

OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD HELD ON APRIL 03, 2007 AT THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NORTH OKANAGAN, VERNON, BC.

PRESENT: Chair John Slater Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Len Novakowski Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Robert Hobson Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Graham Reid Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Lorraine Bennest Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Rick Fairbairn Regional District North Okanagan
Director Ron Perrie Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Tom Siddon Okanagan Water Stewardship Council
Director Toby Pike Water Supply Association of B.C.
~~Director Tim Manuel Okanagan Nation Alliance (absent)~~
Director Glen Taylor Regional District North Okanagan
Director Buffy Baumbrough Regional District North Okanagan

STAFF: Greg Armour Program Manager, OBWB
Dr. Anna Warwick Sears Water Stewardship Director, OBWB
Michael Stamhuis Regional District North Okanagan
Genevieve Doyle Water Stewardship Coordinator, OBWB

OTHERS

PRESENT: Lorna Bissell – Alternate Director, NORD

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Slater called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Armour advised that Correspondence item 9.6 should be followed by Regional District of North Okanagan Service Review as 9.7 and all other correspondence should be move to the next number.

Moved by Director Reid

Seconded by Director Bennest

"That the Agenda for a regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board for April 03, 2007 be approved as amended."

CARRIED.

3. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

Moved by Director Fairbairn

Seconded by Director Novakowski

"That a letter from the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen on Funding for the Water Supply and Demand Study be added as 9.11"

"That Reports on the Water Supply and Demand Study and Hiring of a Technical Writer/Administrative staff person be added as Staff Reports."

"That Item 10.3 being Okanagan Basin Water Board policy for Distribution of In-Camera Minutes be added to the Agenda as a Late Item."

"That a letter from the City of Vernon requesting a Service Review of the Okanagan Basin Water Board be added to the NORD letter notifying the Water Board of the review."

CARRIED.

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board held March 06, 2007

Moved by Director Reid

Seconded by Director Fairbairn

"That the minutes of a regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board held on April 06, 2007 at the Regional District of Central Okanagan be adopted as circulated."

CARRIED.

5. DELEGATIONS

- 5.1 Fern Schultz (Director of Science and Information Branch) and Tony Cheong, (Manager of Information and Forecasting) Water Stewardship Division, Ministry of Environment
The Hydrometric Network and the Okanagan: Working to the Future**

Ms. Schultz and Mr. Cheong made a PowerPoint presentation on increased importance being given by the Ministry of Environment's (MOE) Water Stewardship Division to stream flow and hydrometric information and the need for greater local stakeholder input.

The hydrometric network is currently managed by the MOE and Environment Canada but

funding and staff cutbacks have reduced the number of monitoring stations in the Okanagan to 22 and the total number of stations in BC from 600 to the current level of 450.

Dr. Sears noted that this seemed to be a low percentage of the total 450 stations in BC, considering the importance of the Okanagan region.

Ms. Schultz said that many stations were dependent on money from partners such as forestry, mining and other industry.

Director Pike inquired about the funding formula used to determine a partner's share of the cost of a monitoring station.

Mr. Cheong replied that there is no official formula and that the percent funding from each contributor depends on the purpose of data gathered, the potential usefulness to other groups, the location of the station (remote or not) and other factors. Each station is assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Ms. Schultz said that additional information can be inferred for unmonitored streams through the application of hydrology models. This means that an increase in the number of stations is not always necessary, but that a well thought out network of stations is important.

Director Fairbairn asked about reports generated from information gathered to date and Director Reid asked about identifying the exact locations of stations in the valley.

Mr. Cheong replied that information is available through websites and he will provide the addresses of those websites to the board. Mr. Cheong said the Water Supply and Demand Study will contribute to local information in addition to determining the need for other monitoring stations that are not currently integrated in the network.

Ms. Schultz said that while the provincial and federal governments have historically driven the hydrometric network the Ministry of Environment is looking toward more stakeholder involvement to ensure the stability of the network. She said that the Ministry is looking to pilot a more regional approach in the Okanagan.

Director Bennest stressed the importance of reliable hydrometric network to provide confidence in the data where decisions must be made about water supply or fish flow.

Ms. Schultz said that the Ministry is looking to the OBWB and the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council for advice and guidance on the best way to make this pilot effort for regional network management work locally. The Province isn't looking for ways to devolve responsibility but to establish stable funding by partnering more broadly.

Dr. Sears mentioned that the Water Supply and Demand Study is key to identifying what the needs for the Okanagan are and that because the models developed through the study will be 'living' models with continually updated information, the Okanagan will need to have a solid hydrometric network.

Director Siddon said that he has been involved with Water Highway BC and that organization feels the Ministry should assume responsibility for the Hydrometric Network in BC.

Director Pike stated that as a water purveyor he does not have confidence in the accuracy of hydrometric data. He asked if the hydrometric network will affect water licensing.

Ms. Schultz responded that she didn't know how new information would affect licensing.

Director Reid expressed interest in maintaining an open dialogue but noted that local governments are concerned about downloading of costs from the provincial agencies.

Ms. Schultz said that the Ministry is hoping to host a workshop in June with participants from the Water Board, Environment Canada and Water Highway BC.

Director Siddon asked Mr. Cheong and Ms. Schultz if they would consider bringing a proposal or a white paper with them to the workshop, so there is a starting point for discussion.

The Water Board expressed interest in the workshop suggested by Mr. Cheong and Ms. Schultz.

Action: Send letter to the Ministry of Environment, indicating our participation in a workshop to be held in June 2007.

6. APPOINTMENT OF SIGNING AUTHORITIES

6.1 Appointment of Okanagan Basin Water Board Signing Authorities 2007

Mr. Armour advised that the signing authority resolution appointing Directors Fairbairn, Taylor and Baumbrough as signing authorities for OBWB cheques had been re-drafted.

Moved by **Director Novakowski**

Seconded by **Director Reid**

"That the Signing Authority Resolution be approved as presented."

CARRIED.

7. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

7.1 Draft Letter to Regional Board Chairs on Noxious Species Control

As requested at the March 6, 2007 meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board, staff presented a draft letter to the Regional Board Chairs regarding regional noxious species control.

Director Hobson mentioned that CORD has agreed to fund \$25,000 for a regional function of

noxious species control, subject to NORD and RDOS committing the same amount of funds.

Director Bennest suggested that the regional districts should look at how staff could be incorporated to work on a valley wide scale together instead of creating a new entity to deal with noxious species.

Chair Slater said that there is not an appetite for another regional board, and that the province is reluctant to fund individual local issues, they want to see regional cooperation.

Director Hobson clarified that CORD is not proposing a new body; they are just raising the issue of noxious species control.

Director Reid does not want to send the letter as it currently reads as it suggests creating a new entity, but he does support the idea of regional cooperation on this issue.

Director Perrie said that RDOS includes lots of area in the Similkameen Valley too where they have separate programs. He also noted that there was no support for a starling control program in the RDOS and that the Similkameen didn't participate in it.

Director Hobson said that other participants are willing to come forward and if there is moderate investment from the regional districts then could have an effective noxious species control program.

Director Reid warned against creating compulsory taxation as it can cause political dissent if certain areas feel that it isn't a priority and their needs are not being met.

Dr. Sears mentioned that in her experience with a noxious species control program (in California) it was set up so that certain areas could opt out of the program but there were enough participants to create economies of scale.

Director Hobson agrees that the regional chairs when they meet will be informed that the Water Board has discussed the issue and encourages cooperation and discussion to determine options in order to effectively proceed.

Moved by **Director Fairbairn**

Seconded by **Director Reid**

“That the Okanagan Basin Water Board encourages the Chairs of the three Regional Districts to work together to discuss options for noxious species control”

CARRIED

8. STAFF REPORTS

8.1 Minutes of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council Meeting held on March 8, 2007 – First Nations Panel Session and Dr. Hans Schrier Presentation on Virtual Water Concept

Dr. Sears informed the Board that the OWSC First Nations panel discussion was an interesting and productive session.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip commented that treaty negotiations have evolved from reparation issues to a stewardship focus.

Chief Fabian Alexis has agreed to forward a letter to the province expressing First Nation concerns on the sale of leased lots on reservoir lakes.

Moved by **Director Pike**

Seconded by **Director Perrie**

“That the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council held on March 8, 2007 be received subject to OWSC adoption.”

CARRIED.

The Meeting broke for Lunch at 12:05 p.m. and reconvened at 12:30

8.2 Summary of WSC Session on Source Water Protection

Director Hobson left the meeting at 12:35 and re-entered at 12:40.

Director Pike commented that on average in the province, the percentage of community watersheds surrounded by multiple use Crown Land is 7% to 8 %, while in the Okanagan it is almost 100%. We have little control over activities in our watersheds.

Director Siddon said that the concept of land reserves is important to protect watersheds.

Dr. Sears advised that this is noted on Page 9 of the summary.

Mr. Stamhuis added that the problem of the involvement of so many Provincial ministries in water leads to conflicting actions such as the sale of reservoir lots.

Director Reid said that outside expertise from areas that have successfully implemented source water protection might be valuable in leading to legislative change.

Director Hobson advised that the District of lake Country proposed boundary expansion would take in the entire watershed. He noted that there has to be commitment to a political direction and that local governments have not always made the best land use decisions with respect to source water protection. He added that the Auditor General’s report recommended a balanced approach using both watershed protection and treatment.

Moved by **Director Pike**

Seconded by **Director Perrie**

“That the summary of WSC Session on Source Water be received for posting and

distribution subject to adoption by the Water Stewardship Council.”

CARRIED

8.3 Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grants

Ms. Doyle gave a report on the Grant proposals and informed the Board that staff will be evaluating them and making a recommendation to the Board at the May meeting.

8.4 Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce – Stream Flow Monitoring

Dr. Sears reported that the Vernon Chamber of Commerce requested any Okanagan Basin Water Board water-related policies for submission to BC Chamber for incorporation into their policy and positions manual. Dr. Sears and Dawn Lasby of the Vernon Chamber jointly developed a policy statement around the need for stream flow hydrometric monitoring. This will go to the BC Chamber of Commerce AGM in May, 2007.

The stream flow hydrometric monitoring statement was received by the Board.

8.5 Presentation to Columbia Shuswap Regional District

Mr. Armour reported that he, Chair Slater and Dr. Sears attended a CSRD meeting in response to a request for a presentation on the history, governance and current initiatives of the OBWB.

9 CORRESPONDENCE

9.1 Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum – Funding Request

Moved by **Director Hobson**

Seconded by **Director Fairbairn**

“That the Okanagan Basin Water Board provides \$5000 for sponsorship of the International Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum Conference being held Sept. 17/18, 2007.”

CARRIED.

9.2 Dr. Paul Hasselback, Interior Health Authority – Drinking Water Turbidity Notification

The Senior Medical Health Officer IHA response to the OBWB letter of Feb 9th (to Murray Ramsden CEO of IHA) supporting the WSA proposal to modify the Turbidity Notification Program was reviewed by the Board.

Director Reid advised that the District of Peachland is working with the Water Supply

Association on a resolution to OMMA supporting the WSA proposal for revisions to the turbidity notification process.

Director Hobson noted that there was some concern at the City of Kelowna that the Okanagan Basin Water Board was endorsing the lowering of water quality standards.

9.3 Michael Stamhuis, RDNO – Comments on Dr. Hasselback’s Letter

Received by the Board

9.4 Copy of OBWB Letter to Hon. George Abbott, Minister of Health

The Board reviewed a copy of the OBWB letter to the Minister of Health requesting independent mediation for IHA / WSA discussions, a review of the adequacy of design of the previous turbidity notification survey. The letter expressed support for an Independent Advisory team to review policies now in place and recommend the most effective approach to turbidity notification.

9.5 Town of Oliver – Letter of Support for Turbidity Notification Review

The letter was received by the Board.

9.6 Black Mountain Irrigation District – Mission Creek Water Storage Initiative Regional District of North Okanagan

A BMID proposal to be submitted to MOE for consideration for funding was received.

BMID is proposing to exchange water license with the Province for a higher quality drinking water source (Loch Long instead of Belgo Reservoir) and also increasing storage in two other reservoirs.

Director Hobson noted that BMID is not a municipal government entity and is not eligible for infrastructure funding. Municipalities would likely not support such a request because it would be in direct competition with their own infrastructure projects.

Moved by **Director Hobson**

Seconded by **Director Perrie**

“That the Okanagan Basin Water Board support the Black Mountain Irrigation District proposal in principle, recognizing that accessing infrastructure grant funds would require that BMID become a part of municipal government.”

CARRIED.

9.7 Notice of Service Review Requested by City of Vernon

Director Baumbrough advised the Board that the City of Vernon had initiated a review of many of the services provided by NORD to the City. The Okanagan Basin Water Board is included in those services to be reviewed.

9.8 Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen - Impact of Mountain Pine Beetle on Okanagan Lake – Request for Funding

A funding request for \$200,000 to conduct an assessment of the potential for Mountain Pine Beetle to affect turbidity entering Okanagan Lake and tributary sub-watersheds was received.

Director Hobson referred to a study conducted in the Central Okanagan by Dobson Engineering Ltd. as a possible pilot for a larger regional study. He also noted the Federal commitment of \$250 million in assistance for impacts of mountain pine beetle and suggested that we should be looking at this funding source first.

Director Reid said that the Board should not formally respond at this time but should consult with RDOS to exchange information on this regional issue.

9.9 Regional District of North Okanagan – Approval of Water Supply and Demand Matching Funds

9.10 Regional District of Central Okanagan – Approval of Water Supply and Demand Matching Funds

9.11 Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen – Approval of Water Supply and Demand Matching Funds

The Board received Items 9.9 to 9.11 for information.

10 SEWAGE GRANT APPLICATIONS

Sewage Grant Terms of Reference

The Board received the amended sewage grant terms of reference for information.

Hydrometric Monitoring

The Board discussed the presentation on hydrometric monitoring made by Ms. Schultz and Mr. Cheong.

Moved by **Director Reid**

Seconded by **Director Siddon**

“That the Okanagan Basin Water Board agree to the participation of the Chairs and Vice

Chairs of the Okanagan Basin Water Board and Water Stewardship Council in a workshop to look at a shared stewardship approach to hydrometric monitoring and that a discussion paper outlining the Federal Provincial proposal be received prior to the workshop.”

CARRIED.

11 REMOVAL OF ITEM FROM IN-CAMERA

The Okanagan Basin Water Board adjourned to In-Camera session at 2:05 p.m.

Moved by **Director Hobson**

Seconded by **Director Novakowski**

“That the Okanagan Basin Water Board removes from In-Camera minutes of the November 7th, 2006 meeting, the following resolution:

Moved by Director Reid

Seconded by Director Hobson

“That the OBWB authorizes increasing Mr. Armour’s salary in the 2007 – 2008 Provisional Budget by \$1,000.”

CARRIED.

The In-Camera meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

12 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board is scheduled for May 01, 2007 at the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen.

13 ADJOURNMENT

The regular meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

Certified Correct:

Chair

Program Manager