



Making a difference...together

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE Water Advisory Committee, held Tuesday, March 28, 2023 at 12 pm, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Boardroom 625 Fisgard Street, Victoria, BC**

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**PRESENT: Members:** K. Oppen (Chair); J. Todd (Vice Chair) (EP); C. Davis (EP); M. Doehnel; A. Fernandes (EP); T. Krawczyk; A. McArdle; C. Nowakowski; A. Pakvis; J. Rogers (EP); W. Scheuer (12:15); D. Timothy (12:10); M. Turner; K. Zimmerman  
**Staff:** I. Jesney, Acting General Manager, Integrated Water Services; S Irg, Senior Manager, Infrastructure Water Operations; S. Mason, Manager, Water Supply Engineering and Planning, Infrastructure Engineering; P Stephens, Project Engineer, Infrastructure Engineering (EP); J Zimmerman, Communications Coordinator, Integrated Water Services; D Dionne, Administrative Coordinator, Integrated Water Services; M Risvold, Committee & Administrative Clerk, Integrated Water Services (Recorder)

**Also in Attendance:** G. Baird, Chair Regional Water Supply Commission; S. Burke (Stantec Consulting); K. Boseman (Stantec Consulting); K. Pugel (Stantec Consulting); S. Heffernan (Urban Systems Ltd.); D. Haung (Urban Systems Ltd.)

**REGRETS:** C. Stock

EP = Electronic Participation

The meeting was called to order at 12:01 pm.

**1. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Regional Water Supply Chair, Gord Baird, provided the Territorial Acknowledgement.

**2. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

G. Baird called for nominations for Chair of the Water Advisory Committee for a one-year term ending December 31, 2023.

Katie Oppen self nominated.

G. Baird called for nominations a second time.

G. Baird called for nominations a third and final time.

Hearing no further nominations, K. Oppen was acclaimed as Chair for 2023.

**3. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR**

The Chair called for nominations for Vice Chair of the Water Advisory Committee for a one-year term ending December 31, 2023.

M. Turner nominated J. Todd. J. Todd accepted nomination.

The Chair called for nominations a second time.

The Chair called for nominations a third and final time.

Hearing no further nominations, J. Todd was acclaimed as Vice Chair for 2023.

#### 4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**MOVED** by T. Krawczyk, **SECONDED** by A. McArdle,  
That the agenda be approved.

**CARRIED**

#### 5. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

**MOVED** by T. Krawczyk, **SECONDED** by D. Timothy,  
That the minutes of the September 1, 2022 meeting be adopted.

**CARRIED**

#### 6. CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Chair stated that as a new member of the Committee she has lots of questions. She would like to have open friendly conversations. She noted that water is a very important resource and that she is looking forward to a successful year.

#### 7. PRESENTATIONS/DELEGATIONS

There were no presentations or delegations.

#### 8. GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

I. Jesney introduced himself as the acting general manager of Integrated Water Services and noted that he will continue the position, as it relates to committees and commissions until July, when he will be fully retired.

He advised that a new General Manager has been hired, Alicia Fraser, and she will assume those responsibilities on July 24, 2023.

He noted that Water Advisory Committee meetings have been typically held at the Integrated Water Services office on Old Island Highway, however due the number of people in attendance today it was decided to hold the meeting in the boardroom. The meetings will likely continue to be in the Figgard St. Boardroom. Meeting location can be revisited based on in person and online attendance.

#### 9. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

##### 9.1. Water Advisory Committee Orientation Presentation

I. Jesney provided the orientation.

Discussion ensued and staff responded to questions from the Committee regarding:

- Bylaws, federal acts, and guidelines
- Bulk water sales
- Status of reservoir filling, historically later this year than past years, no current concerns regarding water levels
- Water restrictions and conservations
- Effect of snowpack on reservoir levels
- Budget breakdown

- Asbestos pipe locations and capital replacement program
- Upgrading and maintaining the water system

Staff will provide the Committee with links to the Regional Water Supply service budget staff report, the 2017 strategic plan and the 2022 master plan.

## **9.2. Proposed Regional Water Supply Development Cost Charge Program and Bylaw**

I. Jesney provided a summary of the report and introduced staff from Urban Systems Ltd. who provided a presentation on the proposed Regional Water Supply Development Cost Charge (DCC) program.

Discussion ensued with staff and presenters responding to questions from the Committee regarding:

- Possible push back from the development community due to the added cost.
- How the rates would be applied regionally. The DCC fee would apply to all developments serviced by Regional Water - First Nations excluded.
- Municipal Assist Factor (MAF) differential between Juan de Fuca Water Distribution service and Regional Water service – cannot set different MAF on a geographic basis.
- Other forms of DCC programs outside of Water DCCs.
- Rate difference between low-density housing, high-density housing and industrial.
- Whether there is an ability to incentivize or disincentives the rates as it relates to industrial development versus housing development.
- How categories are broken down and should align with municipal categories.
- Impact of DCC on water rate over time – water rate projections that were done for the 2022 Master Plan would flatten, as those projections did not consider DCC funding at that time.
- DCCs can only be charged on new developments that will receive the service.
- MAF percentages and what the Regional Water Service would be responsible for.

A feedback questionnaire was provided to the Committee as Appendix E and will be emailed out at the end of this meeting. Staff requested that it be completed and returned by April 14. It is anonymous. Staff will share the results with the Committee. The results of the Committee's feedback will be going to the Regional Water Supply Commission in May.

## **9.3. Agricultural Water Rate Review – Progress Update**

S. Irg provided a summary of the report and introduced staff from Stantec Consulting who provided a presentation on the Agricultural Water Rate Review and the various rate options.

Discussion ensued with staff and presenters responding to questions from the Committee regarding:

- The process for the collection of agricultural rate review data.
- Agriculture studies from other jurisdictions.
- Cost benefit framework – in terms of what is the future of the agricultural water rate subsidy program.
- Decreasing or reducing the eligibility. BC Assessments of farmland might be done for properties that are not food production farms.
- Discussion ensued regarding Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), the protection of land with the potential of farming, and the assessment of land, not in the ALR, by BC Assessment as a farm.

*C. Davis left at 2:20pm*

- Data sharing between the different levels of government beyond what is publicly available on websites.
- How farming activity is defined. The Farm Assessment Act lays out what needs to be done to receive farm status.

*M. Turner left at 2:33pm*

- How the rate options were determined.
- The Committee request that, when the final report comes forward, the “Model Options Study” page in Appendix B of the Stantec report, contain further detail such as a table showing the concerns expressed and how they could be addressed.
- The deadline for providing feedback is flexible.

There was a discussion regarding the Water Advisory Committee working groups. The Committee agreed to reestablish the Agriculture Working Group to discuss the information. Staff will assist with providing meeting coordination.

Staff will forward a link to the Agricultural Water Rate questionnaire following this meeting.

#### **9.4. Summary of Recommendations from Regional Water Supply Commission**

I. Jesney advised that this is a summary of what has occurred at the Regional Water Supply Commission meetings and is for information only.

#### **9.5. Water Watch Report**

I. Jesney advised that this report is an ongoing statistical analysis of reservoir levels that is provided for information only.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- Quarterly data versus of monthly
- Storage capacity in Sooke Lake Reservoir

- The 2022 Master Plan
- Stage two water conservation
- Climate change and precipitation
- Weather extremes
- Retail water sales

The Committee requested a different view of the Water Watch report showing year over year and/or month over month – rather than week over week.

#### **10. WATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE PROPOSED MEETING SCHEDULE**

Regular meetings of the Water Advisory Committee shall be held on the fourth Tuesday of the month commencing at 12 pm unless otherwise determined.

- March 28, 2023
- June 27, 2023
- September 26, 2023
- December 12, 2023 Special date (in lieu of December 26)

#### **11. NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

#### **12. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOVED** by T. Krawczyk, **SECONDED** by A. McArdle,  
That the March 28, 2023 meeting be adjourned at 3:24 pm.

**CARRIED**

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**CHAIR**

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**SECRETARY**