



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD FEBRUARY 4, 2020, AT REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL OKANAGAN
1450 KLO RD., KELOWNA, B.C.**

PRESENT

Chair Sue McKortoff	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Vice-Chair Cindy Fortin	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Victor Cumming	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Rick Fairbairn	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Bob Fleming	Regional District North Okanagan
Director James Baker	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Colin Basran	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Toni Boot	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Rick Knodel	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of BC
Director Denise Neilsen	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

ABSENT

Director Christopher Derickson	Okanagan Nation Alliance
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STAFF

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
Corinne Jackson	Communications Director
James Littley	Operations and Grants Manager
Kellie Garcia	Policy and Planning Specialist

GUESTS

Tessa Terbasket	Okanagan Nation Alliance
Doug Gilchrist	City of Kelowna

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Exec. Dir. Sears called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIR & VICE-CHAIR

2.1 Board appointments and elections for 2020

Dr. Sears welcomed directors appointed for 2020.

Directors appointed to the board:

From **Regional District of North Okanagan**

Mayor Victor Cumming

Director Rick Fairbairn

Director Bob Fleming

Alternates – Christine Fraser, Amanda Shatzko, Shirley Fowler

Regional District of Central Okanagan

Mayor James Baker

Mayor Colin Basran

Mayor Cindy Fortin
Alternates – Mark Bartyik, Charlie Hodge, Stephen Johnson

Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen

Mayor Toni Boot
Director Rick Knodel
Mayor Sue McKortoff
Alternates – Mark Pendergraft, Subrina Monteith, Doug Holmes

Water Management Appointments

Okanagan Nation Alliance

Chief Chris Derickson
Alternate – Chief Chad Eneas

Water Supply Association of BC

Mr. Bob Hrasko
Alternate – Ms. Zee Marcolin

Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

Chair Denise Neilsen
Alternate – Vice-chair Scott Boswell

Dr. Sears requested nominations for chair. Dir. Knodel nominated Dir. McKortoff. Dir. McKortoff accepted the nomination. There being no other nominations, Dir. McKortoff was re-elected chair.

Dr. Sears requested nominations for vice-chair. Dir. Boot nominated Dir. Fortin. Dir. Fortin accepted the nomination. There being no other nominations, Dir. Fortin was elected vice-chair.

3. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Chair McKortoff respectfully acknowledged that the meeting was being held on the traditional and unceded territory of the Syilx Okanagan Nation and the home of Westbank First Nation.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of February 4, 2020 be approved.”

CARRIED

5. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

5.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Dec. 3, 2019 at Regional District of Central Okanagan.

“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on Dec. 3, 2019 at Regional District of Central Okanagan be approved.”

CARRIED

6. DELEGATION

6.1 Presentation by Lora Nield – Ecosystems Section Head with B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development on milfoil permitting procedures and the Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussel

Ms. Nield provided an overview of the provincial government’s ecosystems department, noting it works on habitat protection and endangered species, and introduced Mark Phillipotts with the resource management team.

Nield provided an overview of the province's permitting process with OBWB, noting discussions began in 2010 around milfoil control permits and the desire to address species at risk, based on the previous B.C. Water Act. In 2013, some potential conflicts between Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussels (RMRM) and milfoil rototilling were identified and restrictions were put in place for the OBWB's five-year milfoil control permit.

In 2018, the ministry updated its 2009 "Okanagan Large Lakes Foreshore Protocol" which was intended to look at impacts from multiple projects and provide direction to applicants. The update included mapping based on new information, including expanded red zones in Vernon where live RMRMs were identified. In August 2018, the OBWB applied to renew its five year permit. The province issued an initial permit in April 2019 and a revised permit on Sept. 4. Nield said the revised permit limited rototilling to certain depths in some areas, and added harvesting in other areas until further planning to address rototilling and its potential impact to RMRMs could be discussed with OBWB.

The province, she added, is talking with universities regarding research to better understand the risks of rototilling to the RMRM. In response to a question from Dir. Fortin, Mr. Phillipotts said the research will also look at the impact of uncontrolled milfoil on the mussel. Ms. Nield added that the ministry would like to discuss the research questions with the Water Board.

Dir. Cumming voiced his concern about the province's decision to limit rototilling at Kin Beach in Vernon and its impact, adding that this is a small stretch along the Okanagan's foreshore but with significant recreational value.

When asked by Dir. Fleming if there is any evidence that rototilling impacts the RMRM, Ms. Nield said no. In response to additional questions, provincial staff said adjustments have been made to the permit and there is the potential for additional changes, in part based on new mussel survey information.

Dir. Boot asked for an update on milfoil control in Vaseux Lake. Mr. Littlely noted that Penticton and Osoyoos Indian Bands and Okanagan Nation Alliance are still reviewing the idea. He added that the Westbank First Nations has requested milfoil treatment on one of their beaches. Dir. Boot asked that Summerland's foreshore also be looked at for milfoil control.

Dir. Basran added that he agrees with the province that communication could have been better and that decisions around the permit seemed to be a one-sided decision-process, not taking into consideration broad community needs, leading to frustration and upset. Ms. Nield responded that a decision was made to get the permit in place as quickly as possible but that better communication was important.

In referring to upcoming research, Dir. Knodel noted the importance of remembering that milfoil is an invasive species.

Mr. Littlely added that recent discussions with the province have been productive and OBWB can provide a list of areas of high importance which the province can review to manage conflicts. In response to questions, Mr. Phillipotts added that the RMRM is on the federal radar as a species of special concern and if they find the province is not doing enough to mitigate impacts to the RMRM they could step in.

Dr. Sears responded, noting the federal government did not up-list the species and that communication from the federal government to OBWB has said the province is responsible for regulations. Ms. Nield added that if the OBWB is told in advance that there are mussels in an area and it rototills the area and harms the species that it would be in the board's best interest

to get a mussel kill permit from the federal government.

7. STAFF REPORTS

7.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Sears noted letters were sent from the board to the province with input on B.C.'s climate strategy, Emergency Program Act modernization and Water Quality Objectives for the Osoyoos Aquifer. There will be another opportunity for input on watershed protection in March, she added. It was noted that the Water Stewardship Council, and in particular former chair Dr. Brian Guy, has been instrumental in shepherding these letters, as per the council's mandate. Directors thanked the council for its input.

Flood mapping LiDAR data is being forwarded to communities. Local government staff who have questions or requests for the information are asked to contact Dr. Sears. There was discussion about the importance of allowing third party access to the data. Staff were asked to draft a letter to GeoBC or B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development requesting that this be addressed quickly. Dir. Fortin further suggested that the recent Auditor General's report that speaks to this concern be also noted.

"THAT the OBWB draft a letter to the Province of B.C. urging that third party access to recently collected LiDAR data be addressed and reference the Auditor General's report which noted similar concern."

CARRIED

Dr. Sears provided an overview of a proposal from UBC-Okanagan's School of Engineering to undertake a flood mitigation planning review and gap analysis.

"THAT the OBWB enter into a contract with UBC-Okanagan's School of Engineering to undertake a flood mitigation planning review and gap analysis, as per proposal."

CARRIED

The board was updated on UBCO's Water Research Chair. Over the last several years an advisory committee of funders (including OBWB representation) has met several times a year with the chair to discuss ongoing and potential research priorities. UBCO is now considering a new process where the chair provides an update to funders (for the OBWB - all three regional districts) and holds annual community water forums. Directors discussed the process. Chair McKortoff suggested that the Water Research Chair be invited to present at the 2021 Osoyoos Lake Water Forum.

Despite January's cold snap and snow, it is still too early to know what to expect in the coming months, the board was told. Meteorologists have indicated there are no strong predictors for wetter or drier than normal conditions but the long-term forecast suggests warmer than normal temperatures for the next few months and the State of Wash. is in abnormally dry conditions. Dr. Sears added that work is underway to develop a contract for a hydrologic study in the Similkameen. This river, she noted, is important since its flows have a large influence on Osoyoos when it comes to flooding and drought.

"THAT the Executive Director's Report, dated Jan. 29, 2020, be received."

CARRIED

7.2 Water Stewardship Director Report

Mr. Jatel gave an update on the December council meeting and presentations from Environment and Climate Change Canada, including discussion about the importance of reestablishing hydrometric monitoring.

The February council meeting will include a presentation on the Okanagan region climate projections report, funded in part with a grant from the OBWB.

Referring back to the hydrometric monitoring, Dir. Cumming suggested staff bring a report forward that looks at which areas are highest priorities, the cost and potential next steps. After further discussion, it was agreed that staff would prepare a report.

Mr. Jatel noted that an Okanagan Wetland Action Plan is now available on the OBWB website as a guide for local governments.

Work is also continuing on the flood mapping website. With some additional funding for the project and a small work window, the board was asked to approve additional work for the site.

“THAT the OBWB approves a contract extension with Northwest Hydraulics Consultants Ltd. to provide data management and support services for the Okanagan flood plain mapping project with a budget to not exceed \$65,000.”

CARRIED

“THAT the Water Stewardship Director’s Report, dated Jan. 29, 2020, be received.”

CARRIED

7.3 Operations and Grants Manager Report

Mr. Littley reported that 132 participants have registered for the B.C. AquaHacking Challenge. Most are from UBCO and Okanagan College, but there are also some from the Lower Mainland and a few from Quebec and Ontario. Registration closes on Feb. 21, he added, noting that the semi-finals will be held March 21. Work is underway to finalize judges and organizers are in the final stages of fundraising the final amount, about \$13,000.

“THAT the Operations and Grants Manager Report, dated Jan. 28, 2020, be received.”

CARRIED

7.4 Communications Director Report

Ms. Jackson gave an update on the Make Water Work (MWW) 2020 campaign, noting a meeting with local government and utility partners the day before which included a review of more recent water demand numbers. Hiilite Marketing staff, who have been assisting with the MWW and Don’t Move A Mussel campaigns, were also in attendance. Jackson added that she has also been working with the Okanagan Xeriscape Association on expanding the MWW Plant Collection and garden centre partnership.

Plans are underway to screen “Brave Blue World” and have a follow-up panel discussion on March 19 as part of Canada Water Work festivities. The film, which celebrates innovative technological solutions to some of the world’s greatest water challenges, was chosen as a good fit with OBWB-Okanagan WaterWise’s involvement in the B.C. AquaHacking Challenge. The challenge, and the semi-final which is being held two days later, will be highlighted and promoted at this event.

Staff have also been working with the RDCO Waste Reduction Office on the 2020 Living Greener calendar and upcoming composter-rain barrel sale, assisting with the Okanagan Flood Story Map and Aqua-Hacking communications, as well as the upcoming “Building Community Resilience in a Changing Climate” event on Feb. 26, featuring Sheila Watt-Cloutier and the public launch of the *Okanagan Climate Projections Report*.

“THAT the Communications Director’s Report, dated Jan. 29, 2020, be received.”

CARRIED

7.5 Policy and Planning Specialist Report

Ms. Garcia reported on the expansion of the Agricultural Water Supply Communication Project and the addition of Lake Country and Oliver, bringing the number of Okanagan utility partners to 10. Some of the focus in the coming year will be on recruiting more farmers to sign up for water supply e-alerts, helping them respond to potential drought, and providing information to increase water efficiency and maximize crop yield.

Work is continuing on source protection planning for Okanagan Lake with OBWB staff hosting a meeting on Feb. 7 with water suppliers around the lake to talk about how they can collaborate to complete source water assessments and protection plans.

The board was told that Ms. Garcia and Mr. Jatel will be co-presenting at Adaptation 2020 on collaborative drought planning and the Environmental Flow Needs project.

“THAT the Policy and Planning Specialist Report, dated Jan. 28, 2020, be received.”

CARRIED

8. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

8.1 OBWB Draft Strategic Plan 2020-2024 Memo

Dr. Sears introduced the draft Strategic Plan, noting that the final document will guide the work of the board and staff. Dir. Cumming suggested an appendix with a baseline or indicators. Dr. Sears offered to provide an updated plan with appendix at the next board meeting.

Dir. Fortin exited the meeting at 1:02 p.m.

“THAT the Draft Strategic Plan 2020-2024 be received and an appendix be provided at the next board meeting.”

CARRIED

8.2 Invasive Zebra & Quagga Mussel Update Memo

Ms. Jackson and Mr. Littley provided an update on the invasive mussel file, with the OBWB’s calls for provincial and federal action and responses to date, and an overview of B.C.’s 2019 inspection and defence program.

With 16 of the 22 mussel-fouled watercraft intercepted having come from Ontario, Dir. Fleming noted the importance of federal support on the issue. Chair McKortoff raised the idea of sending a resolution to Southern Interior Local Government Association’s April AGM regarding invasive mussels and milfoil. Staff offered to touch base with the province for an update on the program and how the OBWB can support efforts, and bring a report back in March.

In response to a question as to how B.C. has managed to keep the mussels out so far, Mr.

Littley noted that inspections and public education has been helpful, but water utilities should also be doing risk assessments and looking at retrofitting infrastructure.

“THAT the Invasive Zebra & Quagga Mussel Update Memo be received.”
CARRIED

9. CORRESPONDENCE

- 9.1 Tracy Gray letter re federal funding for invasive mussel prevention
- 9.2 Osoyoos Aquifer Water Quality Objectives letter
- 9.3 B.C. Climate Strategy letter
- 9.4 B.C. Emergency Program Act Modernization letter

“THAT the correspondence from and to the Okanagan Basin Water Board be received.”
CARRIED

10. NEXT MEETING

- 10.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be held on Tues. March 3, 2020 at Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen in Penticton.

11. ADJOURNMENT

“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Feb. 4, 2020 be adjourned at 1:31 p.m.”
CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director