

Water board holds the line on taxes

By Kelowna Capital News

Published: **November 05, 2013 03:00 PM**

Updated: **November 05, 2013 03:463 PM**

Unlike some taxing authorities, the Okanagan Basin Water Board has not increased its budget over last year, so taxpayers will not see any increase on their annual tax bills next year—for that function.

There was discussion of eventually including grants to municipalities for storm water treatment, in addition to the sewage facility grants currently provided, with director Tom Siddon from the south Okanagan asking if the board had the will to expand the benefits of that program, perhaps to include grants for tertiary treatment of sewage or other alternatives as well.

West Kelowna Mayor Doug Findlater said he would have a problem with the OBWB going for more taxpayer dollars.

On the other hand, he favoured letting the public know what a responsible organization the OBWB is, in not budgeting for increased expenditures in the coming year.

The \$3.4 million budget would cost property-owners about 5.8 cents per \$1,000 of assessment in total, with 2.9 cents of that going to the sewage facilities grant program.

The water milfoil control program costs about one cent per \$1,000 in assessment, the same as last year, including a \$40,000 addition to the equipment reserve, in case one of the milfoil rototilling or harvesting machines needs to be replaced in future.

For the OBWB's water management function, the requisition is 1.7 cents per \$1,000, down from the previous year, and well under the two cents permitted for the program.

Matching grants from other government agencies help keep costs down, noted executive-director Anna Warwick Sears in reporting to the board at its regular monthly meeting.

Projects for the coming year include expansion of public education for water conservation and about invasive zebra mussels; building on water monitoring programs and other projects.

The OBWB also contributes a portion of the cost for a Water Research Chair at UBC Okanagan.

jsteeves@kelownacapnews.com

Find this article at:

<http://www.kelownacapnews.com/news/230734571.html>