

**OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD HELD ON AUGUST 9, 2005, AT THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NORTH OKANAGAN, 9848 ABERDEEN ROAD, VERNON, 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.
Director Rick Fairbairn	N.O.R.D.
Director Gordon Clark	O.S.R.D.
Alternate Director Jerry Oglow	N.O.R.D.
Vice Chair Will Hansma	N.O.R.D.
Director Eike Scheffler	O.S.R.D.

**STAFF:**

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

**MINUTES:**

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

***"That the minutes of a regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board held on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2005 be adopted as circulated."***

***CARRIED.***

**DELEGATION:**

**Mr. Reg Crane – Crane Environmental Services – Agricultural Water Watch**

Mr. Crane made a presentation on increasing agricultural water use efficiency. He informed the Board that in the Greater Vernon Services area there are 800 water users with farm status and they use 55% of the available water.

Mr. Crane outlined a social marketing strategy to help agriculturalists reduce their water consumption. This is a marketing scheme but rather than commercial or retail marketing, it is directed at changing behaviour, values, and beliefs.

Director Novakowski noted that there is a cost that goes along with marketing and asked where the funding would come from.

Mr. Crane responded that senior government funds are available but need to be searched out and applied for.

Chair Slater suggested that suppliers of high tech irrigation materials might contribute.

Mr. Crane indicated that the goal of the program was to reduce agricultural water consumption by 15% beginning with six demonstration sites and an inventory of existing system practices. He explained that the program must be community driven and that education will be needed to assuage concerns of agriculture that the saved water will merely be lost to them.

Director Hein said that while we talk about the importance of education, it takes time. He spoke about the current situation in Lake Country where there is a lack of reason for agriculture to cooperate due to additional cost for new technology and loss of current allocation. He also noted that the province issues water licenses and does not monitor the actual usage. He said that any water reduction program must be a partnership off all jurisdictions that have authority over water.

Mr. Crane agreed that policies do not match the needs of landowners. A large investment of money is required along with an understanding of what needs to be done.

Mr. Stamhuis ask if a 15% reduction in agricultural water use was met in Greater Vernon, would the farmers receive any compensation.

Director Clark commented that without First Nations as part of any water strategy, the 15% savings will be quickly negated.

The Board discussed the need to approach First Nations and have them represented and involved.

Director Hobson asked if there would be an equal focus on a 15% residential water use reduction. He said that there should be similar goals for the two sectors.

Mr. Crane explained that the trial sites were to be operated for 2 years and that Greater Vernon also has a residential water conservation program.

Director Hobson added that he felt that developers should pay for agricultural upgrades needed to save water. He noted that such measures as inter basin transfers simply steal from one basin and that the result might be that someone else steals from us. A holistic approach is needed because incentives do not work on their own and while education is valuable, it is too long to wait. He said that many areas that were never meant to be irrigated, both on First Nations land and otherwise, has been developed.

### **NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

#### **Proposal to Enhance the Effectiveness of the Okanagan Basin Water Board**

Councillor Pat Cochrane of the City of Vernon joined the meeting.

Mr. Armour briefed the Board on a draft response to the City of Vernon relating to their concerns about the Water Board proposal.

The Board discussed how the relationship and trust between the City and the Okanagan Basin Water Board could be improved.

Councillor Cochrane said that there was concern that another level of bureaucracy was being initiated by the Water Board and that through the grant initiatives, the rest of the valley would be playing catch up at Vernon's expense. He expressed that the huge number of water utilities in the valley need to be reduced through amalgamation, something that Greater Vernon has done. He noted that the current policy of the City of Vernon is to approve all growth and supply high quality water.

Alternate Director Oglow said that since Vernon is a major player in the North Okanagan, he would like to make sure they are represented on any inter-jurisdictional programs. He advised that there is strength in numbers and the valley collectively can pressure and lobby for policy changes such as the amalgamation of small utilities. He added that Vernon must face other water issues that could benefit from implementation in an expedient fashion.

Councillor Cochrane detailed some of the longer range costly initiative in the plans for Vernon such as separation of domestic and agricultural water.

Director Novakowski said that stronger leadership is needed from the Province but that this will not happen until we demonstrate change in valley governance.

Director Hobson stated that we must show we are united and working together in the valley for the Province to take on a leadership role. A fragmented approach will not be effective. Part of the senior leadership will involve direct funding for water projects but there will also be spin offs with support of water programs at UBC Okanagan. Vernon would benefit more from a provincial change of policy if they are participants in the local body driving the changes.

The Chair thanked Councillor Cochrane for his assistance.

### **2004 – 2005 Milfoil Derooting Summary**

Mr. Armour presented a summary of the milfoil infested areas rototilled in the past season (attached)

He informed the Board that the budgeted amount of \$254,000 had been spent and the three machines operated 1520 hours total. Costs per hour were \$150.

Mr. Armour noted that several areas in the valley seemed to experience a 'comeback' in weed growth this year. He said that staff will assess options for additional work including borrowing one of Columbia Shuswap Regional District's weed harvesters.

Director Hansma informed the Board that areas of the Shuswap River and Mabel Lake may require weed control. He wondered if the Water Board could do this work.

Chair Slater noted that this area is not within the Okanagan watershed but upon receipt of a request, the Board could consider contracting the work. This would be subject to equipment availability.

Mr. Armour offered to contact Columbia Shuswap Regional District to see if the work was something they might take on.

### **CORRESPONDENCE:**

#### **City of Vernon – Response to Proposal to Enhance OBWB**

The letter was dealt with in discussion above and a response approved.

#### **Eric Partridge – ADM Environmental Protection Division – CWRA Conference Proposals**

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

***"That correspondence from the Environmental Protection Division and the Canadian Water Resources Association be received."***

***CARRIED.***

#### **Water Highway BC – Preservation of Hydrometric Networks**

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

***"That the Okanagan Basin Water Board support the Water Highway BC initiative and make a Five Hundred dollar membership donation."***

***CARRIED.***

Director Hansma Opposed

**Oliver Brandes – Polis Project on Ecological Governance**

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

*"That the report 'At a Watershed' be received."*

***CARRIED.***

Director Hobson asked for a copy of the report or a website link.

**Alliance Professional Services - Newsletter**

Joanne DeVries of Alliance Professional Services asked if the Water Board would be interested in purchasing space in the next newsletter to publicize the proposed new role of the Board. The newsletter is now distributed to over 100,000 homes throughout the valley.

The cost is \$5000 for a full page and we would need to confirm by the August 10th or 11th to hold the space. The content of the article could be submitted in early September.

The next Alliance newsletter will be April or May 2006.

Director Hobson questioned whether we should be advertising something we have not yet embarked on.

The Board discussed purchasing a smaller space for a brief update on our programs.

**Moved by Director Hobson and seconded by Director Hansma:**

*"That the Water Board purchase one quarter of a page (maximum cost \$1500) in the next Alliance Professional Services newsletter."*

***CARRIED.***

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The Okanagan Basin Water Board meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

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