

OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD HELD ON JUNE 5TH, 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 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.
	Director A. Klim	N.O.R.D.
	Director D. Hackman	N.O.R.D.
	Director W. Hansma	N.O.R.D.

<u>STAFF:</u>	G. Armour	Field Supervisor
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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 April 3^d, 2001 be adopted as circulated."

CARRIED.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Ministry of Health – Presentation on On-Site Sewage Disposal Regulations

Mr. Armour reported that John Rowse of the Ministry of Health advised that new regulations governing on-site disposal systems were not at a stage where a presentation could be made to local government. He wondered if this was a presentation that could be made at the July or August meeting, or should be left until September, to include as many people as possible.

The Board agreed to wait until September.

Chair Hobson commented that further work was being done on the regulations which had been reviewed by the UBCM Environment Committee. He said he thought the Board should arrange for the Chair, Vice Chair and Mr. Armour to meet with the new minister in the near future to discuss this and other issues in the Okanagan.

Director Cardoso entered the meeting at 10:10 a.m.

Chair Hobson noted that the question of the liability to local government in operating package type treatment facilities was of concern.

Director Hein said that local government needs to be part of the approval process for on-site treatment at least in a referral type role. They have the awareness of local conditions and factors.

Chair Hobson agreed and suggested we communicate our offer to bring together local government in a workshop format as part of the consultation process for the final regulations.

Alternate Director Slater added that the cumulative effect of servicing areas with on-site systems needs to be addressed in the regulations. At present, once a subdivision is created, Health approval is on a site specific basis only.

Moved by Director Novakowski and seconded by Director Hein:

"That a letter be sent to the new Minister informing him of our interest in the new on-site disposal regulations and our agreement to host a regional workshop for local government to receive information and have input to the legislation."

CARRIED.

Director Hansma added and the board agreed that we should indicate in the letter, liability, cumulative effects and the need for local input as our specific areas of concern.

Health and Safety Program Analysis – McMullen and Associates

Mr. Armour reported that with the permission of Chair Hobson he had retained McMullen and Associates to perform a health and safety audit of the weed control program. The cost would be about \$1650 and the Regional District of North Okanagan had already selected this firm to do a similar audit. He noted that new WCB guidelines made it necessary to review and upgrade our procedures for working with equipment, working alone, and working over water. These are all considered high risk areas.

Moved by Director Hansma and seconded by Alternate Director Slater :

"That the Okanagan Basin Water Board authorize the health and safety audit as proposed by McMullen and Associates."

CARRIED.

Director Cardoso asked if the recommendations would likely involve actual procedure and equipment changes or just written instructions. He added that there might need to be a contingency set up for the cost to comply with new regulations.

Mr. Armour said that he expected much of the requirement would be for written procedures.

Chair Hobson suggested and the Board agreed that Mr. Armour should review the results of the audit and present his analysis to the Board.

Meeting with Hon. R. Duhamel – Secretary of State for Western Economic Development

Director Novakowski reported on a meeting of Okanagan Valley local government and Minister Duhamel who is responsible for Infrastructure Grants. He commented on the variety of local projects put forward to the Minister and said that the majority were water related.

Mr. Armour, who also attended the meeting, noted the Minister's closing remarks where he asked how often local government met to discuss valley priorities. The Minister said that his job of awarding grants was made much easier in areas where regional priorities had been established.

Chair Hobson informed the Board that Senator Fitzpatrick, who organized the meeting, had also set up a

committee of the three regional Board Chairs to look at economic priorities in the Valley. He noted that the infrastructure program is greatly oversubscribed so the competition for grants is fierce. He reminded the Board of our lack of success in the past in establishing regional priorities for sewer projects with the master Liquid Waste Management Plan and commented on the difficulties in establishing agreement for priorities for regional transportation.

Director Klim replied that perhaps the possibilities for regional planning are enhanced by the remarks of Minister Duhamel. She asked for further information regarding the process involving the three Chairs.

Chair Hobson responded that the project will be administered through RDOS and funding has been applied for to conduct the work. He added that it is probable that we will continue to be asked by funding agencies, to make recommendations with a regional scope.

Director Hansma informed the Board that North Okanagan road infrastructure programs had received priority because they were based on regional planning concerns, and not the wishes of one municipality.

Alternate Director Slater wondered if the Water Board should be supporting specific projects as [art of a regional approach.

Chair Hobson replied that this will be the natural course that things are likely to follow. He suggested that at the meeting with Okanagan MLAs in the fall we try to get water onto the agenda along with transportation, education and health issues.

Director Hein referred to the presentation given to the Board by Water Management branch Director Jim Mattison, and asked what the status of Drinking Water Protection legislation would be with the new government.

Chair Hobson noted that in discussions with the UBCM Environment Committee, it had been indicated that the new legislation was perceived as have too much regulation and required further local consultation. There had been discussion with the Federal Government as a result of recent fatalities in Walkerton and North Battleford, to put more money into protection of water supplies. Other provinces, including Ontario, Saskatchewan, Quebec and Newfoundland are putting legislation similar to BC, in place. He felt the present legislation was good but that the source of money necessary for local government to assess watershed problems and rectify them was not defined. The 'single voice for water' proposed in the Auditor general's report had not been dealt with. He said that the Drinking Water protection Legislation should be on our list of topics to discuss with the Minister.

Director Hein hoped the new government would act quickly to enact the legislation.

Alternate Director Slater commented that the new government has many members with municipal experience who are aware of the need to establish assurance of safe water supplies.

Director Hein remarked that he citizens of Lake Country currently pay more for cablevision than they do for water.

Director Cardoso referred to the bulk sale of water and wondered how surplus amounts would be calculated. If we are able to conserve water would this amount just be added to potential surplus for sale.

Moved by Director Hein and seconded by Director Klim:

"That the Okanagan Basin Water Board urge the expedient implementation of Drinking Water Protection Legislation by the new government and note the requirement of local government

to have input and influence on activities in community watersheds in areas beyond the municipal boundaries."

CARRIED.

Alternate Director Slater commented that if the new regulations drive some small water purveyors out of the business there is a question of who will take over these supplies.

Director Hansma responded that the intention is to have all small suppliers come under the authority of local government. He said the local government needs to have firm criteria in place for accepting these where the province must pay to upgrade the system to meet acceptable standards.

Chair Hobson said that improvement districts are not eligible for infrastructure funds while local government is.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Moved by Director Hein and seconded by Director Hansma:

"That the correspondence be received."

CARRIED.

Regional District of North Okanagan – Approval to Continue to Investigate Water Management Partnership Actions

Received

Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen - Approval to Continue to Investigate Water Management Partnership Actions

Received

Chair Hobson noted that the Central Okanagan Regional Board had also agreed to the same presentation and that a letter would be forthcoming.

Regional District of North Okanagan – Aquatic Weed Control

Received

Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen – Aquatic Weed Control

Moved by Director Hansma and seconded by Director Klim:

"That the Okanagan Basin Water Board meet with the new Minister and outline the failure of the previous government to live up to its commitment to fund aquatic weed control."

CARRIED.

Director Coady suggested and the Board agreed that a written summary detailing past involvement of the Province in weed control accompany the letter in advance of the meeting and that the summary be sent to valley MLAs and Regional Boards as well.

Director Hansma noted that this is a regional issue in the Okanagan as should be a test of whether the

government stands by its stated intent to participate in regional programs.

Chair Hobson suggested that this be included as one of the number of regional issue we wished to discuss with the Minister. He added that this was an opportunity to rectify the breach of the five year agreement signed by the past government.

Director Hein asked Mr. Armour if weeds cut at the south end of Wood Lake could be trucked away rather than left to decompose in the southeast corner. He suggested Mr. Armour call the Administrator to find a suitable access site.

Environment Canada – Meeting with Regional Director General

Mr. Armour advised that Regional Director general Don fast had clearly stated that if an ecosystem approach were taken in the Okanagan Valley toward environmental issues, Environment Canada would look at an increased role in this area.

Derek Thompson, Deputy Minister of Environment – Aquatic Weed Control Funding

Received

Ministry of Environment – Drinking Water Protection Plan Consultations

Received

Minister of Indian Affairs – Sewage Disposal Systems on Reserve Lands

The letter responded to OBWB concerns that sewage treatment on First Nation lands be of the same standard as enforced on other sensitive areas around the lakes. The minister said that treatment systems were inspected by health Canada but that individual septic systems were looked at only at the request of First Nation government.

Moved by Director Hansma and seconded by Director Coady :

"That the OBWB urge the Minister to consider legislation requiring mandatory inspection and permitting of all new on-site disposal systems on First nation lands and the condition of existing systems be evaluated. In addition that the Federal Government provide funding for Liquid Waste Management Plans to be put in place for First Nation lands in the Okanagan."

The board discussed the motion and decided to revise it.

Moved by Director Hansma and seconded by Director Coady :

"That the OBWB urge the Minister to consider legislation requiring mandatory inspection of all new on-site disposal systems on First nation lands and the condition of existing systems be evaluated. In addition that the Federal Government provide funding for Liquid Waste Management Plans to be put in place for First Nation lands in the Okanagan."

CARRIED.

Moved by Director Klim and seconded by Director Cardoso:

"That the OBWB request the federal and provincial governments to encourage partnerships between First Nations and local government for implementation of liquid waste treatment systems on Indian Reserve lands."

CARRIED.

Director Hansma opposed.

Mr. M. Little – Skaha Lake Weed Control

Chair Hobson asked Mr. Armour to draft a response to the letter from Mr. Little outlining actions that had been taken to control weeds in Skaha Lake.

Okanagan Nation Fisheries Commission – Ecosystem Workshop

Received.

The Board authorized Mr. Armour and Chair Hobson to attend.

Ministry of Environment – Watershed Assessment Referrals

Mr. Armour advised that draft assessments of two Okanagan upper watershed, Kelowna and Mission had been referred to the Board for comment. He noted that the work represented two years of data collection in one case and four years in the other. This is the type of information that will be needed under the Drinking Water Protection Legislation to determine the status of community watersheds.

Moved by Director Hansma and seconded by Director Coady :

"That the OBWB encourage the new Minister responsible to continue data collection and make provision for data analysis of Community Watershed assessments conducted by the Ministry of Environment."

CARRIED.

SEWERAGE FACILITIES GRANT APPLICATIONS:

City of Penticton – Industrial Area Sewer Extension

The City supplied a letter stating that they would have been eligible for a grant but the project would have been classed as a low priority and there would not have been funds to proceed expediently. The City decided to go ahead with the community sewer project, funding it entirely from local sources. They were asking the Board to consider a Sewage Facilities Grant retroactive to 1999.

Chair Hobson said it was the Board's decision as to eligibility of a program without provincial funding.

Director Coady said the project was the start of a larger project that would provide sanitary sewer to the Penticton industrial area, which is presently served by on-site systems and is in close proximity to Skaha Lake.

Director Hein said that the Water Board needed to establish a policy concerning paying grants retroactively. He proposed that there be no such grants paid for time periods prior to the submission of an application for a qualifying project.

Director Hansma asked how the City of Penticton determined that the project would have been eligible for a provincial grant.

Director Novakowski said he was not in favor of paying grants for projects whose eligibility was justified after completion.

Alternate Director Slater suggested that since a policy was not presently in place we 'grandfather' this project in and establish a firm guideline for the future.

Moved by Director Klim and seconded by Director Hansma:

"That the OBWB agree to pay the grant as requested in the letter from the City of Penticton, subject to receipt of a letter from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs stating that the sewer extension met their eligibility criteria."

CARRIED.

Director Hein opposed.

The Board discussed putting in place a policy that no retroactive grants are paid from this time forward.

There was a reluctance to add to or amend the original policy which was not in front of the Board.

Moved by Director Klim and seconded by Director Cardoso:

"That the OBWB place a moratorium on retroactive payments of sewage facilities grants until the current policy is reviewed."

CARRIED.

Opposed Novakowski, Hansma

Director Hein noted that he is not aware of the legalities of the first motion thus he could not support it.

The Board discussed whether to reconsider the first motion to pay the City of Penticton request.

Director Coady asked why the Board would not want to subsidize a project that met our requirement to remove sources of pollution from the lake, regardless of when the project took place.

Chair Hobson commented that payment of retroactive grants where the necessary funds had not been requisitioned might jeopardize other qualifying projects in that year.

The Board agreed to let the motion stand and to review the grant payment policy at the next meeting.

Water Management Actions

Chair Hobson advised the Board that we need to proceed with a schedule for actions authorized by the three regional boards, an allocation of funds for each action, and an outline of the State of the Basin Conference content and objectives.

Director Klim said that we should focus on the needs of the Okanagan and on sharing knowledge in areas where communities have already done good work such as on conservation of water. She wanted to make sure that the conference addressed water issues from the bottom up, in other words, so the message was received by the people who will use the information and ultimately constitute the support for the Board's actions.

Director Coady felt the conference agenda should relate specifically to what we can do in our own areas.

Director Hansma added that the water purveyors have to be involved and must agree on representation, in order for the message to get through.

Director Novakowski felt that the outcome of the conference should be a revised mandate of the Okanagan Basin Water Board.

Director Hansma left the meeting at 1:10 p.m.

Director Hackman noted that it would be useful to compare our way of doing things between the three regional districts.

Director Hein stated that the Okanagan Basin Water Board has a mandate to look at water quality and quantity, and that this should be the role of the Board in the future. If it is not, then there needn't be a Water Board.

Director Cardoso said that we must be expedient in doing something or the credibility of the usefulness of this Board will be damaged.

Alternate Director Slater said we need to make substantive progress in order to have the continued support of the regional districts.

Chairman Hobson said that a list of actions would be prepared for discussion at the July meeting.

Next Meeting

The next regular Board meeting will be July 24th at the Regional District of North Okanagan.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Okanagan Basin Water Board meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY