



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD MAY 3, 2022, ONLINE
OKANAGAN, B.C.**

PRESENT

Chair Sue McKortoff	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
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
Vice-Chair Cindy Fortin	Regional District Central Okanagan
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 Colin Basran	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Doug Holmes	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
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

Kari Alex	ONA Fisheries Dept.
Madeline Baker	Times Chronicle
Vanessa Moll	OCCP Project Coordinator

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair McKortoff called the meeting to order at 10 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

8.1 In-camera session (under sec. 90(1)(k) of the Community Charter).

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of April 5, 2022 be approved.”

CARRIED

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- 4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of April 5, 2022 held online.

"THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on April 5, 2022 held online be approved."

CARRIED

5. DELEGATION

Kari Alex, Okanagan Nation Alliance Fisheries Biologist – update on Okanagan fisheries restoration and environmental flows

Ms. Alex explained that Environmental Flow Needs are now required by B.C.'s 2016 Water Sustainability Act and are intended to help provincial staff make water licence decisions based on understanding the water needs of the aquatic ecosystem, including fish.

Vanessa Moll joined meeting at 10: 12 a.m.

Directors were told that initial studies were done about 10 years ago on a few streams to determine flow needs, but more recently the need for more in-depth studies was recognized. Fish have been struggling with dams, channeling, over-licencing of creeks and, more recently, climate change – with low and warm water levels.

The EFN project, conducted in partnership with OBWB, has included studies and collecting hydrometric data on several streams to help determine fish needs. Most streams studied have found that EFNs are hard to maintain, especially in summer when water use is highest. Water conservation and stream restoration is critical, Ms. Alex said. Before colonization, salmon was the primary food source of the syilx people. Once settlers moved in, water was diverted for agriculture and is now the largest use of water in the valley, she noted.

Directors thanked Ms. Alex for the presentation. Dir. Hrasko, who manages Black Mountain Irrigation District which supplies customers with water from Mission Creek, noted he would like to meet with ONA to discuss how to best address supply issues on the creek.

In response to a question about past water management practices creating an environment conducive to invasive species, it was noted that milfoil was a problem in Okanagan River until an area was re-naturalized and made it inhospitable. As for invasive mussels, if they were to be introduced near the river channel, which is straight and with concrete walls, they would likely colonize and be a problem.

Ms. Alex exited the meeting.

6. STAFF REPORTS

- 6.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Sears updated the board on the OBWB's fiscal year-end, noting the audited financial statements should be ready for the June meeting.

The board was told of an International Joint Commission conference on climate resilience strategies and interest in advancing binational coordination. There was great interest in the work being done on lake level management and flows in the South Okanagan, Dr. Sears added.

“THAT the Executive Director’s Report, dated April 27, 2022, be received.”

CARRIED

6.2 Water Stewardship Director Report

Mr. Jatel noted an upcoming presentation at the May 12 council meeting from Nidhi Kalra, Sr. Information Scientist with RAND corporation, and David Groves, Senior Climate Change Specialist with the World Bank. The two will present research on decision-making around water resources, given climate change uncertainty and its implications to the Okanagan. Also, the OBWB’s annual water supply webinar is set for May 10, 11 a.m. to noon, and will include presentations on the annual outlook for flood and drought.

The board was updated on the installation of hydrometric stations, including two by Environment and Climate Change Canada and four by ONA this year.

“THAT the Water Stewardship Director Report, dated April 27, 2022, be received.”

CARRIED

6.3 Operations and Grants Manager Report

Mr. Littley presented an asset replacement plan to the board. He also shared research by UBC Okanagan students that suggests a de-watering and shredding barge could load 10 times more milfoil, helping save staff time with dropping loads off on beaches and having them collected and moved.

There was a question about rototilling milfoil vs harvesting. The board was told that although rototilling is preferred since it de-roots the invasive weed, it can only be done when temperatures are below 10 C so plant fragments won’t re-root. At the same time, sometimes rototilling is not possible where there are obstructions like water intakes, or restrictions for protected species like Rocky Mountain Ridged Mussels, Western Painted Turtles, or to protect fish spawning. In these instances, harvesting is preferred.

In reference to the asset replacement plan, Dir. Cumming suggested OBWB speak with Vernon staff about possible milfoil drop-off locations. He also recommended looking at a second-hand electric vehicle to replace the current Water Board vehicle.

“THAT the OBWB approve the Asset Replacement Plan 2023 - 2027, and direct staff to seek the approval of Okanagan regional districts for the Asset Replacement Schedule given in the plan, prior to the next budget cycle.”

CARRIED

Mr. Littley noted that the Environmental Funders Canada (EFC) Conference is being hosted in the Okanagan and 80 funders were expected. The OBWB is a member of EFC.

“THAT the Operations and Grants Manager Report, dated April 27, 2022, be received.”

CARRIED

6.4 Policy and Planning Specialist Report

Ms. Garcia gave an update on the Source Water Protection project noting deliverables, including a toolkit, website, speaker series, presentations to councils and boards in the Okanagan, a public outreach poster, and an article in the BC Water and Waste Association’s magazine. She noted that she will continue to support Okanagan local governments develop SWP plans for their communities.

The board was updated on the Okanagan Lake Management Review. Ms. Garcia is developing a plan to ensure recommended studies are completed, including organizing an advisory committee. The project is expected to take five to seven years to complete.

“THAT the Policy and Planning Specialist Report, dated April 27, 2022, be received.”
CARRIED

6.5 Special Projects Coordinator Report

Ms. Restrepo Tamayo told the board about an upcoming boating impacts workshop on June 22. Those who will be contacted and invited include representatives from local, provincial, federal, and First Nations government, academia, the boating industry (e.g. marinas and dock builders), and conservation groups. The workshop will look at the impacts to water quality, aquatic habitat, and more, and will begin a discussion to find solutions.

“THAT the Special Projects Coordinator Report, dated April 26, 2022, be received.”
CARRIED

6.6 Communications Director Report

Ms. Jackson updated the board on the re-launch of the annual Make Water Work (MWW) and Don't Move A Mussel campaigns this month. As part of the MWW launch, community leaders will be asked to post videos of what they are doing to make water work better this summer. Staff are also working to expand the partnership in getting the message out regarding invasive mussels.

Directors were told of a presentation earlier in the week to SD 67 (Okanagan-Skaha) teachers regarding the “Our Relationship with Water in the Okanagan” education guides, and continued collaboration with UBCO School of Education’s Co-Curricular Making project. The board was also presented with the new public outreach poster “Choose Your Watershed,” to raise awareness for water quality protection.

“THAT the Communications Director Report, dated April 27, 2022, be received.”
CARRIED

7. CORRESPONDENCE

“THAT the correspondence from District of Sicamous to B.C. Government regarding invasive mussels be received.”

CARRIED

Move to in-camera at 11:36 a.m.

8. IN-CAMERA

8.1 In-camera session (under sec. 90(1)(k) of the Community Charter)

Come out of in-camera 12:04 p.m.

9. NEXT MEETING

9.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be held Tuesday, June 7, 2022 at 10 a.m. The meeting location is to be determined.

10. ADJOURNMENT

"THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of May 3, 2022 be adjourned at 12:06 p.m."

CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director