



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD MARCH 1, 2011, AT REGIONAL DISTRICT OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN
101 MARTIN ST., PENTICTON, B.C.**

PRESENT

Chair Stu Wells	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Vice-Chair Rick Fairbairn	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Buffy Baumbrough	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Doug Dirk	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Graeme James	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director James Baker	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Doug Findlater	Regional District Central Okanagan
Alt. director James Pepper	Okanagan Nation Alliance
Director Bernie Bauer	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council
Director Toby Pike	Water Supply Association of BC

REGRETS

Director Gordon Clark	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Michael Brydon	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen

OBWB STAFF

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

GUESTS

Brian Symonds	Osoyoos Lake Board of Control
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1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Wells called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

"THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of March 1, 2011 be approved as amended."

CARRIED

3. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

- 5.3.1 i. Additional memo re: Okanagan WaterWise Website Traffic Report
- 5.3.2 Drinking Water Week Proclamation
- 6.2 Updates from directors
- 6.3 The Letter to Hon. Stockwell Day

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- 4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Feb. 1, 2011 at Regional District of Central Okanagan in Kelowna.

Correction to a vote was noted.

“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Feb. 1, 2011 at Regional District of Central Okanagan in Kelowna be adopted as amended.”

CARRIED

Dir. Doug Dirk entered the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

5. STAFF REPORTS

- 5.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Warwick Sears told directors that the deadline for applications to the Water Conservation and Quality Improvements (WCQI) Grant Program was Feb. 21. There were 35 applications submitted with a total ask of \$703,000. There is \$300,000 available in total.

Proposals will now be ranked based on how they meet the program criteria and are linked to OBWB objectives.

Dir. Bauer asked if the current program, that provides specific funding amounts to the North, Central and South Okanagan, precludes some outstanding projects from being funded because all available funding has been allocated. Dr. Warwick Sears responded that the program was set up to allow regions to address the issues in their communities while ensuring basin-wide benefits.

There was discussion around having the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council discuss priorities for funding in advance of the call for proposals. After further debate it was noted that having the OWSC involved could result in priorities being determined based on the most pressing issue at the time. It was recommended that the priorities be linked to the Sustainable Water Strategy.

Dir. Fairbairn suggested there be a review of program funding since it is so oversubscribed.

Dr. Warwick Sears recommended that the WCQI Grant Program be reviewed as part of a Strategic Planning Session in May.

Dr. Warwick Sears and Melissa Tesche will be meeting with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and B.C. Ministry of Environment staff regarding the Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussel and how to work around the mussel while meeting the needs for watermilfoil control in the Okanagan. Water Board staff recognize the need to balance control of milfoil for people while protecting native species like the mussel, Dr. Warwick Sears added.

The Sewage Assistance Grant review is almost complete. Dr. Warwick Sears added that as a result of the review, it was determined that the formula for calculating a grant to RDCO had been affected by the splitting off of sewage project grants to West Kelowna, resulting in the award for the Lakeview Trunk Sewer being lowered from \$9,000 to about \$6,000. The project budget was originally established based on a pooled grant award to a number of different sewer projects, and when the projects were divided it affected RDCO's eligible amount. The OBWB has already requisitioned for the original amount. Dr. Warwick Sears went on to request that the board forgive the \$3,000 and proceed with the \$9,000 and not penalize them for this split.

“THAT the Sewage Facilities Award to the Regional District of Central Okanagan for the Lakeview Trunk #605 sewer be maintained at the original award level.”

CARRIED

Dirs. Bauer and Pike abstained.

The board was told about \$11,000 that was remaining from the original development and printing of Environment Canada’s Okanagan Waterscape poster. The Water Board has been given approval to use the funds to print additional posters, said Dr. Warwick Sears, noting that the timing is perfect since copies in the OBWB office are running low.

Chair Wells noted that copies of the poster should be made available at the September Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum.

Dr. Warwick Sears provided the board with a report from the Director of the Regional Drinking Water Teams. She noted that the Southern Interior Regional Drinking Water Team (SIRDWT) there has been some progress on motorized vehicle regulation in the watersheds, but much of the discussion has focused on the mandate and authority of the team.

After some discussion, Dirs. Pike and Bauer agreed to develop some points for the Water Stewardship Council to discuss at their March meeting. A letter will then be drafted, which will include council input, and be brought back to the board at the beginning of April.

Dr. Warwick Sears told the board that she was invited to speak about the work of the OBWB at the Canadian Water Networks conference in Ottawa on March 2.

5.1.1 Water Supply & Demand (WSD) update

Dr. Warwick Sears provided an update on Phase 3 of the Water Supply and Demand (WSD) Study. The report was well-received with the board suggesting a greater need to communicate out to the public what the OBWB is doing and the significance of projects like the WSD study.

Dr. Warwick Sears noted that the report could be turned into a Frequently Asked Questions document and posted to the OBWB website.

Dir. Pike added that point 3, which notes Okanagan communities and water suppliers that have requested water demand data, could be expanded to include what they’re using it for, allowing others to see what is possible with this information.

The OBWB has put out position papers in the past and posted them on its website, added Dir. Bauer. Perhaps the board should develop more of these on issues of significant concern to Okanagan residents (e.g. groundwater), he said. Dr. Warwick Sears added that the OBWB’s recommendations on groundwater to the Water Act Modernization process can be used to help develop a position paper and brought back to the board. Dir. Bauer agreed to follow up on this item with the Stewardship Council.

Dir. Dirk suggested board members provide staff with the issues they are asked most asked about.

“THAT the Executive Director’s Report, dated March 1, 2011, and the Executive Director’s Report on the Water Supply and Demand Project, dated Feb. 23, 2011, be received.”

CARRIED

5.2 Water Stewardship Director Report

Mr. Jatel reported that he has been meeting with Okanagan Water Stewardship Council members individually to determine what is working and what can be improved with the council.

Fred Schaad, from the City of Kelowna, will be talking about the city's stormwater management at the next council meeting, on March 10.

A blog has been added to the OBWB website to facilitate communication and it should be operating in the next three weeks, added Mr. Jatel.

Board members were provided with a copy of the draft 2010 Progress Report to the Sustainable Water Strategy to review.

“THAT the Water Stewardship Director Report from Mr. Jatel, dated Feb. 21, 2011, be received.”

CARRIED

5.3 Communications and Research Coordinator Report

Ms. Jackson reported on the launch of the Streamlined Water Use Reporting Tool, noting the media attention and the fact that the story was reported in every community in the Okanagan Basin. Interestingly, she added, Castanet also ran a poll asking people about their steps to conserve water. While not scientific, Ms. Jackson noted that more than 1,200 people were further prompted to think about their own water use and responded.

In addition to providing the monthly analysis of newspaper, radio and TV media reports, Ms. Jackson commented on the growth of social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, but also blogs that are carrying the OBWB's message even further.

World Water Week planning is well underway. A public forum is planned for March 22, 5 to 6:30 p.m. at the Bohemian Café in Kelowna. Board directors were invited to attend. A project to encourage youth involvement is also underway, she added.

In an attempt to encourage greater communication around OBWB initiatives, Ms. Jackson noted that she is compiling a list of ratepayer associations in the valley to provide information to.

5.3.1 OBWB Corporate and Okanagan WaterWise Website Traffic Reports

Ms. Jackson provided the board with a website traffic analysis of both the OBWB corporate site (www.obwb.ca) and the Okanagan WaterWise site (www.okwaterwise.ca)

While the corporate site is getting a lot of traffic the report suggests a need to reorganize the WaterWise site.

The Okanagan WaterWise site is still very new and is missing some key pieces in its development that would make it easier to find. The OBWB's website manager made a number of recommendations that will improve people's ability to find the site. It was also suggested that one thing that would be helpful would be to increase the number of links to WaterWise from well-trusted and visited websites (e.g. links on local government sites, water utilities, partner non-profits and others).

The report notes that imbedding some of the material, now listed as links, will also keep people on the website, as would creating more material for the site.

Ms. Jackson said staff will be working to implement the recommendations and another traffic analysis study will be done in two to three months.

“THAT the Communications and Research Coordinator Report from Ms. Jackson, dated Feb. 22, 2011, and the Website Traffic Report dated Feb. 28, 2011 be received.”

CARRIED

5.3.2 Drinking Water Week Proclamation

There was some debate around a Drinking Water Week (DWW) proclamation and whether the OBWB should invite other Okanagan communities to proclaim the week.

While the board agreed to proclaim DWW, there was discussion about asking others to join in. Dir. Bauer noted that the OBWB is already involved in World Water Week (WWW) and asked why the Water Board is also involved in DWW. There was also a question around the potential to confuse people with two separate awareness weeks around water.

Dr. Warwick Sears noted that this is a BC Water and Waste Association initiative, following in the footsteps of the American Water and Waste Association, and they feel the need to highlight drinking water and the issues around it. The BCWWA asked the OBWB to join their provincial DWW committee. However, she added, it seems reasonable to ask them to consider linking their work to World Water Week in future years.

Ms. Jackson added that the request for OBWB to send letters to Okanagan communities encouraging their support came from RDNO and the City of Penticton’s representatives on the DWW committee.

The board agreed to proclaim May 1-7 DWW and send a letter to local governments in the Okanagan suggesting they do the same. Further, the board requested that a letter be sent to the BCWWA asking that, in future years, they coordinate their efforts around WWW.

“THAT the OBWB proclaim May 1-7 Drinking Water Week and send a letter to local governments in the Okanagan asking that they also pass a proclamation. Further, the OBWB will send a letter to the BCWWA suggesting that, in future years, they coordinate their efforts around World Water Week.”

CARRIED

6. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

6.1 OBWB Goals and Objective 2011

Dr. Warwick Sears presented a revised 2011 Operational Goals and Objectives memo and requested that the board endorse it and move forward with a Strategic Planning Session in May to review some of the issues raised in the original memo.

“THAT the 2011 Operational Goals and Objectives memo from Dr. Warwick Sears be adopted.”

CARRIED

6.2 Updates from directors:

Chair Wells reported on a new marina proposed for Osoyoos and noted a painted turtle was found. Work has stopped until the issue is addressed.

Dir. Fairbairn said Interior Health's (IH) Paul Hassleback is coming to speak to an RDNO committee about future water protection requirements and filtration. Dir. Pike noted that IH seems to have softened on filtration deferral and the big negotiating point now is source water protection strategies. The only ones that may be affected by filtration deferral requirements are suppliers who draw water from the mainstem lakes.

Dir. Pike drew attention to a survey of capital priorities conducted by the three Okanagan MLAs. Interestingly, water improvements rated among the top priorities.

6.3 Letter to Hon. Stockwell Day and federal officials: Request for Attention to Renewal of Operating Orders for Osoyoos Lake

There was lengthy discussion around the letter to officials regarding the renewal of operating orders for Osoyoos Lake and the potential for flow levels to be negotiated. It was suggested that the letter should reference the potential impact on agriculture.

Dir. Bauer noted that the letter should state that the Osoyoos Lake Board of Control should be considering lake levels only and not be looking at flow rates until studies have been done and the ramifications for fish, agriculture, and other implications are known.

Dr. Warwick Sears told the board that the University of Washington study that looks at flow is available for review. A study on climate change considerations is being conducted on the Canadian side of the border and is using the OBWB's Water Supply and Demand study results.

Dirs. Findlater and Dirk suggested that at some point, the board may want to go public with their concerns.

Dr. Warwick Sears noted that the September Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum will include a number of topics and the renewal of operating orders will be one of the items discussed. People from Osoyoos, Oroville, and the surrounding areas are expected, as well as members of the IJC. CBC National expressed interest in covering the forum, she added.

It was decided that a decision about a letter would be made following Mr. Brian Symonds report to the board.

7. DELEGATIONS

7.1 Brian Symonds – Canadian representative to the Osoyoos Lake Board of Control

Mr. Symonds told the board that the current order, controlling lake levels on Osoyoos Lake, runs out Feb. 22, 2013.

About two-thirds of Osoyoos Lake is on the Canadian side of the border, he added, noting the Osoyoos Order controls lake levels for the operation of Zosel Dam on the U.S. side of the border.

The Osoyoos Lake Board of Control (OLBC) is responsible for monitoring the lake level, issuing and suspending drought declarations, reporting to and meeting with its parent International Joint Commission (IJC) and the public. The board, he said, has commissioned eight studies to be conducted in anticipation of the U.S. requesting a renewal of the order. Of interest to many,

he added, is a U.S. study that suggests negotiation for flow rates.

Currently, the OLBC is not mandated to deal with transboundary flows, Mr. Symonds said. However, because the IJC is collaborative, the board is open to talking about flows.

Dr. Warwick Sears exited the meeting at 1:35 p.m.

In response to questions, Mr. Symonds said that it is possible that flows will come up for discussion. However, Canada’s representatives on the OLBC have some influence and they will not be promoting this concept, he added.

As for a question about the merit of sending a letter to the IJC saying that negotiation of flow rates is a concern to the OBWB, Mr. Symonds said such a letter is important. He added that the letter should be sent to the U.S. and Canadian chairs of the commission and both chairs of the OLBC.

Anyone with concerns is encouraged to make their feelings known, Mr. Symonds said, adding that people can do this more than once.

The current order for Osoyoos Lake was for 25 years. Most IJC orders don’t have an expiry, Mr. Symonds noted. Whether or not this next order will have an expiry date is unknown, he added.

The board agreed to send a letter to the IJC and OLBC, regarding their concern about the potential negotiation of flow rates, and cc the letter to the Hon. Stockwell Day and others. Staff will draft the letter and provide it to the board for review before it is sent.

8. NEXT MEETING

8.1 The next regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be held April 5, 2011 at Okanagan Indian Band’s Head of the Lake Hall, 118 Head of the Lake Rd., Vernon.

9. ADJOURNMENT

“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of March 1, 2011 be adjourned at 2:17 p.m.”

CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director