

OKANAGAN-KOOTENAY STERILE INSECT RELEASE PROGRAM BOARD

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the **OKANAGAN-KOOTENAY STERILE INSECT RELEASE (SIR) PROGRAM BOARD** held hybrid in the RDCO Woodhaven Boardroom, Kelowna BC, and online via Microsoft Teams on Friday, November 24, 2023

Voting Members:

Director Shirley Fowler	Regional District of North Okanagan
Director George Bush	Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen
Director Tim Lavery	Regional District Columbia Shuswap
Director Mohini Singh	Regional District of Central Okanagan
Grower Tarsem Goraya	Grower Representative – Zone 2
Grower Joginder Dhand	Grower Representative – Zone 3

Non-Voting Members:

Dr. Susanna Acheampong	BC Ministry of Agriculture and Food
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Guests/Delegates:

Lori White	RDCO Financial Manager
Glen Lucas	BC Fruit Growers Association
Gail Nelson	BC Fruit Growers Association
Parm Dhaliwal	BC Fruit Growers Association/SIR 3.0 Steering Committee
Dave Dobernigg	Grower/SIR 3.0 Steering Committee
Lindsay King	BCMAF/SIR 3.0 Steering Committee
Madeleine van Roechooldt	Grower/SIR 3.0 Steering Committee

Regrets:

Grower Walter Makepeace	Grower Representative – Zone 1, organic
Director Gord Lovegrove	Regional District of Central Okanagan
Taras Pojasok	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Adrian Arts	BCMAF/SIR 3.0 Steering Committee
Rchid El Hafid	AAFC/SIR 3.0 Steering Committee
Sukhpaul Bai	Grower/SIR 3.0 Steering Committee
Tyrion Miskell	BCGA/SIR 3.0 Steering Committee

Staff:

Melissa Tesche	OKSIR General Manager
Michelle Cook	OKSIR Operations Manager
Evan Esch	OKSIR Entomologist
Shelby Austen	OKSIR Office Manager

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting of the OKSIR Board to order at 10:32 am.

2. ADJOURN TO IN-CAMERA

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Grower Goraya

“THAT this meeting be closed to the public pursuant to Section 90(2) (b) of the Community Charter for the OKSIR Board to deal with matters related to:

(k) negotiations and related discussions respecting the proposed provision of a municipal service that are at their preliminary stages and that, in the view of the council, could reasonably be expected to harm the interests of the municipality if they were held in public.”

CARRIED

3. RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION

4. CALL TO ORDER THE REGULAR MEETING

The Chair called the meeting of the OKSIR Board back to order at 12:25 pm.

The Chair called a recess for lunch until 12:45pm.

5. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Director Lavery

“THAT the November 24, 2023, meeting agenda be adopted as presented.”

CARRIED

6. MINUTES

6.1 Regular Board Meeting – October 13, 2023 – for adoption

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Director Lavery

“THAT the OKSIR Regular Board Meeting Minutes from October 13, 2023, meeting be adopted as presented.”

CARRIED

6.2 Business Arising from Minutes

7. DELEGATION/PRESENTATION

8. CORRESPONDENCE/INFORMATION

8.1 Staff Report from Melissa Tesche, General Manager, dated November 15, 2023, re: Program Update

The General Manager confirmed that the new chiller has been successfully installed and will be commissioned shortly. She noted that necessity was the mother of invention—having the chiller unit offline for the installation process required the Facility Manager to write some new building control scripts to keep the rooms at appropriate temperatures. The new scripts functioned beautifully and saved the facility power and money—they will be used during the cooler months in the off season going forward to take advantage of energy savings.

The General Manager and the Board expressed their appreciation for the Facility Manager and his staff that are able to innovate and keep the facility running, even through challenging times.

On the field side of the program, all seasonal staff have been laid off for the year. Field offices are now closed. Extended staff are in the field to capture orchard changes before the snow falls, so that the tax roll in the spring is as up to date as possible. She noted that staff in the south are reporting as many as 60 new acres of apples planted in the south.

The General Manager provided a staffing update, noting that Ms. Shelby Austen had resigned her position as Office Manager to take a role in communications with the Cross Commodity Leadership Support Project.

Ms. Tesche reported that she has been invited to give several talks for Pacific Northwest growers, with a focus on sterility. She will be attending the Orchard Pest and Disease Management Conference in Portland and the Washington Tree Fruit Research Commission’s Apple Crop Protection Day in Wenatchee.

Evan Esch, Program Entomologist, gave a brief report on his visit to China to consult on codling moth SIT. He noted that China is the world’s biggest producer of apples and are facing a looming labour shortage due to their aging demographics. He noted China has a long way to go before they could get a program up and running and that we in the Okanagan are very lucky to have collaboration between government, professionals, and farmers that we have.

Moved by: Director Singh

Seconded by: Grower Goraya

“THAT the staff report from the General Manager be received.”

CARRIED

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

9.1 Lease and Services Renewal with RDCO

Melissa apologized for the memo missing from the agenda package related to the lease and services renewal. She described the terms offered by RDCO for the 5-year renewal of the lease, with RDCO asking for a less than 1% increase over the current amount. She noted that using the finance and IT services of the Regional District keeps them in line with the best practices of local governments and recommended that the board accept the terms of the new agreement.

Moved by: Director Singh

Seconded by: Director Bush

“THAT OKSIR renew its lease and services agreement with the Regional District of Central Okanagan for the period of 2024-2028, with total costs of \$12,670.17/month.”

CARRIED

10. NEW BUSINESS

10.1 Memo re: Administration of Stabilization Funds for Project Assessing Potential of New Apple Varieties

The General Manager explained that the New Varieties Development Council (NVDC) had not had its mandate renewed and would be dissolving. NVDC had received a grant from the stabilization fund. With the delay in finding a consultant to take on the project, the project would now extend beyond the mandate of NVDC and they are requesting that CCLSP (through SIR) take over the administration of this project. This is pending IAFs approval to switch administrators.

Moved by: Director Singh**Seconded by: Director Bush**

"THAT OKSIR take over from NVDC as administrator of funds for the Assessment of New Apple Varieties Project as approved by IAF."

CARRIED**10.2 Memo re: Administration of Grant Funds for Projects Completed Under the CCLSP**

The Board gave permission for the program to apply for grant funds without passing each potential application by the board in order to streamline the granting process.

Moved by: Grower Goraya**Seconded by: Director Singh**

"THAT the Board authorize OKSIR to act as fund administrator for grant-funded projects applied for by the Cross-Commodity Leadership Support Project (CCLSP), as long as OKSIR receives a minimum of 5% administration fee and the grant-funded projects will be completed before the end of the CCLSP."

CARRIED**10.3 Proposed Meeting Schedule for 2024**

The General Manager presented the 2024 meeting schedule in detail.

Moved by: Director Lavery**Seconded by: Grower Goraya**

"THAT the meeting schedule for 2024 for the Okanagan-Kootenay Sterile Insect Release Board be approved as presented."

CARRIED**10.4 Increase to Parcel Tax Rate**

The Board discussed the proposed 8% parcel tax increase, with a focus on the tough and prolonged financial difficulty that growers are facing at the moment. There was a question as to whether or not a tiered payment structure could be available for growers who need more moths. Ms. Tesche said this would not be possible with the current legislation based on the prescribed method of cost recovery for the program.

The Board asked staff to amend the proposed rate to 4% and to return with a budget based on the smaller increase.

MOTION TO DEFER**Moved by: Director Singh****Seconded by: Director Bush**

"THAT OKSIR increase the parcel tax rate for 2024 by 8%, for a rate of \$168.93/acre."

CARRIED

10.5 Bylaw 43 – SIR 2024-2028 Five Year Financial Plan – Three Readings and Adoption

- a. **2023 Projected Year End and 2024 Budget**
- b. **Schedule A to Bylaw 43 (2023-2027 Financial Plan)**

The budget will be amended to reflect the requested changes to the parcel tax rate and brought back to the next meeting.

MOTION TO DEFER

Moved by: Director Lavery

Seconded by: Director Singh

“THAT the SIR 2024-2028 Five Year Financial Plan, Bylaw No. 43, 2023, be adopted.”

CARRIED

10.6 Bylaw 44 – 2024 OKSIR Board Revenue Anticipation Borrowing Bylaw No. 44, 2023 – Three Readings and Adoption

The revenue anticipation bylaw amount will be amended and brought back to the next meeting.

MOTION TO DEFER

Moved by: Director Bush

Seconded by: Director Lavery

“THAT the 2024 OKSIR Board Revenue Anticipation Borrowing Bylaw No. 44, 2023, be adopted.”

CARRIED

11. OTHER BUSINESS

11.1 Matters arising from in-camera

Board Directors discussed the value of the rearing facility with respect to the potential to mass rear future pests of concern.

Moved by: Director Singh

Seconded by: Director Bush

“THAT the board authorize SIR to work with strategic partners to create a project that would investigate the potential ability to rear other pests in the SIR facility and to pursue grant opportunities to fund the project.”

CARRIED


12. ADJOURNMENT

Moved by: Director Singh

Seconded by: Grower Goraya

"THAT the SIR Board meeting be adjourned at 1:44pm."

CARRIED



Chair



Corporate Officer