

## Minutes

# Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA) Annual General Meeting Tuesday, February 25, 2025 at 1424 Clarke Rd, London

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Dean Trentowsky, UTRCA Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:30am.

### Members Present:

Jean Coles  
Peter Cuddy  
Skylar Franke  
Tom Heeman  
Anna Hopkins  
Sandy Levin  
Hugh McDermid

Paul Mitchell  
Harj Nijjar  
Brian Petrie  
Mark Schadenberg  
Dean Trentowsky - Chair  
George Way

Regrets: Jim Craigmile, Scotty Zehr

### Staff Present:

Jenna Allain  
Tracy Annett  
Vanni Azzano  
Emily Chandler  
Karlee Flear  
Brenda Gallagher  
Joe Gordon  
Eleanor Heagy  
Teresa Hollingsworth  
Jennifer Howley  
Tatianna Lozier  
Lisa Reynolds

Michelle McDonald  
Christine Saracino  
Damian Schofield  
Graeme Shaw  
Phil Simm  
Mary Sloan  
Paul Switzer  
Chris Tasker  
Michelle Viglianti – Recorder  
Brandon Williamson

## 1. Territorial Acknowledgement

The Chair read the territorial acknowledgement.

## 2. Modifications to the Agenda

There were no modifications made to the agenda.

The Chair noted a piece of correspondence was received in regard to item 6.4.

### 3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

### 4. Delegations/Presentations

There were no delegations or presentations.

### 5. Administrative Business

#### **5.1. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting: January 28, 2025**

Mover: George Way

Seconder: Skylar Franke

THAT that the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Board of Directors approve the Board of Directors' minutes dated January 28, 2025.

Carried.

#### **5.2. Business Arising from the Minutes**

There was no business arising from the minutes.

#### **5.3. Correspondence**

Correspondence was received from the London Development Institute and will be recognized as part of agenda item 6.4

### 6. Reports – For Consideration

#### **6.1. Factual Certificate**

Mover: Tom Heeman

Seconder: Sandy Levin

THAT the Board of Directors approve the factual certificate as presented.

Carried.

## 6.2. Municipal Apportionment Methods

Mover: Paul Mitchell

Seconder: Anna Hopkins

That the 2025 Municipal Apportionment Methods be approved;

That each participating municipality's share of the 2025 Total General Distribution be calculated using "Modified Current Value Assessment." And that the participating municipalities be assessed for payment of Category 1 operating and capital expenses presented in the draft budget;

And that category 3 programs and services also apply the "Modified Current Value Assessment" (MVCA) method for apportioning costs in agreements with municipalities;

And that each participating municipality's share of the 2025 "Benefit-Based Apportionment" method be applied for use with respect for costs for Dams and Water Control Structures as identified in the 2025 Draft Budget Package.

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>For, Against or Absent</b>	<b>Current Value Assessment (CVA) Apportionment Percentage</b>	<b>Voting Weight</b>	<b>Weight Per Member</b>
<b>City of London – Total</b>	-	64.05	50.00	
<b>City of London</b> Anna Hopkins	For	-	-	12.5
<b>City of London</b> Peter Cuddy	For	-	-	12.5
<b>City of London</b> Skylar Franke	For	-	-	12.5
<b>City of London</b> Sandy Levin	For	-	-	12.5
<b>County of Oxford – Total</b>	-	17.0	23.65	
<b>County of Oxford</b> Brian Petrie	For	-	-	4.73
<b>County of Oxford</b> Paul Mitchell	For	-	-	4.73
<b>County of Oxford</b> George Way	For	-	-	4.73
<b>County of Oxford</b> Mark Schadenberg	For	-	-	4.73
<b>County of Oxford</b> Scotty Zehr	Absent	-	-	4.73
<b>City of Stratford</b>	For	7.17	9.97	9.97

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>For, Against or Absent</b>	<b>Current Value Assessment (CVA) Apportionment Percentage</b>	<b>Voting Weight</b>	<b>Weight Per Member</b>
Harj Nijjar				
<b>Township of Lucan- Biddulph</b> Tom Heeman	For	0.3565	0.50	0.50
<b>Municipality of Thames Centre</b> Tom Heeman	For	3.2460	4.51	4.51
<b>Municipality of Middlesex Centre</b> Jean Coles	For	2.4722	3.44	3.44
<b>Municipality of West Perth</b> Dean Trentowsky	For	1.4617	2.03	2.03
<b>Township of Perth East</b> Hugh McDermid	For	1.4128	1.96	1.96
<b>Town of St. Marys</b> Jim Craigmile	Absent	1.4630	2.03	2.03
<b>Township of Perth South</b> Jim Craigmile	Absent	1.1591	1.61	1.61
<b>Municipality of South Huron</b> Jim Craigmile	Absent	0.2024	0.28	0.28

The motion carries with 100% of the weighted vote supporting the recommendation.

\*Based on UTRCA share of assessment.

Notes: Voting weight is capped at 50% for any municipality unless the number of its representatives exceeds 50% of the total number of municipal appointees. The voting weight of the remaining municipalities is increased proportionally.

### **6.3. 2024 Final Draft Budget Consideration**

The members discussed the ongoing impact of the fee freeze on the Municipal Levy, noted to be approximately \$400,000.00 of lost revenue, and felt that the financial impact of the fee freeze should be highlighted and more widely communicated.

Some members were supportive of the budget but felt that another double digit increase next year would not be feasible. It was noted that, although still very early, the plan is that the 2026 budget increase will be in single digits.

The General Manager provided a budget overview presentation.

Members thanked staff for the work done to receive the rebate from the Workplace Safety Insurance Board (WSIB).

Mover: Skylar Franke

Seconder: Brian Petrie

That the Board of Directors approve the budgets for 2025 in two parts:

1. A projected operating surplus of \$520,876 from \$27,553,066 in operating expenses, requiring \$8,197,570 of participating member levy, and requiring \$626,156 in cost apportioning agreements among members,

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<b>City of London</b> Anna Hopkins	For	-	-	12.5
<b>City of London</b> Peter Cuddy	For	-	-	12.5
<b>City of London</b> Skylar Franke	For	-	-	12.5
<b>City of London</b> Sandy Levin	For	-	-	12.5
<b>County of Oxford – Total</b>	-	17.0	23.65	
<b>County of Oxford</b> Brian Petrie	For	-	-	4.73
<b>County of Oxford</b> Paul Mitchell	For	-	-	4.73
<b>County of Oxford</b> George Way	For	-	-	4.73
<b>County of Oxford</b> Mark Schadenberg	For	-	-	4.73
<b>County of Oxford</b> Scotty Zehr	Absent	-	-	4.73
<b>City of Stratford</b> Harj Nijjar	For	7.17	9.97	9.97
<b>Township of Lucan- Biddulph</b> Tom Heeman	For	0.3565	0.50	0.50
<b>Municipality of Thames Centre</b> Tom Heeman	For	3.2460	4.51	4.51
<b>Municipality of</b>	For	2.4722	3.44	3.44

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>For, Against or Absent</b>	<b>Current Value Assessment (CVA) Apportionment Percentage</b>	<b>Voting Weight</b>	<b>Weight Per Member</b>
<b>Middlesex Centre</b> Jean Coles				
<b>Municipality of West Perth</b> Dean Trentowsky	For	1.4617	2.03	2.03
<b>Township of Perth East</b> Hugh McDermid	For	1.4128	1.96	1.96
<b>Town of St. Marys</b> Jim Craigmile	Absent	1.4630	2.03	2.03
<b>Township of Perth South</b> Jim Craigmile	Absent	1.1591	1.61	1.61
<b>Municipality of South Huron</b> Jim Craigmile	Absent	0.2024	0.28	0.28

The motion carries with 100% of the weighted vote supporting the recommendation.

\*Based on UTRCA share of assessment.

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The Board discussed the capital budget.

A member voiced concerns around the proposed deficit capital budget, feeling it was not good business practice and not supportable. Other members voiced their support for the capital budget, noting that the Flood Control portion of the capital budget had a surplus, and the deficit was due to campground projects with specified reserves available.

Mover: Brian Petrie

Second: Anna Hopkins

2. A projected capital deficit of \$2,338,219 from \$15,483,600 in capital expenditures, requiring \$6,535,881 of participating member levy.

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<b>City of London – Total</b>	-	64.05	50.00	
<b>City of London</b> Anna Hopkins	For	-	-	12.5
<b>City of London</b> Peter Cuddy	Against	-	-	12.5
<b>City of London</b> Skylar Franke	For	-	-	12.5
<b>City of London</b> Sandy Levin	For	-	-	12.5
<b>County of Oxford – Total</b>	-	17.0	23.65	
<b>County of Oxford</b> Brian Petrie	For	-	-	4.73
<b>County of Oxford</b> Paul Mitchell	For	-	-	4.73
<b>County of Oxford</b> George Way	For	-	-	4.73
<b>County of Oxford</b> Mark Schadenberg	For	-	-	4.73
<b>County of Oxford</b> Scotty Zehr	Absent	-	-	4.73
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<b>Municipality</b>	<b>For, Against or Absent</b>	<b>Current Value Assessment (CVA) Apportionment Percentage</b>	<b>Voting Weight</b>	<b>Weight Per Member</b>
<b>Municipality of South Huron</b> Jim Craigmile	Absent	0.2024	0.28	0.28

The motion carries with 87.50% of the weighted vote supporting the recommendation.

\*Based on UTRCA share of assessment

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#### **6.4. Application of Floodplain Freeboard and Interim Policy Direction**

Members discussed the regulatory flood standard, how the UTRCA uses a different, lower flood standard than the majority of the Province, and the importance of educating the member Municipalities on this matter, particularly London's Planning and Environment Committee.

Mover: Anna Hopkins

Seconder: Peter Cuddy

THAT the Board of Directors endorse the proposed direction for implementing an interim-policy approach within the floodplain freeboard area, with detailed policies to follow within the updated Planning and Regulations Policy Document;

Moved: Sandy Levin

Seconded: Anna Hopkins

THAT the motion be amended to include Part B: THAT staff be asked to quarterly report on the interim policy approach for floodplain freeboard area and other interim measures as appropriate.

Carried.

THAT the Board of Directors endorse the proposed direction for implementing an interim-policy approach within the floodplain freeboard area, with detailed policies to follow within the updated Planning and Regulations Policy Document; and

Part B: THAT staff be asked to quarterly report on the interim policy approach for floodplain freeboard area and other interim measures as appropriate.

Carried.



## **6.5. Mileage and Honorariums**

Mover: Brian Petrie

Seconder: Tom Heeman

THAT the annual honorarium for the Chair and Vice Chair be adjusted to align with the annual salary grid adjustment for UTRCA salaried and contract staff, and

THAT the per-kilometer rate be updated annually to reflect the Department of Finance Canada annual automobile income tax deduction limits and expense benefit rates.  
Carried.

## **7. Reports – In-Camera**

There were no reports to be discussed in closed session.

## **8. Reports – For Information**

### **8.1. Annual Report of Administration and Enforcement – Section 28**

A member suggested periodic file reviews and post consultations as a tool for staff to consider in order to help discover where improvements could be made as part of the streamlining initiative.

Mover: Hugh McDermid

Seconder: Mark Schadenberg

THAT the Board of Directors receive the report for information.

Carried.

### **8.2. Section 28 Violations – Annual Summary Report**

Peter Cuddy left the meeting at 11:12am.

Mover: Paul Mitchell

Seconder: Harj Nijjar

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

### **8.3. Thames River Current – February Edition**

The February edition of the Thames River Current was presented for the members' information.

Mover: Jean Coles

Seconded: George Way

THAT the Board of Directors receive the report for information.

Carried.

## 9. Reports – Committees

### 9.1. Finance and Audit Committee

There was no report from the Finance and Audit Committee.

### 9.2. Hearing Committee – January 28, 2025 Decision

Mover: Hugh McDermid

Seconded: Anna Hopkins

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

## 10. Notices of Motion

There were none.

The Chair called for a 15 minute break at 11:17am. Tom Heeman left the meeting at 11:17am.

The meeting reconvened at 11:35am where additional UTRCA staff and guests joined the meeting.

## 11. Welcome to Staff – Past and Current Chair

The General Manager welcomed staff and the Board members introduced themselves. Past Chair Brian Petrie and current Chair Dean Trentowsky provided opening remarks.

Anna Hopkins and Skylar Franke left the meeting at 11:55am.

## 12. 2024 Year in Review

A slide presentation provided an overview of the work done by the UTRCA in 2024.

## 13. Presentation of the Conservation Awards

### 13.1. Inspiration Award – Christine Ritsma and the Stratford District Secondary School Eco-Club

The Chair presented Christine Ritsma and the Stratford District Secondary School (SDSS) Eco-Club with the 2025 Inspiration Award. The award was presented in recognition of Christine Ritsma's commitment to environmental education throughout her career at Stratford District Secondary School through the Green Industries course and the SDSS Eco-Club. The UTRCA also recognize the Eco-Club students with this award for their instrumental role in having Stratford City Council declare a Climate Emergency in 2020, as well as their work on the produce bag initiative, tree planting, the urban farm project, and for being a prime example of youth influencing positive change in their community.

### 13.2. Kayla Berger Stewardship Award – Brian and Elizabeth Wheeler

The Chair presented Brian and Elizabeth Wheeler with the 2025 Kayla Berger Stewardship Award for their long-term volunteer efforts, passion for wildlife and selfless dedication to the environment. Their dedication and passion has been shown through the donation of 85 acres of environmentally sensitive land along Fish Creek and many years of stewardship work including invasive species management, tree planting, species at risk monitoring, and habitat creation, as well as entering the property into the Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program. Their passion and dedication have not only improved the health of their property but have had impacts reaching the whole subwatershed and have ensured the long-term protection of the property.

### 13.3. Board of Directors Award – Patti Donnelly

The Chair presented Patti Donnelly with the 2025 Board of Directors Award for her more than 20 years of volunteering with the UTRCA community education program. As an integral part of the education team, her expertise, enthusiasm, and contributions to program development, delivery, and evaluation have elevated the quality of the UTRCA's education programs. The UTRCA is deeply grateful for her unwavering commitment and passion, which have profoundly impacted the UTRCA and the communities it serves.

## 14. Presentation of Staff Service Awards

The following staff members were presented services awards:

**20 Years**

Phil Simm, Geographic Information System Specialist  
Damian Schofield, Conservation Areas Coordinator

**25 Years**

Paul Switzer, Land Management Technician  
Mary Sloan, Compensation and Rewards Specialist

**30 Years**

Jennifer Howley, Health and Safety Specialist  
Michelle McDonald, Financial Analyst - Expenses

**35 Years**

Brenda Gallagher, Forestry Technician (vegetation)

The Chair also recognized the service of Ben Dafoe, Properties Superintendent, 10 years, Brent Verscheure, Manager of Lands, Facilities, and Conservation Areas, 15 years, and Ryan McNaughton, Graphic Design Specialist, 20 years, who could not attend the meeting.

**15. Chair's Comments**

The Chair presented his closing remarks.

**16. Member's Comments**

There were no additional comments from Members.

**17. General Manager's Comments**

The General Manager provided closing remarks.

**18. Adjournment**

There being no further business on the agenda, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 1:01pm.

Tracy Annett, General Manager  
Att.