

OKANAGAN WATER STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

A Technical Advisory Body to the Okanagan Basin Water Board

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD THURSDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2010, AT COAST CAPRI HOTEL, 1171 HARVEY AVE., KELOWNA, B.C.

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Present

UBC Okanagan	Bernie Bauer, Chair
Ministry of Agriculture and Lands	Ted van der Gulik, Vice Chair
Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch	Denise Neilsen
BC Agriculture Council	Hans Buchler
BC Fruit Growers Association	Lorraine Bennest
BC Ground Water Association	Remi Allard
City of Kelowna	Mark Watt
City of Vernon	Rob Dickinson
Environment Canada – Pacific & Yukon Region	Dan Millar
Kelowna and District Fish and Game Club	Doug Flintoft
Interior Health Authority	Rob Birtles
Ministry of Environment, Resource Stewardship & Parks	Ken Cunningham
Oceola Fish and Game Club	Lorne Davies
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program	Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo
Regional District of Central Okanagan	Margaret Bakelaar

Regrets

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch	Doug Edwards
BC Cattlemen's Association	Lee Hesketh
Canadian Water Resources Association	Brian Guy
Ministry of Environment, Fish and Wildlife Science	Steve Matthews
Okanagan College	Douglas MacLeod
Osoyoos Lake Water Quality Society	Mark McKenney
Regional District North Okanagan	Laura Frank
Shuswap Okanagan Forestry Association	Kerry Rouck
Urban Development Institute	Robert Evans
Water Supply Association of BC	Bob Hrasko

STAFF:

OBWB, Executive Director	Anna Warwick Sears
OBWB, Water Stewardship Director	Nelson Jatel
OBWB, Communications and Research Coordinator	Corinne Jackson
OBWB, Interim Office and Grants Administrator	Melissa Tesche

GUESTS:

Assoc. of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of B.C.	Don Dobson
Insight Environmental Consulting	Kellie Garcia
Ministry of Environment, OWSC Source Protection Cttee.	Solvej Patschke

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mr. Jatel called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. and welcomed members and guests.

2. ELECTIONS: CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Dr. Bauer was re-nominated as chair.

No further nominations were presented at second and third call for nominations; nominations for chair were closed.

There being no further nominations, Dr. Bauer was declared chair by acclamation.

Mr. Van der Gulik was re-nominated as chair.

No further nominations were presented at second and third call for nominations; nominations for vice chair were closed.

There being no other nominations, Mr. Van der Gulik was declared vice-chair by acclamation.

Mr. Jatel turned the meeting over to Chair Bauer.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Dan Millar

Seconded by Lorraine Bennest

"That the agenda for the Oct. 14, 2010 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved."

CARRIED

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of a regular meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council held Sept. 9, 2010, at Kelowna and District Fish and Game Club clubhouse, Kelowna

Amendments: A few minor amendments to the minutes were suggested and incorporated.

Moved by Hans Buchler

Seconded by Lorraine Bennest

"That the minutes from the June 10, 2010 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved as amended."

CARRIED

5. BOARD REPORT

Dr. Warwick Sears reported on the Oct. 5, 2010 Okanagan Basin Water Board meeting, noting a presentation from Urban Systems who did a baseline water pricing survey of 20 water utilities in the valley.

The board also received a report on Phase 2 of the Okanagan Water Supply and Demand Study and its uses, she said. Jillian Tamblyn will be doing a follow-up report on how local governments can use the study.

The board approved a staff recommendation to work with the B.C. government and encourage the reallocation of water rents from consolidated revenue to water stewardship.

There was an update from Dir. James Baker regarding the reservoir lots issue. The province has decided that recreational lease lots will not be sold, Dr. Warwick Sears said. Dr. Bauer added that this is a great success story for the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council and the Water Board who

worked so hard on this.

Ms. Bennest suggested that this issue has been divisive and work needs to be done to address the concerns of those who have leases around reservoirs. Dr. Bauer agreed and offered to take this to the board.

Ms. Bakelaar noted that the Regional District of Central Okanagan has put zoning on these areas to protect them, and source water protection plans are also in place. Livestock are prohibited, residential lots are regulated and riparian areas are recognized, she said.

Ms. Bennest added that she would like to see similar restrictions elsewhere and these lots phased out with the titles reverting to Crown. These lots do not benefit the local tax base and are a direct financial burden, Ms. Bennest said, adding that work needs to be done to help landowners leave these lots.

6. DISCUSSION: 2010/11 WORK PLAN

Mr. Flintoft noted a news release from the Forest Practices Board, stating they are auditing how well forest and range practices are protecting water quality in community watersheds. As part of this audit the agency is focussing on Oyama and Vernon creeks.

Ms. Patschke added that the board asked for input from her department so that if issues are identified they can work together. She's looking forward to this process, she said.

Dr. Bauer asked that the news release be circulated.

Mr. Jatel opened discussion around the goals for the coming 18 months, and whether there is interest in reintroducing a committee structure.

Mr. Jatel explained that, during part of the last council term, there were six committees that met for two hours and alternated with council meetings. The committees provided a forum for focused discussions. As a result, the Water Supply and Drought Management Committee, for example, looked at drought communicating during drought events catalyzing the Okanagan pilot drought signage project. Moreover, in response to increased reporting frequency for water use, the Streamlined Water Use Reporting Tool (SWURT) is being developed. The tool will allow water utilities to report water use to the province online and see what their neighbours are using, and allow them to plan water demand in their area more effectively. Work of the Water Economics Committee led to a water pricing survey being conducted to provide a benchmark for further study. The Groundwater Committee developed a Groundwater Bylaws Toolkit which local governments are now using to develop bylaws. The committee is also working towards having monitoring wells established. Finally, the Communication and Outreach committee saw the launch of the WaterWise website and would help move the outreach program forward.

Mr. Jatel suggested some larger "flagship" issues, based on the Sustainable Water Strategy (SWS), that the council could work on in the next 18 months. Council members then voted for what they felt was most important. Those receiving the most votes include: prepare comprehensive water management plan for Okanagan Basin (5 votes); develop basin-wide source protection strategy (4); and establish Agriculture Reserve (3). The following all received one vote: implement drought management plan; maintain and expand the network of hydrometric and climate stations; develop a groundwater regulation pilot program; develop an Okanagan Basin Information Network and; Water Act Modernization. Mr. Jatel will incorporate feedback to support the writing of the Council's work plan.

In looking at the potential flagship issues, Mr. Van der Gulik suggested that work needs to be done to get people to buy into a water ethic. It was generally accepted that communication and the development of such an ethic should be part of every issue the council takes on.

Mr. Millar and Ms. Bennest both spoke to the need to improve relations with First Nations and encourage their involvement at the council table. Mr. Jatel noted that the invitation has been made and the intention to participate is there, but understaffing at band offices makes it difficult.

Dr. Bauer said that he would like to see the council continue to be involved in the Water Act Modernization process. Also, although the idea of water markets to address water allocation is controversial, it should be studied. Finally, there should be some strategic long-term planning for water done, using the Okanagan Water Supply and Demand Study, he said, adding this can include leveraging it to help develop a water ethic.

Other topics noted included recreational activity on the lake and how to protect water supply, addressing gaps that exist with source protection plans, and looking at recommendations with source assessments that are being conducted.

Dr. Warwick Sears added that the OBWB's Water Management Program is up for review in a year and Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen has asked that a governance review be conducted. If council members are aware of issues affected by governance that need to be looked at, maybe this would be an opportunity for a committee to look at them, she added.

Mr. Millar noted that some of the committees had difficulties at the beginning. Mr. Buchler added that some of the discussion that happened within the committees fell flat when it made its way to the council, and he would want this addressed.

Mr. Jatel called for a vote on how to proceed with council meetings, asking if there should only be council meetings, if there should be alternate council and committee meetings, or a hybrid version where there is focus on a particular issue at each council meeting. The majority of Council members voted for the hybrid meeting option.

Ms. Patschke said that there can still be meetings on topics outside of the 10 council meetings, such as the meetings that have been held to develop drought signage and ground water monitoring wells.

7. SUSTAINABLE WATER STRATEGY: Progress Report and Review

Ms. Garcia led a discussion, following up from the September council meeting, and asked for further details regarding progress on recommendations provided in the Sustainable Water Strategy. Comments were compiled and will be part of a progress report being developed by Ms. Garcia.

8. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

8.1 OBWB Project Updates

Mr. Jatel reported that the SWURT program is set to launch January 2011.

OBWB staff submitted, at the request of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), a funding application to the *Innovative Approaches Program* for four projects focussing on: policy development, food security, and adaptation to climate change. Mr. Jatel noted that the goal of this AAFC funding program is to look at economic instruments to: develop, test and evaluate innovative approaches to delivering Agri-Environmental policy and programming that will enhance sustainability of the agriculture sector. The proposal identified four deliverables: (1) community value of irrigated agricultural land; (2) agricultural water pricing survey; (3) a water utility tool kit that includes water pricing policy support; and (4) a systematic analysis of an agricultural water reserve and how it may

be developed.

Council members identified the need to have agricultural producers involved both at a steering and technical committee level. It was agreed that the proposal would be circulated to interested council members for comment and input. Mr. Jatel stated that the rationale behind developing the proposal was to support local food production, something that is a value shared by council members.

Mr. Van der Gulik requested a letter of support from the Water Board allowing the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands to waive the minimum agricultural revenue requirement. The intention would be to allow a farmer, who is facing drought, to not water or farm without losing their farm status. In May, the ministry had support from the province when the region was facing drought, but then the rain came and the issue was dropped.

Mr. Van der Gulik was asked to forward more information on this to allow the board and council to review it at their next meeting.

8.2 Okanagan Water Supply and Demand Study: Phase III update

Dr. Warwick Sears reported that the “Okanagan Water Supply and Demand Viewer” – an interactive website containing information collected as part of the OWSD study – was reviewed earlier in the day and will be going live in the next few weeks. As well, the OWSD information is being revamped for the OBWB website so that it is more accessible. The Phase 3 committee is also working on additional scenarios (e.g. looking at storage and the impact of multi-year droughts in the future and are we ready). Finally, the Water Board is working with someone to develop a report on how to assist local government to use this information.

9. ROUND TABLE – MEMBER UPDATES

- Anna Warwick Sears: Council members were reminded of the “From Rain to Resource” workshop Oct. 28 and 29 in Kelowna and invited to attend.

10. NEXT MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council will be held Nov. 2, 2010 at Kelowna Capri Hotel and will be a joint meeting with the OBWB Board of Directors.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Moved by Ken Cunningham

“That there being no further business, the meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council of Oct. 14, 2010 be adjourned.”

CARRIED

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Chair

Executive Director