



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD APRIL 4, 2023, AT REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NORTH OKANAGAN
9848 ABERDEEN RD., COLDSTREAM, 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 Wayne Carson	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Doug Holmes	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Alt. Director Subrina Monteith	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of B.C.
Director Jeremy Fyke	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC)

REGRETS

Vice-Chair Blair Ireland	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Christine Fraser	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Charlie Hodge	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Tim Lezard	Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA)

GUESTS

Simone Runyan	District of Coldstream
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STAFF

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo	Office and Grants Manager
James Littlely	Deputy Administrator

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 and Splotsin Nation.

2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS

No late items.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of April 4, 2023 be approved.”

CARRIED

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of March 7, 2023, held online.

“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on March 7, 2023, held online, be approved.”

CARRIED

5. STAFF REPORTS

5.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Sears briefed directors on the province’s recently released Watershed Security Strategy and Fund Intentions Paper, noting First Nations consultation is very intentionally woven into the document. The province is asking for feedback on the paper by April 17. Dr. Sears added that recommendations will be brought to the board for consideration and invited directors to provide input in advance.

There was discussion regarding what is required to deliver on the strategy, including improved staffing levels at the province and the need for a much larger investment than the \$100 mill. committed. Dir. Cumming referred to the much larger funding provided in the past through Forest Renewal BC. There was further discussion with questions regarding how the fund will be set up. Chair McKortoff suggested the OBWB put out a news release once the OBWB sent its response to the province.

Dr. Sears reported on the International Joint Commission’s interest in establishing an International Watershed Board (IWB) for Osoyoos Lake. The current International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control (IOLBC) mainly deals with the management of lake level storage for drought. An IWB would have a broader mandate to oversee management for adequate fish flows, water quality, public communications, and other issues. The current board is made up mainly of senior government staff from both sides of the border. In 2015, the board was expanded to include local representatives. Having an IWB would expand the potential for funding and increase collaboration, providing enhanced resources for water in the South Okanagan, Dr. Sears added.

The board was also provided an update on the OBWB’s flood mapping project and told that a workshop is being developed for local governments on how to create bylaws and policy changes for flood policy.

Finally, Dr. Sears noted that she has applied to appear before the B.C. Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services and is open to suggestions for priorities from the board.

“THAT the Executive Director’s Report, dated March 29, 2023, be received.”

CARRIED

5.2 Deputy Administer Report

Mr. Littley presented on the Invasive Mussel Infrastructure Vulnerability Assessment Toolkit. The toolkit is intended to help water utility managers plan and budget for infrastructure improvements to address invasive mussels. The guide could be useful to communities in and outside the Okanagan. It will look at the ecological, social, and economic impacts of mussel invasions, the range of costs, the vulnerability of different water bodies depending on their chemistry, and how to protect systems and operations. It is being prepared by a consultant out of Ontario who is the leading expert on mussel’s affects on infrastructure.

It was noted that as the mussels continue to spread in Manitoba and then with a false alarm last fall, it became clear that action was needed to prepare.

Mr. Littley also updated the board on the RFP process to source a new amphibious milfoil

harvester. The RFP is complete, and negotiations are ongoing with the highest ranked bidder. It's expected that a recommendation will be brought to the board at the May meeting.

The board was further updated on the Sewage Facilities Assistance (SFA) Grant Program review, and told that work is underway to compare existing local government bylaws to the existing program's Terms of Reference, and to review the last five years of development variances. Directors related troubles with failing septic systems in their communities. In the case of Vernon, Dir. Cumming said some residents find the cost of sewer hook-up too high and some are said to be choosing instead to sell their lots. Chair McKortoff suggested if OBWB changes its one-hectare bylaw, there should be other systems in place to avoid pollution issues.

The technical advisory committee looking at the SFA program includes provincial and local government staff.

"THAT the Deputy Administrator's Report, dated March 23, 2023, be received."

CARRIED

5.3 Policy and Planning Director Report

Dr. Sears delivered the report for the Policy and Planning Director, Ms. Garcia, highlighting her work on drought communication planning with the Thompson-Okanagan Regional Drought Team and local partners.

Ms. Garcia is also project manager for the Okanagan Lake Regulation System (OLRS) Plan of Study. Dr. Sears noted that the OBWB was unsuccessful in its application to the Gas Tax Fund for the project.

"THAT the Policy and Planning Director's Report, dated March 27, 2023, be received."

CARRIED

5.4 Water Stewardship Director Report

Dr. Jatel updated the board on a presentation from B.C. Ministry of Forests District Manager Ray Crampton to the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC) in March on the difference and connection between three B.C. ministries involved in water issues.

As noted at the meeting, the B.C. Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy is responsible for preparing a strategy to adapt to climate change and meet greenhouse gas reduction targets, as well as safeguarding and managing B.C.'s natural resources, including water, land, air, and living resources. The new B.C. Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship was established to develop water allocation policies and implement new water governance and watershed planning tools. Their focus is on creating a secure watershed strategy and funding it. Finally, the Ministry of Forests is responsible for making statutory decisions related to the Water Sustainability Act (WSA), managing provincial Crown land, and ensuring the sustainable management of forests, wildlife, water, and other land-based resources. The regional and district operations of the Ministry of Forests include water licensing, responding to fire, flood, and drought, as well as mitigation and recovery efforts.

Next month, Gwen Bridge will be presenting on Indigenous governance and decision-making.

The council is also working on providing recommendations to the OBWB in its submission to B.C.'s Watershed Security Strategy and Fund Intentions Paper.

Dr. Jatel updated the board about water quality testing through the Okanagan Lake Collaborative Monitoring Agreement, coordinated through OBWB. Three local governments participate, as required by the province, because of their wastewater discharges. Latest testing shows Okanagan Lake water quality is relatively stable, but the affect of forest fires polluting run-off is beginning to show. This year, the consultants will be doing a webinar for the partner local governments.

The OBWB was successful with a recent Mitacs application, co-funded with other partners, to look at the economics of agricultural water. This will provide a benchmark to better understand irrigation demand trade-offs.

“THAT the Water Stewardship Director’s Report, dated March 29, 2023, be received.”
CARRIED

5.5 Communications Director Report

Dr. Sears presented Ms. Jackson’s staff report. She updated the board on the success of the online film screening of *DamNation* and panel discussion on March 21st, celebrating UN World Water Day. This was a jumping off point for discussions about the modernization of the Okanagan Lake Regulation System. Dir Fairbairn indicated that Wellesley dam in RDNO will be decommissioned soon, and the film was helpful in understanding the process. Dir. Cumming indicated City of Vernon has received permission to make changes to Vernon and BX Creek if they include fish habitat restoration. Vernon will be doing significant improvements to fish habitat, he said.

Meetings are being held with partners to begin planning for the OBWB-Okanagan WaterWise’s two outreach and education campaigns, Make Water Work, and Don’t Move A Mussel. Both run May to October, coinciding with residential outdoor watering and water recreation.

“THAT the Communications Director’s Report, dated March 29, 2023, be received.”
CARRIED

Meeting adjourned for lunch at 11:57 a.m.

6. IN-CAMERA

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

7. RISE & REPORT FROM IN-CAMERA

“THAT the OBWB approve the 2023 Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant funding as presented. AND THAT the OBWB Rise and Report the 2023 grant funding as approved.”

CARRIED


8. NEXT MEETING

8.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be an abbreviated session, held Tuesday, May 2, 2023 at 9 a.m. at Manteo Resort, Kelowna, B.C., followed by a joint meeting of the board and OWSC.

9. ADJOURNMENT

“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of April 4, 2023 be adjourned at 1:07 p.m.”

CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
		
Chair		Executive Director