

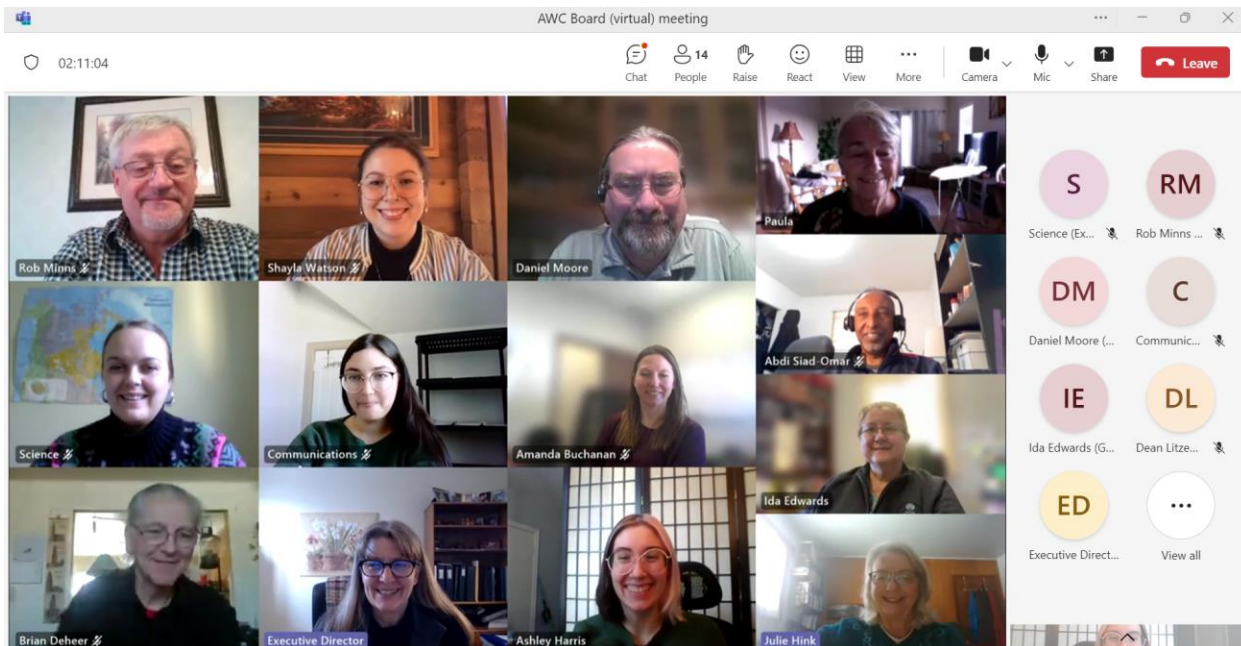
Board of Directors Meeting

February 15, 2024; 9:00 am to 12:00 pm.

Draft Meeting Minutes

Meeting Summary:

The Athabasca Watershed Council (AWC) met virtually on February 15, 2024. The board approved previous (Nov. 23, 2023) board meeting minutes and shared round table sector updates. They approved the Q3 (Oct-Dec) staff activities and financial report and heard about other winter activities. They also provided staff guidance on several communication and technical activities. The next board meeting is April 18, 2024 in Fort McMurray and online.



SEAT	DIRECTOR	ALTERNATE	Quorum
AEP Representative	Abdi Siad Omar		√
Provincial/Federal Government	vacant		
Municipal (Upper Basin)	vacant		
Municipal (Middle Basin)	Robb Minns	Gary Cromwell	√
Municipal (Lower Basin)	Sterling Johnson		√
Forestry	Dan Moore		√
Oil & Gas			
Ag or Industry	vacant		
Agriculture	vacant		
Mining/Utilities	Amanda Buchanan		√
Indigenous			
Indigenous	vacant		
Indigenous	vacant		
Health or Environment	Brian Deheer		√
Health or Environment	Julie Hink		√
Stewardship			
Stewardship	Paula Evans		√
Research and Academia			
Member-at-Large	Laura Pekkola		
Member-at-Large	Ida Edwards		√
Past President	vacant		
Quorum = >50% filled seats (14) = >7			9
Staff: Petra Rowell, Sarah Shortt, Ashley Johnson, Caity Seifert, Shayla Watson Guests: Walter Preugschas, County of Barrhead; Dean Litzenberger, member			

Actions arising from the Feb. 15, 2024 Board meeting:

Lead /Action:	To be completed by:
Petra develop a list of all previous supporters for inclusion in the 15 th anniversary report.	June AGM
Petra build a list of stakeholders/sectors in the Athabasca and develop a draft communications plan and materials (introductory folder, slide deck, sector fact sheets) to engage potential supporters	Provide update at June Board meeting
Sarah work with board members identified to develop an AWC safety protocol, procure a satellite phone(s), and develop a waiver form.	Summer field season
Petra research other WPAC travel rates and inform the board.	April board mtg
Sarah invite Janice Linehan to make a presentation on Suncor's expansion/ McLelland Fen area at a future board meeting.	April board mtg
Dan, Petra and Sarah to think about a project utilizing the ARB model and projects around the impact of fire on water quality (rising pH?).	Provide update in June
Petra to continue to develop a new municipal membership policy.	June Board mtg.
Petra to share her water allocation PowerPoint in a blog for the website.	June

1. Welcome

- a. **Call to order; Health and Safety; Quorum:** The meeting was called to order by Paula at 9:06 a.m.; no health and safety issues were identified for this virtual meeting; quorum was met.
- a. **Treaty Land Acknowledgement:** Paula opened the meeting with a treaty land acknowledgment.
- b. **Introductions via Chat:** Board members, staff and guests introduced themselves via the chat function.

2. Administration:

- a. **Review Meeting Objectives and approve Meeting Agenda:** The meeting objectives were to:
 - i. **Provide oversight:** hear the Q3 report, discuss Q4 and 2024-25 activities.
 - ii. **Practice good governance:** Review and update policies, plans and practices – municipal membership discussion
 - iii. **Build knowledge:** hear presentations and discuss the AWC's role in topical issues (water allocation)
 - iv. **Develop and share advice:** discuss drought messaging and activities

Paula motioned to approve the agenda; Rob Minns seconded, and the agenda was approved by consensus as presented.

- b. **Approval of Past Meeting Minutes (November 23, 2023):** Petra reviewed the action items from the previous meeting. Dan asked for approval of the meeting minutes. Rob made a motion and the minutes were approved by consensus.

Lead /Action:	Status
Ashley post the approved Sept. 2023 board meeting minutes to the website.	Done
Petra develop a list of all previous supporters for inclusion in the 15 th anniversary report.	To be completed for June AGM
Petra build a list of stakeholders/sectors in the Athabasca and develop a draft communications plan and materials (introductory folder, slide deck, sector fact sheets) to engage potential supporters	To be completed for June AGM
Sarah work with board members identified to develop an AWC safety protocol, procure a satellite phone(s), and develop a waiver form.	Summer field season

3. Oversight: Reports and Updates

- a. **Q3 Activity and Financial Report:** Petra provided an overview of staff and financial activities. The Q3 report was approved by consensus.
- b. **Q4 Budget Recommendations:** After noting that GOA travel rates had recently (Dec. 2023) been increased, Treasurer Paula motioned to increase the AWC travel rates to align with the GoA. Gary Cromwell suggested that rates be increased further; Petra offered to do research on other WPAC policies and potentially change the AWC policy. Following discussion, the motion to align with current GOA rates was approved by consensus. Ida moved to go *in camera* (approved by consensus). Paula motioned to exit *in camera* (approved by consensus). The Board directed the Executive Director in the matter of staff raises, to be effective January 1, 2024.
- c. **2024-25 workplans and budget: input to planned staff activities:** Petra provided a broad overview of the 2024-25 core operational budget that will be similar to 2023-24 (as the 2nd year of our 4 year agreement with AEPA). She also noted that program activities will be similar as we continue to grow out current programs and projects. However, she also noted the importance of being nimble and able to respond to issues (like drought) when they arise. She then asked board members if there are any other areas, projects that staff should be considering? Some comments were:
 - i. There are some concerns about the Suncor expansion and its impact on McClelland Fen. Petra asked Sarah to contact Janice Linehan to get a presentation from Suncor on the topic for the April board meeting.
 - ii. We should try to design a project utilizing the Alberta WaterSmart Athabasca River Basin model.
 - iii. Increase in forest fire and their impact on water quality is of interest (impact of fire suppression compounds, ash, etc. Town of Athabasca seeing slight change in pH in 2023. Other studies in the south.)

4. Governance: Policies and Practices

- a. **Membership Review:** Petra provided an overview of our current membership structure. She noted that this structure does not work well for municipalities. She proposed a new structure for municipal memberships; after some general discussion, it was agreed a change is needed. Petra will bring back a more detailed document to the April board meeting.
 - i. Noted that we are missing an Agricultural rep (Guest Walter Preugschas subsequently worked with Petra to send an email out to all the Ag Fieldmen in the watershed seeking an interested Ag rep.)

5. Knowledge Building

- a. **Reliable Supplies:** Petra provided a presentation to the board on water allocation and water use in the Athabasca watershed (will be made available as a blog). She noted that she is looking for a student or volunteer to help with updating the water allocation report including taking a closer look at water use (consumption). Abdi noted he is on an Environment Canada committee looking at water allocation in the Peace/Athabasca/Delta. Need to be sure why we need this info/ who does it inform, for what purpose before committing capacity to it.

6. Providing Advice

- a. **Drought Advice:** Petra provided an overview of Alberta Water Council and WPAC drought outreach activities. Staff worked with the MPWA and LSWC to co-host a drought resiliency workshop in Grande Prairie January 31. The AWC is hosting a similar workshop in the Town of Athabasca on March 7. It was noted that agricultural drought and forest fires are top of mind throughout the Athabasca watershed.

b. Round Table Updates:

- i. Abdi (AEPA): AEPA is very focused on the drought.
- ii. Amanda (mining): The summer of 2023 was challenging! Experienced a 1 in 1000-year storm event; also had drought and had to step up on water reuse; fires made site access and supply mgmt an issue (lots of reactive management due to conditions).
- iii. Brian and Julie (Environment): Working on Plamondon Creek with AWC; drought is a topic in mind for the LLB WMP implementation committee and for Healthy Waters LLB; Brian noted that LLB County has asked their Ag Services Board to respond to the Ministers drought letter and provide recommendations.
- iv. Ida (Member-at-Large/Town of Athabasca): Was happy to hear about the Tawatinaw work at the last meeting; Town of Athabasca is steady as she goes for water (have turned their licence over to Aspen Regional Water Commission).
- v. Paula (Stewardship): Crooked Creek is supporting the AWC's activities in the Tawatinaw.
- vi. Rob (Municipal: Athabasca County): Will be attending the MPWA's Fire and Water Forum (Petra is also going); looking forward to the drought workshop in Athabasca March 7. Noted that mainstem pH has risen, impacting drinking water treatment. ALUS committee continues to meet; looking forward to Ag workshop in April.
- vii. Dan (Forestry): Fires and droughts are on the mind; lots of discussion on planning if we don't get snow and rain.

7. Next Steps / Meetings

- a. March 7th drought workshop, Town of Athabasca
- b. April 18th board meeting in Fort McMurray (Sarah organizing)
- c. June 8th AGM and board meeting (Whitecourt)
- d. Week of Sept. 16 – joint meeting/workshop with ALMS

Dan adjourned the meeting at 11:54am.

Approved