

Council Meeting
December 13th 2023 • 9:30 – 12:30 PM
Zoom meeting

Record of decisions and action items
Approved on March 13th, 2024

Meeting objectives

1. Receive update from program managers
2. Approve budget updates for 2023-24
3. Receive guest presentation from White Lake Residents' Association
4. Receive research proposal from Margot Webster, M.Sc. candidate

Present

Jay Simpson, Chair – Columbia Shuswap Regional District, Area F
Natalya Melnychuk, Vice Chair – Columbia Shuswap Regional District, Area G
Marty Gibbons – Columbia Shuswap Regional District, Area C (*from 10:45 am*)
Rhona Martin – Columbia Shuswap Regional District, Area E
Debbie Cannon – City of Salmon Arm (*to 11:35 am*)
Pam Beech – District of Sicamous (*to 10:25 am*)
David Lepsoe – Thompson-Nicola Regional District, Village of Chase (*to 11:45 am*)
Allysa Hopkins – Regional District of North Okanagan, Area F
Kym Keogh – BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (*to 10:30 am*)
Lindsay Benbow – BC Ministry of Agriculture & Food (*to 11:35 am*)
Erik Kok – Community representative (*to 12:00 pm*)
Kimm Magill-Hofmann – Community representative
Phil Owen – Community representative
Dennis Einarson – Senior Scientific Advisor (*from 9:55 am to 12:00 pm*)

Erin Vieira and Alex de Chantal – Staff, c/o Fraser Basin Council

Observers

Barbra Fairclough	Ian Rogalski
Clyde Mitchell	Lita Gomez
Linda Franklin	Carly Foster

Regrets

Reid Hamer-Jackson	Robyn Laubman
Howard Nordquist	Dean Trumbley
Kelly Chiatto	Jim Johnson

Call to Order

Chair Jay Simpson called the meeting to order at 9:40 AM.

The Chair acknowledged the traditional and historic lands of the Secwepemc and Syilx Peoples.

Adoption of meeting agenda

Moved/seconded by Director Hopkins/Erik Kok that:

The agenda for the December 13th 2023 meeting of the Shuswap Watershed Council be approved.

CARRIED

Adoption of meeting summary

Moved/seconded by Director Martin/Councillor Cannon that:

The summary of the September 13th 2023 meeting of the Shuswap Watershed Council be approved.

CARRIED

Correspondence

Moved/seconded by Vice Chair Melnychuk/Director Hopkins that:

The correspondence be received for information.

Discussion:

The Chair briefly summarized the reply letter that the SWC received from Ministers Heyman and Cullen; the letter suggested that SWC's recommendations for regulatory tools to stop the spread of invasive mussels be submitted through the *Wildlife Act* review process.

Councillor Beech remarked that it was great to see such an outpouring of correspondence from local governments to the Province about invasive mussels. Chair Simpson agreed; Vice Chair Melnychuk commented on the importance of having the SWC to serve as an advocate for this issue locally.

CARRIED

Moved/seconded by Director Martin/Director Hopkins that:

Staff follow up with the *Wildlife Act* review process as suggested in the Ministerial correspondence.

CARRIED

Action item:

Staff will submit the SWC recommendations to the Province for stopping the spread of invasive mussels to the *Wildlife Act* review process.

Old business: draft committee meeting summaries, for information

Moved/seconded by Vice Chair Melnychuk/Kimm Magill-Hofmann that:

The draft summaries of the Water Monitoring Group and the Water Protection Advisory Committee be received for information.

CARRIED

Dennis Einarson entered the meeting at 9:55 am

Old business: Item deferred from September 13th SWC meeting – Water Quality Grant Program budget

Mr. Alex de Chantal, Program Manager, gave a brief summary about the rationale for increasing the grant program budget, citing inflation and that the grant program was over-subscribed last year.

Moved/seconded by Director Hopkins/Councillor Cannon that:

The Water Quality Grant Program budget be increased by \$10,000 to a total of \$65,000 for 2023-24.

Discussion:

Councillor Cannon suggested that the grant program specifically target farms in the Salmon River valley and the Shuswap River valley, because the SWC research has shown this is the source of nutrients causing algal blooms. Mr. Phil Owen suggested that social media and mail-outs could be used in promoting the grant program to farms; he also remarked that the SWC could provide signage to grant recipients, similarly to the Environmental Farm Plan program. Mr. Dennis Einarson reminded everyone that the Province has an *Agricultural-Environmental Management Code of Practice*, which requires farms to meet certain standards and requirements; this legislation is being phased in over a period of years. Other comments were made about the grant program targeting hobby or commercial farms in the Shuswap watershed. Kym Keogh reminded everyone that if they observe concerns or problems relating to agricultural waste, they should call the Provincial RAPP line.

Chair Simpson directed staff to administer the vote by email because the meeting did not meet quorum for financial decisions.

Action item:

Staff will administer the vote via email. *Now complete.*

CARRIED

Councillor Pam Beech and Kym Keogh left the meeting at 10:30 am

Report from Chair

No report from Chair Simpson, he moved directly into the next agenda item.

Update on CSRD referendum and roundtable discussion

Chair Simpson reported that the CSRD has re-scheduled their referendum for the continuation of their funding to support the Shuswap Watershed Council to take place on February 3rd. CSRD staff will commence notifications about the referendum in early January. The CSRD Board has not yet determined if the tax in question will be a parcel tax or an *ad valorem* tax.

Director Gibbons and Carly Foster entered the meeting at 10:45 am

Discussion:

Director Martin commented that communications should emphasize that the CSRD service in question has been in place for 10 years and that the service has nothing to do with water metering or access to water for domestic purposes.

Erik Kok commented on the importance of the CSRD informing residents about the cost implications of continuing the service (i.e. whether it will be a parcel tax or an *ad valorem* tax).

Vice Chair Melnychuk suggested all SWC members reach out to CSRD voters to make them aware of the referendum.

The Chair commented that staff have requested an increase to the communications budget so that they can publish some informative articles and advertisements in January.

Report from Program Managers: revised communications budget for 2023-24 and revised wetland strategy budget for 2023-24

Chair Simpson noted the time and suggested the meeting move straight to the updated budget items as presented in the agenda package.

Moved/seconded by Kimm Magill-Hofmann/Phil Owen that:

The Communications budget be revised as presented.

Discussion:

Chair Simpson emphasized that SWC communications will focus on delivering factual information about the SWC's work so that CSRD voters are aware.

Director Gibbons commented that there is a contract with the CSRD and the Shuswap Watershed Council that restricts how the SWC can spend money on communications. Mr. Alex de Chantal, Program Manager, confirmed that necessary steps have been taken, the SWC is registered with Elections BC and that its communications will inform voters about the work of the SWC.

Mr. Erik Kok commented that he is in support of the SWC undertaking communications in January to inform voters about the work and the role of the SWC.

Chair Simpson directed staff to administer the vote by email because the meeting did not meet quorum for financial decisions.

Action item:

Staff will administer the vote via email. *Now complete.*

CARRIED (Director Gibbons opposed)

Moved/seconded by Director Hopkins/Kimm Magill-Hofmann that:

The Wetland Strategy budget be re-allocated as presented.

The motion could not be voted on because the meeting did not meet quorum for financial decisions.

Action item:

Staff will administer the vote via email. *Now complete.*

CARRIED

**Guest presentation:
White Lake
Residents'
Association**

Mr. Patrick Frank introduced himself as a resident and volunteer of White Lake Residents' Association (WLRA). He explained some of the monitoring underway at White Lake since 2017, including for invasive fish species and water quality. WLRA has worked with the Province and the Salmon Arm Fish and Game Club on these initiatives. In 2018, the WLRA joined the BC Lake Stewardship Society to embark on a Level 1 and later a Level 3 water monitoring program. The WLRA has an experienced volunteer water monitoring crew that carries out the program and they have secured water monitoring equipment. A Level 3 program has now been completed, spanning from 2020-2023. The WLRA will receive the results of their three-year Level 3 monitoring program from a staff member at the Province in January. In 2024 the WLRA is reverting to a simpler Level 1 monitoring program.

Mr. Frank thanked the Shuswap Watershed Council for the financial support to carry out a Level 3 water monitoring program on White Lake. To-date, the WLRA has spent \$3400 of the \$4200 granted from the SWC.

Discussion:

Mr. Erik Kok commented that it's great to see communities involved in local water monitoring.

Mr. Phil Owen asked if the funding from SWC leveraged any other funds for the White Lake monitoring program. Mr. Frank replied that there are plenty of volunteer hours committed to it.

**Guest presentation:
Margot Webster**

Ms. Erin Vieira, Program Manager, introduced Margot Webster, a Masters candidate studying at Royal Roads University in the Masters of Environmental Management Program and explained that Ms. Webster reached out to discuss her research thesis. Ms. Webster then introduced herself and stated she is on staff with the Ministry of Environment. Through her work with the Ministry she is aware of the algal blooms that have occurred in the Salmon Arm Bay of Shuswap Lake. She is interested in nature-based solutions to resolve complex environmental issues. Floating treatment wetlands (FTWs) are one such nature-based solution. She explained that it is a simple technology using plants to uptake nutrients from water to improve water quality. FTWs aren't a standardized technology and aren't well tested in natural environments in western Canada.

For her research, Ms. Webster will build three FTWs and deploy them in the Salmon River in 2024 and monitor how they take up nutrients from the river. She provided an overview of her experiment methodology, including three FTWs and a suite of water quality monitoring upstream and downstream of the FTW locations. She explained that algal blooms are a global water quality problem, and FTWs pose a potential solution that is simple and inexpensive.

Ms. Webster provided a cost estimate for her project, and asked that if it aligns with the SWC's objectives, could the SWC provide a contribution to it in the amount of \$5620. She has secured other potential funding sources including BC Wildlife Federation, BC Conservation Foundation, BC Ministry of Environment, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and NSERC and other academic sources. She commented that at the end of her research project, she would be happy to donate the FTWs to a group for long-term deployment on the river or the lake.

Councillor Cannon and Lindsay Benbow left the meeting at 11:35 am

Discussion:

Mr. Dennis Einarson asked some clarifying questions about her methodology. He further commented that he likes the project and anticipates it to be beneficial.

Chair Simpson commented that it is an interesting proposal and potentially fits with the Wetland Strategy that the SWC is developing. He requested that Ms. Webster share a documented request for financial support with the SWC.

Phil Owen commented that he thinks the research project is a great idea. He asked if her project needs any approvals from DFO due to the Salmon River being a salmon-bearing river. Ms. Webster replied that she is currently working with three permitting bodies.

Chair Simpson thanked Ms. Webster for her presentation.

Action item:

Staff will follow up with Ms. Webster to receive her presentation slide deck and a written request for funding assistance for her research.

Mayor Lepsoe left the meeting at 11:45 am

**Report from
Program Managers**

Ms. Erin Vieira presented a financial report for the second quarter (April 1st – September 30th 2023):

Revenue for 2023-24 (no change from previous meeting):

Revenue sources	(\$)
2022-23 operational surplus	47,656
2023-23 funds allocated and carried forward to 2023-24 projects	53,004
<i>Per Contribution Agreement:</i>	
CSRD Areas C, D, E, F, G and District of Sicamous	160,000
TNRD	53,600
City of Salmon Arm	40,000
Adams Lake Indian Band	1300
<i>Grant funding:</i>	
Transport Canada Boating Safety Contribution Program	24,025
Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation (confirmed)	0
Total revenue	379,585

Expenses shown on the next page ...

Report from Program Managers

Budget and actual expenses to end of second quarter (April 1st – September 30th 2023):

Program	Annual budget (\$)			Q1 + Q2 actual expenses (\$)		
	Expenses	Program mgmt. (labour)	Sub-total	Expenses	Program mgmt. (labour)	Sub-total
Water Quality Monitoring Program						
Shuswap Water Monitoring Group	0	7200	7200	0	640.00	640
Water monitoring expenses	21,900	2200	24,100	16,453.08	600.00	17,053.08
Annual Water Quality Report	7200	5800	13,000	8019.51	3760.00	11,779.51
Water Quality Protection Program						
Water Protection Advisory Committee	0	4200	4200	0	853.33	853.33
Water Quality Grant Program	108,464	9800	118,264	26,590.93	4040.00	30,630.93
Wetland Strategy	20,000	4000	24,000	2316.50	3813.33	6129.83
Climate change impact study (with TRU)	3000	600	3600	3000.00	280.00	3280.00
Zebra & Quagga Mussel Prevention Program						
Education and outreach campaigns	33,300	6600	39,900	30,417.11	3760.00	34,177.11
Safe Recreation Program						
Safety campaigns	20,000	10,000	30,000	11,872.20	3880.00	15,752.20
Communications, Public Engagement, & Advocacy						
Communications collateral	3250	6100	9350	2488.62	2400.00	4888.62
Public engagement and media	4150	16,800	20,950	5375.97	10,386.67	15,762.63
Advocacy	0	4200	4200	0	493.33	493.33
Administration						
Council meetings, work planning, staff liaise with Chair and Vice Chair	2600	20,800	23,400	578.88	11,466.67	12,045.55
Financial management and fund development	0	16,700	16,700	0	7626.67	7626.67
Sub-total expenses	223,864	115,000	338,864	107,112.79	54,000.00	161,112.79
Contribution to Operating Reserve			40,721			
Total budget for 2023-24			379,585			

Dennis Einarson and Erik Kok left the meeting at 12:00 pm

**Report from
Program Managers**

Erin Vieira and Alex de Chantal, Program Managers, provided an update since the last Council meeting held in September:

- SWC members toured Trinity Dairies in Enderby on October 20th to learn about nutrient management, dairy cattle, and the flood mitigation project on the farm that was partially funded by SWC Water Quality Grant funds
- Staff facilitated a meeting of the Shuswap Water Protection Advisory Committee on November 22nd; the committee reviewed the Water Quality Grant Program Guide and will next meet in February to review applications to the grant program
- Staff facilitated a meeting of the Shuswap Water Monitoring Group on November 28th; the group reviewed 2023 water monitoring activities and had a roundtable discussion on wildfire impacts
- An update on five projects funded by SWC Water Quality Grant funds was provided, with four projects being complete and the fifth being on schedule and on budget
- The Water Quality Grant Program opened for applications on December 1st; the application period will close on January 31st and applications will be reviewed in February and approved in March. Staff are facilitating a webinar on January 10th with prospective applicants to provide information about the grant program.
- The Wetland Strategy is progressing; a consulting firm completed an assessment, inventory and mapping project of wetlands in the Salmon Arm Bay drainage. Staff have applied for funding to Environment Canada for next steps, which will include further analysis, prioritization and classification of wetland data to identify key areas for restoration and conservation.
- Educational campaigns for preventing the spread of invasive Zebra & Quagga Mussels to BC have mostly concluded for the winter; with the recent discovery of Quagga mussels in Idaho, staff will keep this program running at lower capacity through the winter instead of shutting down completely
- The field program for monitoring for invasive mussels in the Shuswap has concluded for 2023, no invasive mussels were detected in any samples. This field program is carried out by the Columbia Shuswap Invasive Species Society.
- Staff are reviewing and providing input to a new draft Provincial Invasive Species Strategy for BC. Input from the SWC will focus on strategies to prevent the spread of invasive mussels to BC. See the draft strategy, prepared by the Invasive Species Council of BC, here: <https://bcinvasives.ca/invasive-species-strategy-for-bc/>.
- Staff published an updated Nutrients and Water Quality research summary report in October. The report is available online and print copies were sent to library branches in the Shuswap.
- Three media releases were published this fall regarding recent SWC activities and announcements

- Staff worked with the Chair to send two letters to Provincial and Federal ministers regarding calls-to-action to prevent the spread of invasive mussels to BC
- Staff worked with the Chair and four local governments to send a follow-up letter to Interior Health regarding algal bloom response and responsibilities, asking IH to re-instate their leadership over these issues
- Staff are working with the four funders (CSRD, Thompson-Nicola Regional District, City of Salmon Arm and Adams Lake Indian Band) to amend the Contribution Agreement by extending it for a year, per the direction given at the September SWC meeting
- Staff have applied to Transport Canada for \$24,000 grant funding to support safe boating and swimming campaigns next summer.

Roundtable discussion: 2023 wildfire season and impacts to the Shuswap watershed

This item was removed from the agenda.

New business: SWC meeting schedule for 2024

Moved/seconded by Director Hopkins/Kimm Magill-Hofmann that:

The SWC meeting schedule for 2024 be approved as presented.

Discussion:

Director Hopkins commented that there is an Okanagan Regional Library Board meeting on September 11th 2024 that will create a scheduling conflict with some SWC members.

CARRIED

Action item:

Staff will try to find an alternative date for the September meeting.

The meeting schedule for 2024 will be: March 13th, June 12th, September 11th (tentatively re-scheduled to a date not yet determined), December 11th.

Meetings will be held in the CSRD Boardroom in Salmon Arm, 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM except for the December meeting which will be held via Zoom.

Roundtable updates

This agenda item was removed from the agenda.

Adjourn

Moved/seconded by Director Hopkins/Kimm Magill-Hofmann that:

The December 13th Shuswap Watershed Council meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm.

CERTIFIED CORRECT:

Chair