

## **OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD HELD ON MAY 7, 2002, AT THE BOARD ROOM, REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NORTH OKANAGAN, 9848 ABERDEEN ROAD, VERNON, B.C. AT 10:00 A.M.**

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**PRESENT:**

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.

**STAFF:** G. Armour Field Supervisor

### **MINUTES:**

**Moved by Director Hein and seconded by Director Novakowski:**

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

***CARRIED.***

### **DELEGATIONS:**

#### **Michelle Boshard and Deana Machin, Okanagan Basin Technical Working Group and Okanagan Boundary Fisheries Partnership**

Ms. Boshard gave a presentation on the Canadian Okanagan Basin Technical Working Group (TWG) and its terms of reference and principles of operation. (attached) She also reviewed the Strategic Plan for the Okanagan Similkameen Boundary Fisheries Partnership. (OSBFP) (attached) Ms. Machin represents the Okanagan Nation Fisheries Commission on both bodies.

Ms. Boshard explained that the TWG deals with fisheries issues on a government to government basis and uses fish as an indication of ecosystem health. An adaptive management approach is used where any changes made are initially small and reversible. Water interests are also considered on a transboundary level with US counterparts.

The OSBFP is run by a twelve person steering committee which includes local government. It has delivered \$1.5 million to community fisheries programs over the past three years. The funding came from Fisheries Renewal BC which does not exist anymore.

Ms Boshard suggested that the Water Board consider partnership for outreach programs to educate community groups and also continue with efforts to establish a converged database. She noted that the OBWTWG has produced a discussion paper on transboundary communication issues and is looking for comments and suggestions. An aquatic ecosystem conference will be held in 2003 and the OBWB has been invited to partner by chairing a session on water quality and quantity. She said that the group is interested in avoiding duplication in conferences and in developing a closer working arrangement.

Director Hein asked if Ms. Boshard's position was funded by DFO.

Ms. Boshard replied that it is, under a 4 year program which ends in March of 2003.

Director Hein asked what projects from the \$1.5 million in grants contributed to improved water quality or quantity.

Ms. Boshard said over 100 projects were funded on such things as improvements to riparian areas, in-stream rehabilitation, and the Okanagan Lake Action Plan for kokanee recovery.

Director Novakowski asked about the US Agencies involved in water management.

Ms. Boshard stated that in Canada DFO and the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection deal with fisheries issues, while the US has more regulatory groups involved in hydro power. The Bonneville Power Administration is committed to spending \$127 million on the Columbia River system. Us agencies may look at spending money in Canada to mitigate against fish habitat losses in the US on the river system.

Ms. Machin noted that the Colville Confederated Tribes and the Okanagan Nation are the same tribe separated by the border. The Colville Tribe accesses BPA funding and contributes some money to Okanagan nation initiatives. There is also one Canadian project funded by the Douglas County Public Utilities District.

Director Coady asked about the Columbia Basin Trust money.

Ms. Boshard answered that these funds are not designated for the Okanagan, Similkameen, or Kettle systems. She added that Environment Canada does not fund fisheries related projects.

Director Coady wondered how the Ecosystem Conference would fit with a state of the basin conference which would include such factors as climate change and water conservation

Director Hansma asked how far the DFO initiatives had progressed now that the funding end is in sight.

Ms. Boshard observed that the original goals have changed somewhat and that progress has been made in networking of stewardship groups, capacity building and increasing government to government and government to community communication. She said she believes these function will continue after March 2003.

Director Cardoso said more communication is needed locally as many are not aware of the details of OBSFP projects.

Alternate Director Gullen asked if the TWG had looked at the impact of dam failures.

Ms. Machin replied that all issues cannot be dealt with due to staff limitations.

The Chairman thanked the delegation for their presentation.

**Vic Jensen, Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection – Water Quality in Skaha, Okanagan and Osoyoos Lakes**

Mr. Jensen presented information from the work he does for the Environmental Protection Division of the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection. He samples the effects of discharges to the lakes under permits issued by the Ministry and to some extent, the effects of agriculture and forestry on the lakes.

Mr. Jensen noted that the first limnological study of Okanagan lake was performed in 1939 when the valley population was about 28,000. The next look at lake conditions was through the comprehensive Okanagan Basin Study from 1969 to 1972. Valley population at that time was about 115,000.

Director Hackman asked what the effect of failing septic systems is on the condition of the lakes.

Mr. Jensen replied that it is small in terms of the overall phosphorus loading to the lakes.

Director Hein noted that the damage to lakes and riparian areas caused by roads, railways, and human activities is a concern to local government. Information on the nature and extent of damage needs to get back to local people and then local government can put pressure on to get the money necessary to rectify these problems.

Director Klim said that Vernon is looking at stormwater management and requires information on what course of action to take. She noted that perhaps the Water Board can assist with incentives in this area as they have done for point source pollution. She said that information on the sources of nutrient pollution is needed.

Mr. Jensen advised that the cost to rectify point source problems is easier to estimate and the solutions easier to implement than those for non point source problems. He said there is a need to step back and decide what the important issues are for the next thirty years and how these should be addressed.

Chairman Hobson stated that there should be more linkage between senior government agencies in producing an integrated plan for the valley.

Director Hansma acknowledged that information on what 'normal' levels of nutrients are in the lakes is needed as a baseline in knowing what our goals should be.

Mr. Jensen said that his branch is trying to obtain funding to do sediment coring in Skaha Lake to provide some of this baseline information. He added that information on other parameters than nutrient levels is required to give a clear picture of normal conditions.

Ms. Boshard commented that we should be integrating funding rather than fragmenting it to achieve common goals.

Director Novakowski stated that we should be charging the real cost of water and applying the resources to remedial measures.

Director Klim left the meeting at 12: p.m.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Jensen for his presentation.

### **NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

#### **Discussion of Presentations:**

Chairman Hobson asked the Board members for their thoughts on OBWB participation in the actions of the Technical Working Group. He wondered if our goals and audiences are sufficiently similar to work together.

Director Novakowski noted that we need empowerment from the regional districts to change our mandate.

There was discussion regarding the potential for a Water Board role in rural sewage systems or advanced on site disposal. The role of a catalyst and whether the commitment would involve financing was discussed. It was suggested that the Board work with technical and financial people to investigate and develop some possibilities which could be taken to the local technical community for discussion. A portion of the twenty-one cent Water Board levy could be allocated for this purpose.

Director Hackman added that if the courses of action investigated do not involve expenditure of additional funds, there should not be a problem but the North Okanagan will participate financially in sewer grants and weed control only.

Director Hein noted that the OBWB is the only taxing authority for water in the valley. He wondered if one of the three regional districts did not wish to participate in an initiative, could we proceed with the assenting regions.

Alternate Director Gullen felt that communities have an obligation to participate especially when the actions are supported by senior government and have international implications.

The Board discussed participation in the Ecosystem Conference.

Director Cardoso felt we should use the opportunity to reinforce the accomplishments of the Board.

Alternate Director Gullen noted that there is a lack of coordination of local regulations for providing water and sewer to developments and the Board should be proactive in ensuring that adequate standards exist for all developers.

Chairman Hobson wondered if we should work with BCFI to review water conservation in the Okanagan and put the information into presentation form to educate people in the valley. He said this might be a tool to change the mind set of local government regarding the value of water.

Alternate Director Gullen said that grants for metering of water use were necessary as a start for conservation and efficient use of water. She added that all water licenses issued should be catalogued and analyzed for their impact on quality and quantity of water.

Director Coady noted that there has been varied success with local government taking over the role of water purveyor.

Chairman Hobson said that one problem is that purveyors often have a mandate to supply water but no authority over land use. He asked if the Board had ideas for alternative uses of the funding designated for a water conservation workshop.

Director Coady suggested that the money be used to work with BCFI to summarize water conservation information and technical information on aspects of water licenses including water volume data.

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

***"That Water Board provide up to \$6000 for a technical inventory of water conservation measures in the Okanagan Valley. The Board should work with the BC Freshwater Institute at OUC to determine the details of the investigation including conservation objectives, water volume utilization, and water license inventory information. A report on the proposed scope of the project should be brought back to the Water Board for consideration"***

***CARRIED.***

It was agreed that the BC Water Supply Association and the Water Comptroller through the Provincial Government should be contacted for information. There was discussion about what level of college project this should be and it was agreed that a graduate level was preferable. The report brought back to the Board should indicate what is needed in terms of time and funding.

**April 16th Water Board Goals and Objectives Meeting**

Notes from this meeting were received

**May 1st Workshop on Small Sewer Systems**

The Board agreed that an outcome of the workshop was a need for specific technical information on alternate technologies for upgrading liquid waste disposal in areas not served by sewage treatment plants.

This should be compiled and included with a summary of the workshop.

**April 3rd Database Meeting**

The Board received a Discussion Paper on the outcomes of the meeting.

**Drinking Water Source Contamination Workshop**

The Board received a report on the workshop from Mr. Armour.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

**City of Penticton – Letter from CUPE Regarding Drinking Water Standards**

The Chairman noted that the CUPE letter dealt with the issue of privatization of water supplies which was not considered by the Drinking Water Review Panel.

**Moved by Director Hansma and seconded by Director Hein:**

*"That the letter from CUPE to the City of Penticton be received."*

**CARRIED.**

**Premier G. Campbell – Drinking Water Review Panel**

**Moved by Director Hansma and seconded by Director Hein:**

*"That the letter from the Premier be received."*

**CARRIED.**

**Water Workshop and Think Tank – Simon Fraser University**

**Moved by Director Novakowski and seconded by Director Cardoso:**

*"That the Okanagan Basin Water Board pay the registration fee for Alternate Director Gullen to attend the Simon Fraser Workshop ."*

**CARRIED.**

**NEXT MEETING**

The next regular meeting will be held June 11<sup>th</sup> in Penticton.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The Okanagan Basin Water Board meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

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**CHAIRMAN**

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**SECRETARY**