



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD NOVEMBER 3, 2020, ONLINE
OKANAGAN, 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 Rick Knodel	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Christopher Derickson	Okanagan Nation Alliance
Director Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of BC
Director Denise Neilsen	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

STAFF

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
Corinne Jackson	Communications Director
James Littley	Operations and Grants Manager
Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo	Special Projects Coordinator

REGRETS

Director Toni Boot	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Tessa Terbasket	Okanagan Nation Alliance, Technical Observer
Kellie Garcia	Planning Specialist

GUESTS

Andrew Gibbs	City of Kelowna Senior Project Manager
Linda Digby	Kelowna Museum Executive Director

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair McKortoff called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

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

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Addition of item 6.3 Unfinished Business re: Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussels

“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Nov. 3, 2020 be approved as amended.”

CARRIED

Dir. Fortin joined the meeting at 10:02 a.m.

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- 3.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Oct. 6, 2020 held online.

Two amendments were noted.

“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on Oct. 6, 2020 held online be approved as amended.”

CARRIED

4. DELEGATION

- 4.1 Andrew Gibbs, Senior Project Manager, City of Kelowna, presenting a virtual tour of the Laurel Packinghouse Indigenous Landscaping Garden

Mr. Gibbs provided an update on Laurel Square, an outdoor public park space, located next to the Laurel Packinghouse downtown. Design work started in 2016 as a capital project by the city and was done in partnership with Kelowna Museums. Construction began in 2019 but had some budget challenges. An OBWB Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant helped ensure the project was completed in 2020. The project was intended to address an underused area and create a more attractive and educational public space, Gibbs explained. The partnership with the museum, allowed for the telling of the history of the area – its orchards, irrigation. Today the space includes a seating area made to look like apple crates, a truck that helps illustrate the story of the Packinghouse, an interactive irrigation flume, and more.

Dirs. Cumming and Derickson entered the meeting at 10:07 a.m.

Funding from the OBWB helped create a WaterWise, native plant demonstration garden. There is also a bug hotel to teach about the importance of pollinators, an interactive “Coddling Moths and Ladders” game. Partnership with Westbank First Nations also brought a local Indigenous focus to the project.

Ms. Digby added that the square is intended to invite curiosity and ignite discovery. Teacher and public feedback has been positive, she added. Additional work is underway to create an interpretive panel for the garden. Work is also underway to develop capstone project to take the project digital and take the story further.

Ms. Jackson noted that staff are developing Okanagan water-related and outdoor education guides for valley educators and invited further collaboration.

Board directors thanked Mr. Gibbs and Ms. Digby for the presentation and their work on the project.

Mr. Gibbs exited the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

5. STAFF REPORTS

- 5.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Sears provided a proposed meeting schedule for 2021.

“THAT the OBWB adopts the 2021 meeting schedule as presented.”

CARRIED

Dr. Sears noted a meeting with the RDCO board on Oct. 8 about the Okanagan Lake Regulation

System and how it wants the OBWB to take the lead and work with local jurisdictions to advocate to the province for a review.

“THAT the OBWB work with member jurisdictions to advocate to the province to expedite all the necessary studies and consultation for a rigorous review of the management of the Okanagan Lake Regulation System.”

CARRIED

The board was told that staff have spoken with provincial officials who are interested and have funding to do a gap analysis. The OBWB has been asked to partner and manage the contract. After further review, it is recommended that the contract, under \$25,000, be awarded to Associated Environmental.

“THAT the OBWB offers in-kind support to the B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, by receiving funds, and holding and managing a consulting contract for a gap analysis of studies needed for review of the Okanagan Lake Regulation System management.”

CARRIED

“THAT the gap analysis project be direct awarded to Associated Environmental.”

CARRIED with Dirs. Derickson, Neilsen, Hrasko abstained

Directors were updated on a letter sent to the B.C. Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy with recommendations from the Water Stewardship Council on its climate adaptation strategy.

Dir. Baker entered the meeting at 10:37 a.m.

“THAT the Executive Director’s Report, dated Oct. 28, 2020, be received.”
CARRIED

5.2 Water Stewardship Director Report

Mr. Jatel provided a report on the October Water Stewardship Council meeting, a survey of members and resulting discussion regarding the council’s direction for the next few years.

The council’s agricultural irrigation committee met with staff from the B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD) regarding groundwater licencing. FLNRORD staff will present to the whole council at its next meeting for a fuller discussion.

Mr. Jatel will be presenting on the Okanagan Flood Story mapping project at an Esri Canada workshop.

Work is also underway to migrate a number of OBWB websites, models and data to a new server. The old server has obsolete hardware and the new system will be more secure, the board was told.

“THAT the Water Stewardship Director’s Report, dated Oct. 28, 2020, be received.”

CARRIED

5.3 Operations and Grants Manager Report

Mr. Littley noted that staff were invited to a meeting to discuss aquatic invasive species and next steps to address the issue with MPs Mel Arnold, Tracy Gray and Dan Albas. Staff are awaiting the announcement of the B.C. cabinet before forwarding a call to action, addressing provincial aquatic invasive efforts.

The board suggested broadening the federal meeting to include all Okanagan MPs. Dr. Sears said she could take this request forward.

“THAT the OBWB encourage MP Mel Arnold to invite, and encourage, all Okanagan MPs to attend.”

CARRIED

The board was provided an update on the 2021-22 WCQI grant competition and theme.

“THAT for the 2021-2022 WCQI grant competition annual theme, the OBWB seeks projects in any category that address water security; AND THAT applications in these categories are prioritized for funding during staff review with the awarding of up to 10 extra points toward the total score; AND THAT the process and scoring criteria for the grant competition be approved as outlined.”

CARRIED

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

CARRIED

5.4 Communications Director Reports

Ms. Jackson gave an update on the OBWB’s 50th anniversary online speaker series, noting the Oct. 22nd Bob Sandford presentation is now uploaded on the OBWB-Okanagan WaterWise YouTube channel. Mr. Seth Siegel will be presenting on Nov. 12 and that video will also be posted.

A telephone survey on Okanagan water was done in October and the results are now being compiled. The survey, similar to one the Water Board conducted in 2009 and 2014, will gauge valley residents’ understanding around water issues and help inform OBWB water management efforts.

Ms. Jackson also provided an update on the development of new Okanagan water education guides for teachers in the valley. The guides meet the new B.C. curriculum guidelines, were developed with Syilx knowledge keepers to incorporate local Indigenous perspectives, and includes resources to explore outdoor education.

Communications support has also been provided to the 2021 Western Canada AquaHacking Challenge and various water-related events, including the Community Water Forum with UBCO and Okanagan Nation Alliance on Nov. 5.

“THAT the Communications Director’s Report, dated Oct. 28, 2020, be received.”

CARRIED

5.5 Policy and Planning Specialist

Dr. Sears presented Ms. Garcia’s memo, noting that she was attending a federal Okanagan Chinook Mitigation workshop scheduled at the same time as the board meeting.

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

CARRIED

5.6 Special Projects Coordinator

Ms. Restrepo-Tamayo noted efforts are underway to recruit advisory committee members for the 2021 Western Canada AquaHacking Challenge. The committee will select and refine the water issues to be tackled by participating teams, assist with access to data for the teams, recommend potential mentors and judges, and promote the event.

Discussions are continuing regarding the Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum, set for October 2021. However, organizers are also considering contingency plans, including a possible postponement, recognizing the importance of in-person attendance for at least some of the event and COVID-19 considerations.

Work is continuing to hold a Municipal Natural Assets Workshop for Okanagan local governments in late November. Details will be available soon.

“THAT the Special Projects Coordinator Report, dated Oct. 27, 2020, be received.”

CARRIED

6. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

6.1 Budget Features Memo – Proposed Budget for 2021-2022

Dr. Sears presented the proposed budget, adding that the OBWB’s letters patent require the budget be passed by December. New this year is an improved hydrometric monitoring service, approved this fall by the board, that will support the province’s flood forecasting, and help communities prepare for freshet and potential drought.

“THAT the OBWB adopts the 2021-2022 budget as presented.”

CARRIED

6.2 RDNO Letter - request for support re: Wastewater Treatment Facility and ALC exclusion of land for spray irrigation

Dir. Fleming provided background on a joint application from RDNO, Spallumcheen and Okanagan Indian Band to the Agricultural Land Commission for an application to use reclaimed water for irrigating ag lands in the South Spallumcheen area. It’s part of a larger wastewater treatment plant project and effort to improve water quality in Swan Lake and area streams, improve water supply for ag irrigation and provide economic development through implementation of a community sewer system.

In response to questions, Dir. Fleming added that the application would allow for the treated wastewater to be extended for use on other nearby ag lands.

“THAT the OBWB send a letter of support for the RDNO, Spallumcheen and Okanagan Indian Band’s non-farm use permit to the Agricultural Land Commission.”

CARRIED

6.3 Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussels

Dir. Cumming explained to the board that Vernon has had issues installing a new water intake due to Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussels and asked if OBWB knows of the science behind the listing of the mussel as a species of concern. Staff offered to provide the report OBWB submitted as part of the review under Canada’s Species at Risk Act. Dr. Sears offered to raise the issue at the upcoming meeting with Okanagan MPs.

7. **NEXT MEETING**

7.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be held Tues. Dec. 1, 2020 at 10 a.m. at location TBD.

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Nov. 3, 2020 be adjourned at 11:51 p.m.”

CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director