



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD FEBRUARY 4, 2014, AT REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL OKANAGAN,
1450 KLO RD., KELOWNA, B.C.**

PRESENT

Chair Doug Findlater	Regional District Central Okanagan
Vice-chair Juliette Cunningham	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Doug Dirk	Regional District North Okanagan
Alt. Director Rick Fairbairn	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Keith Fielding	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Gerry Zimmermann	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Allan Patton	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Stu Wells	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Toby Pike	Water Supply Association of BC
Director Don Dobson	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

REGRETS

Director Wes Hopkin	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director James Pepper	Okanagan Nation Alliance

OBWB STAFF

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
Corinne Jackson	Communications Director
James Littlely	Office and Projects Manager

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Dr. Warwick Sears called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

2. APPOINTMENTS TO THE OBWB

2.1 Board Appointments and Elections for 2014

Regional District of North Okanagan

Director Juliette Cunningham
Director Doug Dirk
Director Bob Fleming
Alternates – Mary Jo O’Keefe, Rick Fairbairn, Mike Macnabb

Regional District of Central Okanagan

Director Keith Fielding
Director Doug Findlater
Director Gerry Zimmermann
Alternates – Patty Hanson, James Baker, Gail Given

Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen

Director Wes Hopkin
Director Allan Patton
Director Stu Wells
Alternates – Michael Brydon, Mark Pendergraft, Tom Siddon

Okanagan Nation Alliance

Director – James Pepper
Alternate – TBD

Water Supply Association of BC

Director Toby Pike
Alternate – Bob Hrasko

Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

Director Don Dobson
Alternate – Robert Birtles

3. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Dir. Zimmerman nominated Dir. Findlater as Chair. Seconded by Dir. Cunningham. There being no other nominations, Dir. Findlater was declared Chair by acclamation.

Dir. Findlater nominated Dir. Cunningham for Vice-Chair. Seconded by Dir. Zimmermann. There being no other nominations, Dir. Cunningham was declared Vice-Chair by acclamation.

4. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

There were no new items.

5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of February 4, 2014 be approved.”

CARRIED

6. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

6.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Dec. 3, 2013 at Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen.

“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Dec. 3, 2013 at Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen be adopted.”

CARRIED

7. PRESENTATION

7.1 Todd Cashin, City of Kelowna – Mission Creek Restoration Initiative (MCRI) and flood control

Dr. Warwick Sears introduced Mr. Cashin who provided an overview of the MCRI which began in 2008, bringing together several stakeholders in an effort to restore the natural functions of the creek between East Kelowna bridge and Okanagan Lake.

The creek, explained Mr. Cashin, provides 25% of all water entering into Okanagan Lake and was designated a BC heritage river in 1997, recognizing its importance.

There are several issues it is facing, in part because of diking in the 1950s, including the loss of wetlands and fish habitat, and impact on the sport fishery. Creek channelization has also impacted fish and wildlife habitats. There are a number of bird species at risk, he added. With the changing climate, flooding is also on the increase.

The vision of the MCRI is to repair and protect this area. Flood protection efforts alone have several benefits, Mr. Cashin noted, including species at risk protection and recovery, fish and aquatic species enhancement, cultural enhancement, GHG sequestration, and biodiversity enhancement.

MCRI is looking at several methods to restore the creek, including: setting back dikes and widening the creek, re-establishing the flood plain, reconnecting remnant oxbows, restoring creek banks and planting riparian vegetation, creating wetlands and habitat for species at risk, maintaining the greenway and public access to it, and improving drainage to agricultural lands.

Mr. Cashin thanked the OBWB for provided funding for various parts of the project, dating back to 2008, including an ecological goods and services assessment in 2012 and funding for site setback and habitat enhancement work in 2013.

The group is now raising funds now to acquire property and will be going to the public in 2015 for feedback on its plans.

Directors asked questions. There was some discussion about the increase in flooding, the impact of climate change and the need for greater resiliency.

Up until now, a lot of the work has been reactive and there needs to be more proactive effort made. Mr. Cashin noted that the province is currently conducting a hydraulic capacity study on the creek.

There was some discussion about potential partners for future work, including property acquisition, as well as government funding, especially with the renewal of the Columbia Basin Treaty and its interest in fish and the role the Okanagan plays in a healthy fish population in the Columbia.

8. **STAFF REPORTS**

8.1 Executive Director Report

Looking forward to 2014

Dr. Warwick Sears reported that a review of the Water Management Program is due in 2014, requiring the OBWB to return to all three regional districts and discuss re-approval of the program including the WCQI grant program, the communication programs, the Water Stewardship Council, and policy and science initiatives. Staff will be undertaking the review in the spring and summer of 2014, and going to the regional districts in early fall, before the next local government elections.

OK Falls Treatment Plant

Dr. Warwick Sears introduced discussion around the Ok Falls Treatment Plant and RDOS' wish to discharge treated waste water into a nearby wetland for further polishing before it's released into the Okanagan River channel. The process is intended to ensure a higher quality of water being released into the channel and a healthier aquatic habitat (e.g. for salmon). The method is recognized as best practice for releasing treated waste water back into the system, as well as an effective method for dealing with Endocrine Disrupting Compounds, a concern to the OBWB board.

There has been some opposition by the Canadian Wildlife Federation, concerned with the impact on ducks, she noted. Directors discussed the issue and directed staff to write a letter to the B.C. Ministry of Environment and federal Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans, requesting that the matter be resolved.

“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board send a letter to federal Environment Minister Leona Aglukkaq and Fisheries Minister Gail Shea asking that issues around the Okanagan Falls Treatment Plant and its proposed development of an engineered wetland to provide additional polishing of the water before returning it to Okanagan River, be resolved. AND, that the letter be cc'd to MPs Alex Atamanenko and Dan Albus, to Okanagan Nation Alliance and the Canadian Wildlife Federation.

CARRIED

Dr. Warwick Sears went on to provide updates on other projects including a Water Allocation Tool which the OBWB is helping develop that will help the province make water licencing decisions,

An updated Water Conservation Guide for local government has been developed in partnership between the OBWB, the province and the POLIS Project, It is available on the OBWB website at: http://www.obwb.ca/newsite/wp-content/uploads/WCG_Design3.0_Web.pdf. The guide is intended for communities who want to develop a plan for water efficiency, she added, saying that the province may require communities to have a plan before providing grants.

Dr. Warwick Sears and Mr. Jatel attended Watersheds 2014 (re. watershed governance) and presented on the work of the OBWB. There were presentations from various First Nations and their work on watershed planning and opportunities for partnerships. The province also presented on the new Water Sustainability Act.

The OBWB is working with RDOS and other partners to develop a grant proposal to RBC Blue Water, extending the effort of the Make Water Work campaign from messaging through media to delivering hands-on programs in the Okanagan valley.

Dr. Warwick Sears invited discussion regarding the presentation of an award to Judie Steeves, who recently retired from the *Kelowna Capital News*, recognizing her for her commitment in promoting the protection of the valley's water resources. Directors agreed. The award will be presented as part of Canada Water Week activities in March.

“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board present Judie Steeves with an award during Canada Water Week, recognizing her for her commitment to promoting the protection of the valley's water resources.”

CARRIED

“THAT the Executive Director's Report, dated Jan. 24, 2013, be received.”

CARRIED

8.2 Water Stewardship Director Report

Mr. Jatel reported that next council meeting will include discussion around flooding and floodplain management. The board directors and local government staff are encouraged to attend.

“THAT the Water Stewardship Director's Report, dated Jan. 24, 2014, be received.”

CARRIED

8.3 Office and Project Manager Report

Mr. Littley reported on a meeting he attended in Washington State regarding milfoil and

other invasive species. There was some discussion about research being done to develop a biological control method for zebra/quagga mussels that is of interest. It was approved by the EPA in 2011 and is currently used in facility operations as a chlorination substitute. It is a naturally derived toxin from a common bacteria that selectively poisons z/q mussels. Tests suggest it is harmless on native fish, plants, and even other native mussels.

Mr. Littley reported on a severe windstorm in Kelowna that tore two rototillers from where they were moored. Staff will be reviewing tie-up procedures.

“THAT the Office and Project Manager’s Report, dated Jan. 22, 2014, be received.”
CARRIED

8.4 Communications Director Report

Ms. Jackson provided an overview of her memo, referring to an attached final report on the 2013 Make Water Work (MWW) campaign, and noted plans for 2014. The matching fund arrangement developed for local government partners has been successful in leveraging in-kind funds from additional partners, she added. For a \$2-3,000 advertising investment from local government partners, matched by the Okanagan WaterWise program, the OBWB was able to deliver a campaign in 2013 worth nearly \$119,000. (This is up from \$92,411 in 2012.)

Ms. Jackson also provided an overview of the 2013 Don’t Move a Mussel initiative, referring to an attached final report. She also noted plans for the coming spring/summer. Again, the campaign showed strong results, measured in part by the number of visits to www.DontMoveAMussel.ca, and extensive public feedback. Staff were able to leverage advertising dollars thanks to support from some of the media partners. With an investment of just over \$40,000, staff delivered a campaign worth more than \$170,000 (more than \$129,500 in-kind).

There was discussion about plans for Canada Water Week including the screening of the award-winning documentary Watermark, the annual panel and public discussion event, and the multi-media contest for kids.

“THAT the Communications and Research Coordinator’s Report, dated Jan. 28, 2014, be received.”

CARRIED

9. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

9.1 Sewage Grant - 1.0 Hectare Policy Update Memo

Dr. Warwick Sears presented her report on the 1.0 ha policy reminding the board about previous discussions and its decision to have the policy apply to carriage houses. The policy, she explained, is to discourage local governments from approving carriage houses on small lots with septic systems because of the potential for septic failures. An Okanagan local government could risk eligibility to the OBWB’s Sewage Facilities Grant Program if they approve such a project, she added.

“THAT the Sewage Grant - 1.0 Hectare Policy Update Memo, dated Jan. 24, 2014, be received.”

CARRIED

9.2 Invasive Zebra and Quagga Mussel Pilot Inspection Program Memo

Dr. Warwick Sears presented her memo, noting that the province's interest in a pilot program surfaced over a meeting between herself and Mr. Jatel with the Okanagan MLA caucus, with MPs Cannan and Albus joining by telephone.

In speaking with the province's lead staff on this issue, it was suggested that a pilot in the Okanagan doesn't protect the region because of all the roads that lead to the valley. Canadian Border Services needs a federal ban on the importation of invasive mussels to be able to act and is hoping for this in 2014. Without the ban, CBSA may be able to look and monitor boats coming across the border but not do anything, so it would need B.C. conservation officers to enforce under B.C. legislation.

A recent report regarding the Idaho inspection program found 20% of the contaminated boats it checked were on their way to Alberta (9%) or B.C. (11%). The program does not run 24/7, added Dr. Warwick Sears, noting that we can't expect these inspectors to always have our back.

It is estimated that a single inspection station would cost \$60-160,000 a year and that perhaps 15 would be sufficient, located at strategic locations throughout B.C. – the B.C./Alberta border for example. The program could be funded through the sale of inspection stickers, the same way Idaho has been operating its successful program.

There was discussion about the existing www.DontMoveAMussel.ca campaign and the need to continue it and expand (e.g. boat shows in Alberta and Saskatchewan).

After lengthy discussion, the board directed staff to take action on a number of items.

“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board staff prepare and deliver a report to the Okanagan MLA caucus regarding the threat of zebra/quagga mussels, complete with recommendations. AND that staff organize a forum for Okanagan water utilities on what is being done in affected areas and how to prepare for a local invasion. AND that staff prepare and deliver a report to the Water Board exploring implications and opportunities for local government bylaws to address zebra and quagga mussels. AND that additional letters be sent to the appropriate federal ministers to encourage the legislation necessary to address the mussel threat, and to the federal and provincial ministers encouraging appropriate funds to act.

CARRIED

There was further discussion regarding the province's law against possessing and carrying the invasive mussels, but the lack of enforcement. Staff offered to follow-up with the province and get an update.

10. CORRESPONDENCE

10.1 Letter from Federal Minister of Environment to OBWB re: national park

“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board receive the correspondence from Federal Minister of Environment re: national park.”

CARRIED

10.2 Letter from Federal Minister of Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness to District of West Kelowna re: zebra/quagga mussels

“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board receive the correspondence from Federal

Minister of Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness to District of West Kelowna re: zebra/quagga mussels.”

CARRIED

11. NEXT MEETING

11.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be March 4, 2014 at the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen.

Directors and staff thanked former vice-chair Fairbairn for his time and support during his time on the Water Board. He will continue on as an alternate as he assumes the role of Chair for the RDNO.

12. ADJOURNMENT

“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of February 4, 2014 be adjourned at 2 p.m.”

CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director