

OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD HELD ON MARCH 11, 2003, AT THE BOARD ROOM, REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL OKANAGAN, 1450 KLO ROAD, KELOWNA, B.C. AT 10:00 A.M.

<u>PRESENT:</u>	Director Rolly Hein	C.O.R.D
	Director Len Novakowski	C.O.R.D.
	Director Robert Hobson	C.O.R.D.
	Chair John Slater	O.S.R.D.
	Alternate Director Eike Scheffler	O.S.R.D.
	Director Doug Hackman	N.O.R.D.
	Director Ruth Ann Gullen	O.S.R.D.
	Director Stan Field	N.O.R.D.
<u>OTHERS:</u>	Mike Stamhuis	NORD
	Alternate Director Patty Hanson	C.O.R.D
	Mark Watt	City of Kelowna
<u>STAFF:</u>	Greg Armour	Field Supervisor

MINUTES:

Moved by Director Hein and seconded by Director Hackman:

"That the minutes of a regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board held on February 4th, 2003 be adopted as circulated."

CARRIED.

DELEGATIONS:

Dr. Rick Nordin - Okanagan Lake Water Quality Objectives

Dr. Nordin made a presentation for the Board on a review of the phosphorus objectives for Okanagan Lake that have guided us since 1985 and the possible expansion of measurements of water quality criteria.

He said the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection has commissioned this work, and he is currently working on contract for them. As a long time employee for the Ministry he has been extensively involved in previous work on lakes in the Okanagan.

Dr. Nordin reviewed the physical characteristics of Okanagan Lake noting that the separation of the lake into three basins causes different parts of the lake to react in different ways. In additions, there is typically a lack of surface water mixing. In years of high inflow the phosphorus concentration in the lake is also high.

He reviewed the approaches taken to water quality protection measurements: loading or concentration criteria; physical or chemical criteria such as water clarity; and biological criteria such as contamination of fish tissue. Our previous water quality objectives have focussed on keeping phosphorus levels at or below 10 micrograms per litre. Other objectives might include nitrogen levels, water clarity, algae numbers and types of communities, zooplankton; and contaminants in fish and mysis shrimp.

Dr. Nordin summarized that changes and physical and biological parameters measured over the years. He said that the future of the lake would depend on a collaborative approach being taken, leadership, inclusive and holistic management, taking a long term and sustainable view, and establishing the role of water quality objectives.

Director Hein asked about the effect of climate change on freshet.

Dr. Nordin said that it is hard to predict the exact effect, but it will certainly change the inputs into the lake.

Director Novakowski questioned a role for the Water Board in providing leadership as the Province has the power and authority in water related matters.

Dr. Nordin replied that the resource is better managed by and amalgamation of local interests.

Chair Slater noted that achieving goals will require a partnership of Federal and Provincial authorities as well as a local government.

Director Hein commented that the OBWB has lost confidence in its role as a water management authority and re-affirmation of this role is needed from the Province.

Director Hobson asked about the usefulness of objectives if they are not legislated.

Dr. Nordin said that guidelines for water quality are difficult to translate into penalties but they can be useful as standards for liquid waste management plans. He commented that the reduction and withdrawal of senior government services leave the Board in the position of requiring expertise and regulatory authority to implement standards on a regional basis.

Director Hein added that we generally do not realize how cheap water is today and we will have to take financial responsibility for dealing with our problems.

Mr. Stamhuis advised that we to know the specifics of what we need to do, or not do in order to meet water quality objectives to define what our role is.

Director Gullen noted that while industrial use of water is heavily regulated in the valley, there are few accurate measures of private use.

Alternate Director Scheffler asked Dr. Nordin what we should do in a scientific and technical sense to establish our priorities for the valley.

Dr. Nordin responded that education of the public with respect to the way water is undervalued and the value of the lakes in comparison to the costs of effective management is needed.

Director Novakowski noted that protection and authority go hand in hand.

Mr. Watt asked if the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection will do monitoring to gather data for new objectives. He said that it is critical that objectives result in data to improve our understanding of the lake.

Director Gullen said that economic factors are not given enough priority along with the value and impact of water resources on the valley. Licensees pay next to nothing for the resource.

Alternate Director Scheffler agreed and added that the use of water from wells should be subject to significant charges.

Director Hobson referred to strategic water allocation planning being done by CORD for the Westside. He said the Province and the Regional District are providing funds to do the study that will guide future water allocation decisions for this area.

Dr. Adam Wei and Dr. David Scott – Okanagan University College Chairs in Watershed Management

The Board welcomed the two OUC Chairs in watershed management.

Dr. Scott briefly described the establishment of the two positions through FRBC endowment and indicated that there is somewhat of a priority toward forest and watershed issues as a result. He said that the Chairs determine other areas of interest and it is up to them to obtain research funding for projects that are typically conducted by graduate students.

Dr. Wei referred to the uniqueness of water and the need for an ecosystem approach when dealing with management issues. He said that some of his personal interests included that protection of riparian areas to protect water sources and the use of GIS mapping as a tool to manage water. He noted that funding typically comes from Federal agencies such as NSERC and from government and industrial partnerships. He said that funding with a term longer than one year is very useful in research efforts.

Director Hein asked which watershed will be looked at in research projects.

Dr. Scott said that is not yet determined but will be influenced by the funding partners as well as the need for extensive data for the study area.

Dr. Wei noted that data and results from a small geographic area might produce methodology and recommendations that apply to a larger area. He said that projects require a solid proposal for a researchable field and generally funding is not expensive.

Director Hobson stated that many of our interests are interdisciplinary and bring in socio-economic and political issues. He asked how this could be addressed at the College.

Dr. Scott suggested that this is what the BC Freshwater Institute at the College is designed to do in drawing on the resources of the University as a whole rather than just one department.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Presentation to City of Vernon

Mr. Armour reported on the presentation made February 10th to the City of Vernon Committee of the Whole. He said that he, Chair Slater and Mr. Stamhuis met with Council for about 35 minutes.

Chair Slater introduced the group and commented on the negative tone of Councils' letter about the actions of the Water Board. Mayor Harvey apologized and said the letter was meant to indicate councils' satisfaction with weed control and sewer grants but their opposition to any expansion of the Boards' role.

Mr. Armour made a presentation on the current make-up and activities of the OBWB and provided some information on the usefulness of valley wide action from both ecological and financial aspects.

Councils' questions centred on our finances, particularly when our sewer grant program would be completed. There was no support for turning this funding toward other initiatives that might encourage beneficial actions on a coordinated valley wide scope. Vernon felt they had taken on enough in local projects and had no resources to support such initiatives.

Director Novakowski asked about the sewer grant program completion and the benefits received by the City of Vernon.

Mr. Armour said that Vernon had received a considerable amount more in benefits that they had paid in to the grant program. He added that some of the debt from original grants made over twenty years ago had been or was being retired but that new projects which were more expensive in comparison with those done years ago were still being added. The intent of the Board is that projects made necessary by growth will be funded by local government without OBWB assistance.

There are still areas identified in the original Okanagan Basin Study that have filled in but are likely eligible for grants.

Director Hein expressed frustration that we are not being allowed to fulfill our mandate and said that he did not think that our letters patent would allow a partner to withdraw from the function.

Director Hobson noted that only one community continues to be opposed to our mandate and their concerns should continue to be pursued. Sewer grants will probably be issued as long as senior government infrastructure funds are available. He commented that our inability to promote new technology and effective maintenance for septic systems in rural areas is a problem since these areas have paid into the program but will never be seweraged.

Chair Slater agreed that rural areas would benefit from our assistance and that we need to prove the worthiness of our goals to the City of Vernon.

Alternate Director Scheffler said that groundwater is a major concern in the South Okanagan and large developments on wells requires that new technology be applied in unsewered areas.

Director Hackman commented that if we cannot convince Vernon, then perhaps we need to re-think our approach.

Director Hein said that the Board must recognize that our abilities are currently limited by the amount that can be done with one staff person. He said that we must decide what we want to do, the costs of taking these responsibilities on and then sell this to the three partners.

There was a discussion of the ability of one area to refuse to pay or otherwise drop out of a function within a region. Areas where crises had precipitated changes in governance such as California water shortages and Walkerton health and quality concerns were mentioned.

Master Water Supply Strategy – Draft Proposal

Mr. Armour reported that as requested by the Board at the February meeting, he and Mike Stamhuis put together a draft proposal to catalogue and analyze water quantity data, and develop an action plan to better manage water quantity throughout the valley.

It is proposed that the project be developed in three phases.

Phase I entitled 'Data Assembly' would be done using Water Board funds and would simply identify all sources of water quantity information and areas where necessary information does not exist. It would form the basis of a submission for senior government funding through Western Economic Diversification, for subsequent phases.

Phase II would be a comprehensive analysis of the information, research to fill the information gaps and projections of where and when water quantity crises will occur.

Phase III an action plan to avert or delay crises. Such a plan might include ways to increase supplies, reduce demand, changes to legislation licensing or governance.

He informed the Board that funds remaining from the \$75,000 approved by the Regional Districts for Water Management actions totaled about \$45,000.

Director Hein stressed that this proposal was a draft.

Director Gullen noted that economic data should also be obtained from purveyors.

Director Hobson said that we should get information on all similar work being done such as CORDs' Westside project so that we make use of available information and not ask the same questions of suppliers that others are already asking. He was also concerned that the data collection and analysis costs were not very predictable, as we have no idea what might be involved.

Director Hein pointed out that water quantity data is not as hard to obtain as water quality information.

Director Gullen commented that the project would tie in with growth management strategies being undertaken or contemplated by the three regions.

Director Hobson stressed that the collection of data must be an ongoing process and not just a snapshot in time. He asked about the status of the OUC database project.

The Board asked that a representative update the OUC database project at the next meeting.

Mr. Stamhuis advised the Board that phase I of the proposal would include data on projections, growth, and climate change and not just a snapshot in time. Current usage information will be collected but also all information useful to making projections.

Director Field suggested that a technical committee was needed to assess Phase I of the water management strategy.

Director Gullen asked about funds set aside last fall for work by the Okanagan Nation Fisheries Commission pertaining to water quantity and fisheries flows.

Mr. Armour reported that he had contacted Jillian Tamblin of the ONFC and was told that Michelle Boshard had drafted the proposal and that Ms. Boshard has now resigned from the Fisheries Commission. The status of the project is unsure.

Director Hein argued that the Water Board has to start to take action somewhere to deal with water quantity and quality issues. He suggest coordinating a meeting at the OUC Campus involving the Watershed Management Chairs and the OUC Database Group to scope out possible areas of research where information applicable to larger areas could be gained.

Correspondence:

District of Lake Country – Copy of letter to Regional Director, Ministry of WLAP

Director Hackman congratulated Director Hein on spearheading efforts that had resulted in the Province delaying action on sale of lots on reservoir lakes.

Vic Jensen, Ministry of WLAP – Okanagan Lake Water Quality Objectives

Regional District of Central Okanagan – Septic Tank Education Program

Director Hobson reported that CORD felt that septic tank maintenance education on a valley wide basis was one area where the OBWB could be useful.

Moved by Director Hein and seconded by Director Hackman:

"That the correspondence be received."

CARRIED.

SEWERAGE FACILITIES GRANTS:

City of Penticton – Industrial Area Sewer Project

Mr. Armour clarified that the City of Penticton Project involved extension of sewers to business in the Industrial Area currently on septic, and not just connection as mentioned in the application.

Director Hobson asked if the project qualified for Federal/Provincial Infrastructure Funding.

Mr. Armour said that it did.

Moved by Director Hobson and seconded by Director Novakowski:

"That the sewage grant application from the City of Penticton for extension of Industrial Area sewers be approved for payment."

CARRIED.

Regional District of Central Okanagan – Clarification of Project Funding

Mr. Armour reported that he had clarified CORD questions regarding up-front payment of sewer costs. Projects are eligible whether the applicant incurs debt or funds cost up front. The total project cost is eligible for OBWB grants.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Okanagan Basin Water Board meeting adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY