



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD OCTOBER 3, 2023
ONLINE**

PRESENT

Chair Sue McKortoff	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Vice-Chair Blair Ireland	Regional District Central Okanagan
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
Director Rick Knodel	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of B.C.
Director Jeremy Fyke	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC)
Alt. Director Bob Fleming	Regional District North Okanagan

REGRETS

Director Christine Fraser	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Charlie Hodge	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Tim Lezard	Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA)

STAFF

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
Corinne Jackson	Communications Director
James Littley	Deputy Administrator
Sandra Schira	Water Science Specialist
Amanda Burnett	Communications Coordinator

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. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Oct. 3, 2023 be approved.”

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Sept. 8, 2023, held at Rotary Centre for the Arts in Kelowna.

“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on Sept. 8, 2023, held at Rotary Centre for the Arts in Kelowna, be approved.”

CARRIED

4. DIRECTOR ROUNDTABLE

The Okanagan Basin Water Board Directors were invited to share their experiences at the recent Union of B.C. Municipalities (WCQI) conference.

Chair McKortoff reported that she and Dr. Sears participated in a meeting at UBCM with the City of West Kelowna and B.C. Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) Nathan Cullen regarding invasive zebra and quagga mussels. The meeting was especially timely considering the recent discovery of quagga mussel larvae in Idaho.

Dir. Knodel recounted meetings with B.C. Minister of Municipal Affairs Anne Kang and Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness Bowinn Ma during which he recommended that the provincial government increase its efforts to prevent the spread of invasive mussels.

Dir. Ireland reported that he also met with Min. Cullen and noted the number of ministries working on various water issues and concerns around lack of enforcement for watershed protection.

Dir. Fairbairn noted discussions with BC Hydro regarding the decommissioning of Wilsey Dam, adding that they are looking at how to mediate large amounts of sediment.

Dir. Holmes entered the meeting at 10:08 a.m.

Dir. Cumming said he met with Premier David Eby and suggested that water be made a priority issue. In a meeting with Minister of Forests Bruce Ralston, the director emphasized the importance of wildfire prevention and fuel management in the Aberdeen Plateau area which is a critical water source for Greater Vernon.

Dir. Holmes added that he spoke with MLA Fin Donnelley, Parliamentary Secretary for Watershed Restoration regarding source water protection, noting that this is a common concern among local governments.

It was noted that the Deputy Minister of WLRS, Lori Halls, requested and was sent a briefing note from the OBWB regarding invasive mussels in Idaho and recommendations for action, in preparation for a meeting with Department of Fisheries and Oceans in Ottawa.

5. STAFF REPORTS

5.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Sears updated the board on a UBCM clinic she co-presented, regarding building housing safely in floodplains, noting the progress of floodplain mapping and plans to reduce flood impacts on residential areas.

The board was presented with a 2024 OBWB meeting schedule.

“THAT the board schedule for the Okanagan Basin Water Board meetings for 2024 be approved.”

CARRIED

The board was told that OBWB staff have been working on the 2024-25 budget, including a renewal of a five-year office lease with RDCO and a 10-year lease with RDNO for the milfoil yard lease in Vernon.

“THAT the OBWB accept in principle the term and rate of the OBWB office lease renewal proposed by RDCO, to be finalized by staff.”

CARRIED

In discussing the rate proposed by RDNO for the milfoil yard lease, the board asked staff to provide a counter-offer and bring the matter back for discussion at the November board meeting.

“THAT OBWB staff provide a counter-offer to RDNO regarding the milfoil yard lease renewal and report back at the November board meeting.”

CARRIED

Dr. Sears told the board that planning is underway to hold a workshop regarding Mission Creek in response to community interest, and that she attended a transboundary mining conference in Osoyoos. The International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control (IOLBC) has its annual meeting on Oct. 4th at the Sonora Centre and is expected to discuss the possibility of expanding its focus to be an International Watershed Board. The result would be additional capacity to address an increasing number of transboundary water issues, beyond water levels and dam management. Finally, Dr. Sears noted that she’s been appointed to the transboundary Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission, which should help inform her work on the IOLBC and at OBWB.

“THAT the Executive Director’s Report, dated Sept. 27, 2023, be received.”

CARRIED

5.2 Deputy Administrator Report

Mr. Littley updated the board regarding invasive quagga mussels discovered in the Snake River at Twin Falls, Idaho, a tributary to the Columbia River and the Okanagan River.

In response, Idaho turned to its emergency response plan and released a copper-based pesticide to kill the mussels, which will also kill local flora and fauna. It is still unclear how effective this treatment will be.

The board was told that work is continuing to finalize a mussel infrastructure vulnerability toolkit for use by utilities, and it was recommended that the OBWB convene a working group to broaden the conversation and response. A temporary moratorium on out-of-province watercraft until provincial and federal protective measures improve was also discussed.

“THAT staff be directed to form a working group in response to invasive mussels being detected in Idaho’s Snake River, a tributary to the Columbia River which connects to the Okanagan River.”

CARRIED

Following discussion, the OBWB was invited to host an invasive mussel information booth at the upcoming Okanagan Nation Alliance AGM in Penticton.

An update was also provided on the milfoil control program. Rototilling is now underway, and staff are working with a contractor on its next five-year provincial permit.

“THAT the Deputy Administrator’s Report, dated Sept. 26, 2023, be received.”

CARRIED

5.3 Office and Grants Manager Report

Ms. Restrepo-Tamayo provided an update on *siwtkw* (Water) for All – Co-creating Futures, Environmental Flows Conference 2024, to be held March 13-15, 2024 in Kelowna.

The conference is a follow up to the OBWB's environmental flow needs conference in 2018. The upcoming conference is intended to bring together representatives from national and international organizations who are engaged in water management or research, including fisheries and water managers, First Nations, regulators, policy-makers, academia, funders and NGOs.

Early registration is open until Nov. 30 at <https://environmentalflores2024.ca/>.

“THAT the Office and Grants Manager’s Report, dated Sept. 27, 2023, be received.”

CARRIED

5.4 Water Science Specialist Report

Ms. Schira updated the board on her latest research on climate indicators. She noted that 2023 has been a record-breaking year and the hottest year on record, globally. With fall around the corner, she provided data showing that the season (September to November) shows the smallest observed increase in temperature compared to the 1951-1980 historical average 0.9C in Vernon, 0.8C in Kelowna and 0.5C in Penticton), however, the change has resulted in some significant impacts, including at least one fall day every year with a maximum temperature over 30C and the number of days with minimum temperature below 0C has decreased by about five days in each location.

This data is being compiled and will be part of a website available to the public.

“THAT the Water Science Specialist Report, Sept. 25, 2023, be received.”

CARRIED

5.5 Communications Director Report

Ms. Schira provided the drought update portion of Ms. Jackson's memo, noting the Okanagan remains at Level 5 drought with a number of streams running below environmental flow needs and even critical flow needs for fish. The province will review drought levels again at the next meeting of the Thompson Okanagan Regional Drought Team meeting tomorrow, Oct. 4.

In response to questions from directors, it was noted that the drought team is made up of water-related staff from provincial and federal governments (e.g. B.C.'s WLRs ministry, and Fisheries and Oceans Canada), First Nations, local water utilities, and the OBWB, and is intended to provide the province with up-to-date information on water conditions, While the province sets the drought levels, the OBWB has been working with utilities to communicate on water conservation and local water restrictions.

Ms. Burnett gave an update on communication efforts to raise awareness regarding invasive mussels and the importance of taking precautions to prevent their spread, especially with two long-weekends in October.

Finally, it was noted that the Annual Report is on the OBWB website and a highlight video from

the meeting is posted on the OBWB-Okanagan WaterWise YouTube channel.

“THAT the Communications Director’s Report, dated Sept. 27, 2023, be received.”

CARRIED

6. NEXT MEETING

6.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be Tuesday, Nov. 7 from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., online.

7. ADJOURNMENT

“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of Oct. 3, 2023 be adjourned at 11:36 a.m.”

CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director