



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD  
HELD DECEMBER 1, 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
Alt. Director Shirley Fowler	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 Doug Holmes	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
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
Kellie Garcia	Planning Specialist

**TECHNICAL OBSERVER**

Tessa Terbasket	Okanagan Nation Alliance
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**REGRETS**

Director James Baker	Regional District Central Okanagan
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**GUESTS**

Katie Pease	Sustainable Winegrowing BC Program Manager
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**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. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

***“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Dec. 1, 2020 be approved.”***

**CARRIED**

**3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

3.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Nov. 3, 2020 held online.

*“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on Nov. 3, 2020 held online be approved.”*

**CARRIED**

**4. DELEGATION**

- 4.1 Katie Pease, Program Manager, Sustainable Winegrowing BC (SWBC), presenting on SWBC Certified Program

Ms. Pease presented on the launch of SWBC’s certification program and efforts to help members conserve water.

The Okanagan accounts for 80% of all wine grapes grown in B.C., she explained. Among the benefits of sustainable winegrowing is the ability to be proactive to increasing environmental pressures. The B.C. certification program, Ms. Pease added, is part of a growing number of winegrowing regions that offer certification, allowing provincial wine-growers to remain competitive.

SWBC has two certifications: one for vineyard, the other for winery. All services provided by the program are free, including resources, training, and education, and tools to allow the industry to benchmark & communicate sustainability performance. Participants do a self assessment and then a third-party inspection is conducted. Goals within the vineyard certification include watershed management and irrigation optimization. Winery goals include water efficiency and conservation.

Encouraging WaterWise practices has been a challenge, Ms. Pease noted, adding that survey results have shown that grape growers do not make it a priority because of the low cost of irrigation.

In response to questions about crop water use, Dir. Neilsen added that wine grapes use about 60% of the water fruit trees use. Alt. Dir. Holmes asked about the connection between production costs and people’s choice to adopt sustainable practices. Ms. Pease responded that when people pay, there is greater incentive to conserve and there just isn’t a lot of incentive when it comes to water as it is now. In California, the drought has caused challenges for growers, she added, noting the importance of being proactive.

Ms. Pease was thanked for her presentation. She exited the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

**5. STAFF REPORTS**

- 5.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Sears updated the board on a contract with the province to conduct a gap analysis for a review of the Okanagan Lake Regulation System. As part of this effort, she will be meeting with the Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) board on Dec. 7 with recommendations for them to make to the province. Following the meeting and after receiving feedback, similar recommendations will be sent to other Okanagan local governments.

Last summer, the OBWB joined a number of B.C. watershed groups and submitted a request to the B.C. government for an ongoing Watershed Security Fund, as part of the economic recovery from COVID-19. The consortium was invited to submit proposals and several shovel-ready projects were suggested, including the OBWB’s Source Protection Toolkit. The province announced \$27 mill. for watershed protection in September. Since then, following the October election, the B.C. government has announced its cabinet and released mandate letters. Dr. Sears noted that

watershed protection is noted in the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change letter. Funding proposals for the \$27 mill. are also being reviewed, she added.

The federal government is gathering input, online, regarding a new Canada Water Agency. The OBWB submitted a response with input from the Water Stewardship Council's policy committee.

Dr. Sears reported on a couple meetings staff were invited to regarding the discovery of invasive freshwater clams in the Shuswap, one with Okanagan Conservative MPs and the other with the Columbia Shuswap Regional District. The clams were discovered a year ago but it took a year to positively identify them, raising concerns around the response time. There is concern about the potential response to a finding of invasive mussels. The board agreed that OBWB should continue to work with partners to review ways to improve response to aquatic invasive species.

***"THAT the Executive Director's Report, dated Nov. 25, 2020, be received."***  
**CARRIED**

## 5.2 Water Stewardship Director Report

Mr. Jatel reported on the November Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC) meeting and a discussion regarding agriculture, groundwater licencing and licencing to crop. The next meeting is Dec. 10 and Okanagan Nation Aliiances (ONA)'s Karilyn Alix will be discussing the Trout Creek restoration project.

Work is proceeding to expand the hydrometric monitoring network with the Water Survey of Canada and ONA in 2021, including an update to the hydrometric database to support data input and enhance quality assurance. Mr. Jatel also noted a series of workshops held by BC Wildlife Federation in the fall and a presentation he gave Nov. 10 on Okanagan wetland projects. He presented on LiDAR mapping and the Okanagan Flood Story website at an Esri workshop. The OWSC is planning to share the flood mapping project as part of a series of workshops for real-estate and insurance professionals.

In response to a question, Mr. Jatel provided an update on Indigenous involvement with these various projects.

***"THAT the Water Stewardship Director's Report, dated Nov. 25, 2020, be received."***  
**CARRIED**

## 5.3 Operations and Grants Manager Report

Mr. Littley presented grant applications to the Sewage Facilities Grants (SFA) program.

***"THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board approve the SFA grant for the Osoyoos Main Lift Station project as outlined."***

**CARRIED**  
***Dirs. Derickson, Neilsen, and Hrasko abstained***

***"THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board approve in principle the SFA grant for the RDOS Kaleden project for OBWB budgeting purposes."***

**CARRIED**  
***Dirs. Derickson, Neilsen, and Hrasko abstained***

The board was presented with recommendations to update the SFA Program Terms of Reference to clarify grant eligibility. There were no questions.

***“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board amend Clause 3.3 in the SFA Terms of Reference to read: ‘Lots that were existing at the time of the original grant program, 1977, (and have not been subsequently subdivided), will be eligible for funding when sanitary sewers are installed. AND THAT this change will take effect for the 2021 grant year and not be retroactive for existing grants that were approved prior to 2021.’”***

**CARRIED**

The board was provided an update on milfoil rototilling efforts, the purchase of a new equipment trailer, shop trucks, and an RFP to purchase a crane truck. In response to questions, Mr. Littley noted the existing trucks will go to a government auction site with any funds collected going back into the equipment budget.

***“That the Okanagan Basin Water Board approve the purchase of three new shop trucks for a total price not to exceed \$125,000 + tax.”***

**CARRIED**

***“THAT the Operations and Grants Manager Report, dated Nov. 23, 2020, be received.”***

**CARRIED**

#### 5.4 Communications Director Reports

Ms. Jackson reported on a telephone survey of Okanagan residents on local water issues, conducted in October. The survey will help inform OBWB water management and engagement efforts.

The board was also presented with final reports for the Make Water Work and Don't Move A Mussel campaigns for 2020. The board was told that the contract for the marketing company staff have been working with ends March 2021 and an RFP is being prepared to go out in December for a new contract.

Directors had some questions regarding the survey, noting the awareness level for some of the messages the OBWB and its Okanagan WaterWise program is looking to deliver. Dir. Dericksen invited staff to connect and discuss ways to incorporate more Traditional Ecological Knowledge into the campaigns.

***“THAT the Communications Director's Report, dated Nov. 25, 2020, be received.”***

**CARRIED**

#### 5.5 Policy and Planning Specialist

Ms. Garcia reported on the first meeting of the Okanagan Flood Collaborative Planning Group, which included local government engineers, planners, emergency response staff, representative from B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD), UBC Okanagan, ONA and others. The purpose was to discuss experiences with flood preparedness and mitigation, and opportunities to collaborate. FLNRORD's Shaun Reimer presented on the challenges and considerations required in an Okanagan Lake Regulation System review.

Work is proceeding on the Source Protection Toolkit. Earlier discussions with the technical advisory committee (TAC) have noted the importance of addressing road sediment, but also the

need for collaboration to address the cumulative impacts of multiple resource and recreation activities in watersheds. The TAC is now reviewing a draft of the toolkit.

The province held a debrief of the Thompson Okanagan Regional Drought Response Team. The discussion included public education efforts. Ms. Garcia noted that she offered OBWB assistance – given that a number of the initiatives the province is interested in have been piloted by the OBWB. Ms. Garcia is also helping with an OBWB-hosted Natural Asset Management Workshop in January, and attended the Water Supply Association of B.C.’s online conference in November.

***“THAT the Policy and Planning Specialist’s Report, dated Nov. 24, 2020, be received.”***  
**CARRIED**

5.6 Special Projects Coordinator

Ms. Restrepo-Tamayo reported on the Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum 2021, noting that steering, program and finance committees have been set up with representation from all levels of government, and First Nations, on both sides of border. Organizers are waiting to see if the event will have to be postponed due to COVID-19.

Organizing is well underway for a Municipal Natural Assets Workshop for Okanagan local governments in mid-January. Speakers include local government staff from North and West Vancouver, Grand Forks, and Kelowna.

Dir. Dericksen exited the meeting at 12:04 p.m.

The board was updated on the 2021 Western Canada AquaHacking Challenge and told that the advisory committee is reviewing and selecting water issues to be addressed. Staff are also working with partners in B.C., Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba to start recruiting potential participants at universities across Western Canada.

***“THAT the Special Projects Coordinator Report, dated Nov. 24, 2020, be received.”***  
**CARRIED**

6. **NEXT MEETING**

6.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be held Tues. Feb. 2, 2021 at 10 a.m. at location TBD.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

***“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Dec. 1, 2020 be adjourned at 12:10 p.m.”***  
**CARRIED**

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director