

OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD HELD ON MAY 24, 2003,
AT THE FRESHWATER INSTITUTE, OKANAGAN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, 3140 COLLEGE WAY,
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.
	Alternate Director Patty Hanson	C.O.R.D.
	Chair John Slater	O.S.R.D.
	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.
	Director Will Hansma	N.O.R.D.
<u>OTHERS:</u>	Mike Stamhuis	NORD
	Mark Watt	City of Kelowna
	Dr. Stuart Cohen	UBC
	Dr. Denise Neilsen	PARC
	Lisa Vitols	Environment Canada
	Vanessa Sutton	O.S.R.D.
	Dan Ashton	O.S.R.D.
	Aaron Dinwoodie	C.O.R.D.
	Brian Symonds	MWLAP
	Dr. Adam Wei	OUC
	Dr. Jeff Curtis	OUC
	Nelson Jatel	Freshwater Institute
<u>STAFF:</u>	Greg Armour	Field Supervisor

MINUTES:

Moved by Director Novakowski and seconded by Director Hackman:

"That the minutes of a regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board held on March 11th, 2003 be adopted as circulated."

CARRIED.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Green Sustainable Economic Development (GSED) Implementation Report:

The report from Westland Resource Group was received along with a letter from RDOS Chair D. Ashton recommending that the Okanagan Basin Water Board be the agency responsible for implementing the green sustainable development strategy. The Board also considered a memo from Mr. Stamhuis commenting on areas of the strategy which may fit under the Board's existing mandate and on possible roles for the Board in assisting with the resource side of the GSED.

Mrs. Sutton summarized the thinking behind referral of the GSED report to the Water Board. She noted that the Water Board was the only truly regional political representative in the Valley, that it already has taxation authority, and that water may be the appropriate means to take this strategy beyond individual political boundaries.

Director Hein said that it was time to move our mandate to a higher level than sewers and aquatic weeds. He commented that in order to undertake a project such as this the Board would need professional staff in the form of a secretariat and the funding to support it. This would give us the capacity to take on areas of our mandate that are not part of our current actions.

Director Novakowski asked if addition of a secretariat would enable us to go beyond our limitations and function as a political board. Perhaps we need to disband and start from scratch.

Chair Slater suggested that the idea be sold at the political level by bringing together local government and First Nations to present it to Senator Fitzpatrick.

Director Scheffler commented on the parallel to the Columbia Basin where they are also an international waterway but has large amount of funds through the Columbia Basin Treaty to deal with programs such as this.

Director Gullen suggested that Public Health is a valuable and necessary participant in this process.

Director Hein suggested that the board agree to pursue establishment of a secretariat as the first step to taking on this project.

Mrs. Sutton said that she would need help in developing a presentation.'

Director Hansma advised that we need buy in from the regional Boards prior to approaching the Senator with a proposal. He suggested we report on what we plan to do to the regional boards and receive their mandate to approach the Senator for funding and support of OBWB initiatives

Moved by Director Hein and seconded by Director Hansma:

"That a proposal be sent to the three Regional District Boards requesting support to approach Senator Fitzpatrick for financial assistance to enable the Okanagan Basin Water Board to assume a role in implementing the Green Sustainable Economic Development Strategy."

Discussion of Motion:

Mrs. Sutton advised that Westland Resource Group asked for \$35,000 to prepare the next phase of GSED implementation.

Director Field stated that the Water Board should have Senator Fitzpatrick's consent prior to approaching the regional districts.

Mr. Stamhuis commented on his memorandum to the Board that contained ideas for a potential role for the Water Board in Implementing the GSED strategy. He felt that going beyond water issues was not advisable at this point and we need to focus on quantity of water issues as it relates to growth and development.

Director Gullen said that we need to identify what we are looking for as an end result. We do not want that result to be another document. We need a person to draw together all the information from other agencies that already exists.

Director Hein pointed out that the real challenge will be to rid us of the parochialism that exists in the valley. The person will have to break down those barriers and at present the allocation of water is beyond our jurisdiction.

Mr. Stamhuis said that the first step is to tie the importance of water to economic growth as a means of selling the strategy.

Director Novakowski suggested reversing the strategy and brining the OBWB under the umbrella of the GSED rather than using the Water Board to separately implement part of the strategy.

Director Gullen stated that consumption based pricing of water is the single most important factor in ensuring that there is water to sustain life on this planet.

Alternate Director Hanson noted that leadership is required to move forward from the discussion stage and get the job done.

Moved by Director Hansma and seconded by Director Gullen:

"That the five elements of the original OBWB mandate:

- 1) To organize or receive proposals from private interests, local organizations or agencies and all levels of governments concerning water-resources utilization and management in the best interests of man;*
- 2) To define problems and determine such factors as priorities, economic feasibility, responsibility, necessary supports legislation and required action;*
- 3) To provide communication and co-ordination between various levels of government and government agencies involved with water-resources utilization and management;*
- 4) To present proposals and recommendations to appropriate agencies, being municipalities or governments, according to jurisdiction and responsibility; and*
- 5) To participate, financially or otherwise, in such surveys, investigations or projects on behalf of Municipalities, Electoral Areas or Regional Districts as may be authorized by the participating Regional Districts.*

be presented to the three regional districts for approval and the actions under these mandate items to further the GSED Strategy be supported by senior government funding to establish a Water Board Secretariat."

Director Gullen suggested obtaining Senator Fitzpatrick's agreement and asking the Senator to attend the regional board meetings with media in attendance.

An amended motion was proposed

Moved by Director Hansma and seconded by Director Gullen:

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- 2) To define problems and determine such factors as priorities, economic feasibility, responsibility, necessary support legislation and required action;*
- 3) To provide communication and co-ordination between various levels of government and government agencies involved with water-resources utilization and management;*

- 4) *To present proposals and recommendations to appropriate agencies, being municipalities or governments, according to jurisdiction and responsibility; and*
- 6) *To participate, financially or otherwise, in such surveys, investigations or projects on behalf of Municipalities, Electoral Areas or Regional Districts as may be authorized by the participating Regional Districts.*

be presented to the three regional districts for approval with the prior agreement of Senator Fitzpatrick for financial assistance to establish a Water Board Secretariat."

CARRIED.

Director Hein commented that we need to be aware of what resources we can commit to this project when we approach the Senator.

Mr. Stamhuis stated that this will mean a permanent change in how we deal with water in the basin in a sustainable fashion.

Moved by Director Hein and seconded by Director Scheffler:

"That the Okanagan Basin Water Board allocate up to \$50,000 from its discretionary funds for water management actions to support the GSED implementation contingent on approval of federal financial assistance and Board approval of a workplan."

CARRIED.

Mrs. Sutton advised the Board that she would act in their behalf in communicating with Senior Government, but that any formal applications for funding would have to be prepared by the Water Board staff.

Regional Water Supply Strategy

Mr. Armour reviewed information previously considered by the Okanagan Basin Water Board relating to a regional water supply strategy.

In February the Board in discussing priority issues noted the lack of a coordinated plan to manage water quantity in the Valley. The amount of water will probably be the limiting factor to growth in the Okanagan and the sooner we deal with potential problems the better equipped we will be to at least stave off a crisis. Some areas of concern were:

- Lack of current water use information and predictions of future use from some purveyors
- Lack of collation of information on water supply and future demand on a valley scope
- Groundwater information
- Factoring in climate change
- Growth predictions and the resultant effects on water demand

A draft memo was presented to the Board at the March meeting outlining a possible step by step means of obtaining and integrating water use information, beginning with an inventory of what is available and leading to subsequent phases for which senior government funding would be required.

The next phases would involve filling information gaps and analyzing information to determine the limits of our supplies. Lastly we would need a coordinated action plan to mitigate the point at which demand exceeds supply.

There are many individual efforts underway to deal with area specific water quantity issues and there are cooperative management efforts such as the Kelowna Joint Water Committee and the newly formed GVWU. These would form a strong base to tie together the valley picture.

Mr. Armour informed the Board that several knowledgeable experts from different sides of water management were in attendance to join in discussing the validity of our thoughts and to help us clarify what may need to be done.

Ms. Lisa Vitols, Senior Regional Analyst with Environment Canada addressed the Board. She offered information on a pilot project being conducted in the Okanagan to determine what information local government needs and integrate the data collected by EC. She said she is also involved in analyzing infrastructure grant applications and is hoping to assist local government in preparation of application to make them stronger in Federal government eyes.

Ms. Vitols said that EC is hoping to form partnerships with local government to assist in having Federal government information incorporated into local decision making. EC has also agreed with UBCM to take steps to further ecosystem based decision-making, the coordination of EC activities into local decisions, and facilitate the sharing of information with local government.

She noted that there is also a problem in internal transfer of information from one federal department to another. A goal of the pilot project will be to hold a workshop where federal scientists can present work they have been doing to local government as part of looking internally at how EC deals with communities and what information is needed by communities.

Chair Slater asked how data and information are exchanged with small communities which may not have an environment or even an engineering department.

Ms. Vitols replied that it may be beneficial to work with the small communities on this.

Director Hein suggested that the LRMP would be a good blueprint of what the 'Community of the Okanagan' would like to see happen.

Director Gullen questioned the urban focus of the pilot project and asked if rural areas were being left out.

Ms. Vitols responded that the Okanagan was considered an urban area but contains many rural components.

Drs. Stuart Cohen and Denise Neilsen summarized their work on phase 2 of the study of climate change effects on the Okanagan. (Executive Summary attached)

Director Hein asked what we should be doing to address climate change effects on such things as timing and volume of freshet, and ultimately the amount of available water.

Dr. Cohen explained that the first phase of the work did not address adaptation or responses to climate change. This phase does to some extent.

Dr. Neilsen noted that she has tried to factor in climate change scenarios to crop water demand at various points in time.

Dr. Cohen said that reservoir inflow volumes will decline in the future as well as alteration of the timing of flows. The proposal for phase III funding deals with this.

Chair Slater asked about climate change impacts on groundwater.

Dr. Cohen replied that the connection between climate change and groundwater is assumed but no model has been created.

Moved by Director Hein and seconded by Director Gullen:

“That the Okanagan Basin Water Board support the continuation of the climate change work and the provision of funding for Phase III of the project.”

CARRIED.

Director Gullen said she felt there should be more groundwater science and more information to deal with the consideration of water as a commodity rather than a resource by NAFTA.

Dr. Cohen responded to questions about the total water budget as affected by climate change, noting that there may be increased winter precipitation with less snow and more rain. While this area may receive less total precipitation, there will be other areas where the reverse is true. Water will not disappear but its distribution will change and the timing of its availability will change.

Mr. Stamhuis asked about the effect of climate change on the total water storage in Okanagan Lake.

Dr. Cohen answered that there is not enough information to make accurate predictions. He also said that our willingness to change our practices would be a factor. For example would we be willing to ‘mine’ water from the lake? Would we pump out more than the annual inflow and thus permanently reduce the lake level?

Brian Symonds of the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection addressed the question of how many more people the watershed can support from his perspective as engineering manager of the Okanagan Lake Regulation system. He said there is not a simple answer to this question. Changes in water usage patterns and the public acceptance of changes will be big factors.

He commented that each 1 centimetre drop in lake level is the equivalent of 40 cubic metres per second less flow out of the lake. Our current replenishment of water comes over a short period of time in April, May and June. The question will be what trade-offs are we willing to make in the future with respect to our usage of water, our acceptance of lower lake levels etc.

Mr. Symonds also informed the Board that the Ministry is considering changes to the governance of water regulation on the Okanagan system and will perhaps look to local government to take on this role. He also mentioned that the International Joint Commission is looking at expansion of their presence in the Okanagan.

Mr. Symonds outlined the Provincial involvement through the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management with CORD in the Trepanier Landscape Project. This pilot project is designed to assess upland and groundwater sources and relate these to where development should occur. This process could then be applied to other areas of the valley.

Director Hein expressed concern at the suggestion that local government take on lake regulation without any licensing authority. He noted that current licensed withdrawals are not properly monitored and suggested that unused licenses be revoked.

Dr. Jeff Curtis, OUC professor and head of the Freshwater Institute observed that from a scientific perspective, the best unit for effective water management in the valley is the basin as a whole. The political a governance issues that result in fragmentation are not easily addressed by science.

Dr. Curtis informed the Board that many Okanagan based questions are ‘one-off’ or site specific and senior funding agencies do not favour such projects.

Chair Slater suggested that cooperation between the Water Board and OUC to supply supporting science toward achieving water management goals would be valuable.

Director Hein agreed that supporting the expertise within the Okanagan community was very worthwhile. He asked whether the college would consider a project within a single watershed to look at water quality and quantity, on a joint basis with local government.

Dr. Curtis answered that the project would have to fit the criteria of the researcher and this would involve the applicability of the results and information to a wider area.

Director Novakowski asked what we can do to foster more academic focus on the valley.

Dr. Curtis replied that national and international application is a big factor in applying for research funding.

Dr. Wei of OUC noted that the College does have access to Federal and Provincial funding not available to government.

Director Hansma advised that Spallumcheen has initiated discussion with OUC on a joint water pilot project.

Nelson Jatel of the Freshwater Institute advised on the database project that was jointly initiated between the Water Board and OUC. This project now called the Okanagan Basin Information Network (OBIN) was designed to pull together existing water data from a variety of sources and identify the questions that need to be asked and the information that is required for decision making. The challenge is how to pull diverse information together in a useful format.

Dr. Wei voiced his strong support of the database project, saying that integrated management is not possible without data.

The Board asked that the Summit and Westland reports done for OBWB on integrated water management be sent to Dr. Wei.

Moved by Director Hansma and seconded by Director Hein:

“That the agenda package for OBWB meetings be sent to the OUC Freshwater Institute and they have an opportunity to attend our meetings.”

CARRIED.

Director Hansma left the meeting at 1:30

Mark Watt of the City of Kelowna Environment Department addressed the Board. He commented that the future water needs of Kelowna should be met by licensed withdrawals for Okanagan Lake. The Water Board needs to focus on the bigger picture of basin wide supply and future allocation scenarios. What is the basin water balance? Water use is just a small portion of this balance.

New and Unfinished Business:

OBWB – Changes to Signing Authorities

The Board approved the attached resolution to change signing authorities.

2002 – 2002 Budget Report

The Board received the report on the Fiscal Year 2002 – 2003 fiscal year expenditures and agreed to maintain the sewage grant reserve amount noting the possibility of future use in rural areas for satellite treatment systems.

Correspondence:**Community Futures Development Corporation (Okanagan Similkameen) Copy of Letter to D. Ashton Regarding GSED**

Received.

Okanagan Similkameen Boundary Fisheries Partnership – Water Consumption and Fish Screening Project

Mr. Armour reported that the OBWB approved \$10,000 in funding providing OSBFP obtained matching funds for the project. The OBSFP letter informs us that funding was not received and our contribution is not required. The letter also reports the scaling back of program.

Osoyoos Lake Water Quality Society – Fish Tissue Sampling

The Water Board received the Water Quality Society letter regarding need to do fish tissue sampling in Osoyoos L. and their application for \$12,000 to do these tests.

The Board also received information from Vic Jensen of WLAP about Environment Canada testing done in 1997 and Washington State fish testing.

Director Scheffler reported that there is a need to examine fish as part of the assessment of Osoyoos Lake. Baseline information is needed and there is now no funding from the OBSFP due to cutbacks.

Moved by Director Scheffler and seconded by Director Gullen:

“That the Okanagan Basin Water Board support the Osoyoos Lake Water Quality Society request with \$6000 to be taken from aquatic weed control budgets.”

Defeated.

(Opposed Directors Hein, Novakowski, Field, Hackman)

Director Hein stated that the Water Board was the wrong agency to approach with this funding request. We cannot support funding of individual projects which although they have worth and value should be addressed by local government.

Director Field said that if this application was accepted the Board should stipulate that it be a one-time grant only.

Director Novakowski said that the project was unique to one local area and he was reluctant to support it.

Alternate Director Hanson said that this request does not pertain directly to the quality of water.

Director Hackman said that he could not support a local initiative that was not regional in scope.

Director Scheffler responded that the Board wishes to pursue new areas of water management and that's why we exist.

Director Hein stated that this would not be an appropriate expenditure of Water Board funds and would be regarded as suspect by the people we wish to have as partners in valley wide water management. Director Gullen noted that the Board had approved fund for the OBSFP and this request was not substantially different.

Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen – Appointments to OBWB

Moved by Director Hein and seconded by Director Field:

“That the Okanagan Basin Water Board accept the changes to RDOS appointments as outlined in the Regional Board letter.”

CARRIED.

Okanagan Nation Alliance- Request for Conference Sponsorship

The Board received the agenda for the June 22 – 24 conference and a request for sponsorship funds ranging from \$500 to \$10,000.

Moved by Director Hein and seconded by Alternate Director Hanson:

“That the Okanagan Basin Water Board decline the request to sponsor the conference.”

CARRIED.

The Board noted the Alternate Director Scheffler is chairing a session of the conference and Mr. Armour will attend as well.

Community Futures Development Corporation (Okanagan Similkameen)

A copy of a letter to RDOS Chair D. Ashton was received in which Community Futures agreed to work with the Water Board in implementing the GSED.

Moved by Director Hein and seconded by Director Gullen:

“That the Okanagan Basin Water Board receive the letter from Community Futures.”

CARRIED.

SEWERAGE FACILITIES GRANTS:

None at this time.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Okanagan Basin Water Board meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY

