



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE OKANAGAN BASIN WATER BOARD
HELD OCTOBER 1, 2024, AT RDOS
101 Martin St. Penticton, B.C.**

PRESENT

Chair Blair Ireland	Regional District Central Okanagan
Vice Chair Doug Holmes	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Sue McKortoff	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Victor Cumming	Regional District North Okanagan
Director Wayne Carson	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Bob Fleming	Regional District North Okanagan
Alt-Director Adrienne Fedrigo	Regional District Okanagan-Similkameen
Director Tim Lezard	Okanagan Nation Alliance
Director Bob Hrasko	Water Supply Association of B.C.
Director Jeremy Fyke	Okanagan Water Stewardship Council (OWSC)

REGRETS

Director Charlie Hodge	Regional District Central Okanagan
Director Rick Fairbairn	Regional District North Okanagan

STAFF

James Littlely	Interim Executive Director
Nelson Jatel	Water Stewardship Director
Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo	Office and Grants Manager
Amanda Burnett	Communications Coordinator

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Chair Ireland called the meeting to order at 10:05 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

No late items.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

“ THAT the agenda of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of October 1, 2024 be approved.”

CARRIED

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

4.1 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of September 6, 2024, held at the Rotary Centre for the Arts in Kelowna, B.C.

“ THAT the minutes of the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board on September 6, 2024, held at the Rotary Centre for the Arts in Kelowna, B.C., be approved.”

CARRIED

5. STAFF REPORTS

5.1 Interim Executive Director Report – James Littlely

Mr. Littlely presented a proposed Water Board meeting schedule for 2025.

“THAT the OBWB adopts the 2025 meeting schedule as presented”
CARRIED

Mr. Littlely spoke to the Board about his work on the 2026 Budget, providing a brief summary of some increases. Mr. Littlely also discussed board remuneration best practices published by the Union of B.C. Municipalities, and that he was reviewing OBWB Director Remuneration Policy as part of budget planning.

Mr. Littlely gave a brief update on the hiring process for the new Communications Manager. He also informed the board about his upcoming attendance at the International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control (IOLBC) on Thursday, Oct. 3rd, and spoke about the upcoming public meeting, hosted by the IOLBC on the same day, where the IOLBC will hear questions and comments from the public about lake level management and the IOLBC’s activities.

Mr. Littlely also updated the board on the milfoil control program, and that a Request for Proposals for a new milfoil harvester was in process. Because of the need to order the harvester to be delivered during summer 2025, a contract would need to be signed in October.

“THAT the OBWB authorize the new Interim Executive Director to sign a contract for the purchase of a new milfoil harvesting machine for up to a maximum of \$385,000 plus tax.”
CARRIED

In a continued update to the Milfoil Program, Mr. Littlely spoke about the new 5-year rototilling permit for the milfoil program, which is expected soon thanks to productive discussions with provincial staff. This permit provides guidelines for adding treatment areas, while considering environmental protections and First Nations engagement, enabling a more scientific, precise approach to targeting milfoil removal.

The Board asked questions about milfoil removal in specific areas in the Okanagan, and it was noted that some areas are heavily affected with milfoil that have previously not received treatment, specifically in the North Okanagan. Board Directors enquired about requests for milfoil removal from specific areas and were informed that local government requests for milfoil control are prioritized under current OBWB policy. It was also noted that historically, areas adjacent to first nations land and reserves have not been prioritized, and that part of the process of referrals going forward will be to ask what band priorities are for milfoil treatment. It was noted that there is potentially the worst milfoil density in the Okanagan in the North arm of Okanagan Lake, near Okanagan Indian Band land.

“THAT the Board directs staff to craft a statement from the Board, stating that the OBWB would like to initiate working more collaboratively to address milfoil removal in areas prioritized by Indian Bands, with a specific letter to the OKIB to address the milfoil density issue in the North Okanagan.”

CARRIED

Mr. Littlely continued with an update on invasive mussels and that OBWB received interest from Alberta MLA Grant Hunter, head of the Alberta Invasive Mussel Task Force for a meeting to discuss

interprovincial cooperation on invasive mussels. Mr. Littley responded to MLA Hunter's office requesting that the meeting be delayed until after the outcome of the B.C. election.

Additionally, Mr. Littley will be presenting to the Health Officer's Council in White Rock in October, about water quality and public health issues related to invasive mussels. Recent findings of quagga mussels in the Snake River, Idaho, demonstrate the near impossible challenge of eradicating these invasive species, and highlight the urgency for the OBWB's call to actions such as mandatory inspections, a temporary interprovincial boat ban, and establishing an invasive mussel-free zone in collaboration with Alberta and Saskatchewan.

"THAT the Interim Executive Director's Report, dated October 1, 2024, be received."
CARRIED

5.2 Water Stewardship Director Report – Dr. Nelson Jatel

Dr. Jatel presented to the Board about the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council's (WSC) meeting on September 12, 2024, which featured expert discussions on blue-green algae's impact on water, progress updates from four committees, including the Policy Committee's water infrastructure paper and drought report, and the launch of a climate dashboard. Key issues such as water management's economic effects, herbicide impacts, invasive mussel prevention, and environmental updates were addressed. The Council, alongside ONA Fishery Department, is focusing on real-time hydrometric data for stream management, with several Okanagan streams being critically low in September.

The next WSC meeting is on October 10th.

Dr. Fyke, Chair of the Water Stewardship Council, spoke in-depth about the work of the WSC's Policy Committee, highlighting their report on the review of the 2023 provincial drought response, which compares and contrasts drought responses in the Okanagan to other regions in B.C. This report is a good example of the ability of the WSC's ability to provide thorough water science reports to continue to support the work of the OBWB.

Dr. Jatel continued his presentation to the Board, discussing, the work of the new postdoctoral fellow, who will be focusing on key issues affecting irrigated land in the Okanagan, specifically connections between ground water and surface water.

"THAT the Water Stewardship Director's Report, dated October 1, 2024, be received."
CARRIED.

5.3 Water Science Specialist Report – Presented by Dr. Nelson Jatel on behalf of Sandra Schira

Ms. Schira continues to attend weekly provincial drought meetings. She created graphs illustrating the Okanagan's drought levels over time, highlighting the impact on our region's water flow. After severe drought conditions in 2023, the Okanagan started at drought level 2 in May due to low snowpack. Although the level increased to 3 and high summer temperatures threatened to worsen conditions, periodic rain in spring and summer helped alleviate the initial dryness. Streamflow varied throughout the summer, affecting fish spawning and ecosystem health, but cooler temperatures at the end of the season should reduce strain. Water stewardship and improved drought communication remain priorities for OBWB staff.

"THAT the Water Science Specialist Report, dated October 1, 2024, be received."
CARRIED.

5.3 Office and Grants Manager Report – Carolina Restrepo-Tamayo

Ms. Restrepo provided the board with a mid-term update on the Water Conservation and Quality Improvement (WCQI) grants for the 2024 – 2025 cycle. Grant applicants are required to submit their mid-term reports by October 31st.

The Board also received an update on the Sewer Grant Program. In June 2024, the board updated the sewer grants program to include more funding for community systems and to support rural areas in managing wastewater to protect groundwater and community health. This included new grants for developing Liquid Waste Management Plans (LWMPs), with eligibility starting in 2025. On August 22nd, the first LWMP grant notification was received from the District of Lake Country for their plan, which involves drafting reports, community engagement, and an Environmental Impact Study. This notification allows planning for future grant payments, with the District's projected annual grant at \$17,333.33 for three years based on the \$325,000 project cost. Final numbers are determined when the project is complete, and the final grant amount is brought back to the board for approval at that time.

“THAT the Board approve in principle the Lake Country LWMP project as described above, and that staff include the projected amount in the 2026 SFA program budget.”
CARRIED.

“THAT the Office and Grants Manager Report, dated October 1, 2024, be received.”
CARRIED.

6. DIRECTOR ROUNDTABLE

Board directors took the opportunity to discuss their recent attendance at the UBCM Convention in Vancouver. Directors highlighted their discussions with provincial ministers about invasive mussel detecting K9s, water treatment facility funding, and the connection between forest management and watershed management.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

A letter from the staff of Alberta MLA Grant Hunter, regarding inter-provincial cooperation in preventing invasive zebra / quagga mussels was received.

“THAT correspondence to the OBWB, dated October 1, 2024, be received.”
CARRIED.

8. IN-CAMERA

7.1 In-camera session (under sec. 90(1)(m) and 90(1)(c) of the Community Charter) at 11:32 a.m.

The board exited the in-camera session at 11:50 a.m. to adjourn the meeting.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board will be held virtually on Tuesday, November 5th.

10. ADJOURNMENT

“THAT there being no further business, the regular meeting of the Okanagan Basin Water Board of October 1, 2024 be adjourned at 11:50 a.m.”

CARRIED

Certified Correct:		
Chair		Interim Executive Director