
CITY OF KELOWNA

MEMORANDUM

Date: November 10, 2008
File No.: 0230-20
To: City Manager
From: General Manager, Citizen Services
Subject: Okanagan Basin Water Board – Water Management Program Review

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the City of Kelowna endorses the Central Okanagan Regional District Sept 14th, 2008 resolution #215/08 for renewal of the OBWB Water Management Program subject to the Central Okanagan Regional District allocating of the of the three OBWB positions to the City of Kelowna

AND THAT Council direct staff to become an active member of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council in their advisory role to the Water Board.

AND THAT Council encourage the other 3 major municipalities of the Okanagan to also become equally involved in the OBWB Water Stewardship Council.

BACKGROUND:

At the regular meeting of Kelowna City Council held October 6, 2008, Council received a presentation from Anna Sears Warwick, OBWB Executive Director requesting Council's endorsement of the RDCO resolution of Sept 15, 2008 for the OBWB Water Management Program for an additional 3 years. Council requested that staff review this request and report back to Council before a decision was made on this request.

The OBWB Water Stewardship Program was initiated in 2006 with a 3 year mandate to improve the OBWB's ability to assist local government and other water purveyors; to advance water management in the Okanagan valley by defining and promoting solutions to water management issues of basin wide significance. The Program was to work with many partners to initiate a basin wide approach to water planning and to complement rather than duplicate work of individual jurisdictions.

Staff believes that the OBWB is uniquely positioned to facilitate discussions and activities between all levels of government to develop a basin wide approach to sustainable water resource management. Through the implementation of a Water Stewardship Council, they have been able to bring many stakeholders in the water resource area together to develop a draft strategy entitled Okanagan Sustainable Water Strategy. These efforts should have a positive impact on improving the water resource in the Okanagan.

It is recommended that both Council and staff take an active role in the activities of this program. City of Kelowna taxpayers by themselves fund over 40% of this program. The City would have much to contribute due to our proactive efforts on water conservation; watershed protection and restoration; and leading edge stormwater, wastewater and water treatment practices. There are many recommendations of the draft Water Strategy that could potentially have significant impacts on the



City of Kelowna, from a planning, operational and financial perspective. To date, the Water Stewardship Council has not had ongoing representation from staff of any of the four major municipal governments in the valley. OBWB staff has encouraged the City to provide staff to attend this Council. Recognizing many provincial and federal departments involved in the water resource area, Council and staff could support the efforts of the OBWB to ensure those provincial and federal jurisdictions fulfill their mandates. \$300,000 of funds collected from valley taxpayers by OBWB are administered by the Water Program in the form of grants back to local governments and water purveyors for water enhancement projects. It should be ensured that these funds are directed toward initiatives with a basin wide benefit and not toward specific projects that relate to local water sustainability, best practice such as metering and education programs. There is a large diversity in sustainability activities by the many water utilities in the valley. It would financially inequitable to have taxpayers in proactive utilities subsidizing those who have chosen not to initiate those efforts to date.

There are considerable decisions to be made in the water resource area for the Okanagan Basin over the coming years. Water is a very limited resource in the valley. Wise water use, protection of fisheries habitat, adequate water supply for agriculture, maintaining Okanagan Lake water quality, responding to impacts of climate change, requirements for enhanced drinking water quality, and supporting economic sustainability must all be dealt with over the coming years. The OBWB can bring together all stakeholders involved in those decisions to allow a comprehensive balanced approach to this.

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS: Staff support will be provided through Don Degen, Utilities Services Manager and his staff.

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Vos", is written over a horizontal line.

John Vos, P. Eng.

Cc: Director, Infrastructure Operations
Utility Services Manager