

OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD HELD ON OCTOBER 6, 2001, AT THE BOARD ROOM, REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NORTH OKANAGAN, 9848 ABERDEEN ROAD, VERNON , B.C. AT 10:00 A.M.

PRESENT:

Chair R. Hobson	C.O.R.D.
Director R. Hein	C.O.R.D.
Director L. Novakowski	C.O.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.

STAFF: G. Armour Field Supervisor

OTHERS: D. Holmes NORD

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 October 6th, 2001 be adopted as circulated."

CARRIED.

DELEGATIONS:

Okanagan Indian Band

The Okanagan Indian Band was unable to be represented at the meeting due to other commitments of the Chief and Council.

The Band has requested that the Water Board Chair attend a Band Council Meeting.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Aquatic Weed Control – Provincial Parks

The Board asked at last meeting for clarification of why some weed removal was done in front of Provincial Parks this summer, when the Board had notified the Province that we would require funding assistance to be able to do this work.

Mr. Armour explained that while milfoil harvesting is a pretty straightforward procedure, the weed beds in question may affect a number of activities and properties in addition to Parks. He showed some aerial photographs of Haynes Point Park at Osoyoos, Christie Memorial Park at Skaha, and Kekuli Bay near Vernon. He advised the Board of the status of other Parks: Okanagan Lake Park has milfoil but was not cut this year; Sunoka Beach also has milfoil but was not cut this year; Bear Creek has minimal weed growth; and there is no milfoil at Fintry or Ellison Parks.

Aquatic Weed Control Budget for F.Y. 2002 – 2003

Doug Holmes, Chief Financial Officer for NORD provided details of the proposed increase in administration charges for the Okanagan Basin Water Board. He noted that an evaluation of staff time sheets had shown that the cost of Board administration and provision of office space and supplies was approximately \$33,000, up from the \$20,500 currently charged.

Mr. Armour advised that prior to the current year administration contract charges were \$17,900 for the previous four to five years. The charges were around \$23,000 during the mid 1990s and earlier. NORD was awarded admin contract in 1983 as low bidder among the three regional districts. In the early 1990's the contract was again offered and only NORD chose to submit a bid. He noted that there is less payroll now – up to 6 employees where there used to be 14 – 20 seasonal people. The decision in 90's to lower the charges was based on a reduction in funding from the province and the changed role of the Field Supervisor who took on more of the administrative load.

Director Hackman questioned the amount of time spent by the corporate controller on Water Board business. He said it seemed excessive as the clerk was performing most of the accounting and payroll work.

Mr. Holmes described the duties of the Corporate Controller.

Director Hackman said he could not support the increase based on this information.

Director Hein wondered what other options were open to the Water Board if they did not contract the administration through NORD. He said that while he agreed with Director Hackman's assessment, he doubted we could obtain administrative services any cheaper through other local government.

Chairman Hobson noted that Mr. Holmes was here to present the information requested by the Board and not to negotiate.

Director Hansma noted that some actions such as the processing of Sewage Grants required the time of the Corporate Controller and not the clerk. He advised that the Regional Board had asked for documentation of NORD staff time.

Director Novakowski said that he saw no benefit in arguing about staff time.

Director Coady asked what the effect would be on NORD if the Water Board chose to contract administration elsewhere.

Mr. Holmes said that staff reductions would have to be looked at.

Director Hackman agreed that there were no readily available alternatives for the Water Board, but he still felt a 50 to 60 percent increase was not justified.

Director Klim noted that Vernon Council does not support the increase and would like other options examined.

Director Cardoso noted that there is a benefit to the North Okanagan in having the Water Board housed there, in terms of dollars spent in the community. He suggested that perhaps the Sewage Grants should include an administrative charge.

The Board asked that Mr. Holmes obtain further information on the involvement of the Corporate Controller in Water Board business.

Mr. Holmes said that he could provide this later in the meeting.

Mr. Holmes subsequently returned to the meeting and said that a closer look at the analysis of staff time had turned up an error which had resulted in a higher proposed charge than would actually be the case. He was not sure of the exact amount but said it would be substantial. The Board agreed to incorporate the revised amount into its provisional budget.

Mr. Armour reviewed the provisional 2002 –2003 budget for aquatic weed control and the options for sewage facilities grant requisition. This information is attached.

He described the three options for sewage grant requisition as follows:

- 1) Requisition the same as 2001 – \$2.1 million (projection \$2.197 to be spent) The total RD requisition will increase because of aquatic weed control increase. (\$30,000)
- 2) Requisition \$2 million and use up about \$200,000 of surplus
- 3) Requisition amount we anticipate paying out in grants \$2.15 – \$2.2 million – will leave around \$300,000 surplus. This cannot be spent on projects other than Sewage treatment and collection without the consent of the three regional boards.

Director Hein noted that both the weed control and sewage grant assessments were well below the maximum amount the Board is allowed to levy. The cost to individual households in the Okanagan is small for the return in keeping the lakes clean.

The Board asked Mr. Armour to prepare a review of the status of the equipment reserve fund and a schedule for equipment replacement for consideration at the next meeting.

Director Cardoso commented that there was no allocation in the budget for improvements in areas of on site disposal in rural areas.

Chairman Hobson noted that rural areas can apply for grants to install sewers and that there was still a benefit to all of cleaning up municipal sources of effluent.

Director Hein agreed that at some point the Water Board should look at subsidizing enhanced on site treatment systems as an alternative to community sewers in some areas.

Moved by Director Hein and seconded by Director Coady:

"That the Okanagan Basin Water Board adopt the FY 2002 - 2003 provisional budget for aquatic weed control as presented and requisition \$470,326 ."

CARRIED.

Moved by Director Coady and seconded by Director Klim:

" That the Okanagan Basin Water Board requisition \$2,100,000 for sewage grants for fiscal year 2002 - 2003."

CARRIED.

UBCM Meeting With Ministry of Land, Air and Water Protection Senior Staff

Chairman Hobson reported on discussions between some Water Board Directors and the senior staff of the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, held at UBCM. He said that Director Hansma had included weed control with the topics of a meeting he had arranged.

Director Hansma informed the Board that options for a dedicated source of revenue from which the Province could contribute to the control of aquatic weeds were discussed and the Ministry seemed amenable to considering this. They were not receptive to any sort of grant funding similar to what had been done in the past. The former government had rejected suggestion for both a boat trailer license surcharge and a marine fuel tax as options for funding. Director Hansma also mentioned these ideas in subsequent meetings he had with Minister Ted Nebbeling and Premier Campbell.

The Board asked that all parties be kept informed of any further discussions on this subject.

Chairman Hobson asked that the information package sent to the Ministry be forwarded to regional boards in other jurisdictions where aquatic weed control is performed.

Director Klim noted that a hotel tax would be part of discussions between Provincial government members from the Okanagan and the Mayors and Chairs. She suggested that part of this money might be made available to address weed control

Kalamalka Lake Water Quality

Mr. Armour reported that he had spoken with Vic Jensen of the Ministry of Land, Air and Water Protection about the Kalamalka Lake water quality concerns raised by the District of Coldstream and NORD.

Mr. Armour advised the Ministry had recently sampled Kalamalka Lake and Mr. Jensen would be willing to inform the Board of results at the next meeting.

Chairman Hobson asked if gathering information on the Kalamalka Lake situation was something the Board wished to do, even though participation in any study was currently not part of our mandate.

The Board agreed to invite Mr. Jensen to its next meeting.

Director Hackman noted that a study of Kalamalka Lake water quality may be initiated by the local governments around the lake as they are doubtful such work will be done otherwise.

CORRESPONDENCE:**Okanagan Similkameen Boundary Fisheries Partnership**

The Board received a letter asking for participation in planning sessions to be held in October and November.

OTHER BUSINESS:**Superannuation Arrears**

Mr. Armour reported that he wished to purchase pensionable time when employed by the Water Board but not enrolled in the superannuation plan due to administrative error. He said that he had been informed that the options are:

- Wait until retirement date and pay what was originally owed plus accrued interest to the retirement date. The Water Board would then have to pay on the same basis.
- Pay to purchase the arrears now. (original amount plus interest to date) The Water Board would have to contribute on the same basis.

The explanation received for waiting until the retirement date is that if the employer agrees to pay now, they must agree to settle all arrears claims. If they wait until retirement of the employee, they are obligated only to deal with that employees' application.

Mr. Armour indicated that he would prefer to buy the time now and save the interest but he was unsure of how to determine the liability of the Board for any other claims.

Director Hackman suggested, and the Board agreed that independent advice should be obtained as to the best course of action.

Protection of Watershed Areas Outside Municipal Boundaries

Director Hein noted that further consultation will be held with local government regarding the Drinking Water Legislation. He said he remains very concerned that local government, while being asked to ensure the safety and integrity of water supplies, has little or no jurisdiction over activities in community watersheds outside municipal boundaries. He expressed the need for such additional powers to be delegated.

Chairman Hobson commented that there was a question of Provincial interests in watersheds versus those of local government.

Director Hansma said the directors should take these concerns to local government consultations on the legislation.

Director Novakowski wondered if the Board should take a more formal position to be presented to the Province.

C5H2O Conference

The Board agreed to pay directors for attending the conference at the same rate per day as regular meeting pay.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Okanagan Basin Water Board meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY