

OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD HELD ON APRIL 13, 2004, AT THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL OKANAGAN, 1450 KLO ROAD, KELOWNA, B.C. AT 10:00 A.M.

PRESENT:

Director Len Novakowski	C.O.R.D.
Director Robert Hobson	C.O.R.D.
Director Rolly Hein	C.O.R.D.
Chair John Slater	O.S.R.D.
Director Eike Scheffler	O.S.R.D.
Alternate Director Gus Boersma	O.S.R.D.
Director Stan Field	N.O.R.D.
Director Doug Hackman	N.O.R.D.

OTHERS:

Gerry Tonn	Urban Systems
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STAFF:

Greg Armour (OBWB)	Project	Manager
Mike Stamhuis	N.O.R.D.	

MINUTES:

Moved by Director Hackman and seconded by Director Hein:

"That the minutes of a regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board held on March 9th, 2004 be adopted as circulated."

CARRIED.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

March 19th Workshop – Follow Up

Mr. Armour presented a memo for consideration by the Board for the next steps in moving forward with the recommendations from the March 19th workshop.

He Board discussed the continued involvement of Gerry Tonn from Urban Systems in facilitating Subcommittee meetings and providing some research and materials for committee consideration.

Director Hein commented that the Subcommittee should work out their own preference for the process.

Mr. Stamhuis noted that the committee has no budget at present and is dependent on OBWB assistance. He suggested that the committee work out terms of reference for their proposed actions.

Director Hein said that the committee should at least be given travel expenses and staff support from the OBWB.

Director Hobson entered the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

Alternate Director Boersma noted that Community Futures would want to see a business plan for the subcommittee.

Director Field asked who the subcommittee would present their recommendation to.

Director Scheffler observed that the OBWB may end up being morphed into a new body which was more useful and acceptable to local government.

Director Hobson said that the Fraser Basin Council (FRBC) was a volunteer group of agencies who have agreed to deal with common issues. They have a basic administrative structure and support resources. The body is inclusive of major users of basin resource and government who cooperate to decide on actions that need to be taken.

There was a discussion of the membership of a framework management structure, the need for leadership, and the role of the Water Board.

Director Scheffler advised that a possible leader might be Mr. Jack Blaney who was retired but had previous involvement with the Fraser Basin Council and the International Joint Commission.

Other Board members put forward the names of Senator Fitzpatrick and Mr. Tom Siddon.

Director Hackman noted that Vernon is likely not on-side with these actions.

Director Hobson pointed out that the FBC does not require everyone to participate. The goal is cooperation, not take-over of local authority.

Kelowna Capital News – Workshop Review

The Board received a copy of an article from the Kelowna Capital News, which reported on the March 19th workshop.

Urban Systems – Proposal for Subcommittee Facilitation

Gerry Tonn of Urban Systems joined the meeting and introduced a proposed discussion guide for the afternoon's meeting of the subcommittee.

Director Hein suggested that the subcommittee develop their expectations for support needed for the Water Board and options for the way in which they would prefer to proceed.

The Board discussed the need for some sort of bridge funding to support the group and perhaps develop a charter for sustainability in the Okanagan. They felt that there needed to be a buy in from local government to the principles and strategy of integrated watershed management before a structure is endorsed.

The Board reviewed several options for getting information to local government including presentations to each council and a presentation through OMMA.

Director Hobson commented that OMMA probably represented too broad a focus and did not include the interests of non-government people and groups. He commented that there should be no Water Board direction on what the Subcommittee will do. The composition of the group is representative and the goals and outcomes should be a result of their efforts.

Correspondence:

City of Vernon – Homesite Severance Policy

The Board received a letter from the Vernon City Clerk regarding OBWB policy on the size of lots created by homesite severance and on septic systems.

Moved by Director Hackman and seconded by Director Hein:

"That the Okanagan Basin Water Board policy concerning creation of lots of less than 1.0 hectare be amended to exempt homesite severance and allow these lots to be less than 1.0 hectare in size and served by septic systems."

CARRIED.

The Board noted that these lots are on large acreages and only the homesite lot would be exempted from the requirement to be sewered if less than 1.0 hectare.

Geological Survey of Canada – Groundwater Assessment – Project Outline

The Board received a project outline for groundwater assessment in the Okanagan to be undertaken jointly by the Geological Survey of Canada and the Ministry of Water, Land, and Air Protection.

Mr. Armour reported on his involvement with the project steering committee.

The Board noted that this work would begin to fill a large gap in water data in the valley and questioned whether the information would eventually lead to legislation.

Moved by Director Hobson and seconded by Director Novakowski:

"That the Board send a letter supporting the groundwater assessment project and local involvement at the outset."

CARRIED.

The Board noted that they looked forward to a continuing program which would result in better local ability to manage groundwater.

ADJOURNMENT:

The Okanagan Basin Water Board meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY

Subcommittee Session:

The subcommittee formed as a result of the March 19th Workshop met from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. The purpose of the session was to make progress toward identifying a governance model that will work for regional Okanagan water management.

Present:

Denis Davis	Retired
Bob Harriman	Mayor of Peachland
Stu Wells	Community Futures of Okanagan-Similkameen
Toby Pike	South East Kelowna Irrigation, District BC Water Supply Association
Valerie Cameron	Ministry of Water Land and Air Protection
Kirk Johnstone	Environment Canada

Missing:

Patrick Nicol	City of Vernon
Mickey Werstuik	Westbank First Nation, Okanagan Nation Alliance

Staff:

Mike Stamhuis	North Okanagan Regional District
Greg Armour	Okanagan Basin Water Board

Water Board Chair John Slater provided a brief introduction to the group. He said the March 19th workshop had reached agreement that the Okanagan Valley must take steps toward better coordinated and more sustainable use of water supplies. All parties with an interest in water should be included in developing a framework structure which will recommend basin wide steps for constructive actions.

Mr. Slater left the room at this point.

Mr. Tonn went through the discussion guide he had prepared for the meeting.

Ms. Cameron noted that the executive summary of the workshop referred to the potential institutional framework as an organization. She wondered if a partnership would be acceptable.

Mr. Tonn said that all models are open for discussion and the term organization was used in a very general sense. He asked the group to envision what the group would like to see as accomplishments of a basin wide management group from the perspective of looking back from 2010.

Mr. Pike said that he would like to see water license rationalization to better control supply and also a more universal demand management program.

Mr. Davis commented that better water allocation information should be available and the group should have evolved more trust and developed the framework governance model as problems

needing joint action are identified.

Mr. Harriman said that we must set aside parochialism to ensure supplies of adequate quantity and quality of water for the future.

Mr. Johnstone said that we need to achieve better understanding of demands on water resources.

Ms. Cameron stated that an accomplishment of a basin wide structure should be that in the event of a severe water shortage, the best job possible was done to mitigate the problems.

Mr. Stamhuis commented that more thorough data and science on the extent of our water resources should be available.

Mr. Pike noted that there was a void in water information with Provincial reduction in staff and services. The valley wide organization could have a role in closing this gap.

Mr. Wells said there are too many bodies with water jurisdiction. In addition we should achieve a reduction in the IJC demand for Canadian water.

Mr. Johnstone advised that he is on the IJC Board and in renegotiating the agreement there are a list of BC issues to be dealt with in the Okanagan prior to establishing a BC position for the negotiations.

Shape of an Organization and Framework

Mr. Wells said that establishing another legally constituted entity is not the way to go. Despite far sighted legislation, the OBWB has been unsuccessful.

Mr. Harriman noted that the Fraser Basin Council got all parties to the table to deal with common problems. Facilitation provided by such people as David Marshall, had helped to bring this group together.

Ms. Cameron added that Ontario Watershed Associations has been used successfully and shown advantages to a more structured model. They deal with serious problems and provide efficient response.

Mr. Davis described three management options: the least legislated version such as the Fraser Basin or the Georgia Basin Ecosystem Initiative; the Ontario watershed model or the prairie water boards; and the French system where all water management powers and taxation are vested with one authority.

Mr. Tonn noted that First Nations must be a full participant since they have a great deal of authority over water.

Mr. Stamhuis observed that initial buy-in to a consensus based group would be easier. Down the road they may identify areas where greater authority is needed.

Mr. Pike pointed out that choosing the right people to represent water interests will be integral to gaining trust and enabling additional future responsibility.

Mr. Wells noted that it is easier to later tighten up with more authority than to slacken later.

Ms. Cameron asked if today's goal was to establish a framework organization.

Mr. Tonn said it was not.

Mr. Harriman asked what the role of the Subcommittee is and where recommendations from this meeting would go.

Mr. Tonn said they would be referred to workshop participants.

Representation on the Board: requires leadership, governance, and direction.

Ms. Cameron said that input from a broad range is desirable but there should be accountability for decisions. This may fall on a variety of individual agencies, each accountable for their own decisions.

Mr. Wells stated that the organization which now exists does not work and broader representation is the only answer.

Ms. Cameron asked if the board will be advisory. She noted that this worked in the Fraser Basin, where the issue of gravel extraction brought people together in a collaborative role but without decision making authority. Fifteen partners achieved consensus on actions.

Mr. Tonn suggested that the accountability of this board would be to ask if consensus was achieved and not be accountable for decisions.

Mr. Stamhuis wondered what the linkage of the committee would be to the Water Board.

Mr. Pike said that it makes sense that there is a linkage since the Water Board has valley-wide political representation and taxation authority. He envisioned a group with a broader representation supported by the existing organization.

Mr. Harriman said that we face serious problems and have an opportunity to have all levels of government support the Board.

Mr. Johnstone advised that over time there tends to be stress on funding especially as problem levels fluctuate. Reliance on sustained funding from senior government is risky and there should be some sort of back-up mechanism to fund the organization.

Ms. Cameron agreed and added that at present the Provincial Government is very open to participating in innovative funding arrangements.

Mr. Davis suggested a small municipal tax on water used.

Mr. Stamhuis agreed that any program should not be crippled in the event of change in political situations.

Ms. Cameron offered that contribution of some partners could be 'in-kind' providing the base funding for the organization is in place.

Mr. Johnstone said that the scope of the work needs to be defined before looking for funding.

Mr. Tonn said that a business plan would be a useful tool.

Mr. Harriman wondered about having some sort of 'carrot' for participation

Approach to Decision Making

Mr. Wells commented that a majority method of decision making will not work.

Mr. Davis said that consensus based decision is the only thing that will succeed.

Mr. Johnstone said that it is time to try something other than a majority based body.

Ms. Cameron noted that consensus involves some options and we should define what it means in this case.

Problem Solving:

Mr. Pike said that the water management structure should deal only with basin-wide issues and initially, not with sub-basin problems.

Ms. Cameron commented that some land management issues impact water quality and quantity.

Mr. Tonn said that land management issues could be included when they are identified as major impacts on water.

Mr. Pike said he would like to see standardization of policies throughout the valley; for example water conservation. Knowledge should be shared among all jurisdictions.

Mr. Wells said that groundwater is a valley wide issue that could be addressed.

Mr. Pike said that we definitely need First Nations in order to address aboriginal title to water.

Keeping the Committee Engaged and Retaining Enthusiasm:

Mr. Davis suggested that we adopt a strict agenda and schedule and that we get scientists to identify what information we need. This critical work should commence as soon as possible.

Mr. Harriman said that he perceived water management as a very serious problem and that we should take a recommendation back to a second workshop.

The committee agreed that they would like to have:

- **Okanagan Basin Water Board involvement**
- **Funding support**
- **Engage broader representation**
- **Involvement of Gerry Tonn (Urban Systems)**

A second committee meeting will be scheduled in approximately two weeks.

