



Making a difference...together

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE Water Advisory Committee, held Tuesday, May 28, 2024 at 12 p.m., Goldstream Meeting Room, 479 Island Highway, Victoria, BC**

---

**PRESENT:** **PRESENT:** **Members:** K. Oppen (Chair); K. Zimmerman (Vice Chair)(EP); M. Doehnel; A. Fernandes (EP); K. Harper; T. Krawczyk (EP); A. McArdle; A. Pakvis (EP); T. Pedersen; J. Rogers; W. Scheuer; M. Turner;  
**Staff:** A. Fraser, General Manager, Integrated Water Services; S Irg, Senior Manager, Infrastructure Water Operations; Annette Constabel, Senior Manager, Watershed Protection; Glenn Harris, Senior Manager, Environmental Protection; Jason Dales, Senior Manager, Infrastructure Wastewater Operations; J. Marr, Senior Manager, Infrastructure Engineering; Shayne Irg, Senior Manager, Infrastructure Water Operations; D. Dionne, Integrated Water Services (Recorder); Mikayla Risvold, Committee & Administrative Clerk  
**Also in attendance:** Gord Baird, Chair, Regional Water Supply Commission; Joanna Winter, Strategic Plan Review Workshop Facilitator

**REGRETS:** C. Davis; C. Nowakowski; D. Timothy

EP = Electronic Participation

The meeting was called to order at 12:08 pm.

**1. TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The Chair provided the Territorial Acknowledgement.

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOVED** by M. Doehnel, **SECONDED** by A. McArdel,  
That the agenda be approved.

**CARRIED**

**3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

**MOVED** by T. Pedersen, **SECONDED** by W. Scheuer,  
That the minutes of the February 27, 2024 Water Advisory Committee meeting be adopted as circulated.

**CARRIED**

**4. CHAIR'S REMARKS**

The Chair referred the Committed to her email for the structure of today's meeting. There will be a presentation and a high-level discussion and feedback session today with more detailed feedback to be gathered further on in the process.

**5. PRESENTATIONS/DELEGATIONS**

There were none.

## 6. GENERAL MANAGERS REPORT

A. Fraser introduced staff in the room who are present to support the strategic planning process.

## 7. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

### 7.1. Regional Water Supply Strategic Plan [Presentation]

A. Fraser introduced Joanne Winter, who will start the presentation and facilitate the workshop portion of the meeting.

Throughout the presentation feedback was gathered from Committee members and comments on proposed priorities are noted in red below.

#### Internal and External Trends:

***As customers, ratepayers, experts, what do you think are the things that we will need to focus on in the next five plus years?***

- Climate Instability (drought / extreme weather)
- Cyber Security
- Food Security
- Drinking Water Security
- Emergency Water Sources
- Reconciliation
- Irrigation (risk)

#### Mission Statement – Discussion / Comments:

***Together we provide reliable, high-quality drinking water to help ensure the health and sustainability of the growing communities we serve today and in the future.***

- There were concerns raised with limiting the wording to drinking water and excluding other water uses. G. Baird clarified the Regional Water Supply Commission's authority and that its focus is on quality drinking water which can be used for other water uses.
- There was discussion regarding what other mission statements reflect and staff noted that they are all very different depending on the utility and the type of services provided.
- J. Winter reminded the Committee that the plan will be reviewed every five years and can be modified as may be required.

#### Commitment 1 – comments on proposed priorities noted in red:

***Provide high quality, safe drinking water.***

1. **Manage Protect (use a more proactive word than manage)** the Greater Victoria Water Supply Area for the protection of long-term sustainable high-quality source water.
2. Ensure drinking water quality with a multi-barrier risk-based approach.
3. Advance our understanding of the water supply area **(or watershed?)** and source water to prepare for the future.

**Commitment 1: Comments posted to the online meeting chat:**

There should be a formal acknowledgment of outdoor water use / irrigation water in the new Strategic Plan.

Acknowledging irrigation's importance to:

- the local ecology
- restoration of degraded lands
- local food production
- also its associated risks (the irrigation tap turns off when the rains stop).

This matter is somewhat dealt with in the water restriction levels (e.g. no watering of lawns at Stage 4) - but is there another area of the strategic plan to flush out the Capital Regional District's (CRD) commitment to outdoor irrigation water? Are some forms of outdoor use more appropriate than others? Food security is covered to a degree, so we're getting there.

But otherwise, is irrigation water simply a positive externality of producing excess drinking water?

What would the CRD look like with two to three years of no irrigation? I suspect it could become a parched, low-biodiversity, brittle landscape faster than many of us think, especially where soils have been disturbed.

**Commitment 2 – comments on proposed priorities noted in red:**

***Provide an adequate, reliable, long-term supply of drinking water – comments on proposed priorities.***

1. Continuously plan and prepare for future water supply needs (**including landscaping, irrigation, agriculture, ecological**).
2. Enhance public ~~connection and~~ confidence **and responsibility** of the water supply and value of water.
3. ~~Maximize~~ **Optimize** our **available sustainable** water supply through adaptive demand management strategies.
4. ~~Act now to~~ implement a sustainable and equitable long-term financial plan.

There was discussion regarding the use of "Act now" in Priority 4, staff stated the intent is to begin now with long-term financial planning, rather than waiting until it is needed.

**Commitment 3 – comments on proposed priorities noted in red:**

***Provide efficient, **effective** and innovative operations of water system infrastructure – comments on proposed priorities.***

1. Make ~~data-driven~~ (**science-based or evidence-based**) decisions to ensure reliable system performance and long-term sustainability.
2. Assure long-term sustainability and capacity of water management operations through sufficient resources, robust processes, strategic partnerships, effective tools, and continuous innovation.
3. ~~Protect the public by e~~**Enhancing** the security and sustainability of the water supply by effectively managing risks and enhancing emergency response capabilities.

4. Attract, develop, and retain a diverse, ~~and high performing knowledgeable and~~ **empowered** workforce.

**Guiding Principles:**

1. Empowering staff for sustainable water management
2. Supporting a growing region with reliable service
3. Respecting and adapting to the changing environment
4. Managing our resources effectively and efficiently
5. Proactively managing internal and external risks
6. Fostering collaborative relationships with customers and partners to improve our service

**Things not specifically mentioned (expand to guiding principles):**

- Environment
- Food security
- Municipalities
- Inter-connection with other services (agriculture, wastewater etc.)

**Next steps:**

Staff will incorporate the Water Advisory Committee's feedback and refine the Strategic Plan Actions. There will be a similar workshop for the Regional Water Supply Commission on July 17, 2024 and staff will seek feedback from the Commission. Once guidance from the Commission has been received, the Strategic Plan will go out for public engagement late fall. Staff hope to come back the Water Advisory Committee early in 2025 for final approval.

**MOVED** by A. McArdle, **SECONDED** by W. Scheuer,  
The Water Advisory Committee recommends to the Regional Water Supply Commission the endorsement of the draft 2025 Strategic Plan for the Greater Victoria Water Supply System, as amended by the feedback received during the Water Advisory Committee meeting of May 28, 2024.

**CARRIED**

**7.2. Water Advisory Committee Proposal – Agricultural Water Rates**

Water Advisory Committee members prepared a summary of comments related to the Agricultural Water Rate Study which contained several recommendations, including not proceeding with a change to the agricultural water rate. Staff noted that the Committee could request that the Regional Water Supply Commission put the study on hold.

**MOVED** by W. Scheuer, **SECONDED** by T. Pedersen,  
The Water Advisory Committee recommends to the Regional Water Supply Commission that the Agricultural Water Rate Study be paused until further review by the Water Advisory Committee.

**CARRIED**

**7.3. Summary of Recommendations from Regional Water Supply Commission**

Received for information.

**7.4. Water Watch Report**

Received for information.

**8. NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOVED** by M. Turner, **SECONDED** by J. Rogers,  
That the May 28, 2024 meeting be adjourned at 2:27 pm.

**CARRIED**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**CHAIR**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**SECRETARY**