

## **OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD**

### **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD HELD ON MARCH 5, 2002, AT THE BOARD ROOM, REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN, 101 MARTIN STREET, PENTICTON, B.C. AT 10:00 A.M.**

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<b><u>PRESENT:</u></b>	Director 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.
	Alternate Director Ruth Ann Gullen	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.

<b><u>STAFF:</u></b>	G. Armour	Field Supervisor
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#### **ELECTION OF CHAIR:**

Mr. Armour called the meeting to order and asked for nominations for the position of Chair of the Okanagan Basin Water Board for 2002.

Director Coady nominated Director Hobson.

Director Hackman nominated Director Hansma

Both nominees addressed the Board regarding their perspectives.

Directors voted by secret ballot and Mr. Armour tallied the vote and declared Robert Hobson the Chair for 2002.

#### **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR:**

Chair Hobson called for nominations for the position of Vice Chair of the Water Board.

Director Hein nominated Director Hansma.

Director Cardoso nominated Director Coady.

Both candidates indicated their willingness to stand for the position and addressed the Board.

Directors again voted by secret ballot and Mr. Armour declared Director Coady, Vice Chair of the Water Board for 2002.

Chairman Hobson asked that the Directors give some thought to the challenges facing the Board and prepare to offer their perspective at the next meeting.

**MINUTES:**

**Moved by Director Hackman and seconded by Director Coady:**

***"That the minutes of a regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board held on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2002 be adopted as circulated."***

***CARRIED.***

**NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS:****Workshop on Small Sewage Systems:**

Mr. Armour referred to program he had attached to the agenda concerning the small sewage system workshop to be held May 1<sup>st</sup>. He advised that all speakers have been confirmed and that the session was booked to run May 1<sup>st</sup> from 10:30 until 3:45. He noted that he had tried to see if someone from Municipal Affairs should or would attend but had received no response.

Director Coady asked if invitations had been sent to local government staff as well as politicians planning to attend OMMA.

Mr. Armour said that the material had just been sent out with the OMMA package.

Director Klim suggested that the information be emailed to local government administrators for circulation to staff, particularly those involved in planning or engineering.

Director Hein agreed that staff should attend, probably more so than politicians.

The Board agreed that an extension to the registration deadline would be made to try and reach a larger group of participants.

Director Hackman wondered if the time allotted to each speaker was too short and whether the session should be expanded.

Mr. Armour noted that delegates would be travelling on May 1<sup>st</sup> so an earlier start would be difficult. The venue was being used by OMMA after 4:00 p.m.

Director Klim asked that a display of information on technologies be incorporated into the session so that information might be explored with the speakers.

Director Hansma asked that a package of related technical information be sent out to registrants before the workshop.

Chairman Hobson added that the package should include some background on the Water Board and its function.

Director Coady commented that a biography of each speaker should be included, perhaps with the email to local government administrators.

Mr. Armour spoke on progress with other initiatives, specifically the water information database. He noted that he had spoken to OUC staff and indicated that our interest is in a fairly broad based collection of water related data, not just drinking water information. He advised that he and Chairman Hobson were meeting with 2 OUC people after this meeting to discuss our involvement in an early April

meeting of all interested parties. OUC have met with senior Environment Canada staff who are very interested and will be at April meeting, along with Agriculture Canada representation.

Chairman Hobson noted that the direction the Board had taken in involving the College seemed to be correct as the interest was certainly there.

Chairman Hobson advised the Board that Paul Kluckner and Bruce Kay of Environment Canada wished to make a presentation to the Water Board at the April meeting on ecosystem planning. The Board agreed to invite the Environment Canada Staff.

Director Cardoso agreed that the involvement with the College and the BC Freshwater Institute was the right direction for the Board to take, but cautioned that the College is profit driven and our participation should be at the planning stage and not in maintaining an ongoing database.

Chairman Hobson agreed that this was the direction the Water Board had been given by the regional districts. He suggested that BCFI be invited to talk to the Board about the various roles and interests. He asked that Mr. Armour determine who should attend.

### **Drinking Water Review Panel – Final Report**

Chairman Hobson referred to material from the Final Report of the Drinking Water Review Panel and noted that the organizational chart for a Drinking Water Protection Agency was under the Ministry of Health Planning. He said that there was a recommendation that assessments of watersheds be done as a shared responsibility between government and water users. He advised that the Province was reviewing the recommendations at this time and had stated their intention to pass drinking water legislation this year. This would deal with surface water and ground water. He also noted that since senior government will not have the resources to pay for all drinking water treatment, conservation will take on a more important role in reducing the amount of water that has to be treated. There will, as well be spin off benefits in reducing input to liquid waste treatment facilities.

Alternate Director Gullen asked about new Federal Government programs.

Chairman Hobson said that a new drinking water strategy was being worked on, following the events at Walkerton, but he was not sure about money being made available.

Alternate Director Gullen said that she had heard that there would be funding made available.

Director Hein stated that water should be at the top of the Board's mandate and the need to address the quality of water on a regional basis should be our priority for the future. He noted that the North Okanagan Water Authority (NOWA) is an example of cooperation on a sub regional level and that this same spirit should apply to the Okanagan Basin Water Board. He added that we are hampered by the position of the North Okanagan that we should only cut weeds and distribute sewer grants, and stay out of water quality and quantity issues.

Director Cardoso agreed but noted that this opposition is not restricted to the north Okanagan. He said that the South Okanagan has not come together as a region to deal with water issues. He commented that the election of OBWB representatives first to represent local interests was difficult to balance with taking a regional approach to resource issues.

Director Coady expressed an interest in getting a better understanding of NOWA. She wondered how far the Board could proceed in establishing a timetable for governance changes, and what approval would be needed from the regional districts.

Chairman Hobson answered that the Board would have to await the Provincial government response to drinking water recommendations to see what course of action should be looked at. Approval for any expenditure of additional funds would be required from the Regional Districts and the Boards would certainly want to see a list of deliverables such as dollar savings or time efficiencies resulting from any Water Board actions.

Director Coady said that there should be resources allocated to local government in the event of downloading of responsibility by the Province.

Director Klim gave an outline of the discussions taking place regarding NOWA. She said that Vernon, Coldstream, and Areas B and C recognized a serious situation with the way drinking water was supplied. Although a final plan had not been adopted yet, strides had been taken toward massive infrastructure development in the order of one hundred million dollars over the next forty years. She said that this concept needs to be promoted and applied in other parts of the valley.

Director Hackman added that compromises were being made by Vernon, Coldstream and NOWA in terms of the amounts of funding being contributed in relation to populations.

Chairman Hobson noted that there were problems in the Central Okanagan as well, with numerous water suppliers who might function better as a single utility.

Director Hansma said that the Water Board cannot and should not attempt to be what NOWA is. We should encourage other areas to look at this model and use it if it is found suitable.

Director Novakowski said that he has supported that expansion of the water Board Mandate and questioned why the North Okanagan had such a reluctance to cooperate.

Director Klim answered that all of the resources of the North Okanagan were tied up in these projects and that each region would have to go through a similar process.

Director Novakowski stated that we should all be moving cooperatively in a parallel direction.

Chairman Hobson noted that NOWA is moving toward a single utility with a treatment system to supply water to a large area.

Alternate Director Gullen said that it is commendable what NOWA is trying to achieve, but not necessarily applicable to all areas. She agreed that water must be at the top of our list of priorities and added that the pressure from the United States for our water could result in a loss of control over this resource.

Director Coady said that when Penticton had heavy infrastructure construction commitments, it did not pull out of the Water Board. She asked about other parts of the North Okanagan not covered by NOWA.

Director Hansma said that Spallumcheen purchases water from NOWA and also has eighteen water districts. He said that a study is currently underway leading to these utilities working together as a commission. He said that NORD has never refused to participate in Water Board actions, but that any consideration of an expanded mandate would have to be accompanied by a proper business plan.

Chairman Hobson asked the directors to examine the challenges facing the Okanagan and see if there is agreement on the actions required of the Water Board. He noted that many actions do not require money, but rather cooperation and sharing of information.

Alternate Director Gullen said that the Okanagan Basin Water Board has the opportunity to recognize the value of water and perhaps reward the efforts of those who have put in the necessary infrastructure and

who have implemented effective conservation programs. She stated that these areas are typically penalized under the current system since those who have failed to do the necessary work are rewarded with grant money.

Chairman Hobson asked that each director be prepared to discuss their thoughts on challenges and the role of the Okanagan Basin Water Board at the next meeting

It was suggested by Director Hansma and the Board agreed to make this discussion the subject of a separate meeting. It was decided to hold the meeting on Tuesday, April 16, at 10:00 a.m. in Kelowna.

**Moved by Director Coady and seconded by Director Novakowski**

***"That the Okanagan Basin Water Board send a letter of support for the recommendations of the Drinking Water Review Panel to the Province. The letter should endorse the recommendations and, in particular, the concept of a single agency for drinking water."***

***CARRIED.***

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

**Town of Osoyoos – Control of Canada Geese**

**Moved by Director Hackman and seconded by Director Klim:**

***"That Okanagan Basin Water Board endorse the resolution proposed by the Town of Osoyoos to OMMA for effective means to control the population of non-migratory Canada geese."***

***CARRIED.***

**V. Jensen, Ministry of Water, Land, and Air Protection**

The Board asked that Mr. Jensen be asked to make his presentation at the May meeting, in order that sufficient time be given to the Environment Canada presentation at the April meeting.

**Canadian Union of Public Employees – Letter to City of Penticton**

The Board received a copy of a letter from CUPE to the City of Penticton regarding concerns over private operators of water systems.

Director Coady said the City had asked if the Okanagan Basin Water Board had any comment on private operation of water systems.

Chairman Hobson noted that there was concern in some regions about the commercialization of water and that once public control was lost, it might be difficult to regain control over the resource.

**Moved by Director Hansma and seconded by Alternate Director Gullen:**

***"That letter from CUPE to the City of Penticton be received and that the Board get more information on private control of water systems."***

***CARRIED.***

**OTHER BUSINESS:**

**Status of Provincial Government Programs in the Okanagan**

The Board received information on the status of Provincial government programs in the Okanagan. The material included a synopsis of the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection Service Plan containing strategic shifts proposed by government to achieve their mandate with substantially fewer staff and funds.

A copy of a letter from City of Kelowna Environment Manager, Mark Watt was received. The letter outlines changes and reductions to Provincial staff and services in Penticton and Kamloops.

**Next Meeting**

The next regular meeting will be held April 2<sup>nd</sup> in Kelowna.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The Okanagan Basin Water Board meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

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**CHAIRMAN**

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**SECRETARY**