



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD NOVEMBER 2, 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 Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of B.C.
Director Scott Boswell	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC)

REGRETS

Director Christopher Derickson	Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA)
Caitlyn Glasser	ONA Technical Staff

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

Gregg Howald	FreshWater Life
Ryan Cope	Seven in the Ocean
Jan Vozenilek	Copper Sky Productions

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. 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 November 2, 2021 be approved.”

CARRIED

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- 4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of October 5, 2021 held online.

“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on October 5, 2021 held online be approved.”

CARRIED

5. DELEGATION

Gregg Howald, Ryan Cope and Jan Vozenilek on microplastics research project

Directors were provided an update on an OBWB-funded water research project. Freshwater is critical for many of our planet's ecosystems, but is under increasing threat from invasive species, over-exploitation, climate change and pollution, noted Ms. Cope. The research began with the question, “If plastics are finding their way into the ocean, is it possible that they are also in Okanagan lakes?” The research is looking at macro and microplastics in Okanagan Lake, as well as the Kelowna wastewater treatment plant to determine if wastewater is a potential contamination source and if so, how to mitigate it.

In addition to the OBWB, project partners include Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) for technical support with sampling, UBC Okanagan (UBCO) for initial analysis and follow-up with Okanagan College (OC)'s Water Engineering Technology Program, and Fresh Outlook Foundation. OC has eight students who are assisting, with four looking at wastewater and four looking at freshwater samples, as part of a capstone project.

A surface water trawl did a sampling test run on Aug. 5 and then took samples on Aug. 25th at five sites: north of William R. Bennett bridge, at the bridge, at Kelowna wastewater facility, at the mouth of Mission Creek, and south of the bridge and the wastewater outflow. Initial review found plastics in the lake samples and in samples from the treatment plant. Students are now looking at how to quantify the results, determine the source, and if it is something to be concerned about. Determining the source of pollutants may require further study, the research group added.

In response to questions, Mr. Howald said that it would be useful to do deep water samples, considering water intakes and wildlife that feed in deeper waters. However, he added, this would require more resources than this initial scoping study has at this time. Globally, we know that microplastics are entering the food chain (e.g. in fish tissue), but the consequences on wildlife and human species is still unclear and warrants additional research, he said.

6. STAFF REPORTS

- 6.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Sears presented the board meeting schedule for 2022.

“That the OBWB adopts the 2022 meeting schedule as presented.”

CARRIED

The board was updated on the appointment of auditors, noting that the OBWB uses the same team as Regional District of Central Okanagan for efficiency and cost savings. The RDCO went through an RFP process and, based on review and recommendation is looking to contract with BDO Canada LLP.

“That the OBWB appoints BDO Canada LLP as auditors for the fiscal years ending on March 31, 2022, 2023, and 2024.”

CARRIED

Dr. Sears noted a budget amendment for 2022, looking ahead at interest rates and its affect on the Sewage Grant Program. It was recommended that funds be transferred from reserve to cover the expected grants.

“That the OBWB approves a budget amendment, increasing the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 transfer from reserves by \$55,800.”

CARRIED

Directors were told that provincial staff will be providing a formal review letter of the OBWB's Supplementary Letters Patent (SLP) but have verbally suggested that the document does not appear to restrict Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA) voting powers, so any changes to grow the board's relationship with ONA would likely have to go through the Okanagan regional districts.

Dr. Sears stated that the Okanagan Lake Regulation System report has been released by the province and is posted on their website. The report suggests a number of studies which would be conducted by OBWB, but also the province, possibly ONA and others.

The board was also told about a recent watershed security survey conducted for the Real Estate Foundation of BC and which shows strong support for water.

“THAT the Executive Director's Report, dated October 27, 2021, be received.”

CARRIED

6.2 Operations and Grants Manager Report

Mr. Littley presented on proposed updates to the Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant Program's application and review process with the intention of improving the process for applicants, to make scoring more objective and simpler, and ensure the program is setup to achieve its stated objectives. The board was also asked to approve the annual grant theme.

“THAT the WCQI Grant program Scoring Criteria be amended as outlined above; AND THAT the WCQI Application Form and Internal Scoring Guide be amended for consistency with the new Scoring Criteria; AND THAT for the 2022-2023 WCQI grant competition annual theme, the OBWB seeks projects in any category that address source protection with applications in these categories 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

Directors were updated on the topo-bathymetric LiDAR project, noting all data has now been collected and the contractor is in the data-processing phase with a report expected by Feb. 28.

This year's low lake levels have required milfoil staff to use a crane to lift rototillers into lake waters. While the lake levels may limit de-rooting in very shallow areas, the milfoil may be killed in these areas anyway, if these areas freeze or are scoured by wave action.

“THAT the Operations and Grants Manager Report, dated October 26, 2021, be received.”

CARRIED

6.3 Water Stewardship Director Report

Mr. Jatel reported on the previous month's Okanagan Water Stewardship Council meeting and a discussion around groundwater licencing required by B.C.'s 2016 Water Sustainability Act. The BC Groundwater Association will be using a countdown clock to raise awareness for the March 1, 2022 deadline. In response to questions, Dr. Sears noted that licencing is required of commercial and agricultural water users, but residents are also encouraged to register their well since one can't protect their rights to water under 'First-in-time, First-in-right' without registering. Information is available for the public on the OkWaterWise.ca and OBWB.ca websites.

The November council meeting on Tues. Nov. 16, 1-4 p.m. will include discussion around environmental water indicators.

ONA, and Environment and Climate Change Canada, have been reviewing hydrometric data collected from recently installed stations, and the team is looking ahead to plans for 2022.

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

6.4 Special Projects Coordinator Report

Ms. Restrepo-Tamayo reported on the winding down of the 2021 Western Canada AquaHacking Challenge with grant reporting and debriefing with co-hosts and partners.

Work is continuing on the Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum, confirming venues and finalizing the program. The deadline for posters was extended and will now be accepted until Feb. 1 with details available on the event website, www.OBWB.ca/olwsf.

"THAT the Specialist Projects Coordinator's Report, dated October 26, 2021, be received."
CARRIED

6.5 Policy and Planning Specialist Report

Ms. Garcia updated the board on the Source Water Protection Toolkit webinar series being held Wednesdays, 11 a.m. to noon until Dec. 15, each focussing on a different tool included in the kit. The webinars are attracting a diverse audience including local and First Nations government staff from across B.C., conservation groups, and more. Presentations about the toolkit are also being organized to various Okanagan local governments.

The OBWB worked with the En'owkin Centre to organize a site tour of the k'əmcnitkʷ Floodplain Re-engagement Project in Penticton. The project recently received funding through the Healthy Watersheds Initiative (HWI) as part of the Water Board's Okanagan Collaborative Source Protection Project.

"THAT the Policy and Planning Specialist's Report, dated October 27, 2021, be received."
CARRIED

6.6 Communications Director Report

Ms. Jackson reported that work is underway to compile data from this year's Make Water Work (valley-wide outdoor residential water conservation) and Don't Move A Mussel (invasive zebra and quagga mussel) campaigns.

This month has also been busy with work to update the Okanagan WaterWise website.

Communications support has also been provided in the last few weeks to a number of OBWB-related projects including a City of Kelowna water education video, the WaterWays exhibit at Kelowna Museums, the Community Water Forum – cohosted by OBWB, UBCO and ONA. Additional support was also provided to BC Groundwater Assoc. in their efforts to raise awareness for the groundwater licencing deadline.

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

7. NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS

7.1 Budget Features Memo – Proposed Budget for 2022 – 2023

Dr. Sears presented the proposed budget for the OBWB’s upcoming fiscal year.

“That the OBWB adopts the 2022-2023 budget as presented.”
CARRIED

8. CORRESPONDENCE

8.1 Letter from B.C. Minister of State Nathan Cullen re: Proposed new ministry

8.2 Letter from City of Vernon to Province of B.C. re: lake level management

Dir. Cumming spoke to the letter and concern around low lake levels and the possible impacts on water intakes if they freeze, and for kokanee. Dr. Sears noted that at this time, provincial staff are forecasting that releases between now and spring will likely be minimal due to low lake levels.

“THAT the correspondence from B.C. Minister of State Nathan Cullen to the OBWB, and City of Vernon to the Province of B.C., be received.”
CARRIED

9. NEXT MEETING

9.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be held Tuesday, December 7, 2021 at 10 a.m. online.

10. ADJOURNMENT

“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of November 2, 2021 be adjourned at 11:55 p.m.”
CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director