

OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD HELD ON JULY 13, 2004,
AT THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL OKANAGAN, 1450 KLO ROAD, VERNON 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.
Director Gordon Clark	O.S.R.D.
Director Stan Field	N.O.R.D.
Director Doug Hackman	N.O.R.D.

OTHERS:

Honourable George Abbott	MSRM
Mr. Tom Siddon	Okanagan Partnership
Mr. Nelson Jatel	Okanagan Partnership
Denis Davis	OBWB Subcommittee

STAFF:

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

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA:

Moved by Director Novakowski and seconded by Director Clark:

"That the memorandum from M Stamhuis concerning water management items be added to the agenda."

CARRIED

MINUTES:

Moved by Director Novakowski and seconded by Director Hobson:

"That the minutes of a regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board held on June 8th, 2004 be adopted upon correcting the reference to Penticton in the approval for a sewage facilities grant for the Osoyoos East Side Extension."

CARRIED.

M.A. Stamhuis – Discussion Items for Meeting with Minister Abbott

Mr. Stamhuis outlined the contents of his memorandum regarding water management items which could be brought forward to Minister Abbott.

Director Hein expressed concern that he had not had time to review the recommendations and said that we should perhaps present more comprehensive thoughts rather than get into individual issues. Director Hobson suggested we ask the Minister if the Province will assist with resources to implement a Georgia Basin type of water management structure in the Okanagan. He added that we may not wish to alter our 21¢ levy but use some funds to participate in a new management structure. He suggested we inform the Minister of our work with the Okanagan Partnership to coordinate the Workshop Subcommittee recommendations with our own goals.

There was a discussion on water licensing and allocation issues.

Mr. Siddon commented on the relevance of the original Okanagan Basin Study to our present goals.

DELEGATIONS:

Minister George Abbott – Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management

Chair Slater thanked Mr. Abbott for attending the OBWB meeting and complimented his Ministry for the excellent workshop they had put on in Penticton the previous week.

Staff provided a short outline of Water Board actions toward regional planning in the valley for more efficient water use.

Mr. Abbott referred to the Penticton forum describing it as an effort to avoid dealing with a crisis situation and to take action which will deal with water management issues in a more comprehensive manner. He said his Ministry wished to encourage Valley wide water management but also work in harmony with local political jurisdictions. The Province wishes to provide leadership but with valley consensus or unanimity of purpose. He would like to see a request from the valley or the OBWB for support in a particular course of action.

The Minister responded to a variety of questions about competing demands for water, licensing, and actions that the Province could undertake or mandate to promote conservation measures.

Director Hobson commented on the two approaches to regional water management looked at by the Board; enhanced authority for the OBWB to assume its original mandate and the alternate of a Fraser Basin Model. He suggested a weighted majority vote as an alternative noting the lack of agreement among valley jurisdictions to add to the Board mandate. Director Hobson said that until the valley water budget is defined and legislation for groundwater is implemented, achieving effective management will be difficult.

Director Hobson left the meeting at 11:45 a.m.

Mr. Abbott suggested that the Water Board send a letter to his Ministry and possibly to the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal, and Women's Services discussing changes to the Board's SLP's, but perhaps first do some work in building valley consensus.

Director Hein commented that our present SLPs do not allow us to do what we should do. He said that he was pleased that the Minister was open to discussion of these points and proposals.

Minister Abbott replied that government is moving away for dealing with single purpose functions.

Chair Slater said that the pressures of population growth, climate change, and demands for water among users especially considering the economic expansion of First Nations put the valley in a vulnerable position.

Minister Abbott replied that he is receptive to working with Land and Water BC and local government to look at ways of dealing with these problems.

Director Clark asked about the Ministry's intent for dealing with allocation of groundwater.

Mr. Abbott said that this represents an extensive piece of work but he is receptive to ways to resolve groundwater concerns.

Director Novakowski said that he could understand the Province's reluctance to be heavy handed but the Board needs support and some guidance to do our job.

Mr. Siddon added that sometimes government must lead with some unpopular decisions in order to stave off crises. He said that local government tends to deal with issues in their own back yard and provincial advocacy may be needed in addition to getting our own house in order.

Mr. Jatel reviewed the Okanagan Partnership evolution and noted that support from the economic sector for regional approaches will be of benefit.

Director Scheffler said that some 'attraction' of a non threatening nature is needed for local government to buy into a regional water management strategy.

Minister Abbott indicated the reason for the province to act is to head off a future crisis involving water and that political goals are secondary.

Director Clark said that a successful regional approach in the Okanagan could be used as a model for the rest of the province.

Director Field asked how we can proceed when there is no support from the City of Vernon. He commented that the attitude of a large segment of the public is that there is no water crisis now or in the future. There must be a 'marketing' of information.

Minister Abbott left the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Director Hein left the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Okanagan Partnership – First Nations Symposium:

The Board received information from the Okanagan Partnership on a symposium held to explore economic opportunities with First Nations.

Mr. Siddon advised that Partnership representatives and Chair Slater had met with Community Futures of the Okanagan Similkameen to discuss the fall forum to put forward the Partnership's recommendations to local government. Mr. Siddon suggested an invitation from an official with high standing such as Lieutenant Governor Iona Campagnolo might catch the attention of local officials.

Chair Slater said that sponsorship of the Roundtable discussion should come from all three Community Futures groups in the Okanagan.

Mr. Jatel advised that the roundtable is proposed for October 29th and that Federal funding is available to further partnership recommendations.

Land and Water BC Water Use and Conservation Forum:

The Board received the agenda from the forum held the previous week in Penticton.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Agricultural Water Supply Program:

The Board received a news article on a joint Canada – BC agricultural water supply expansion program.

Vancouver Sun article On LWBC Penticton Forum:

The Board received the Vancouver Sun report on the forum held the previous week in Penticton.

Regional District of Central Okanagan – Congestion of Oyama Canal

The Board received the letter from RDCO asking for comments or suggestions on boating congestion problems in the Oyama Canal between Wood and Kalamalka Lakes.

Mr. Armour advised that Coast Guard has jurisdiction over navigable waterways.

The Board could not offer any suggestions on how to improve the situation.

Federation of BC Naturalists – Long Term Water Management Plan for the Okanagan

The Federation of BC Naturalists forwarded a resolution to the Board urging a long term water management plan for the Okanagan. The resolution suggests a unified water supply authority.

SEWAGE GRANT APPLICATIONS:

OBWB Sewer Grant Policies

Chair Slater advised that Director Hobson asked that the matter be deferred to the next meeting.

The Board agreed to deal with the matter at the August 10th meeting

ADJOURNMENT:

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

CHAIRMAN

SECRETARY