



Making a difference...together

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE Skana Water Service Committee, held Thursday, November 9, 2023 at 9:30 am, Goldstream Conference Room, 479 Island Highway, Victoria, BC

PRESENT: **Committee Members:** W. Korol (Chair); Mitch Bentley (Vice Chair); R. Fenton (Alternate EA Director) (EP 9:49 am); B. Hill (EP); R. Johnston

Staff: J. Marr, Senior Manager, Infrastructure Engineering; J. Dales, Senior Manager, Wastewater Infrastructure Operations; S. Henderson, Senior Manager, Real Estate and SGI Administration; J. Kelly, Manager, Capital Projects; D. Robson, Manager, Saanich Peninsula and Gulf Island Operations; C. Moch, Manager, Water Quality; L. Xu, Manager, Local Services and Corporate Grants; D. Dionne, Administrative Coordinator (Recorder)

EP = Electronic Participation

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 am.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED by Commissioner Korol, **SECONDED** by Commissioner Johnston,
That the agenda be approved.

CARRIED

2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by Commissioner Korol, **SECONDED** by Commissioner Johnston,
That the minutes of the June 16, 2023 meeting be adopted.

CARRIED

3. CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Chair stated that the Committee and staff are working together as a team and that the Committee would like to be kept up to date on things that help them work effectively, being provided information proactively as it comes up so that they can be prepared ahead of meetings.

4. PRESENTATIONS/DELEGATIONS

There were no presentations or delegations.

5. SENIOR MANAGER'S REPORT

J. Dales provided the following Information and updates:

Winterization of private property:

The Capital Regional District (CRD) social media platform has a poster-style sheet with winterization information for system users. It includes a link to a video on winterizing irrigation systems. It is also located on all the Electoral Area drinking water public web pages.

There was a discussion regarding the challenges with communication of information with

users. Staff continue to investigate new or improved options for the future including adding a note to the electronic water bill.

Skana Water Service CRD staff liaison:

D. Robson will be providing more senior support to the Skana Water Service Committee, transitioning to being the main point of contact next year with J. Dales providing back up and attending meetings in Dan's absence.

Recruitment for an on-island manager is underway. The on-island manager of operations will be looking after all the local services on Salt Spring Island and the Southern Gulf Islands.

Operations and maintenance questions from the Committee:

Staff are happy to provide more informal quick updates related to the operation of the water system. He reminded the Committee that its role is to provide input on the overall direction for the service delivery and that the CRD Operations team manages the daily duties and administrative activities.

- The plan for the disinfection by-products is to address the infiltration of the organics into the well system through the well decommissioning project. Staff will monitor to see how this impacts the system – if the well improvements don't resolve the problem, the long-term plan would be adding additional treatment steps through treatment plant upgrades – staff are hoping to avoid this.

Water conservation plan:

J. Dales advised that he participates in a drought management group that meets weekly throughout the summer. The operations team closely monitors system conditions and water conservation stages are adjusted accordingly. The bylaw went into effect this year which provides additional tools to address water quantity in the system, but the primary driver is still through education and awareness and encouraging people to voluntarily comply.

There was a discussion regarding water conservation across all the Local Services. The Committee noted that the bylaw is primarily related to outdoor water use and stated that many local systems do not allow outdoor water usage year-round already. The Committee would like to see a more fit-for-purpose level of stages for small systems that address tighter restrictions and a more meaningful message.

R. Fenton joined the meeting.

Staff are keeping track of these types of comments from the local services and will review if there is opportunity to revise the bylaw with more customized language.

On-island operator:

The Request for Proposals (RFP) is being drafted, and staff plan to have this RFP issued by year-end. In the interim, while the CRD's operations team has been operating the system, it has provided staff with the knowledge needed to develop the RFP. Staff have become more familiar with the utility and have been able to optimize services for both Skana and Surfside water systems.

Water conservation update:

Due to the drought conditions this year, the water conservation efforts were extended an additional month for most of the local services. Staff continue to monitor conditions and once the conditions improve the restrictions will be downgraded or removed as applicable.

Tank action plan – question submitted from a previous meeting:

The storage tank assessment capital project will provide the information the committee is looking for in an action plan. To do an action plan outside the project would be added staff time and resources and would come at an extra cost. The timeline and projected costs for project 24-02 is laid out in the five-year capital plan of the budget document (page 17 of the agenda package). Staff noted the tank replacement is not imminent in the next year, allowing time for proper study and planning.

6. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

6.1. 2024 Operating and Capital Budget

Staff presented the report and summarized the 2024 budget and five-year capital plan.

Staff responded to questions from the committee regarding:

- The increases to the Operating Reserve Fund and the Capital Reserve Fund.
- Staff explained the Alternative Approval and referendum processes.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- Asset management plan
- Value of assets
- The need for capital reserve fund balances

There was a discussion regarding the budgeted \$25,000 funding for Well No. 8 upgrades. Staff noted that the cost of electrical and instrumentation is very challenging to estimate. Staff noted that the \$25,000 was approved in the 2023 budget, but that the Committee could put a cap on the amount used.

MOVED by R. Johnston, **SECONDED** by B. Hill,

That staff be directed to utilize up to \$10,000 of the \$25,000 budget for Project 17-04 in 2024 to scope out the Well No. 8 Upgrade project and present the findings to the committee prior to further action.

CARRIED

There was a discussion regarding increasing user fees to compensate for new connections to the system.

MOVED by W. Korol, **SECONDED** by M. Bentley,

That the Skana Water Service Committee increase the capital reserve transfer by \$3,000, from \$22,325 to \$25,325, to be balanced on user charge from \$61,160 to \$64,160.

CARRIED

Opposed: Johnston

There was a discussion regarding how and when users are informed of rate increases. Staff advised that the fee will be built into the Fees and Charges bylaw for all the Local Services, which is presented to the CRD Board on December 13 for approval to be effective January 1. The Committee stated they would like to see a better job of communicating to the users, the website could be more useful, explanatory notices to the users.

Staff noted that they can investigate what can be done, but that there is also a responsibility on the user to stay informed.

MOVED by W. Korol, **SECONDED** by M. Bentley,
That the Skana Water Service Committee:
Approve the 2024 operating and capital budget as amended and that the 2023 actual operating deficit be balanced on the 2023 Reserve Funds transfer (Capital Reserve Fund and/or Operating Reserve Fund).

CARRIED

MOVED by W. Korol, **SECONDED** by B. Hill,
That the Skana Water Service Committee:
Recommends that Electoral Areas Committee recommend to the Capital Regional District Board that the 2024 Operating and Capital Budget and the five-year Financial Plan for the Skana Water Service be approved as amended.

CARRIED

12:04 R. Fenton left the meeting.

12:06 B. Hill left the meeting.

6.2. Project and Operations Update

Staff provided overview of the staff report.

7. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

8. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

9. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by R. Johnston, **SECONDED** by Commissioner M. Bentley,
That the November 9, 2023 meeting be adjourned at 12:15 pm.

CARRIED

CHAIR

SECRETARY