

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD TUESDAY, JUNE 2, 2026 AT THE OFFICES OF THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN
SIMILKAMEEN**

PRESENT

Chair Blair Ireland	Regional District of Central Okanagan
Vice Chair Doug Holmes	Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Brian Guy	Regional District of North Okanagan
Director Bob Fleming	Regional District of North Okanagan
Director Rick Fairbairn	Regional District of North Okanagan
Director Kevin Kraft	Regional District of Central Okanagan
Director Ron Cannan	Regional District of Central Okanagan
Director Sue McKortoff	Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen
Alt-Director Adrienne Fedrigo	Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Sheena Spencer	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council
Director Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of B.C
Director Tim Lezard	Okanagan Nation Alliance

REGRETS

Director Subrina Monteith	Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen
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STAFF

Melissa Tesche	Executive Director
James Littley	Chief Operating Officer
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
Carolina Restrepo Tamayo	Office and Grants Manager
Carmen Weld	Communications Manager
Sandra Schira	Water Science Specialist
Amanda Burnett	Communications Coordinator

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Ireland called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

- 1.1. He respectfully acknowledged that we work on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded tm̓x̓w̓úlaʔx̓w̓ land of the Syilx Okanagan people who have resided here since time immemorial. We honour and respect this land and the siw̓l̓k̓ water which flows through the valley and connects us all.

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 June 2, 2026 be approved.”

CARRIED

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

- 4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board held May 5, 2026,

held at the Manteo at Eldorado Resort, Kelowna.

“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on May 5, 2026, held at the Manteo at Eldorado Resort, be approved.”

CARRIED

5. BOARD CHAIR REMARKS

No remarks.

6. DELEGATION/PRESENTATION

- 6.1 Mission Creek, groundwater and data: where does it get us? Presented by Dr. Chani Welch, Hydrologist at Okanagan Nation Alliance.

Directors received a presentation from Dr. Chani Welch, Hydrologist with the Okanagan Nation Alliance on the critical connection between Mission Creek, groundwater, and long-term water sustainability.

The presentation emphasized the vital but hidden role groundwater plays in the Okanagan Basin in maintaining streamflow, supporting fish habitat, and sustaining water supply, especially during extended dry periods. ONA research and monitoring underway, in partnership with OBWB, is helping build a more complete understanding of these interconnected systems to inform future water management decisions in a changing climate.

Dr. Welch noted the system is complex, with interactions between surface water, groundwater, and tributaries varying along the length of the creek — areas of both gain and loss. Dr. Welch highlighted the need for improved groundwater data and expanded monitoring to better inform water management.

Using Vaseux Creek as an example, she demonstrated how long-term data and improved understanding of groundwater–surface water interactions supported management actions. The presentation highlighted the importance of long-term data, addressing groundwater data gaps, and integrating multiple data types to support future watershed planning.

The board thanked Dr. Welch for her presentation.

7. STAFF REPORTS

7.1 Executive Director Report – Melissa Tesche

Ms. Tesche reported on ongoing drought conditions, noting low precipitation and that the province has issued its first drought call of 2026, with the Okanagan beginning at Drought Level 5. She also noted that the province will be piloting a water scarcity index, but that there had not been any details on the pilot released yet. Ms. Tesche also noted that she was continuing her presentations at local governments up and down the valley.

“THAT the Executive Director’s Report, dated May 31, 2026, be received.”

CARRIED

7.2 Chief Operating Officer Report - James Littlely

Mr. Littlely provided an update on the milfoil harvesting program, noting expanded access this season thanks to the amphibious harvester, including work planned this year at Duck Lake and ongoing activity in the Okanagan lakes as part of the regular invasive milfoil removal schedule.

The new amphibious harvester that was added to the Invasive Milfoil Control fleet in 2025 will allow the program to access areas like Duck Lake that were previously out of reach.

The work will be especially timely with the BC Summer Games set to take place in the community, including the Towed Water Sports event taking place in Duck Lake.

He advised that staff continue to receive reports of aquatic plants that are not invasive milfoil and emphasized the importance of public awareness, as the Invasive Milfoil Control Program is not permitted to remove native aquatic vegetation.

Mr. Littley also highlighted his recent participation in national discussions on water security funding and updates on invasive mussel prevention work.

“THAT the Chief Operating Officer’s Report, dated May 25, 2026, be received.”
CARRIED

7.3 Water Stewardship Director Report – Dr. Nelson Jatel

Dr. Jatel provided a summary of the recent joint OBWB–Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC) meeting, noting its value for information sharing and collaboration.

Discussion focused on how to communicate current water conditions, including unprecedented data trends, in a way that supports conservation while avoiding confusing messaging. Directors also discussed learning from approaches used in other jurisdictions facing drought.

Dr. Jatel highlighted ongoing work related to stream temperature data, noting that existing systems retain a limited historical record and improvements are being made to better capture and use long-term data.

“THAT the Water Stewardship Director’s Report, dated May 25, 2026, be received.”
CARRIED.

7.4 Office and Grants Manager Report – Carolina Restrepo Tamayo

The board was provided with two project notifications: the City of Vernon’s Okanagan Landing Sewer Project and the Township of Spallumcheen’s North Okanagan Wastewater Recovery Project, both recommended for approval.

“THAT the Sewerage Facilities Assistance (SFA) grant for the City of Vernon’s 2026 Okanagan Landing Sewer Project be approved in principle, as outlined.”
CARRIED

“THAT the Sewerage Facilities Assistance (SFA) grant for the Township of Spallumcheen North Okanagan Wastewater Recovery Project be approved in principle, as outlined.”
CARRIED

“THAT the Office and Grants Manager Report, dated May 26, 2026, be received.”
CARRIED.

7.5 Communication Manager Report – Carmen Weld

Ms. Weld reported on communications activities, including the milfoil harvester naming contest and the May 20 launch of the 2026 Make Water Work campaign in Osoyoos, noting strong engagement across the region.

She also highlighted ongoing initiatives, including an Indigenous youth contest to design a logo for the Environmental Flows Conference and a pilot Don’t Move a Mussel boat ramp stencil project, with initial installations planned at public boat launches in West Kelowna and Peachland.

“THAT the Communication Manager Report, dated May 26, be received.”
CARRIED.

7.6 Water Science Specialist Report – Sandra Schira

Ms. Schira reported on ongoing dry and hot conditions, noting continued precipitation deficits despite recent rainfall and the persistence of a multi-year drought across the region.

She advised that freshet has largely ended and was low this year, resulting in low streamflows and continued drought concerns across the basin.

“THAT the Water Science Specialist’s Report, dated May 25, be received.”
CARRIED.

8. **NEW AND UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

No new business.

9. **IN-CAMERA**

The Board entered an in-camera session (under sec. 90(1)(a) and 90(2)(b) of the Community Charter) at 11:51 p.m.

“THAT the Okanagan Basin Water Board enter into an in-camera session.”
CARRIED.

The board exited the in-camera session at 12:04 p.m.

10. **DELEGATION (STARTING AT 12:30 P.M.)**

10.1 Mario Piroddi, CISA, CPA, CA, Partner, BDO, presenting on the OBWB’s 2026 Audited Financial Statements

10.1.1 OBWB 2026 Management Letter

10.1.2 OBWB 2026 Representation Letter

10.1.3 OBWB Draft 2026 Financial Statements

10.1.4 OBWB Audit Final Report to the Board

The Board received and approved its annual audited financial statements for fiscal year 2026, with the external auditor issuing a clean opinion and confirming no significant deficiencies. The results reflect OBWB’s continued commitment to transparent financial management in delivering programs and services across the Okanagan. Staff thanked the financial team at RDCO for their excellent work on OBWB financial administration.

“THAT the Board Adopt the OBWB’s 2026 Audited Financial Statements as presented.”
CARRIED.

11. **CORRESPONDENCE**

No correspondences.

12. **NEXT MEETING**

12.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be Tuesday, July 7, 2026 at 10 a.m. at the Regional District of North Okanagan, located at 9848 Aberdeen Road, Coldstream, B.C., V1B 2K9.

***NOTE:** Meetings of the Okanagan Basin Water Board are open to the public, and only closed for in-camera sessions as set out in the B.C. Community Charter. From time-to-time, the board will be holding its meeting online. If you are interested in attending an online meeting, please contact Communications@OBWB.ca for further details.

13. ADJOURNMENT

“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of June 2, 2026 be adjourned at 12:58 p.m.”

CARRIED

Original signed by:

Blair Ireland, OBWB Chairperson

Original signed by:

Melissa Tesche, OBWB Executive Director