



**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD  
HELD MAY 7, 2024, AT KELOWNA YACHT CLUB  
1-1370 WATER ST., KELOWNA, B.C.**

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**PRESENT**

Chair Blair Ireland	Regional District Central Okanagan
Vice-chair Doug Holmes	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Victor Cumming	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Rick Fairbairn	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Christine Fraser	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Wayne Carson	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Charlie Hodge	Regional District Central Okanagan
Alt-Director Subrina Monteith	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Sue McKortoff	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of B.C.
Director Jeremy Fyke	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC)

**REGRETS**

Director Christine Fraser	Regional District of the North Okanagan
Director Tim Lezard	Okanagan Nation Alliance (ONA)

**GUESTS**

Theresa Lowens	B.C. Institute of Agrologists (BCIA), AgriFood Canada
Faezeh Ketabchi	UBC Okanagan
Patti Meger	Water Supply Association of B.C. (WSABC)
Marta Green	B.C. Groundwater Association
Rod MacLean	City of Kelowna

**STAFF**

Anna Warwick Sears	Executive Director
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
Corinne Jackson	Communications Director
James Littley	Deputy Administrator
Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo	Office and Grants Manager
Amanda Burnett	Communications Coordinator
Sandra Schira	Water Science Specialist

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

Chair Ireland called the meeting to order at 9:09 a.m.

He respectfully acknowledged that the meeting was being held on the traditional and unceded territory of the Syilx Okanagan Nation.

**2. INTRODUCTION OF LATE ITEMS**

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

***“THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of May 7, 2024 be approved.”***

**CARRIED**

**4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

- 4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of April 2, 2024, held at Regional District of North Okanagan.

A small amendment was noted regarding who attended the April meeting from RDOS.

***“THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on April 2, 2024, held at Regional District of North Okanagan, be approved as amended.”***

**CARRIED**

**5. STAFF REPORTS**

- 5.1 Executive Director Report

Dr. Sears reported that the OBWB’s annual audit report is being prepared and will be presented at the June board meeting. The audited financial statements will be included in the OBWB’s upcoming annual report.

The board discussed the B.C. government’s new Watershed Security Fund and concerns about the size of the fund.

***“THAT the OBWB send a letter to B.C. Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship Nathan Cullen, regarding the Watershed Security Fund and the needs and costs for restoration and maintenance of primary water source areas in the Okanagan; AND THAT the board urge the province to either increase the endowment or create an alternative funding source.”***

**CARRIED**

Dr. Sears noted her participation in the International Joint Commission semi-annual meeting. Discussions included drought management, water quality issues, and the structure of the International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control. There is interest, she noted, in the board becoming an “International Watershed Board” which would allow the body to expand its scope of work. There was also talk about the updating the Zosel Dam operating orders to reflect the challenges posed by climate change since their last revision in 2013. Dr. Sears also noted that Osoyoos Lake’s water level is now maintained at a record high in anticipation of drought this summer.

The board was told of a recent presentation at an online meeting of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. Dr. Sears presented recommendations including; increased investment in local government flood, drought, and wildfire mitigation; increased funding for aquatic invasive species (AIS) management in Western Canada; and, implementation of the recommendations in Commissioner Julie Gelfand’s report on AIS. A video of the presentation is available at <https://youtu.be/Qfb8JKldbUI?si=IJ04iUxuKs694htw>.

Dir. Victor Cumming joined the meeting at 9:16 a.m.

***“THAT the Executive Director’s Report, dated May 7, 2024, be received.”***

**CARRIED**

## 5.2 Water Stewardship Director Report

Dr. Jatel provided an update on the annual Okanagan Water Supply webinar held April 12. Presentations from provincial and federal water authorities indicate a trend towards hotter and drier conditions.

The board was briefed on a presentation from Canada Water Agency (CWA) representatives at the previous Okanagan Water Stewardship Council meeting. It was noted that the Okanagan is not listed as a priority region, even though the federal government has previously recognized it as such. The CWA has also had discussions with Environment Funders Canada (EFC), of which OBWB is a member, requesting that EFC donate to the CWA priority watersheds. The board asked staff to draft a letter to CWA and inquire about their decision-making process, and send a separate letter to EFC.

***“THAT the OBWB send a letter to the Canada Water Agency regarding their selection of priority watersheds,  
AND THAT a separate letter be sent to Environment Funders Canada.”  
CARRIED***

***“THAT the Water Stewardship Director’s Report, dated April 30, 2024, be received.”***

***CARRIED 9:33 a.m.***

## 5.3 Water Science Specialist Report

Ms. Schira reported that Okanagan snowpack levels are substantially below average, with the province reporting levels at 39% of normal as of April 22. The region is currently at Drought Level 2, and in response, the provincially-led Thompson-Okanagan Regional Drought Response Team will begin drought calls earlier than usual to prepare for the anticipated continuation of drought conditions.

***“THAT the Water Science Specialist’s Report, dated April 30, 2024, be received.”***

***CARRIED 9:37 a.m.***

## 5.4 Communications Director Report

Ms. Jackson provided an update on the annual “Make Water Work” (MWW) outdoor residential water conservation campaign. Details are being worked out for the launch, but the 2024 launch and campaign will include the theme of “learning from fire.” The board was told of conversations staff have had with Okanagan fire officials around the importance of being WaterWise in times of drought and wildfire. The Make Water Work Plant Collection is being reviewed and will emphasize plants that are water efficient and FireSmart.

Ms. Jackson highlighted efforts to raise awareness for the “Preparing for Invasive Mussels: Vulnerability Assessment Guide,” including a news release, social media posts, and website updates aimed at promoting the guide. The board was also informed about a recent funding announcement from the province, recognizing funding from BC Hydro and other partners for its Invasive Mussel Defence Program. The Water Board was invited to provide a quote and staff worked with Chair Ireland to provide one. It was also noted that a report will be brought to the board in June to determine next steps in addressing the invasive mussel threat.

*“THAT the Communications Director’s Report, dated April 30, 2024, be received.”*

**CARRIED**

**6. CORRESPONDENCE**

*“THAT the letters from Conservative Party of Canada MPs to federal government, cc’d to OBWB regarding invasive mussels, and that the letter from Regional District Central Okanagan to the B.C. government, cc’d to OBWB regarding invasive mussels be received.”*

**CARRIED**

**7. NEXT MEETING**

7.1 The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be on Tuesday, June 4, 2024 at 10 a.m. at the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen.

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

*“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of May 7, 2024 be adjourned at 9:50 a.m.”*

**CARRIED**

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Executive Director