

OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD HELD ON JANUARY 8, 2002, 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.
	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 Novakowski and seconded by Director Coady:

"That the minutes of a regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board held on November 6th, 2001 be adopted as circulated."

CARRIED.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Okanagan University College – Meeting and Discussion on Database

Mr. Armour reported on a December 14th meeting with A. Bielecki and N. Jatel (OUC) and R. Hobson. The meeting was held to follow up on OBWB interest in partnering with OUC in establishing a database. Adam Bielecki is Director of Campus Development and Strategic Planning, while Nelson Jatel is a consultant who has prepared a Strategic Organization Model for the BC Freshwater Institute.

OUC is investigating partnerships with several database and research partners.

- Pacific Agro – Research Institute – have a database which is comprehensive on valley bottom characteristics but sketchy on the upper watershed.
- OBWB – looking at a sort of water related information warehouse.
- Watershed Management (Forestry Based) The two FRBC endowed Chairs are in place. One is a Forest Hydrologist and the other a Soils Hydrologist. Their roles will be teaching and research.
- SIFERP – Rob Scherer – research Information extension and database

A. Bielecki pointed out the unique nature of the college in offering both a 4 year degree in Freshwater Science which has more of a focus on chemistry and engineering rather than ecology; and in the two year Water Quality Technology Diploma incorporating environmental sciences and wastewater management.

The Plan for the BC Freshwater Institute (BCFI) is to partner with 'Vitesse' a program which specializes in re-skilling people working in a particular industry; a process which may be useful in undertaking risk assessment and response plans for watersheds, under the new Drinking Water Legislation. There are plans to consult with BCWWA in February 2002 to determine requirements of industry to incorporate into

the program. A pilot course involving 20 to 40 people will be initiated in May to focus on risk management in water systems. This will be a pilot course for the Okanagan but the intent is to move throughout the Province.

R. Hobson pointed out a number of areas where the Water Board sees a need:

Risk assessment in watersheds – he noted that the new government will place the onus on forest companies to demonstrate that certain standards and results are guaranteed in waters reaching the lower elevations of the watershed. He noted that data and information already collected on Okanagan watersheds will be needed for risk assessments.

Lack of groundwater legislation

Lack of rules governing wells such as capping of abandoned wells and well registration information.

He added that areas of concern centred around funding for watershed assessments and for implementation of corrective response plans.

Mr. Jatel explained that the BCFI Strategic Model had been discussed with Dr. Shaun Peck, Provincial Health Officer. He noted that in the Health Officer's annual report for 2001, small water delivery systems were identified as being most at risk due to limited resources and low level of technology. He proposed that a database be developed to quantify water purveyors as to their ability to meet acceptable standards and deliver safe drinking water. The steps he saw as necessary were:

- Identify all purveyors on an Okanagan Region basis
- Develop a database where each purveyor would enter basic information
- Determine areas where data is missing indicating areas of risk where purveyors have not done testing. The Provincial Health Officer had agreed that this would be valuable information

Director Klim noted that data reporting is required from purveyors.

Chair Hobson advised that there are hundreds of small systems which individually supply a few houses where no sampling or reporting is done. These may be surface water supply or utilize groundwater.

Director Hein commented that the board should continue to work with OUC towards establishing a water information database. He added that municipal government should be encouraged to complete water supply plans and incorporate these into the database.

Director Novakowski asked about the function of a drinking water database.

Chairman Hobson noted that this database is in anticipation of Drinking Water legislation. He said that OUC has been working with the BC Water and Waste Association as well.

Director Coady said that the database the Water Board had discussed would contain more information than drinking water facts.

Mr. Armour agreed and said the College was looking at a number of existing database sets on water based information and how they could be utilized.

Director Klim stated that we should beware of taking over areas in the protection of drinking water which are provincial responsibilities.

Director Hansma noted that there is funding available for the collection of drinking water related information and this may be a reason for the focus of the College in that area.

Moved by Director Hein and seconded by Director Hansma:

"That the Okanagan Basin Water Board write to Okanagan University College to encourage their efforts in establishing a drinking water database and to give consideration to incorporation of water related information into a data repository ."

CARRIED.

Workshop on Small Sewage Systems:

Mr. Armour informed the Board of progress in setting up a workshop dealing with options for sewage treatment for local government.

He said that he had consulted John Vos of the City of Kelowna and Andrew Swetlishoff of RDOS for their thoughts and comments. He summarized as follows:

Environment, Health should attend as regulators. Perhaps Indian Affairs because of experience with approving and use of small treatment systems on reserves.

Major concern of local government is liability issue including the ongoing cost of operation and maintenance of small systems.

Content of session – presentation of small system options including classes of systems – single dwelling or package plants; new construction or retro-fit

Reduction of local government risk

Possible pilot projects

Audience could include interested politicians, senior local government staff and major private developers. All of these individuals contribute to the present system of dealing with on-site sewage disposal and need to be aware of alternate (new) methods.

Attended several workshops sponsored by private firms that have introduced on-site disposal technologies from outside of Canada. These range from sand filtration systems to self contained biological systems. Alternate systems do exist that are superior to the present 50's technology of septic tanks. The problem that a lot of these alternatives run into is acceptance by the Ministry of Health.

The workshop should be held as early as possible this year, before we get into summer holidays, the growing season etc., possibly in Kelowna as it is central to the Okanagan region.

Mr. Armour added that he had subsequently spoken to both Provincial Government technical people non government resource people regarding the specifics of workshop content:

John Rowse (Health) said that the Second Draft of New Septic Regulations will be circulated in late January. He has list of new technologies for onsite and small treatment systems and protocol technologies or systems that have satisfied Health requirements in operation and have received 'stamp of approval.' He is currently working with Capital Regional District to include a component in their Liquid Waste Management Plan to address maintenance requirements for existing on-site treatment systems

Harry Vogt – WLAP – Manager of Technical Services, Pollution Prevention commented that there is a Technical Committee to advise on revision and implementation of new (1999) Sewage Disposal Regulations and also referred to VanCity Insurance Services proposal to underwrite liability of small systems.

Mike Williams – Manager, Engineering Services, Capital Regional District who is a member of Technical Advisory Committee on Sewage Disposal Regulations. (Committee still meets a couple of times a year, even though regs. are not 'new' anymore) Mr. Williams was involved in development of the Municipal Sewage Regulation and is working on incorporation of maintenance requirement (bylaw) for on-site systems into liquid waste management plan in CRD. Regulations have been drafted and they are now working on methods of cost recovery.

Chris Jenkins of the Ministry of Water Land and Air Protection said that they do not have a list of 'approved' package plant systems but instead require a qualified professional to certify effluent meets the conditions of MSR. (outcome-based) Methods of liability and risk reduction for private systems include cash security, Local Government Service Area, and Assurance Plans.

VanCity Insurance (Laird Lockhart) had provided information on their PASS Financial Security proposal for small Sewage Treatment Systems. The maximum treatment system construction cost would be \$2 million and a two year renewable performance bond to 24 years would be provided to qualifying projects. (Maximum Bond 140% of treatment plant cost)

Mr. Armour noted that VanCity would like to be represented at any workshop to explain this program

The Board discussed whether the workshop should include information on package plants or be confined to advanced on-site treatment options only.

Director Hein stated that use of package plants to service a remote development often takes away the ability of local government to get the developer to pay for extension of community services.

Director Hansma felt the session should deal with on-site technology. He commented that in many rural areas, this is the only option available for sewage treatment.

Director Coady agreed that many areas will never receive Water Board grant for sewers, but that the Board should take a leadership role in looking at alternatives to provide higher quality service to these areas. She noted that the re-use of effluent should be looked at as a water conservation measure.

Director Klim said that the workshop should lead to a recommendation to local government regarding policy for hook up to community sewers.

Director Novakowski said that package plants were an alternative to septic systems.

Director Hansma agreed that while septic systems are acceptable in many rural areas, alternatives could be looked at in areas where the individual on-site system is not adequate.

Chairman Hobson noted that there is a difference in using a package system to upgrade and existing area rather than as a means to service a new area. He felt the debate on the subjects would be useful at the workshop.

Director Cardoso said that the goal of the Board should be to promote effective, economic and easily managed sewage disposal systems. He stressed that we need to expand our horizons beyond what we are currently familiar with.

Director Hein agreed that we should work toward long term effective treatment systems or ultimately our water supplies would suffer.

Chairman Hobson stated that perhaps we need to add to the workshop the perspective of our goals and objectives for the valley and the steps we have taken to get to the point we are at today. He suggested that the details be developed for the next meeting and should include information on what technologies the technical people can provide information on.

Director Klim commented that perhaps a consultant could research the available technology.

Director Hansma said that this step might be an outcome of the workshop.

There was discussion about adding the workshop on to the OMMA Convention in Vernon perhaps on May 1st. Director Hansma offered to determine if this was acceptable to the organizing committee and if space and a time slot would be available.

Provisional Schedule of Meetings for 2002

Moved by Director Klim and seconded by Director Coady:

"That the provisional schedule (attached) for Okanagan Basin Water Board meetings be adopted."

CARRIED.

Drinking Water Review Panel Interim Report

Chairman Hobson reviewed the recommendations of the Drinking Water Review Panel from the document submitted to the Province. He noted the chief recommendations to retain and amend the Drinking Water Protection Act and to create a Drinking Water Protection Agency. The latter would include government and non-government representation.

There was a discussion concerning how these recommendations were received by government.

Chairman Hobson commented on the watershed assessment process in response to questions about how this might be funded. He noted that this is the next major topic for the Review Board. he commented on the role of Drinking Water Officers and water treatment standards.

The Board discussed how these recommendation would be paid for. It was noted that ultimately there may be increased rates for water use to reflect these costs of protecting the resource.

Annual Report of the Provincial Health Officer

Chairman Hobson reviewed some of the content of the Annual Report of the Provincial Health Officer, noting that there were many parallels to the recommendations of the Drinking Water Review Panel. The exception was the recommendation for a single agency to represent water.

Aquatic Weed Control – Budget Update

Mr. Armour advised that \$300,627 had been spent to January 1, 2002 out of \$380,600 budgeted. With three months left in the fiscal year (to March 31, 2002) there should be adequate funds to complete the work schedule.

Willow Beach Pollution Order

Mr. Armour relayed a report from Alternate Director Slater concerning the pollution order for Willow Beach discussed at the November meeting. The trailer park has now been connected to the collection system and pumpouts are being taken to the Town of Osoyoos sewage treatment plant.

Alternate Director Slater reported that this resolved the situation.

CORRESPONDENCE:

RDOS Budget Information Request

Mr. Armour reviewed the response to the request from RDOS for the impacts to the Water Board programs of a one percent budget increase, a zero percent increase, and a two percent decrease

Director Cardoso and Director Coady reported that RDOS, after reviewing the information, had accepted the Water Board provisional budget as presented.

Hon. Joyce Murray, Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection – Aquatic Weed Control Program Funding

The Minister responded to an OBWB enquiry regarding contract weed control work performed at Paul Lake Provincial Park near Kamloops by saying that there were no funds available for any Okanagan work.

The Board asked that the Field Supervisor follow up on information sent to the Ministry on alternate sources of funding for Provincial contribution to weed control.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Ecosystem Conference May 2002 in Spokane, WA

The Chair asked that information on this conference be brought to the next Board meeting.

Next Meeting

The next regular meeting will be held February 5th in Vernon.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Okanagan Basin Water Board meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY