

## OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD HELD ON MARCH 1, 2005, AT THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL OKANAGAN, 1450 KLO ROAD, KELOWNA, B.C. AT 10:00 A.M.**

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### 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.
Alternate Director Tom Chapman	O.S.R.D.
Director Gordon Clark	O.S.R.D.
Director Doug Hackman	N.O.R.D.
Vice Chair Will Hansma	N.O.R.D.

### OTHERS:

Valerie Cameron	MWLAP
Mel Cook	Community Futures
Paul Kluckner	Environment Canada
Toby Pike	Water Supply Association
Bruce Wilson	Water Supply Association
Denis Davis	Retired EC Director General
Brian Guy	Chair of CWRA Conference
Tom Siddon	Okanagan Partnership
David Marshall	Fraser Basin Council
Bob Harriman	Mayor of Peachland
Jake Thiessen	Workshop Subcommittee
Bernie Bauer	Dean of Science UBC Okanagan
Gordie ???	Black Mountain Irrigation

### STAFF:

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

### APPOINTMENTS TO THE BOARD

Regional District of North Okanagan:	Director Will Hansma	(Spallumcheen Mayor)
	Director Doug Hackman	(Coldstream Councillor)
	Director Sean Harvey	(Vernon Mayor)

Alternates Regional Directors Peter McClean; Jerry Oglow; Stan Field

Regional District of Central Okanagan:	Director Len Novakowski	(Westbank Director)
	Director Robert Hobson	(CORD Chair)
	Director Rolly Hein	(Lake Country Mayor)

Alternates Regional Directors Patty Hanson; David Knowles

Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen:	Director Gordon Clark	(Summerland Director)
	Director Eike Scheffler	(Osoyoos Rural)
	Director John Slater	(Osoyoos Mayor)

Alternates Regional Directors Tom Chapman; Gus Boersma

**ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR:**

Director Hackman nominated Director Slater for Chair of the Okanagan Basin Water Board for 2005.

There being no other nominations, Director Slater was declared Chair.

Director Hackman nominated Director Hansma for Vice Chair of the Water Board for 2005.

There being no other nominations, Director Hansma was declared Vice Chair

**MINUTES:**

**Moved by Director Novakowski and Director Hein:**

*"That the minutes of a regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board held on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2004 be adopted as circulated."*

**CARRIED.**

**NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS:****Okanagan Partnership White Paper on Water Management – Next Steps**

Each Board Director and the individual invited guests offered their perspective on the issues of regional Water Management and steps they would like to see taken to address the problem.

Paul Kluckner noted the trends in the valley relating to increasing water use and that steps were being taken to identify knowledge gaps. He said that Environment Canada is interested in this unique semi arid area of rapid growth and the ecosystem effects taking place. This area is of national importance and there is a Federal interest in supporting local government cooperation in ecosystem management.

Toby Pike reviewed the Water Supply Association response to the Okanagan Partnership discussion paper in which the WSA agreed that regional management was a necessity and offered a number of changes and concerns regarding specific recommendations for the mandate of a regional water council. With respect to the council structure the WSA did not support the concept of a two thirds majority with a provision for areas to opt out of particular program. He said there should be a one year notice of intent to withdraw. Mr. Pike also suggested that the mandate of the council be expanded only after its usefulness is proven.

Tom Siddon noted that the collaborative interests are stronger than the differences and an expanded mandate was recommended by the Partnership for eventual incorporation into the council. He is not as concerned with details of the mandate but embarking on the capacity to take on whatever regional issues need addressing. He discussed the advantages of a two tier Board with a decision making executive board and a supporting advisory Board reporting to it.

Brian Guy said that the Canadian Water Resources Association would lend support to decisions to be made concerning water. He stressed the need for strong local leadership and the participation of senior government.

Director Hackman commented on 'on the ground initiatives, which might be under taken by the Water Board.

Director Novakowski said that there is recognition of the need for the Water Board to take on a greater role but he is frustrated by the lack of initiative demonstrated by the refusal to staff the Board accordingly.

Denis Davis felt it was more important to make a start rather than try to define the perfect model.

Director Clark said that the valley is a matter of national interest and that we must use the opportune timing and momentum afforded us now. He added that a Board cannot function with cyclical membership of different groups.

Mel Cook noted that Community Futures had started this process with the early workshops and he had envisioned a simple structure with an executive board, staff and a broad based Board to support the executive. He noted that Community Futures is well positioned to provide assistance as they have funding available through Western Economic Diversification.

Valerie Cameron explained that she is representing a number of different government ministries so that there would be a single contact. The province has a number of responsibilities in the Okanagan including licensing, allocation, groundwater, pollution prevention and non-statutory responsibilities such as watershed planning, drought management, and treaty negotiations. The province is interested in operational resource management issues and in the Okanagan as a unique area including current projects such as the groundwater assessment of the Okanagan Basin, and the water quantity update. She said the province is very open to new local water management ideas.

Director Hansma stated that we must take on a valley wide issue to prove the worth of coordinated action. He added that we need to know more about the extent of the water resource to be able to manage it and that parochialism over jurisdictional boundaries must be overcome.

Bob Harriman referred to the example presented by manager of the Southern Nevada Water Authority at a recent water forum where a desperate water shortage left government no option but to initiate drastic actions.

Director Hobson commented that local level decisions are very disconnected from science. Councils tend to look at ecological considerations as afterthoughts. The Central Okanagan Regional District has already proposed land use that will exceed the available water supply within twenty years. We have no plan to limit growth and many of the resource users are not part of decision making. The two management directions we have looked at and the broad group consensus based model and the smaller authoritarian group which would have the potential to exclude those who wish to have a say. The partnership proposal involves a slightly enhanced Water Board with a supporting council. Many of the decision makers are still not on the board however. He wondered how to reconcile the imminent threat with the lack of political willingness to create a model with authority. There is a sense of urgency which makes the need for rapid decision making more necessary than with the Fraser Basin Council model. Director Hobson asked if the people at the table without the ability to make a financial contribution should have the same authority. He said that the Board must have long-term sustainable funding and wondered where this might come from. He noted that a relationship with UBCO in defining a sustainability institute, with the help of Environment Canada, would lend unbiased non-political advice derived from research.

Director Hein stated that additional education on conservation needs to be a focus and local leadership is required to allow us to make decisions which affect our own areas that are now made by the province. We must look at examples from other areas on how we can manage water for agriculture in a better way. There must be better monitoring of licensed water use and water pricing need to become more reflective of the resource value. With the current thinking and the mandate of the Water Board, it cannot address any of the major issues.

Jake Thiessen said that we have no major rivers draining into the Okanagan basin to make our job easier and the overlapping jurisdiction makes proper management difficult. He supported re-structuring of the Water Board with support from a Council with broad representation and knowledge. He cautioned that the group must also remain workable in size.

Alternate Director Chapman that the limited resource aspect of water is not understood as we continue to approve growth in the valley. Along with the influx of people to the area, there are many uneducated or unconcerned views on water. There is a real need to move ahead and not just talk.

Bruce Wilson said that there is a need for an organization focused on water management in the whole valley. We can either manage now, or do crisis management later. He noted that the emphasis in the past was on the supply of water and how to tap into new sources. 95% of the affordable water in the valley has already been developed and we have to now learn to stop wasting water. He said there is a public expectation of action.

David Marshall informed the group that the Fraser Basin Council (FBC) included seven First Nation Governments. They invited First Nations to help build the Board structure so all government was part of the design. The driver in the Fraser was salmon where in the Okanagan it is water. All issues eventually lead to sustainability and a common vision and needs assessment must be determined. What do we want and how do we get there? A charter for a board can develop over a year or so and must include First Nations as a signatory. People will buy into visions if they see themselves as part of it. The FBC receives \$1.1 million a year in core funding from senior government which allows staff to take on projects. Funding is also available for specific regional economic initiatives. Early success has to be demonstrated while a longer term vision is developed. The initial focus should be on visible specific initiatives. Mr. Marshall commented that many areas are moving away from the authoritarian model.

The Fraser Basin dealt with municipal specific flood issues and when the groups came together they were able to see the linkage. Consensus involves coming to the table, not to defend your mandate but to bring the strength of it to the group. Decision making must recognize that organizations with different mandates could not participate in a structure in which their authority could be compromised by a voting structure. The type of decision would involve asking if there was any objection to moving in a particular direction rather than asking all in favor.

Mr. Marshall offered some suggestions:

The Water Board is local government driven and we need to engage others

Any Okanagan Basin Council should be sustainability driven

A parallel process could occur in which the Council begins to develop a business plan and initiates a consultative process, while moving ahead on some specific issues.

It is more important to do it right than to begin in a hurry

The body should be tailored to the needs of the Okanagan and incorporate both users and influencers.

The Board and guests discussed the merits of a decision making body with authority versus a collaborative agency. There support for a decision making Board with a broader group not replacing the Board but supporting it.

Involvement of First Nations was discussed and Mr. Marshall advised that meeting with influential leaders be undertaken and that First Nations be asked how best to structure their representation.

Mr. Kluckner asked what we are trying to achieve in the valley. Do we want to save water? Are we after sustainability? We have to define what we want before we create an organization and structure.

Mr. Siddon recommended a statement of fundamental principles and a vision. He suggested ranking mandate points to determine what we should do first and look at longer range strategic items in parallel. He suggested that a committee from the group develop such a course of action and present it to the Water Board and ultimately to the regional districts.

Mr. Cook advised that Community Futures can help through their involvement with First Nations and funding through their relationship with Western Economic Diversification. He suggested preparing a business plan for a specific initiative and presenting it to the Community Futures Board.

Director Hein left the meeting at 1:35

Director Hobson observed that the parallel process would need some terms of how to proceed. We would have to remedy the lack of decision making capacity of the current Water Board in order to move forward. Getting people together who have disparate interests and who may lack any authority could

also be a problem. The parallel approach would be to form a council and have the Water Board continue with specific initiatives. The Board would need staff – some sort of secretariat – to carry out actions.

The process of structuring the Board and Council, developing terms of reference and principles of operation, was discussed.

Bruce Wilson referred to the idea of having a small committee from this group draft a working paper for Board consideration on April 12.

Toby Pike said that all efforts so far have assumed there is a crisis. We need to say what is required to better manage water before there is a crisis.

Valerie Cameron commented that there is definitely cohesiveness in the group here today, although the final form of a management structure has not been decided. She said that the Province is open to any option for regional management that the group can offer. They do not, however, wish to see a 'top down' governance, but rather local consensus which includes First Nations.

**Moved by Director Hackman and Director Novakowski:**

*"That Water Board establish an advisory committee consisting of Chair Slater, Vice Chair Hansma, Mr. Armour, Mr. Stamhuis, Director Hobson, First Nations to develop the concept and terms of reference for an executive board and an advisory council. The recommendations should include a comparison with the approach of the Okanagan Partnership proposal. Outside help deemed necessary is authorized with approval of the Chair."*

**CARRIED.**

Mr. Marshall concluded that this recommendation could become the basis for a proposal asking for Federal and Provincial funding.

**Revised Schedule of 2005 Meetings**

**Moved by Director Hansma and seconded by Director Novakowski**

*"That the revised schedule for 2005 meetings of the Okanagan Basin Water Board be adopted."*

**CARRIED.**

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

**Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen – Okanagan Partnership Resolution**

**Regional District of North Okanagan– Electoral Area Directors Committee**

**Hon. George Abbott - Support for Integrated Watershed Management in the Okanagan**

**Hon. Murray Coell – Support for Integrated Watershed Management in the Okanagan**

**Regional District of North Okanagan –Septage Treatment Facility Grant Eligibility**

**M. Werstuik, Councillor, Westbank First Nation – Concerns regarding Mandate of Okanagan Water Management Council**

**Hon. Stephane Dion – Commitment to Ongoing Participation of Environment Canada in Okanagan Regional Watershed Management**

**Alliance Professional Services – Water Utility Newsletter**

**Water Supply Association of BC – Comments on Okanagan Partnership Proposal**

**Okanagan Nation Alliance – Comments on Okanagan Partnership Proposal**

**Moved by Director Clark and seconded by Director Novakowski:**

*"That the correspondence be received."*

***CARRIED.***

**NEXT MEETING:**

The Board agreed that the next meeting be held April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The Okanagan Basin Water Board meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

  

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