



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD JULY 6, 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 Christopher Derickson	Okanagan Nation Alliance
Brian Guy	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council

STAFF

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
Farah Kanani	Technical Writer
James Littley	Operations and Grants Manager
Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo	Special Projects Coordinator
Kellie Garcia	Policy and Planning Specialist

TECHNICAL OBSERVER

Tessa Terbasket	Okanagan Nation Alliance
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GUESTS

Richard Wagner	Regional District Central Okanagan
Markus Schrott	BDO Canada
Cailyn Glasser	Okanagan Nation Alliance

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 July 6, 2021 be approved.”

CARRIED

Director Basran and Director Hrasko entered the meeting at 10:06 am.

4. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of June 1, 2021 held online.

“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on June 1, 2021 held online be approved.”

CARRIED

Director Cumming entered the meeting at 10:10 am.

Director Fortin entered the meeting at 10:12 am.

5. **DELEGATION**

5.1 Markus Schrott, Assurance & Accounting Service Line Leader, BDO; presenting on the OBWB's 2021 Audited Financial Statements

Mr. Schrott presented the final audit report for the board of directors, and responded to general questions by the directors.

Director Cumming commented on the surpluses available and whether they are adequate to operate the organization moving forward. In response, Mr. Schrott said it depends on the future expectations and plans of the organization and this falls on management and the board to decide. Dr. Sears added that the Water Management funds are operational and marked towards different types of projects and not really a reserve. The Milfoil reserve is for equipment replacement, and the Sewage Facilities reserve fluctuates depending on what grants are approved or retired. We use the budgeting process to adjust the levels of the reserves and work closely with the accountants.

6. **STAFF REPORTS**

6.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Sears asked for a resolution to approve the financial statements.

“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board approve the 2021 Audited Financial Statements as presented.”

CARRIED

Dr. Sears reported that the OBWB will hold an abbreviated online annual public meeting without a keynote speaker this year.

She then asked for a resolution to allow the OBWB to open a new corporate credit card account with CIBC because the OBWB has moved its banking there.

“THAT the OBWB approve opening a corporate credit card account with the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC), with a monthly credit limit of \$20,000.”

CARRIED

Dr. Sears updated the board that the province has not released the gap analysis/plan of study report for the review of the Okanagan Lake Regulation System, but she did receive permission for

Dr. Brian Guy to present on it to the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council. The video of the presentation is now on the OBWB-Okanagan WaterWise's YouTube channel.

Director Cumming stated that the lake level conversation came up at the City of Vernon council meeting in June and the motion from council was to request that Dr. Brian Guy present on the report in September. They would like a copy of the report to review beforehand. Director Cumming asked if he should send the request to the province or go through the OBWB. Dr. Sears replied that he should make a formal request to the OBWB.

Dr. Sears presented a letter from the OBWB regarding source water protection directed to the Minister of Environment and cc'd other ministers.

"THAT the OBWB send the letter on Source Water Protection in the Okanagan Basin to George Heyman, B.C. Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, with minor changes as suggested by the Board.

CARRIED

Dr. Sears referred to a synopsis of the Working for Watersheds publication by Watersheds BC contained in her report, which details the level of economic activity associated with watershed protection, restoration, and drinking water provision.

Lastly, Dr. Sears gave a brief overview of the weather outlook, stating that the lakes are low for this time of year.

Ms. Garcia stated that she talked to Shaun Reimer who operates the dams and he doesn't anticipate any impacts on infrastructure or ecosystems this year, but said that we will run into problems if we go into a second year of drought with no replenishment over the winter. A big value of conservation now is to position ourselves well if this is the beginning of a multi-year drought.

"THAT the Executive Director's Report, dated June 30, 2021, be received."

CARRIED

Director Derickson entered the meeting at 10:53 am.

6.2 Policy and Planning Specialist Report

Ms. Garcia gave an update on drought preparedness and response activities in the Okanagan. The B.C. government has kept the Okanagan at a Level 1 drought because most of the reservoirs and streams are still doing okay. But with the continued hot and dry conditions we have been experiencing, it is likely that the drought level will be increased in the near future. The province has six levels now instead of four, which allows more time for warning about worsening conditions.

Water restrictions have been increased in many jurisdictions throughout the Okanagan due to higher demand during the heatwave, which put a lot of pressure on infrastructure.

Director Holmes clarified that Summerland went into stage 2 restrictions because of high demand on water treatment plant not because their reservoirs did not have enough water.

Director Hrasko stated that one of the challenges water suppliers saw during the unprecedented 40°C week is that everything in the perimeter got dry and grass fires were more prevalent. Cutting back irrigation actually increases the chance of fires.

Ms. Garcia updated the board on the Source Water Protection Toolkit project, stating that the

graphic design and website are almost complete and webinars are being planned for mid-September.

“THAT the Policy and Planning Specialist’s Report, dated June 29, 2021, be received.”
CARRIED

6.3 Water Stewardship Director Report

Mr. Jatel told the board about the latest Water Stewardship Council meeting, where Dr. Guy gave a presentation on the report he prepared for modernizing the Okanagan Lake Regulation System. The presentation was recorded and it will be available on YouTube. The next council meeting is scheduled for September 9, where someone will speak about UNDRIP and work around watersheds and Indigenous governance.

Mr. Jatel also updated the board on the Okanagan Flood Risk Mapping project. Proposals are being accepted until 2 p.m. today and a decision to select the contractor will be made next Monday. Dr. Sears reminded the board that the OBWB received a \$600,000 grant for this project and the board already approved a contract of \$80,000 at a previous meeting.

“THAT the OBWB approve the allocation of the budgeted \$500,000 for completion of the Okanagan Basin Flood Risk mapping project; AND THAT following the RFP process, the Executive Director is authorized to execute a contract with the selected supplier for the 2021 Okanagan Basin Flood Risk mapping project, up to \$500,000.”
CARRIED

Mr. Jatel updated the board on the Okanagan Basin Hydrometric Monitoring project. A technical advisory committee is helping to formalize the operational plan. This is done in partnership with the Okanagan Nation Alliance fisheries department. Six creeks will be getting real-time stations installed by our team. All the information collected is being put into the provincial data warehouse that is accessible to everyone.

Included in the plan are two stations being installed in partnership with Environment and Climate Change Canada. One has already been installed on Pearson Creek as a reference stream and a Trout Creek station is in the planning process and will be installed mid-summer.

“THAT the Water Stewardship Director’s Report, dated June 29, 2021, be received.”
CARRIED

6.4 Operations and Grants Manager Report

Mr. Littley provided an update on the milfoil control program. He is getting more calls than normal for this early in the season. The low lake levels are causing the team to have some difficulty transferring the weeds to their trucks.

Mr. Littley told the board that the bathymetric LiDAR project is moving forward and he hopes to have a contract by July 23.

“THAT the Operations and Grants Manager Report, dated June 23, 2021, be received.”
CARRIED

6.5 Special Projects Coordinator Report

Ms. Restrepo-Tamayo provided an update on the Osoyoos Lake Water Science Forum 2022. Both venues have been confirmed for the new days (April 28-30, 2022). 85% of the budget is confirmed and the planning team will begin fundraising for the remaining amount after the holiday period. The program committee is advancing the program and working to make it as balanced as possible.

Ms. Restrepo-Tamayo told the board that Aquahacking is in phase 2 of the challenge where the top 4 teams continue working on developing their solutions and get support from different mentors depending on their needs. The final event will be held on September 14, where the winner for the challenge will be announced.

“THAT the Specialist Projects Coordinator’s Report, dated June 30, 2021, be received.”
CARRIED

6.6 Communications Director Report

Dr. Sears provided a quick overview of Ms. Jackson’s report, including the launch of the annual Make Water Work (residential outdoor water conservation) campaign and Don’t Move a Mussel (raising awareness regarding invasive zebra and quagga mussels).

“THAT the Communications Director’s Report, dated June 30, 2021, be received.”
CARRIED

7 **NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

7.1 Advancing the relationship between the OBWB and the Okanagan Nation Alliance

Dr. Sears provided some background to the memo/report provided. This can be considered the first steps of enhancing the partnership between OBWB and ONA.

Dir. Derickson stated that they have been working on enhancing the relationship between the ONA and the OBWB for a number of years. Now there are more opportunities, specifically with the implementation of UNDRIP at the provincial level and federal level, to further enhance the relationship. This report went to the Chief’s Executive Council and was accepted without any changes. They are looking for meaningful ways to go from working in parallel and sometimes working in partnership, to working toward a more co-governance approach to managing the watershed. The Okanagan Nation Alliance knows what our priorities are and have released our water strategy and adopted a water declaration. One of the recommendations of the report before the board is establishing a working group to implement UNDRIP. Another recommendation is to do some training on cultural awareness of UNDRIP and governance. A further recommendation is to enhance the ONA’s representation on the board. The ONA seat is not a full voting seat and that is something that can be challenging. The final recommendation is for ongoing partnerships in water management stewardship.

Dr. Sears provided more context with respect to full voting powers for the Okanagan Nation Alliance seat on the board. There are three or four different tiers of governance for the OBWB. The supplementary letters patent is issued by the province and they’re the highest level of governance and give the most empowerment. They don’t have a lot detail but set out the basic structures and mandate. When the water management program was established in 2006, there was an amendment to the supplementary letters patent that specifically formed three more seats, one for the ONA, one for the Water Supply Association of B.C. and one for the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council. At the time of that amendment, the province did not put any restrictions on the voting powers for those seats.

However, when the whole program was getting approval at the regional district level in 2005, the

regional district boards put some restrictions on the voting powers of these new directors – limiting their votes to non-financial matters. In order to give the ONA full voting powers, we would need to request the regional districts make an amendment to those 2005 resolutions.

Directors discussed their concerns, asked questions, and shared their support for the motion. A question arose about the financial contributions of the ONA to the OBWB, and another about the voting powers of the representatives from the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council and the Water Supply Association of B.C.

Dir. Derickson explained that the ONA makes in-kind contributions of time from natural resource and fisheries department staff working on projects with the OBWB. The ONA also brings additional grant sources for our partnerships with the OBWB. He also pointed out the structural problems with respect to the *Indian Act*, and the inability to raise taxes in the same way as local governments. He encouraged Okanagan local government representatives to ask senior governments to change these laws to make them more equitable.

Dir. Derickson further clarified that the ONA is asking for equivalent voting powers as are had by local government representatives on the board because the ONA is also a political body representing communities, so they can better help protect and steward waters in the Okanagan watershed. He remarked that giving equivalent voting powers to the Water Supply Association of B.C. and the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (who are primarily there for technical advice) would water down the principle of the request. He stated that the ONA see themselves as a government and hopes that the board also sees that.

“THAT the OBWB and ONA relationship be advanced in the following ways: (a) Establish a working group to implement the spirit of UDNRIP and Syilx rights and responsibilities into the OBWB; (b) OBWB and ONA continue co-led partnerships that are meaningful to the Nation and align with the Syilx Water Declaration; and (c) OBWB Board and staff undertake UDNRIP and Syilx cultural awareness training, as committed in the OBWB’s strategic plan; AND THAT the OBWB endorse a change to the OBWB Governance to ensure the Syilx Nation’s seat has equal voting power to the local government representatives and that the OBWB direct staff to request the change from the regional districts”

CARRIED

Dr. Sears thanked Tessa Terbasket and Cailyn Glasser for doing the bulk of the work on the report.

8 CORRESPONDENCE

- 8.1 Regional District of North Okanagan letter to B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development re. source protection
- 8.2 Village of Lumby letter to B.C. Ministry of Environment re. invasive mussels

“THAT the OBWB receive the correspondence from Regional District of North Okanagan to B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development re. source protection, and the Village of Lumby to B.C. Ministry of Environment re. invasive mussels.”

CARRIED

9 NEXT MEETING

- 9.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be held Fri. Sept. 10, 2021 at 9 a.m. at location TBD.

10 ADJOURNMENT

“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of July 6, 2021 be adjourned at 11:58 p.m.”

CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director