

Board of Directors Meeting

Feb. 18 2025 Virtual Meeting Minutes - Approved

Meeting Summary: The AWC Board of Directors met online on Feb. 18, 2025. In addition to approving previous meeting minutes and 2024-25 Q3 Financial and Activities Report, the board heard updates from staff about several projects and activities. Board members also shared sector updates, and discussed the AWC's strategic goals and several potential future projects. The next board meeting and AGM will be April 25, 2025.

SEAT	DIRECTOR	ALTERNATE	Quorum
AEP Representative	Abdi Siad Omar	Long Fu	√
Provincial/Federal Govt	Dean Litzenberger		√
Municipal (Upper Basin)	vacant		
Municipal (Middle Basin)			
Municipal (Lower Basin)	Colette Borgun		√
Forestry	Dan Moore		√
Oil & Gas	Janice Linehan		√
Ag or Industry	vacant		
Agriculture	vacant		
Mining/Utilities	Amanda Buchanan		√
Indigenous			
Indigenous			
Indigenous	vacant		
Environment	Brian Deheer		√
Environment	Julie Hink		√
Stewardship	Kendra Gilbert		√
Stewardship			
Research and Academia			
Member-at-Large	Laura Pekkola		√
Member-at-Large	Ida Edwards		√
Past President	vacant		
Quorum = >50% filled seats (16) = >8			11

Staff:	Guests:
Petra Rowell, Executive Director	
Ashley Johnson, Education & Outreach Coordinator	
Caity Zimmermann, Project Coordinator	
Mitchel Wincentaylo, Headwaters Project Coordinator	
Ethan Zapach, Watershed Technician	
Shayla Watson, Watershed Technician	

1. Welcome

Call to order; Health and Safety; Quorum: Dan Moore called the meeting to order at 9:32 am. The meeting was online so Health and Safety logistics were not required. Petra indicated quorum was met.

Treaty Land Acknowledgement: Dan provided.

Round Table Introductions: Done.

2. Administration

Review Meeting Objectives & approve Meeting Agenda: Dan briefly reviewed meeting objectives. He then asked if there were any additions to the agenda. There were none. The agenda was approved by consensus as presented.

Petra noted that there were no actions from the Nov. 21 2024 board meeting. Dan then asked for any additions or corrections to the meeting minutes; there were none. The Nov 21, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes were approved by consensus as presented.

3. Provide Oversight: Reports and Updates

- a. **Q3 Report & Budget circulated with agenda;** Staff shared their highlights from Q3. The board discussed how to thank and recognize donors. We should develop a marketing strategy for thanking folks on social media. We could use a communications support person. Petra noted that major donations are currently being added to our savings account to help us manage cash flow; we would also like to use the interest for a small scholarship/stewardship awards program. Ashley will present a proposal at the April meeting; any interested board members can reach out and we can create an awards committee. The board approved Petra's suggestion to move the funds to savings by consensus.
- b. **Committee reports:** Staff are currently undergoing performance reviews and Petra's was completed by the Executive Committee. Congratulations to Petra on 4 years with the Athabasca Watershed Council! Petra noted that the Technical Committee met recently and has initiated a review of the IWMP. The CECE committee has not met recently but we plan to accrue information on the heritage rivers application process for discussion at their next meeting. In other board business, the AWC received a nomination from

Woodlands County (with Councillor Alan Deane as their representative) for our vacant Board of Directors (Upper Municipal) position. The Board approved this appointment by consensus.

- c. **Staff Updates:** Staff shared updates on their program areas, including CECE, governance, and science

4. Provide Input: 2025-26 Strategic Planning & Budgeting

- a. **New 2025-26 Draft budget:** Petra presented a suggested core operational budget for 2025-26. Numbers are similar to the previous year, with the exception of staff funding which has been increased to allow for modest salary increases, offset by reductions in expenses like printing and honoraria which can be secured through other (non-operational) grants. The board needs to preliminarily approve the budget so that Petra can cover April costs, but it can be revisited at the April board meeting. Kendra brought up again finding funding for a communications person; Petra let her know we have been seeking out funding for a communications person via other granting organizations. Dan suggested that if AEPA is looking for more water literacy programming, they may allocate more funding to delivery partners. The 2025-26 budget was approved by consensus.
- b. **Old 2024-25 budget:** Petra noted we are on target to expend our EPA core operational grant (\$320k) by March 31, 2025. We also successfully matched our core operations grant via other grant sources and in-kind support.

5. Improve Knowledge

Petra gave a brief overview of the Canada Water Agency (CWA); our EcoAction grant is now under the CWA. The CWA has identified 8 priority areas, one of which is the Mackenzie basin, with funding available for this priority in the near future that we will be applying for.

A roundtable of sector updates included the following:

- There are a number of ongoing working groups and discussions about oil sands effluents. The Crown-Indigenous working group is making progress looking into a number of different areas. The Oil Sands Monitoring program should be releasing a public summary report fairly soon.
- The AEN water working group meets monthly; they have formed a special purpose group to draft a response to EPA's water availability engagement.
- A Director attended a meeting on perennial grasses and drought resistant plants. Some discussion about the expansion of agriculture north, and how this might affect water supply.

- Several municipal and industry reps noted that they are having discussions about water and preparing for disaster season (fires and floods): paying attention to snowfall and hoping for a rainy spring to help mitigate wildfire risk.
- EPA noted that there are limited flow stations in Northern Alberta; flow is based on modelling, so any water flow measurements (especially for tributaries) that can be shared with the GoA would be great. Also, the Auditor General's report on water management has been reviewed and a plan to address its findings is being developed.
- Healthy Waters LLB is looking into using signage for public education and BAILS is looking to collaborate with partners for funding and engagement.
- Welcome back to Laura, returning to Inside Education after parental leave!
- A final comment was shared that it is important for the board to look at priorities and the allocation of resources to ensure that staff and volunteers do not burn out (can't do everything everywhere all the time).

6. Provide Advice

- a. EPA Water Availability Engagement: Petra noted that the engagement period has now ended and we are looking forward to hearing the results of the engagement, once they have been compiled and released by EPA.

7. Next Steps/Meetings

- a. Upcoming dates:
 - i. Feb. 25-26 Water Management conference in Grande Prairie.
 - ii. March 11th, Pembina Water Quality Webinar.
 - iii. March 21 World Water Day Webinar.
- b. Next Board Meeting Friday April 25th – Hybrid Athabasca
- c. AGM Saturday, June 14th

8. Meeting Adjourned at 12:01pm