reported that \$312,000 had been spent out of \$415,000 budgeted to Jan. 24th the fiscal year ends March 31st. There is still a transfer to reserve of \$53,000 which leaves approx. \$50,000 for the remaining two months of aquatic weed control.

The Board discussed the budget allocation for the next fiscal year noting the shortfall created by utilization of the Board's resources in other water management activities.

Chairman Hobson noted that the Province had not responded to written notification from the Water Board of the necessity to curtail weed control in front of Provincial Parks unless some funding was made available from the Province.

The Board discussed the effect of an election and possible change in government on aquatic weed control funding and agreed to raise the issue with the Province following an election.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Okanagan Nation Fisheries Commission Workshop

Mr. Armour informed the Board that the Okanagan Nation Fisheries Commission (ONFC) had held a workshop on formulating an ecosystem based approach to enhancing sockeye salmon stocks in the lower Okanagan. He commented that the ONFC is following similar course to OBWB and will hold a workshop June 12 and 13 to address specifics of what must be done to adopt an ecosystem approach to salmon restoration. He noted that the ONFC has access to considerable federal and provincial funding and that there was also a significant U.S. component represented at meeting, both First Nations and federal and state governments.

The Board agreed to continue to encourage cooperation between First Nation and local government in furthering an ecosystem management approach.

Ministry of Agriculture Workshop

Mr. Armour reported on a workshop held February 6th which was fairly technical in nature, covering effects of climate change on agriculture and water demand; Southeast Kelowna Irrigation District experiment with metering of agricultural water users; and irrigation scheduling techniques.

He reported on one presentation which indicated that if all Okanagan agricultural irrigation systems were converted to most efficient type of system (at extremely high cost) there would be an estimated savings of 70 million cubic metres of water. If all systems were properly scheduled to apply water when needed, there would be an estimated savings of 67 million cubic metres or almost an equivalent amount. This translates to about the amount of water used by 300,000 people or an additional 23,000 irrigated acres. In order to achieve better scheduling more weather stations are needed, real time data is needed and additional types of data are needed.

Director Cardoso asserted that we should be learning from areas where water is better managed.

Director Coady noted that the savings in water use in the South East Kelowna experiment came from voluntary compliance not additional penalty costs.

Director Hein added that traditional practices play a major part in agricultural water use. He noted that the cost to growers of changes to irrigation systems is very high and there must be incentives in order to effect these changes.

Director Cardoso said that there is a need to look at incentives to those who conserve and use water efficiently, rather than penalties to those who don't.

Director Klim entered the meeting at 11:45 A.M.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Water Management Partnership Proposal

Chairman Hobson informed the Board that he, Mr. Armour, and Directors Klim, Hackman, had met with Vernon Mayor Sean Harvey to review the interest of the Water Board in regional water management and try to clear up some misconceptions attributed to the Mayor in the media.

Director Klim noted that Vernon is embarking on several regional issues at considerable cost and is not prepared to pay any additional amount for expansion of the Water Board role.

Chairman Hobson noted that the water management partnership proposal is not finalized and therefore no firm costs are available. He added that the cost to local government could be zero. The issue of such a partnership is within the mandate of the Water Board to examine and then take any recommendation back to the three regional districts for consideration.

Director Klim passed on the Mayor's concern that any money spent, whether it is local or federal or provincial should go into actual works and improvements and not into expanded bureaucracy. She summarized that there is no support from Vernon Council for the Water Board taking on any new function and no support for any additional funding.

Chairman Hobson asked if Vernon could support the partnership if the Water Board was able to obtain senior government resources and not require any local contribution over what was already available.

Director Klim responded that the specifics of the partnership would have to be considered. There was the worry that senior government would participate in setting up a partnership function and then leave local government with the cost of operating it down the road.

Chairman Hobson said that the Board needs to agree on a partnership proposal to take back to the regional boards.

Director Klim said that the Board should enlist the cooperation of staff of local government in building credibility of the partnership proposal.

Chairman Hobson asked the directors what they were comfortable with in the short term. Should we invite staff to meet and share experiences and successes with the idea of establishing some common goals for the valley and in this way identify areas where we can work together.

Director Hansma replied that to some extent finances may impose this approach as we will be unable to contribute to anything more ambitious.

Director Hein stated that he was not in favor of spending time discussing a partnership if Vernon is locked into an opposing position.

Alternate Director Slater commented that we will face the same problem every year as one municipality or another is not in a financial position to support this effort.

Director Cardoso said that we could create the partnership but make no attempt to force anyone into it. If the structure is valuable they will participate later.

The Chairman advised that the Okanagan Basin Water Board can do certain coordinating actions which don't involve spending additional money without any approval required. Other actions could be done on a 'on-off- basis with approval of the regional districts for each expenditure. He added that the water management partnership was intended to be much more than this, and that ultimately the only effective way to manage water is to have all government and non-government groups cooperate in some fashion. A single agency or authority will not work.

Director Hein suggested that each director try to agree on what is good in the partnership document.

Director Hansma suggested that we let Vernon review the document and get input on what they agree with. He noted that Vernon is just one voice at the regional board table. It may not be wise to allow one dissenting voice to scuttle the whole process.

Director Klim suggested we ask for a resolution of support from all councils.

Chairman Hobson felt it was the job of the Water Board to recommend to councils something which we agree with.

Director Coady felt it would be wrong to submit to local councils, a document which is not finalized and is subject to misinterpretation. She added that not all the proposed partnership actions are local government, and that we expect other agencies to carry on with their water management activities but in a more coordinated and economic way.

Director Novakowski stated that if we cannot get agreement to put a secretariat in place to start the partnership, we should not pursue the issue any further.

Chairman Hobson said that even if we obtain the funding for a secretariat from senior government, there is the perception that this will be withdrawn in the future leaving local government with the costs. This implies that there is no agreement for the Water Board to spend other people's money either. He suggested that we put our existing resources on the table and see what provincial and federal governments will come up with.

Director Hein said that because Vernon is entrenched in the idea of no additional spending, we are wasting our time.

Director Hansma commented that there is no such thing as a no cost scenario for a water management partnership.

Director Coady left the meeting at 12:50 P.M.

Moved by Director Hansma and seconded by Director Hein:

"That the Okanagan Basin Water Board table the Partnership Proposal and appoint a committee consisting of the Chair, the Field Supervisor, and a Director from each region to recommend what items and issues we can work on given the financial concerns expressed about the partnership."

CARRIED.

Directors Hansma, Slater and Novakowski agreed to represent their regions on the committee.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Okanagan Basin Water Board meeting adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY