

OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD HELD ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2003, AT THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN - SIMILKAMEEN, 101 MARTIN STREET, PENTICTON, B.C. AT 10:00 A.M.

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| <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. |
| | Vice Chair Will Hansma | N.O.R.D. |
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| <u>OTHERS:</u> | Karen Rothe | MSRM |
| | Mary Ellen Heidt | Community Futures |
| | Gerry Tonn | Urban Systems |
| | Jane Coady | Community Futures |
| | Rory McIvor | Community Futures |
| | Karen Davies | Community Futures |
| | Stu Wells | Community Futures |
| | George Stayberg | Community Futures |
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| <u>STAFF:</u> | Greg Armour | Field Supervisor (OBWB) |

MINUTES:

Moved by Director Hein and seconded by Director Hansma:

"That the minutes of a regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board held on August 12th, 2003 be adopted as circulated."

CARRIED.

DELEGATIONS:

Community Futures of the Okanagan Similkameen:

Ms Heidt reviewed the recommendation of the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen that the Okanagan Basin Water Board and Community Futures cooperate in implementing the Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy. (GSED) She noted that the role of Community Futures was and economic one and was not water related.

She advised the Board that Community Futures had agreed to fund a workshop involving stakeholders in the GSED as a start towards agreement on implementation and the possible methods to be used. She asked for Water Board participation and comments.

Director Hein commented that the workshop might provide a suitable dialogue for the Water Board to further valley wide water related objectives.

Mr. Armour explained the past work done by the Water Board in promoting and ecosystem approach to water management. He noted the 2000 Westland report resulting from a workshop involving all levels of government. High level bureaucrats from Federal, Provincial, Local and First Nations government met to

discuss how water might be managed more effectively in the Okanagan. It was agreed that an ecosystem approach with a Water Board secretariat staff advising political representatives would be the best way to go about this. The recommendation was subsequently not supported by all of the regional districts.

Mr. Armour also noted that one of the purposes of the Community Futures workshop was to consolidate information in a central database. He advised that this process had begun for water related data by the Water Board and Okanagan University College. The project is known as the Okanagan Basin Information Network. (OBIN)

Mr. Stayberg commented that the Community Futures funding was to help the OBWB towards its objectives.

Chair Slater noted that a problem exists now and we need a better means of dealing with the demands of growth that our current methods.

Director Hein said that despite unanimous support for a Water Board secretariat at the workshop, there is no local funding or senior government funding to support this. He added that the Province has seven Ministries with some jurisdiction over water and they tend to fund small projects that are very uncoordinated. He suggested that the City of Vernon should be tested by an approach from Senator Fitzpatrick to promote cooperation and a wider ranging view of resource management. The current situation of water shortages would help promote cooperation of all parties.

Director Scheffler entered the meeting.

Ms. Coady agreed that there is an acute awareness by the public of water issues this year. She stated that without buy in from all local governments another workshop would be of no use. She noted that while First Nation cooperation is needed, they do not participate financially.

Ms. Heidt suggested that the workshop could be more of a public information meeting.

Director Hansma agreed and said that a public meeting might help convince opposed participants to consider a valley wide approach to resource and economic strategies.

Director Novakowski asked if Community Futures had additional funding to that designated for the workshop.

Ms. Heidt replied that there was only the workshop funding.

Gerry Tonn stated that the workshop might consist of a one-day conference with broad representation where project with good ideas that have failed to receive support could be reviewed. A coordinated effort toward management along the lines of the Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative could be examined.

Chair Slater observed that many workshops have proven to be of limited value and perhaps the money would be more effective in hosting a public meeting.

Mr. Stayberg noted that the Georgia Basin has received substantial money so why not the Okanagan?

Mr. Armour commented that Environment Canada had offered to contribute \$200,000 per year for a five-year term to the Valley and make it the next Federal Ecosystem initiative. The valley failed to take advantage of this offer, which was contingent on cooperation from all regions, and the funds have lapsed.

Mr. McIvor suggested asking the valley Mayors and representatives of the three valley Community Futures Organizations to meet with Vernon and review the benefits of dealing with water on a valley-wide basis. The current situation would provide an opportune time for such a discussion. He felt the public would demand that the system of management be revamped.

Director Hansma advised that the OBWB mandate is broad enough to accommodate such changes but we need unanimous approval.

Chair Slater said that Vernon has many local initiatives that are fully occupying their resources.

Director Hein stated that a change to the Water Board mandate would only add more rhetoric and what is really required is that we use the authority and taxation ability we now have. He added that the scientific evidence of a need for change often works against political and public wishes for no tax increases.

Ms. Rothe asked if Provincial participation and financial support would help bring the Regional Districts on side.

Director Hansma answered that Provincial assistance in a basin wide effort to better manage water would definitely spur local government cooperation.

Ms. Coady noted that the Water Board is the only body in BC with taxing authority across multiple Regional Districts.

Ms. Rothe commented on the Provincial participation and financial contribution in the Trepanier Landscape Unit and said that the preference for any similar projects would be to work with the Water Board rather than individual regions.

Director Hein wondered what it would take for the Province to influence local government.

Alternate Director Hanson suggested that there not be a workshop until cooperation of all parties has been obtained. She said that in this year in particular, the public and press should be supportive of a collaborative effort to better manage water.

Director Scheffler advised that he had discussions with senior Federal bureaucrats in which he was advised that \$40 million dollars in unspent infrastructure funding in BC would result in no projects submitted for the Federal Water Infrastructure program being approved.

Director Novakowski stated that we need a higher level of government to give us direction and state plainly that if we don't work together, there will be no funding.

Ms. Rothe noted that the Province has significant amounts of data and has an obligation to work with local government. She wondered what approaches have been made.

Director Hansma responded that there have been numerous approaches providing we are organized as a region.

Director Hein said that there is confusion among local government about which Ministry does what and how much communication there is between them. He referred to the sale of reservoir lots. While there is widespread local opposition to this the Province is pushing ahead. Senior Ministry officials claim to know nothing about it. He said that it seems funding is available for emergencies such as the Kettle Valley Railroad but not for water.

Ms. Rothe replied that information is often forwarded to higher-ups and no support is received. This is a frustrating situation for the technical staff. She said that government had likely not looked at the long-term implications of disposing of Crown Land

Director Hein said that it is hard to work with senior government when they are as uncoordinated as local government.

Mr. McIvor commented that Community Futures has an opportunity to assist. While a conference is perhaps not appropriate at this time it might be wise to proceed with a meeting of valley Mayors, the three Community Futures Groups and the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management, to outline the downside of not participating in a joint action. The funding for the workshop goes until the end of March.

Chair Slater re-affirmed the commitment of the Okanagan Basin Water Board to do whatever is needed to move toward better resource management.

Director Hein suggested that the Water Board and Community Futures should consider how best to proceed and meet again to agree on a firm direction.

Mr. Wells commented that the Valley MLA's should be asked to participate in a meeting of mayors.

Karen Rothe – Watershed Planner, Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management:

Ms. Rothe thanked the Board for allowing her participation in the previous discussion.

She gave a presentation on the watershed planning process in southern British Columbia noting that her Ministry's focus is on sustainable economic development that considers communities, ecosystems, and financial and economic factors. The focus is on land use and water.

Director Gullen left the meeting at 1:00 PM.

Director Hein asked if Provincial help would still be available to communities that did not wish growth to be a driver toward sustainability, that is, wished to have zero population increase.

Ms. Rothe indicated that she did not know what the response would be. Perhaps if there were no growth there would be no problems. She informed the Board that the Trepanier project was the first of its kind in the Province. Water management, land use, and economic considerations are being tied into actual community by-laws that will guide development.

There was some discussion about the LRMP process and the Sustainable Resource Management Planning that has replaced it.

Director Scheffler observed that the LRMP had not included First Nations, private lands and some mining interests.

Director Hein questioned how the Georgia Basin Initiative has assisted in water usage problems in the lower mainland this year.

Ms. Rothe said that she was not sure but that in general she supported smaller units of management such as Trepanier for facilitating action.

Chair Slater brought up the question of inter-basin transfers of water.

Ms. Rothe advised that there were ecological issues with transfers that information was not available on. There are questions such as pathogen introduction, algal growth, and flooding.

Director Hansma asked if the recommendations of watershed management plans would be made part of Community OCPs in the future.

Ms. Rothe said that this makes sense as water crosses jurisdictional boundaries and local decision making should include a broader watershed view.

Director Hansma said that local government should adopt coordinated actions throughout the valley and then receive financial assistance for the Province to implement them.

The Chair thanks Ms. Rothe for her presentation and for taking part in discussions.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Federal Support for Agricultural and Rural Large Scale Infrastructure Projects

Mr. Armour advised the Board that he and Mr. Stamhuis has prepared a suggestion for a large scale rural water infrastructure project in response to the notice received from Golder and Associates to identify potential projects for Federal funding.

The proposal is detailed on the attached memorandum.

Moved by Director Hansma and seconded by Alternate Director Hanson:

"That the proposal for a large scale rural water infrastructure project be adopted and forwarded to the consultant for consideration."

CARRIED.

Construction of a new Aquatic Weed Rototiller

Mr. Armour asked the Board to authorized preliminary cost estimates for construction of a new rototiller. This would add to the operating time now limited by shared use of one machine with Cultus Lake and with Columbia Shuswap Regional district.

Moved by Director Hansma and seconded by Director Hein:

"That Mr. Armour develop a business plan for operating costs for a new rototiller and proceed with preliminary capital cost estimates."

CARRIED.

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS:

Environment Canada Workshop

The Board asked that information about the number and scope of attendees be forwarded to the Directors prior to the meeting.

Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen

A copy of a letter to the District of Summerland was received expressing concerns about the use of groundwater to augment Summerland's water supply.

Moved by Director Hein and seconded by Director Scheffler:

"That the copy of the letter from the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen be received and that the Water Board write to the Ministry of Water Land and Air Protection to indicate their concern over lack of groundwater data and information to guide local government in making decisions about use of this resource."

CARRIED.

Fiscal year 2004-2005 Salaries

Mr. Armour presented a recommendation for salary increases for him and three other Water Board staff members. (attached)

Moved by Director Hansma and seconded by Director Hein:

"That the Water Board staff receive an increase of the cumulative cost of living amounts since the last adjustment in 2000. This would be 6.9% effective April 1, 2004."

CARRIED.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Okanagan Basin Water Board meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY