



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD  
HELD APRIL 6, 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 Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of BC
Director Denise Neilsen	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

**REGRETS**

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
Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo	Special Projects Coordinator
Kellie Garcia	Planning Specialist

**TECHNICAL OBSERVER**

Tessa Terbasket	Okanagan Nation Alliance
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**GUESTS**

Renee Clark	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council
Kevin Rothwell	107.5 Beach Radio

**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**

***“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of April 6, 2021 be approved.”***

**CARRIED**

**3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

3.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of March 2, 2021

held online.

***“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on March 2, 2021 held online be approved.”***

**CARRIED**

**4. DELEGATION**

- 4.1 Renee Clark, Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC)'s Source Protection Committee member, presenting on the state of source water protection in the Okanagan

Ms. Clark noted that the council committee began work on a source protection position paper in March 2020. In the background were a number of issues, including the Hullcar aquifer contamination issue and work by the POLIS Water Sustainability Project at the University of Victoria. Three themes emerged including the need for 1) government-to-government collaboration, work with First Nations, and improved communication; the need to 2) develop tools so that B.C.'s Water Sustainability Act and Drinking Protection Act were aligned with federal guidelines; and 3) the need for a lead agency with defined responsibilities. The report, presented to the board, recommends that OBWB advocate for four actions: clarify the state of source water protection in B.C.; acknowledge Indigenous values and commitments to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP); advocate for a lead water agency; and, request dedicated resources.

Ms. Clark noted that the recommendations are in line with the POLIS report which suggests a need to advance reconciliation and UNDRIP implementation, protect drinking water sources, implement a watershed security fund, appoint a Provincial Water Security Officer, and invest in climate adaptation and resilience.

In response to questions from the board, Ms. Clark said that there have been changes in the various B.C. ministries over time and today it is unclear who to take source protection concerns to. Dr. Sears added that conflicting mandates makes it difficult to protect water. It was suggested that the board review the council committee's report and be prepared for the May 4 joint board-council meeting. Ted Zimmerman, Executive Director of the Water Protection & Sustainability Branch of B.C.'s Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, will be presenting on the development of B.C.'s new Watershed Security Strategy. It's possible that this strategy will be linked to source protection, she said.

Dir. Fortin added that forestry in the watershed and severe weather are growing concerns. Ms. Clark responded that utilities are responsible for ensuring clean drinking water but other levels of government are responsible for allowing activities that can put water quality at risk, making it difficult sometimes.

**5. STAFF REPORTS**

- 5.1 Water Stewardship Director Report

Mr. Jatel suggests a motion to accept OWSC's Source Protection Committee report on the state of source water protection.

***“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board accept the report from the OWSC's Source Protection Committee on the state of source water protection in the Okanagan as presented.”***

**CARRIED**

It was noted that the council starts a new term in April and Dir. Neilsen will be stepping down as

chair of the council. Dir Neilsen expressed her thanks to the board and added that she will continue participating on the council.

Ms. Clark exited the meeting.

Mr. Jatel gave an update on a flood mapping datum workshop noting the importance of the maps from a local government policy and planning perspective.

The next council meeting will include a presentation from Dr. Sheena Spencer, Research Hydrologist at B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development, discussing research priorities and highlights.

An update was provided on the OBWB's hydrometric program and installation of new stations throughout the Okanagan, working with ONA and Environment and Climate Change Canada. In response to questions it was noted that six new stations will bring the total to 28 online with information publically available. Dir. Cumming asked about the possibility of adding additional stations and was told that requests can be submitted for consideration.

***"THAT the Water Stewardship Director's Report, dated March 31, 2021, be received."***

**CARRIED**

#### 1.1 Policy and Planning Specialist

Ms. Garcia reported on a \$50,000 grant provided by the Province of B.C. through the Healthy Watershed Initiative which will allow work to continue on the source protection toolkit project, including a website launch, webinars and outreach to utilities. Indigenous advisors will also be contracted to build Indigenous perspectives into the various project elements.

The Agricultural Water Supply Communications Project is entering its final year, providing alerts to ag customers with water supply information to best plan for their crops.

***"THAT the Policy and Planning Specialist's Report, dated March 31, 2021, be received."***

**CARRIED**

#### 1.2 Communications Director Report

Ms. Jackson provided an update on the recent UN World Water Day-Canada Water Week event, with an online screening of *Lost Rivers* and panel discussion, adding that a recording is now available on the Okanagan WaterWise YouTube channel.

The board was told that work is proceeding on the "Make Water Work" (MWW) and "Don't Move A Mussel" (DMM) campaigns. Discovery meetings have been conducted for both campaigns and a research and audit report will be provided, reviewed by staff, and will help inform the strategies.

Ms. Jackson provided an update on the invasive mussel-infested moss balls noting the province contacted 1,100 retailers and sellers and seized 3,000 balls. Of special concern were balls that originated from mussel-infested waters in Ukraine. The item was reported in Kamloops, Invermere, Terrace, on Vancouver Island and throughout the Lower Mainland. The aquarium plant was found in Okanagan pet stores and, although they were believed to originate elsewhere, they were surrendered as a precaution. Testing of the product found none were viable although Eastern Canada reported live mussels on the plant. The province has been working with federal staff at Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Canada Food Inspection Agency to track and stop further imports of the product. Invasive species groups and the OBWB's Okanagan

WaterWise program have also been helping get the word out through various media channels. An update on mussel inspection stations for 2021 was also provided, noting that the province is said to be continuing with the same number of inspectors and stations as last year due to COVID-19-related travel restrictions.

The board was told about an art show by Lyse Deselliers at the Osoyoos Art Gallery, “Our Lakes: Connecting the Dots,” featuring the work of the OBWB and others in protecting valley water.

*“THAT the Communications Director’s Report, dated March 31, 2021, be received.”*

**CARRIED**

### 1.3 Special Projects Coordinator Report

Ms. Restrepo-Tamayo reported that work is continuing on the Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum and organizers are still planning for an October event. Financial contributions have been provided by the International Joint Commission, OBWB, Province of B.C., Government of Canada. Others are still to be confirmed. The program committee is also working with the Osoyoos Indian Band and ONA to draft an agenda.

The Western Canada AquaHacking (AH) Challenge has 72 participants with a goal of 100. The majority of participants so far are from B.C. so recruiting efforts are underway in Alberta and Saskatchewan. The AH committee is finalizing judges for the semi-final on May 15. The finals will be held in September.

*“THAT the Special Projects Coordinator Report, dated March 31, 2021, be received.”*

**CARRIED**

### 1.4 Executive Director Report

Dr. Sears provided an overview of office operations under COVID-19 and the upcoming joint Board-Council meeting in May.

The board was updated on various flood-related projects. Dr. Sears noted that the Okanagan Lake Management Review report has been submitted to the province. As well, staff are waiting to hear about federal funding applications for an Okanagan Flood Risk Assessment and Nearshore Bathymetry Mapping of the valley’s mainstem lakes. Also, RDCO has received funds for its Flood Mitigation Plan – Phase 3 which OBWB will be supporting.

Dr. Sears reported on an upcoming roundtable session on water with Minister of State Nathan Cullen that she would be attending, along with other B.C. watershed organizations.

The snowpack is now at 100% for the Okanagan, she added. Another provincial update will be available April 9.

*“THAT the Executive Director’s Report, dated March 31, 2021, be received.”*

**CARRIED**

### 1.5 Operations and Grants Manager Report

Mr. Littley provided an overview of the milfoil program, noting that de-rooting on Okanagan and Wood Lake are completed. One rototiller is currently operating in Osoyoos and the second will soon move from Kalamalka Lake to Osoyoos. The province is reviewing OBWB’s request for expanded work areas, he added. And staff are working with a DFO species-at-risk person who is

studying the Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussel, reviewing OBWB’s concerns regarding upgrading the listing to endangered under the Species At Risk Act.

The board was given an overview of applications to the Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant Program. It was noted that, as is policy, the board will review funding recommendations and approve funding in its in-camera session.

***“THAT the Operations and Grants Manager Report, dated March 30, 2021, be received.”***  
**CARRIED**

Mr. Rothwell was told that a news release would be issued following the in-camera meeting. The meeting was then closed to in-camera.

**2. IN-CAMERA**

2.1 In-camera session (under sec. 90(1)(m) of the Community Charter)

**3. RISE & REPORT FROM IN-CAMERA**

***“THAT the OBWB approve the 2021 grant funding as presented.  
 AND THAT the OBWB Rise and Report the 2021 grant funding as approved.”***  
**CARRIED**

**4. CORRESPONDENCE**

4.1 B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations response to OBWB letter re: Okanagan Lake Regulation System

***“THAT the correspondence from B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations response to OBWB letter re: Okanagan Lake Regulation System be accepted.”***

**CARRIED**

Dr. Sears noted that both MLAs Norm Letnick and Roly Russel have asked for briefing notes after the plan of study released by the province.

**5. NEXT MEETING**

5.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be held Tues. May 4, 2021 at 9 a.m. at location TBD.

**6. ADJOURNMENT**

***“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of April 6, 2021 be adjourned at 11:54 a.m.”***  
**CARRIED**

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director