



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD  
HELD FEBRUARY 2, 2021, 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 James Baker	Regional District Central 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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**GUESTS**

Geoff Mulligan	City of Vernon, Infrastructure Management Technician
Mathew Keast	City of Vernon, Water Resource Engineer

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

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

**2. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

Dr. Sears welcomed directors appointed for 2021.

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**

Director Doug Holmes  
Director Rick Knodel  
Mayor Sue McKortoff  
Alternates – Mark Pendergraft, Subrina Monteith, Ron Oberik

**Water Management Appointments**

Okanagan Nation Alliance

Chief Chris Derickson  
Alternate – TBD

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. Baker 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. Cumming nominated Dir. Fortin. Dir. Fortin accepted the nomination. There being no other nominations, Dir. Fortin was elected vice-chair.

Chair McKortoff offered her thanks to the board and staff, and congratulations to Vice-chair Fortin.

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

**3. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS**

7.4.1 Creative and Media Services Contract Memo

**4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Feb. 2, 2021 be approved as amended.”*

**CARRIED**

**5. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

5.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Dec. 1, 2020 held online.

*“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on Dec. 1, 2020 held online be approved.”*

**CARRIED**

**6. DELEGATION****6.1 City of Vernon's Mathew Keast – Water Resource Engineer, and Geoff Mulligan - Infrastructure Management Technician on Vernon's FCM award-winning Drainage Infrastructure Prioritization Plan**

Mr. Mulligan presented a video showing some of Vernon's drainage issues, review of risk management and the city's efforts to ensure consistent asset delivery. Drainage, he noted, is more than pipes and culverts. It includes curbs, backyards, and people's basements. Climate change and extreme weather events are a threat to sustainable service delivery and is adding costs. While the OBWB was collecting LiDAR data in the valley for flood mapping in 2018, Vernon had additional data collected to determine overland flow routes and found water draining into low lying areas where residents live and work. After the data was mapped, Vernon had a large storm which allowed staff to ground-truth their research and found it to be accurate.

Since the mapping was completed, the city has since been using the information to plan and avoid future drainage issues. This included the hiring of a water resources engineer to review city plans and help get the community on track with projects that are needed to prepare and address future drainage issues.

Dir. Cumming noted that he is thankful for the LiDAR images and added that drainage issues are now showing up on city variance applications, making it easier for council to review.

In response to a question, Mr. Mulligan noted that the city was looking for higher resolution images which required additional flights to collect the LiDAR data. The existing data in other areas should also work to determine some of the drainage areas elsewhere, he added.

**7. STAFF REPORTS****7.1 Executive Director Report**

Dr. Sears noted that given the current situation with COVID-19, it's expected that office staff will be working primarily from home offices until at least July and, hopefully, the Annual Meeting in September can be held in person.

The board was presented with an Audit Plan for the 2020-21 fiscal year.

Dr. Sears reported that work to review Okanagan lake level management is underway with a report to the province expected in March. The report will include a gap analysis and recommended studies needed for a review of management practices. Staff sent a request to Okanagan bands and local governments for letters of support for the review. These will be sent as part of the package to the province.

In addition, the OBWB applied to the National Disaster Mitigation Program for funds to conduct additional lakeshore floodplain mapping and nearshore bathymetry maps to help forecast wave damage during storms under high water conditions.

The board was told that snowpack is above average in most of the Okanagan, but it's unclear what to expect with this year's freshet. Provincial staff are increasing flow from the Okanagan River channel as a precaution. Dir. Nielsen added that low snowpack in the south Okanagan is a concern. Chair McKortoff added that Osoyoos seems to have had more rain which is unusual.

***"THAT the Executive Director's Report, dated Jan. 27, 2021, be received."***  
**CARRIED**

## 7.2 Water Stewardship Director Report

Mr. Jatel reported on the December Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC) meeting and a presentation by Karilyn Alix with Okanagan Nation Alliance on the Trout Creek restoration project. The February council meeting will feature Natalia Moudrak presenting on University of Waterloo's climate adaptation projects which include approaches to address flood risk.

The board was presented with a proposed membership list for the upcoming council term.

***"THAT the attached Appendix 1. Water Stewardship Council proposed membership list be approved, and members be invited to participate in the OBWB's Water Stewardship Council (Term 10) for a period of 24 months (April 2021 – March 2023).***

**CARRIED**

Directors were provided with an update on the hydrometric service program, including updated software and plans for additional hydrometric stations. In response to a question, it was noted that Environment Canada will be adding three stations and OBWB will be managing the data.

***"THAT the Water Stewardship Director's Report, dated Jan. 27, 2021, be received."***

**CARRIED**

## 7.3 Operations and Grants Manager Report

Mr. Litley presented an update from the federal government on invasive mussels, including: Parks Canada looking at expanding protections, Department of Fisheries and Oceans' Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) program to be fully funded and staffed in 2021, and research on a data platform to share AIS info in Canada by March 2022. A risk assessment of Canada's waterways is also being updated from 2012 and there will be additional focus on supporting provincial partners.

Dir. Derickson exited the meeting.

Provincially, staff are updating their economic assessment of a mussel infestation and have said they are interested in a potential table-top exercise for rapid response to an infestation. There has been no movement on the OBWB's request for pull-the-plug legislation or a requirement that all watercraft be inspected before launching. There was discussion about another letter, renewing the call for this legislation as well as a review of B.C.'s Early Detection, Rapid Response plan.

There was further discussion about the boat sticker program used in the U.S. as a way to fund AIS programs and it was suggested that this be included as a potential tool.

***"THAT staff draft a letter to be brought back to the board in March for review. AND THAT, a finalized letter be sent to the B.C. government and a news release be issued."***

**CARRIED**

Mr. Litley provided some background on the invasive clams found in the Shuswap, noting that while harmful, they do not present the same level of risk as invasive mussels.

De-rooting for milfoil is completed in the north and Vernon arms and West Kelowna area of Okanagan Lake, and is underway in Wood Lake and Okanagan Lake in Kelowna. Staff have proposed the use of a shallow cultivator to till sand at Kin Beach, rather than rototill to reduce harm to Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussels. The proposal is being reviewed by the province.

***“THAT the Operations and Grants Manager Report, dated Jan. 27, 2021, be received.”***  
**CARRIED**

#### 7.4 Communications Director Reports

Ms. Jackson provided an update on the RFP and evaluation process for the “Make Water Work” (MWW) and “Don’t Move A Mussel” marketing contracts and presented a recommendation.

In response to a question about the company’s location in Edmonton, it was noted that their proposal ranked highest and met the requirements to be available for meetings, including in-person.

***“THAT the Board award a three-year contract to Habit Creative Inc. for 2021, 2022 and 2023 for \$50,000 each year for ‘Make Water Work’ and \$50,000 each year for ‘Don’t Move A Mussel’ (\$300,000 over three years), with the option to offer two further one-year extensions at the conclusion of the third year on review and with approval of the board.”***

**CARRIED**

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

The board was told that planning is already underway for the 2021 MWW campaign with local government and utility partners committing to matching funds for the program.

Ms. Jackson reported on a recent meeting of B.C. invasive species groups and outreach efforts over the summer and provided an update on the province’s mussel outreach and inspection numbers, including the interception of 16 mussel-fouled watercraft. The greatest number of them, 12, were from Ontario. The number one destination was the Okanagan, with seven en route to the valley.

Ms. Jackson provided an update on the *Our Relationship with Water in the Okanagan* education guides and meetings to incorporate additional local Indigenous knowledge, and an invitation to present the resources at an upcoming regional teacher Professional Development Day.

***“THAT the Communications Director’s Report, dated Jan. 27, 2021, be received.”***  
**CARRIED**

#### 7.5 Policy and Planning Specialist

Ms. Garcia gave an update on the Source Water Protection Toolkit which will include information and resources for Okanagan water suppliers. The project is being developed with a Technical Advisory Committee which includes representatives from valley utilities and local governments, Indigenous communities, and others. The rollout includes several elements including a website and webinars to provide instruction on use of the toolkit. Interior Health has committed \$10,000 and another \$50,000 is expected from additional funders to assist with the project’s extension.

The board was provided a brief update on the OBWB’s Municipal Natural Assets workshop for local government staff in the Okanagan, held Jan. 13. A video of the event will be posted to our YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/OkanaganWaterWise](http://www.youtube.com/OkanaganWaterWise).

***“THAT the Policy and Planning Specialist’s Report, dated Jan. 27, 2021, be received.”***  
**CARRIED**

7.6 Special Projects Coordinator

Ms. Restrepo-Tamayo gave an update on planning for the fall 2021 Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum and noted that there is a possibility of postponing until Spring 2022 if in-person attendance is not possible due to COVID-19.

Following the Municipal Natural Assets (MNA) workshop, the OBWB is considering next steps to support local governments that are interested in pursuing natural asset management.

The AquaHacking 2021 Western Canada Challenge is underway. A news release was sent out with the announcement of the water issues to be tackled and the opening of registration. Water issue leaders have been organized and recruiting at universities is underway. Some 40 people have already registered. Teck has joined again as a sponsor and other potential sponsors are expected to be announced soon.

***“THAT the Special Projects Coordinator Report, dated Jan. 27, 2021, be received.”***  
**CARRIED**

8. **NEXT MEETING**

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

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

***“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Feb. 2, 2021 be adjourned at 12:08 p.m.”***  
**CARRIED**

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director