



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD FEBRUARY 2, 2010, AT THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN,
101 MARTIN STREET, PENTICTON, BRITISH COLUMBIA**

PRESENT

Vice-Chair Rick Fairbairn	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Buffy Baumbrough	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Gyula Kiss	Regional District North Okanagan
Director James Baker	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Doug Findlater	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Graeme James	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Michael Brydon	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Gordon Clark	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Alt. director Mark Pendergraft	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Bernie Bauer	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council
Director Toby Pike	Water Supply Association of BC

REGRETS

Chair Stu Wells	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director George Saddleman	Okanagan Nation Alliance

OBWB STAFF

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
Genevieve Dunbar	Office and Grants Administrator
Corinne Jackson	Communications and Research Coordinator

GUESTS:

Gwen Steele	Okanagan Xeriscape Association
Lisa Masini	Okanagan Xeriscape Association
Tom Chapman	RDOS Director, Electoral Area E (Naramata)

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Vice-chair Fairbairn called the meeting to order at 10:02 am.

2. APPOINTMENTS TO THE OBWB

2.1 Board Appointments and Elections for 2010

Regional District of North Okanagan

Director Rick Fairbairn
Director Buffy Baumbrough
Director Gyula Kiss
Alternates – Doug Dirk, Mike Macnabb, Shawn Lee

Regional District of Central Okanagan

Director James Baker
Director Doug Findlater
Director Graeme James
Alternates – Jim Edgson, Keith Fielding, Charlie Hodge

Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen

Director Stu Wells

Director Gordon Clark

Director Michael Brydon

Alternates – Mark Pendergraft, Dan Ashton, Bill Schwarz

Okanagan Nation Alliance

Director George Saddleman

Alternate – Steve Bryson

Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

Director Bernie Bauer

Alternate – Ted Van der Gulik

Water Supply Association of BC

Director Toby Pike

Alternate – Bob Hrasko

3. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Dir. Baker nominated Dir. Wells as Chair in abstentia, seconded by Dir. Pike.

Dr. Warwick Sears reported that Director Wells had agreed in advance to let his name stand.

There being no other nominations, Dir. Wells was declared Chair by acclamation.

Dir. Baker nominated Dir. Fairbairn for Vice-Chair, seconded by Dir. Clark.

There being no other nominations, Dir. Fairbairn was declared Vice-Chair by acclamation.

Dr. Warwick Sears turned the meeting over to Vice-Chair Fairbairn.

Dir. Bauer entered the room at 10:07 a.m.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Director Kiss

Seconded by Director Baker

“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of February 2, 2010 be approved as amended.”

CARRIED

5. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

Item 9.2 – Update on ministerial meeting regarding trails policy in District of Westside and area

Item 9.3 – Update on Antwerp Springs

Item 10.2 – Water Standards Policy

6. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

6.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Jan. 5, 2010 at the Regional District of North Okanagan.

Amendments: Correction of spelling error

Moved by Director Clark

Seconded by Director Baumbrough

“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Jan. 5, 2010, held at the Regional District of North Okanagan be adopted as amended.”

CARRIED

7. DELEGATIONS

7.1 Gwen Steele and Lisa Masini, Okanagan Xeriscape Association: Xeriscape Outreach and Communication in the Okanagan

The Okanagan Xeriscape Association (OXA) began in December 2008. Its purpose: to foster a culture where xeriscaped landscapes are the desired and accepted norm in the Okanagan. A grant from the OBWB Water Quality and Conservation Improvement Program in 2009 provided much support as they got started.

Ms. Masini and Ms. Steele spoke to the accomplishments of the organization in the past year which included providing education and training workshops, and working closely with nurseries to make this possible. As well, the group launched its website, complete with a plant database to help people plan a xeriscaped garden according to their preferences for various plant heights, colours, blooming months, and other criteria. The website also has a photo gallery, showcasing people’s xeriscaped gardens and showing what’s possible.

OXA is also working on a public demonstration xeriscape project in front of Kelowna’s H2O Adventure and Fitness Centre that will show various types of xeriscaping, including a native plant garden, ornamental grass garden, a butterfly garden and a Mediterranean garden. The project is meant to give people ideas to take home and implement themselves.

In its second year, the association is considering an Institutional Leadership Project, asking various institutions (e.g. UBC-O, City of Kelowna, Interior Health) to take a leadership role and change to xeriscape landscaping. The group is also developing a program to work with nurseries and encourage homeowners to change over to xeriscaped yards.

In responding to Dir. Pike’s question about the type of maintenance required for a xeriscape garden, Ms. Steele said it depends on the type of landscaping material. For example, mulch requires little maintenance. In the case of H2O’s gardens, a community group will be responsible for upkeep and it will be irrigated.

Dir. Kiss wondered if not watering would be incentive enough for residents to choose xeriscaping. Ms. Steele noted if people stopped watering that would be great, but it may not look nice. If you plant for the climate though, she added, it will look nice.

Dr. Warwick Sears added, in response to Director Pike, that xeriscaping can be easier than mowing lawn. She asked if there was a listing of nurseries on the OXA website. Ms. Steele answered that the group is only focusing on xeriscape nurseries and will add more as it finds them.

Dir. Bauer suggested the association look at golf courses for its Institutional Leadership Project. Ms. Steele noted that golf courses are often hidden away and that the group is currently looking at UBC Okanagan, Okanagan College, Interior Health, City of Kelowna, and its parks department, since they are all very visible and can lead by example. Approaching golf courses, added Ms. Masini, may also invite controversy since they provide a strong economic benefit to the region. Perhaps OXA will look at them down the road, added Masini, and encourage them to plant native grasses, for example.

Dir. Findlater suggested the group consider offering to xeriscape the new West Kelowna police station since it will be a LEED gold building and this would fit their goal to be environmentally friendly. He also noted there needs to be a shift in thinking by Communities in Bloom organizers, focusing on xeriscaping. They’ve already caught the imagination of the public, they

just need to fine tune their focus now. Ms. Steele agreed with both points.

Dir. Brydon wondered if the Okanagan Water Supply and Demand model should compare loss of water from xeriscaping versus cedars and lawns. Dr. Warwick Sears answered there is funding to look at additional scenarios and staff will be asking the board for recommendations on what should be studied and this could be one.

8. STAFF REPORTS

8.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Warwick Sears reported that, following up on a request from the board at the last meeting, staff surveyed member municipalities and regional districts about the distribution of the monthly Board Report. Based on those findings, staff will be sending out follow-up letters with the February Board Report to the local governments, thanking them for ensuring councillors and regional district directors are receiving the information.

The Okanagan Water Supply and Demand (OWS&D) Working Group recently discovered a correction was needed to more accurately predict future Okanagan precipitation patterns. Several scenarios need to be re-run and the group is still hoping to be able to launch phase 2 of the project as part of World Water Week in March.

Natural Resources Canada announced Phase 3 funding for the OWS&D Project on Jan. 25. There was a great turnout and a great festive mood since it coincided with the Olympic torch relay coming through the community. Local MPs, MLAs and dignitaries were all on hand.

Plans for World Water Week, March 22 to 26, are well underway, with the OBWB partnering with UBC Okanagan. The Minister of Environment is looking at having a full day water workshop in Kelowna as part of the activities.

Dr. Warwick Sears then invited Mr. Jatel to speak regarding the OBWB Okanagan Water Leadership Award given as part of World Water Week.

Mr. Jatel noted that the award was given last year as a way to raise awareness for the OBWB, but it was also an opportunity to recognize someone for their work in addressing Okanagan water issues. Last year it went to Tom Siddon.

Questions followed around the need for a list of criteria for potential nominees and who sits on the committee. It was suggested that there be input from people outside the OBWB. Jatel responded that there is a list of criteria and the committee last year was made up of a number of people from UBC-O and members of the OBWB's Okanagan Water Stewardship Council.

Moved by Director Baker

Seconded by Director Clark

"THAT Okanagan Basin Water Board staff form a committee to determine a nominee for this year's Okanagan Water Leadership Award."

CARRIED

Dr. Warwick Sears reported that the OBWB and Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program finalized agreements with Environment Canada, clearing the way for \$40,000 in funding to complete the Sustainable Planning for the Okanagan Environment (SPOKE) Project.

There have been some discussions with the BC Water and Waste Association about holding a Kelowna Storm Water Workshop in October or November 2010. An organizing committee is being formed.

Moved by Director Baker

Seconded by Director Pendergraft

“THAT the Executive Director Report from Dr. Warwick Sears, dated January 27, 2010, be received.”

CARRIED

8.2 Water Stewardship Director Report

Mr. Jatel reported on the last Okanagan Water Stewardship Council meeting, making special note of the presentation by John Thompson, Policy Analyst with the Alberta Water Research Institute, about the successes and pitfalls of modernizing Alberta's Water Act.

The OWSC has some new representatives: Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo for the Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program, and Douglas MacLeod and Dianne Crisp from Okanagan College.

Moved by Director Baumbrough

Seconded by Director Bauer

“THAT the minutes of the meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council of Jan. 14, 2010, held at the Kelowna and District Fish and Game Club be received.”

CARRIED

Dir. Kiss said that, in reviewing the Stewardship Council minutes, he was surprised to hear that Alberta allows water licences to be separated from agricultural land and sold. He added that it's important we be aware of this as we proceed with Water Act Modernization (WAM) in B.C. Dir. Clark agreed.

Dir. Bauer noted that at the last board meeting the OWSC was asked to strike a sub-committee to develop recommendations for the board to put forward as part of the B.C. WAM process. This is the type of conversation (e.g. about the sale of water licences) that is taking place within the subcommittee, he added, noting Thompson's report is purely for information purposes and not necessarily to guide their recommendations. Bauer said the subcommittee hopes to deliver recommendations to the board before its March meeting.

Dir. Baker stated that he would like to see water for agriculture addressed in the WAM recommendations. Dir. Bauer assured the board that this will be covered.

Dr. Warwick Sears noted that the province should be contacted about the duration of the public comment period. The board will have time to consider the recommendations before having to provide them to the province.

Mr. Jatel reported that the Streamlined Water Use Reporting Tool (SWURT) project is underway. The bid process is closed and the selection committee expects to award a contract in early February. As for the Okanagan Endocrine Disruptor Research Project, Dr. Jeff Curtis and master's student Tricia Brett are set to provide an update to the board at its March meeting.

Mr. Jatel spoke about the need for drought planning workshops to prepare for potential water shortages this year and the interest at the OWSC table. Those interested in participating and providing water supply information include BC Ministry of Environment, Environment Canada, Agri-Food Canada, the Okanagan Basin Technical Working Group, and the International Joint Commission. The meetings would be held virtually as web-based seminars at-least monthly between February and April.

Moved by Director Baumbrough

Seconded by Director Kiss

“THAT Okanagan Basin Water Board staff organize regular webinars on water supply to address potential drought in 2010.”

CARRIED

Moved by Director Baker

Seconded by Director Baumbrough

“THAT the Water Stewardship Director Report from Mr. Jatel, dated January 26, 2010, be received.”

CARRIED

8.3 Office and Grants Administrator Report

Ms. Dunbar reported that there were not a lot of Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant (WCQI) applications submitted yet, but that they typically come in closer to the deadline. There have, however, been a number of inquiries from interested applicants.

Board members will likely see a number of groups coming to their local government soon, requesting support for their application, as a requirement of the WCQI process, she added. Ms. Dunbar reminded directors that endorsement from a local government does not ensure funding and that a ranking system will be used.

Dir. Fairbairn asked if an applicant could have their application from last year reconsidered. Ms. Dunbar noted that applicants must submit a new application each year. She also explained applicants are encouraged to divide their project into components and sometimes the OBWB will award funding to complete a certain component. And, if the OBWB can only fund a portion of a project, staff will talk to the applicant to determine if other funding is available to ensure the project will be feasible.

Moved by Director Baker

Seconded by Director Pike

“THAT the Office and Grants Administrator Report from Ms. Dunbar, dated January 26, 2010, be received.”

CARRIED

8.4 Communications and Research Coordinator Report

Ms. Jackson noted that staff organized and held a news conference Jan. 25 to announce federal and provincial funding for Phase 3 of the Okanagan Water Supply and Demand Study. Funding for the OBWB project was one of 18 BC projects announced to receive a total of \$6.9 million. The news conference was well-attended with representation from the Kelowna Capital News, Kelowna Daily Courier, AM1150 and Canadian University Press.

The OBWB website has also been updated to include a link to the province’s Living Water Smart blog, reminding website visitors to add their voice and make it as easy as possible to do so.

Finally, Ms. Jackson reported on a meeting between OBWB staff and Think Marketing to report on input from a focus group on the draft WaterWise website design, discuss timelines and content for the website.

Moved by Director Baumbrough

Seconded by Director Kiss

“THAT the Communications and Research Coordinator Report from Ms. Jackson, dated January 26, 2010, be received.”

CARRIED

9. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

9.1 Sewage Facilities Grant Update

9.1.1 RDOS Sewage Grant Application for Northwest Osoyoos Sewer Project

Dr. Warwick Sears reported that on Feb. 25, 2008 the OBWB passed a motion stating that when RDOS had a one-hectare policy in place it would review its application for a sewer extension in rural Osoyoos. With everything now in order, staff is recommending approval of a nearly \$81,000/year grant, making payments to cover a portion of a 20-year Municipal Finance Authority note.

Moved by Director Clark

Seconded by Director Baker

“THAT the OBWB approves a sewage facilities grant award to the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen for the Northwest Osoyoos Sewer Project for eligible debt repayment costs.”

CARRIED

Directors Pike and Bauer abstained.

9.2 Update on ministerial meeting regarding trails policy

Dir. Findlater reported on a meeting that was held with Westside-Kelowna MLA Ben Stewart, Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts (MOTCA) Kevin Krueger, Toby Pike and others to discuss the use of ATVs and other off-road vehicles on the Westside. All parties have accepted that the trails already exist, but that trail construction work has been done without proper consultation and is having a detrimental effect on the area. The ministry has agreed to scrap the existing Bear Creek trails committee, recognizing it's broken, and create a new Terms of Reference and committee. The ministry also agreed to a moratorium on more trail building until a new committee has been created. Dir. Findlater noted that it probably helped that Public Health Officer Paul Hassleback wrote a letter outlining his concerns about the off-road vehicle use in this sensitive watershed.

Dir. Pike added that MOTCA Assistant Deputy Minister Peter Walters seemed very responsive and willing to make things work. When the draft trail strategy was developed in 2008, he added, there was no talk about source water protection. The BC Water Supply Association asked, unsuccessfully, to intervene in the process. Thankfully, a new interagency process will allow proper input.

Dir. Findlater added that the ministry is considering campgrounds in the area so it's important that we manage the area and this issue properly instead of looking to stop the activity.

Dir. Pike noted that the ministry is considering an annual fee to help with trail maintenance, and Walters seems aware of the local government cost of water treatment. He added that licencing will also ensure problem riders can be identified.

9.3 Update on Antwerp Springs

Dir. Kiss reported on the contamination of Antwerp Springs, noting how the area went from a boil water advisory to a no drinking order within 15 minutes. As of Feb. 2, a boil water advisory remains in effect in Lavington. Greater Vernon Water and other agencies are keeping residents

informed regarding what they need to do on their property and what government is doing to address the water distribution system. The province and local water suppliers are continuing to investigate how the water supply became contaminated. Emergency Social Services is providing water and disposable utensils, and the area skating rink is open for showers. It has been a real eye opener as to what can happen when we don't protect our water supply, Kiss added.

10. CORRESPONDENCE

10.1 MLA John Slater response to OBWB letter to BC Ministry of Environment re: Drought Proofing the Okanagan Recommendations

Moved by Director Baker

Seconded by Director Clark

“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board receive the correspondence from MLA John Slater in response to the OBWB letter to BC Ministry of Environment regarding Drought Proofing the Okanagan Recommendations.”

CARRIED

10.2 Water Standards Policy

Dir. Brydon opened discussion around the Interior Health Authority's water standards policy and RDOS's written request for OBWB leadership on the issue, noting that the OBWB has the water expertise and the issues are common throughout the valley. IHA's Sr. Medical Health Officer Dr. Andrew Larder told RDOS that its policy is "outcome-based," and that local governments must meet certain drinking water quality standards. Yet, others at IH have said that local governments are required to provide filtration – a very expensive process. As such, it is unclear that if a local government is meeting IH water quality standards, does it necessarily also have to provide filtration, Brydon explained, adding RDOS has been trying to sort this out for seven years.

Discussion ensued around the need for filtration when one can still meet high water quality standards without it, but through other less expensive means.

Dir Bauer noted it's not clear from the RDOS letter that it wants OBWB involved. It says there should be consistency in the valley and IH should consider each local government's ability to pay, he added, suggesting the OBWB should not get involved.

Dr. Warwick Sears suggested that staff could send a letter to IHA noting its support for water quality targets but asking for clarification on behalf of its member municipalities/regional districts. The OBWB has done this before, she added. Dir. Pike agreed, noting filtration is a side issue and water quality is the key.

Dir. Clark suggested that the mayors and regional district chairs go to Victoria and have a meeting with John Slater, Parliamentary Secretary for Water Allocation, and state the need to resolve this.

Dir. James stated that he felt it best for the OBWB to simply ask for clarification – but not a solution. Dir. Brydon agreed with the OBWB sending a letter for clarification.

Moved by Director Baumbrough

Seconded by Director Pike

“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board draft a letter to the Interior Health Authority stating that the OBWB agrees with the need for a high quality standard of drinking water, but requires clarification around IHA's 4-3-2-1-0 Policy and whether filtration is

also required. And, that staff bring the letter back to the board for review at its March meeting.”

CARRIED

Directors Clark and Bauer opposed.

11. NEXT MEETING

11.1 The next regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be held on March 2, 2010, at the Benvoulin Heritage Church - Reid Hall.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Director Clark

“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of February 2, 2010 be adjourned at 2:00 p.m.”

CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director