



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD  
HELD JUNE 2, 2020, ONLINE  
OKANAGAN, B.C.**

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**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 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

**REGRETS**

Director James Baker	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Christopher Derickson	Okanagan Nation Alliance

**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

**TECHNICAL OBSERVER**

Tessa Terbasket	Okanagan Nation Alliance
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**GUESTS**

Don Dobson	Dobson Engineering, hydrologist
Brian Guy	Hydrogeologist (formerly Associated Environmental Consultants)

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chair McKortoff called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

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

**2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS**

8.2 Letter from Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans Canada Minister Bernadette Jordan to OBWB and Shuswap Watershed Council re: invasive mussels

8.3 Letter from Vernon Chamber to Province of B.C. re: OBWB request for action on invasive mussels

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of June 22, 2020 be approved as amended.”*

**CARRIED**

**4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of May 55, 2020 held online.

*“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on May 5, 2020 held online be approved.”*

**CARRIED**

**5. STAFF REPORT**

5.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Sears updated the board on COVID-19 work plans, noting that staff are working primarily from home but in the office periodically as required.

The final OBWB Strategic Plan 2020-2024 was provided to the board.

Directors were told of a gap analysis project OBWB is undertaking with UBCO, reviewing flood policy in the Okanagan.

A weather update was provided. There is still a lot of snow within the Mission Creek snow pillow and near Silver Star. Dr. Sears noted that there has been some concern regarding high water levels on Kalamalka Lake and wakes caused by watercraft. In discussions with the provincial staff there is little that can be done for Kal Lake. Dirs. Fleming and Cumming, and Dr. Guy also noted concerns about wakes and high water levels in the North Okanagan. Chair McKortoff added that Osoyoos Lake is also high and the province has said it is being drained as best as possible without causing harm downstream. Dr. Sears added that a warm than normal summer is still expected.

Dr. Guy added that his report to the province, following the 2017 floods, recommended systemic changes to ensure resilience and capacity within the ministry responsible, B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations, and Rural Development. Although there has been flood mapping, there hasn't been a lot of evidence of improved organizational capacity, hiring and succession planning.

*“THAT the Executive Director's Report, dated May 2727, 2020, be received.”*

**CARRIED**

5.2 Water Stewardship Director Report

Mr. Jatel noted that the upcoming council meeting will be online on June 11, 1 - 3 p.m. and will include discussion about the recent flood modeling work. The board was also reminded about the website [www.OkanaganFloodStory.ca](http://www.OkanaganFloodStory.ca) where people can put in an address to determine flood risk and find information on how to reduce risk.

A workshop was held May 21 to look at potential improvements to Okanagan hydrology modeling and included speakers from Environment Canada, BC Hydro and NHC, which completed the OBWB's recent flood mapping project. A video is posted on the OBWB-OkWaterWise YouTube channel at

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b6RnE\\_gxDKs&t=185s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b6RnE_gxDKs&t=185s).

***“THAT the Water Stewardship Director’s Report, dated May 27, 2020, be received.”***

**CARRIED**

### 5.3 Operations and Grants Manager Report

Mr. Littley told the board that milfoil staff are preparing for harvesting on public beaches. An asset management review is also underway with a view to purchasing some replacement equipment. One of the three milfoil operators is on leave and staff are looking to hire a temporary position for the summer.

The B.C. AquaHacking Challenge final is set for June 25 and will be held as a Facebook Live on the OBWB’s Okanagan WaterWise Facebook page. In the lead up to the final, the documentary “Brave Blue World” will also be screened, which profiles tech solutions to water issues.

***“THAT the Operations and Grants Manager Report, dated May 27, 2020, be received.”***

**CARRIED**

### 5.4 Communications Director Report

Ms. Jackson updated the board on the launch of the valley-wide “Make Water Work” campaign with a video compilation of Okanagan mayors pledging to conserve water outdoors this summer. This was sent out to media along with a news release. Feedback from local government partners has been very positive. The campaign includes an expanded MWW Plant Collection and two new garden centre partners.

Work is continuing on the relaunch of the OBWB-OkWaterWise’s invasive mussel outreach campaign with updates to the [DontMoveAMussel.ca](http://DontMoveAMussel.ca) website, updated creative for billboards, buses, radio and more. Additional downloadable items are also being discussed to meet demand for virtual outreach materials.

The board was provided an update on an online news conference for the launch of updated flood maps and the [OkanaganFloodStory.ca](http://OkanaganFloodStory.ca) website, as well as communications support to the AquaHacking Challenge and more.

***“THAT the Communications Director’s Report, dated May 27, 2020, be received.”***

**CARRIED**

### 5.5 Policy and Planning Specialist

Ms. Garcia updated the board on the Source Water Protection Toolkit project, noting a technical advisory committee meeting was held online May 27 which included federal, provincial and local government staff, First Nations water suppliers and planners. As part of the project, a toolkit will be created to help water suppliers develop source protection plans.

As part of the Agricultural Water Supply Communication Project, an annual interim report was provided to funders for Year 2 (May 1, 2019 to April 31, 2020). Highlights included increasing the number of water supply partners from eight to 10, key messages and graphics being developed for partners to provide water supply updates to ag customers. Approximately 985 ag customers are now receiving e-alerts.

Dir. Boot noted a report on a proposed B.C. agricultural industrial zone and the potential impact on ag water use. Dir. Neilsen added that the proposal suggests industrial plant food production. The report will be provided to the board.

***“THAT the Policy and Planning Specialist’s Report, dated May 27, 2020, be received.”***

**CARRIED**

## **6. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **6.1 OWSC memo on Water Sustainability Act implementation**

Dir. Neilsen provided an overview of the memo and the issues the groundwater licencing efforts are facing, including that there is no Chair leading the effort, a lack of communication – including benefits of applying, and procedural barriers. It was recommended that the board provide a follow-up letter to the province with recommendations and urging action to improve licencing.

***“THAT OBWB staff draft a letter to the Province of B.C., based on the memo, and send it on behalf of the OBWB.”***

**CARRIED**

There was further discussion around the licencing process, with Dir. Knodel noting that he has heard farmers suggest that it’s an onerous process. Ms. Jackson added that the province held information sessions to help groundwater customers apply which perhaps should be acknowledged and similar public engagement efforts encouraged. Rural areas especially need attention, added Dirs. Knodel and Fairbairn.

### **6.2 Report on UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) and Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls for Action, relating to water**

Ms. Garcia provided an overview of her memo, showing how UNDRIP relates to OBWB and water, and how the agency can proceed in its efforts towards reconciliation.

Ms. Terbasket noted that the report is a good starting point and acknowledged how it was connected to the OBWB’s recently adopted Strategic Plan which helps tie it to responsibility. There is a need for awareness and education at the OBWB and beyond, she added, suggesting this could be done in stages, starting with a broad level introduction (e.g. the history of residential schools and the Indian Act) and then deeper introduction to the local Syilx nation (e.g. learning about territory you live in, Syilx governance, Syilx Traditional Ecological Knowledge and our collective responsibility to care for the water). This deeper understanding is important for First Nation and local governments, Ms. Terbasket said.

Chair McKortoff thanked staff for the report and Ms. Terbasket for her insights.

***“THAT the memo on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) and Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls for Action, relating to water, be received.”***

**CARRIED**

## **7. IN-CAMERA**

Move to include Brian Guy and Don Dobson in the in-camera meeting.

***“THAT the OBWB include Brian Guy and Don Dobson in the in-camera meeting. “***

**CARRIED**

Move to go in-camera at 11:25 a.m. under section 90(1)(k) of the Community Charter.

***“THAT the OBWB move to in-camera under section 90(1)(k) of the Community Charter”***

**CARRIED**

Come out of in camera at 11:59 a.m.

**8. CORRESPONDENCE**

***“THAT the correspondence from MP Richard Cannings to Dept. of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) Minister Bernadette Jordan, the letter from Min. Jordan to OBWB, and Vernon Chamber to the Province of B.C., all related to invasive mussels, be received.”***

**CARRIED**

**9. NEXT MEETING**

9.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be held on Tues. July 7, 2020 at 10 a.m. at location TBD.

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

***“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of June 22, 2020 be adjourned at 12:09 p.m.”***

**CARRIED**

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director