



Making a difference...together

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE Wilderness Mountain Water Service Commission, held Friday, November 10, 2023 at 9:30 am, Goldstream Conference Room, 479 Island Highway, Victoria, BC

PRESENT: Commissioners: D. Pepino (Chair); M. Lechowicz (Vice Chair); A. Wickheim (Electoral Area Director) (EP); L. Cutler

Staff: S. Irg, Senior Manager, Water Infrastructure Operations; L. Xu, Manager, Local Service and Corporate Grants; C. Moch, Manager, Water Quality; D. Dionne, Administrative Coordinator (Recorder)

EP = Electronic Participation

The meeting was called to order at 9:33 am.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Chair provided a hard copy of an alternate agenda for the meeting (available upon request). The alternate agenda reordered and amended the published agenda as follows:

- Item 5, Presentations/Delegations, was moved to Item 3.
- Items 6.1 and 6.2 were moved to Item 4, Senior Managers Update, 4.1 and 4.2 respectively.
- Item 6, Commission Business was moved to Item 5 and Item 5, Chairs Remarks was moved to Item 6.
- Addition to the agenda as Item 7, Working to Satisfy Island Health Service Water Treatment Objectives.

MOVED by Commissioner M. Lechowicz, **SECONDED** by Commissioner L. Cutler,
That the agenda be approved as amended.

CARRIED

2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by Commissioner M. Lechowicz, **SECONDED** by Commissioner A. Wickheim,
That the minutes of the June 12, 2023 meeting be adopted.

CARRIED

3. PRESENTATIONS/DELEGATIONS

There were no presentations or delegations.

4. SENIOR MANAGER'S REPORT

S. Irg provided an update and information on the Boil Water Advisory (BWA) noting that earlier in the week the water was at 1.2 Nephelometric Turbidity Unit (NTU) and staff are currently monitoring.

C. Moch advised that there was some additional sampling done and noted a few things that are contributing to the higher NTUs:

- There is an algae bloom occurring;

- A number of very small particles of a smaller algae species were found;
- Lots of tiny organic decomposing material, likely due to the recent rainfalls; and
- Runoff from the watershed as well as the lake turnover at the same time.

There was a discussion regarding BWA compliance in the Wilderness Mountain Water System and how residents deal with their drinking water.

4.1. Project and Operations Update

S. Irg provided an overview of the staff report. He noted that there were no Capital Project updates and highlighted the activities that staff undertake monthly, which are outlined in the staff report in more detail.

He noted that in July and August there was a lot more algae activity that resulted in more frequent filter changes.

There was a question regarding filter changes and the filtration exemption. The Chair stated that there was a filtration exemption in place which has been rescinded. The cartridge filters that are currently in place are not filtering to consistently guarantee less than 1 NTU. They are larger than 1 micron in size.

4.2. Lake Profiler Discussion [verbal]

The Chair referred to correspondence Item 8.2 (7.2 on the published agenda package) and asked Commissioner Lechowicz to provide further clarity on the item.

There was a discussion regarding implications and benefits of various water quality processes:

- Lake depth profiler
- Floating intake

5. COMMISSION BUSINESS

5.1. 2024 Operating and Capital Budget Report

The Commission requested a line-by-line consideration of the Items proposed in the 2024 budget.

Staff responded to questions from the Commission regarding:

- Pipe drag along the bottom of the reservoir related an adjustable intake.
- Community affordability and the cost of project.
- The Chair thanked Director Wickheim on behalf of the community for the Community Works Funds toward Project 24-01.

There was a discussion regarding applying for grants. Staff noted that there is greater success of receiving a grant if the project is shown in the capital plan. The Commission expressed concern with the implication of the service being responsible should the project go over the grant funding. Staff confirmed that it is a standard clause for most grant applications, that should there be any cost overrun, the service would be responsible.

5.1.1. Project 24-01 Wooden Intake Platform Replacement
(\$45,000 internal grant; \$5,000 CRD labour)

MOVED by Commissioner Lechowicz, **SECONDED** by Commissioner Cutler,
That Project 24-01, Wooden Intake Platform Replacement be approved.

CARRIED

5.1.2. Project 24-02 Conduct a Study for Raw Water Quality Sampling
(\$175,000 grant application)

MOVED by Commissioner Lechowicz, **SECONDED** by Commissioner Cutler,
That Project 24-02 Conduct a study for raw water quality sampling be rejected.

CARRIED

5.1.3. Project 24-03 Alternative Approval Process
(\$10,000 Wilderness Mountain Water Service Reserve Funds)

There was discussion regarding the cost of an alternative approval process.

MOVED by Commissioner Lechowicz, **SECONDED** by Commissioner Cutler,
That Project 24-03 Alternative Approval Process be moved to 2025.

CARRIED

5.1.4. Project 25-01 New Floating Intake
(\$400,000 grant application; no Wilderness Mountain Water Service debt)

The Commission stated the following points:

- Lack of security of the grant funding
- If there is an overrun the Service would be on the hook for that
- Costly project to run a pipe

MOVED by Commissioner Lechowicz, **SECONDED** by Commissioner Cutler,
That Project 25-01 New Floating Intake be rejected.

CARRIED

5.1.5. Project 25-02 Treatment Plant Upgrades
(\$1.9 million grant application, \$200,000 Wilderness Mountain Water Service 25-year debt)

The Commission stated that \$1.9 million is unaffordable for the community.

There was a discussion regarding the Associated Engineering report and the Commission noted that the that the class D estimates plus or minus 50% are too risky.

Staff noted that having a placeholder for grant opportunities in the budget provides staff opportunity to pursue and apply for them when they come available. The grant and debt

numbers presented are optimistic placeholders for 2025, based on a 90% grant with 10% debt split. Staff are generally seeing more like a 60/40 or 70/30 split.

There was discussion regarding compliance with Island Health requirements to meet Service Water Treatment Objectives.

MOVED by Commissioner Lechowicz, **SECONDED** by Commissioner Cutler,
That Project 25-02 Treatment Plant Upgrades be rejected.

CARRIED

That Project 25-02 Treatment Plant Upgrades, to meet Service Water Treatment Objective requirements, be revised from \$1,800,000 grant application and \$200,000 Wilderness Mountain Water Service 25-year debt to \$200,000 grant application and \$20,000 Wilderness Mountain Water Service 25-year debt.

CARRIED

MOVED by Commissioner Lechowicz, **SECONDED** by Commissioner Cutler,
That the Wilderness Mountain Water Services Commission:

1. Approve the 2024 operating and capital budget as amended and that the 2023 actual operating surplus or deficit be balanced on the 2023 Reserve Funds transfer (Capital Reserve Fund and/or Operating Reserve Fund).
2. Recommends that the Electoral Areas Committee recommend that the Capital Regional District Board approve the 2024 Operating and Capital Budget and the five-year Financial Plan for the Wilderness Mountain Water Service as amended.

CARRIED

6. CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Chair read his remarks and provided a hard copy for the record (available upon request).

7. WORKING TO SATISFY ISLAND HEALTH SERVICE WATER TREATMENT OBJECTIVES

There was a discussion regarding a failing septic field and staff advised that this responsibility falls with Island Health. Staff can discuss the concern with Island Health but have no authority.

There was a discussion regarding finding a financial model that will work for the community. The two options are to either build a new plant or connect to the Juan de Fuca Water Distribution System.

The commission advised the Wilderness Mountain Water Service community does not find these two options affordable or desirable. The community is confident that Source Water Treatment Objectives can be achieved through affordable, incremental trials of improvements to the present treatment system.

8. CORRESPONDENCE

8.1. Wilderness Mountain Update to Island Health – July 13, 2023

8.2. Wilderness Mountain Water Service Commission Reply to Staff – July 16, 2023

8.3. Wilderness Mountain Water Service Permit to Operate – Island Health – August 3, 2023

The correspondence was received for information.

9. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Commissioner Lechowicz, **SECONDED** by Commissioner Cutler,
That the November 10, 2023 meeting be adjourned at 11:39 am.

CARRIED

CHAIR

SECRETARY