



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD OCTOBER 5, 2021, 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 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 B.C.
Director Scott Boswell	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC)

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
Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo	Special Projects Coordinator

GUESTS

Yosamin Esanulla	Team SIP
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1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair McKortoff called the meeting to order at 10:00 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

No late items were brought forward.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of October 5, 2021 be approved.”

CARRIED

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of September 10, 2021 held online.

“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on September 10, 2021 held online be approved.”

CARRIED

5. STAFF REPORTS

5.1 Policy and Planning Specialist Report

Ms. Garcia provided an overview of the summer’s drought and work to coordinate response with the province. There will be a debrief of this year’s response and an effort to reach out to Agriculture Canada who is also reporting on drought levels. The province recently downgraded the Okanagan to Level 3 drought but there are concerns if the region doesn’t get much-needed snow to help lakes and upper valley reservoirs bounce back to normal levels.

The directors then received a presentation on the Source Water Protection Toolkit Project. Source protection is aimed at safeguarding drinking water sources, the quantity and quality. Water treatment plants are part of the solution, but source protection is the first barrier, Ms. Garcia explained. The toolkit is aimed at clarifying the source protection planning process, offers best practices, information on jurisdiction, and how to build awareness and gain political and public support.

The toolkit includes input from B.C. government ministry staff, provincial health agencies, local governments, First Nations, and consultants. It focuses on eight tools, including collaboration, funding, policies and bylaws, education and engagement, mapping, and monitoring and reporting.

Drs. Cumming and Baker acknowledged the importance of source protection but questioned the cost and responsibility. In particular, the province allows for multi-use watersheds in the region, where camping and backcountry activity is allowed near community drinking water sources. The province collects revenue from activities, but it is often local governments that have to pay when there is a water pollution issue in these areas. We need local revenue sources, Dir. Cumming added.

Dir. Derickson entered the meeting room.

Dir. Baker added there are also concerns in valley-bottom water sources, e.g. with boats causing silting at water intakes. In this case, there is little enforcement on the lakes which is a provincial responsibility, but local water providers are responsible for ensuring water quality. Ms. Garcia responded that these concerns were raised as the toolkit was being developed and these conversations will continue. A key part of the project, is the development of stronger collaboration on these issues, she added.

Ms. Garcia noted that a series of nine webinars are being held on Wednesdays, starting Oct. 20, to go through each of the tools. Presentations on the project can also be made to interested local governments, she added.

“THAT the Policy and Planning Specialist’s Report, dated September 28, 2021, be received.”

CARRIED

Dir. Derickson exited the meeting room.

5.2 Executive Director Report

The board was asked for their feedback about holding in-person board meetings or continuing to

hold them online. There was general consensus that, while numbers of COVID-19 remain high and to avoid winter driving, meetings will remain online and the issue will be revisited in the spring.

Dr. Sears noted that the Water Board's budget process is underway and will be presented in November.

In response to efforts to grow the Okanagan Nation Alliance-OBWB relationship, B.C. provincial staff have indicated that a formal written letter is being prepared, reviewing the OBWB's Supplementary Letters Patent and the voting powers of board directors. In the meantime, staff have been participating in a number of Indigenous workshops and classes.

Dr. Sears added that the presentation to the province's budget committee on Sept. 29 went well and included requests of funding for a review of the Okanagan Lake Regulation System, invasive mussel prevention, and a permanent Watershed Security Fund.

"THAT the Executive Director's Report, dated September 29, 2021, be received."
CARRIED

Ms. Esanulla entered the meeting.

5.3 Operations and Grants Manager Report

Mr. Littley provided an update on the topo-bathymetric LiDAR project, adding that the data should be able to help inform drought and flood management.

Milfoil staff are doing machine maintenance and looking to launch mid-month for rototilling. This year, like 2016, saw extensive milfoil in Vaseux Lake, creating water quality issues and concern for fish, Mr. Littley added. There are a number of issues complicating milfoil control in the lake, including lake levels, migratory birds, issues around the availability of an off-loading area. Staff are working with Penticton Indian Band and others to address the issues.

"THAT the Operations and Grants Manager Report, dated Sept. 29, 2021, be received."
CARRIED

5.4 Water Stewardship Director Report

Mr. Jatel reported on the previous month's Okanagan Water Stewardship Council meeting and a panel discussion around the heatwave with representatives from the Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium, B.C. forestry and Agriculture Canada. The council's six committees are beginning their work, he added. The policy committee has been discussing water indicators. Next week, the council meeting will look at groundwater licencing with the BC Groundwater Association looking at ways to raise awareness for the March 2022 deadline.

The OBWB recently offered to assist the province and local governments to store water quality data on the Water Board's website. This is now up on our site and is intended to help support decision making related to water management.

The board was updated on the installation of hydrometric stations with Okanagan Nation Alliance and their role in helping inform water management decisions during this year's drought. The data is provided to the province in real-time and included on their water data website which is publically accessible.

"THAT the Water Stewardship Director's Report, dated September 29, 2021, be received."

CARRIED

5.5 Communications Director Report

Ms. Jackson reported that the Make Water Work and Don't Move A Mussel campaigns are wrapping up as residents begin to turn off the irrigation and water recreation winds down. Feedback from partners is now being gathered and will help inform wrap-up reports and next year's campaigns. The media response to this year's drought in the Okanagan was noted, including national, and a series that was conducted by CBC Radio's "The Current."

The board was also updated on staff's involvement in a UBC Okanagan School of Education led Co-Curricular-Making project, aimed at de-colonizing and indigenizing education. The project has a strong water focus and OBWB staff were invited to collaborate. It is a good fit with the recent release of the OBWB-OkWaterWise's three-part "Our Relationship with Water in the Okanagan" education guides," Ms. Jackson explained. It will also be an important connection as the OBWB partners with Okanagan Nation Alliance on a fourth guide, focussing on sylix perspectives on water.

"THAT the Communications Director's Report, dated September 29, 2021, be received."

CARRIED

5.6 Special Projects Coordinator Report

Ms. Restrepo-Tamayo gave an update on the Western Canada AquaHacking Challenge which held final pitches on Sept. 11, and then announced winners during an online event on Sept. 14. All three final teams – two from UBC Okanagan and one from University of Saskatchewan – received start-up prize funding, will be set up with an incubator to further their water solutions, and will receive legal support.

Directors were also told that the Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum is now set for April 28-30, 2022 and much of the recent work has been focussing on finalizing the program.

"THAT the Specialist Projects Coordinator's Report, dated September 28, 2021, be received."

CARRIED**6 DELEGATION**

6.1 Yosamin Esanulla, Co-Director of Team SIP - winners of the 2021 Western Canada AquaHacking Challenge

Ms. Restrepo-Tamayo introduced Ms. Esanulla of Team SIP.

Ms. Esanulla presented a video with information on the team's development of a backpack with a mobile water filtration system. Directors were very interested in the project. In response to questions, she explained the team is talking with various humanitarian organizations about using the filtration system in disaster zones, and that a number of Canadian outdoor gear companies have also shown interest in carrying the product.



7 NEXT MEETING

9.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be held Tuesday, November 2, 2021 at 10 a.m. online.

8 ADJOURNMENT

"THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of October 5, 2021 be adjourned at 12:03 p.m."

CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
		
Chair		Executive Director