

Minutes

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA)
Annual General Meeting
Tuesday, February 27, 2024 at 1424 Clarke Rd, London

Brian Petrie, UTRCA Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:30am.

Members Present:

Jim Craigmile	Paul Mitchell
Peter Cuddy	Harj Nijjar
Skylar Franke	Brian Petrie - Chair
Debbie Heffernan	Mark Schadenberg
Anna Hopkins	Dean Trentowsky
Sandy Levin	George Way
Hugh McDermid	Scotty Zehr

Regrets:

Tom Heeman

Solicitor: G. Inglis

Staff Present:

Jenna Allain	Tatianna Lozier
Tracy Annett	Christine Saracino
Emily Chandler	Jessica Schnaithmann – Online
Alicia Demois – Online	Sarbjit Singh
Karlee Flear	Chris Tasker
Brad Glasman	Brent Verscheure
Eleanor Heagy	Michelle Viglianti – Recorder
Justin Henry	Brandon Williamson
Teresa Hollingsworth	
Lisa Reynolds – Online	

1. Territorial Acknowledgement

The Chair read the territorial acknowledgement.

2. Modifications to the Agenda

There were no modifications made to the agenda.

Amended 27-03-2024

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 30, 2024

Mover: George Way

Secunder: Scotty Zehr

THAT that the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Board of Directors approve the Board of Directors' minutes dated January 30, 2024, including any closed session minutes, as amended.

Carried.

5.2. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

5.3. Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

6. Reports – For Consideration

6.1. Factual Certificate

Mover: Peter Cuddy

Secunder: Sandy Levin

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

Carried.

6.2. Municipal Apportionment Methods

Mover: Skylar Franke

Secunder: Debbie Heffernan

That the 2024 Municipal Apportionment Methods be approved;

That each participating municipality’s share of the 2024 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 2024 “Benefit-Based Apportionment” method be applied for use with respect for costs for Dams and Water Control Structures as identified in the 2024 Draft Budget Package.

Municipality	For, Against or Absent	Current Value Assessment (CVA) Apportionment Percentage	Voting Weight	Weight Per Member
City of London – Total	-	64.0751	50.00	
City of London Anna Hopkins	For	-	-	12.5
City of London Peter Cuddy	For	-	-	12.5
City of London Skylar Franke	For	-	-	12.5
City of London Sandy Levin	For	-	-	12.5
County of Oxford – Total	-	16.981	24.51	
County of Oxford Brian Petrie	For	-	-	4.902
County of Oxford Paul Mitchell	For	-	-	4.902
County of Oxford George Way	For	-	-	4.902
County of Oxford Mark Schadenberg	For	-	-	4.902
County of Oxford Scotty Zehr	For	-	-	4.902
City of Stratford Harj Nijjar	For	7.2068	10.03	10.03
Township of Lucan-Biddulph Tom Heeman	Absent	0.3507	0.49	0.49
Municipality of Thames Centre Tom Heeman	Absent	3.1974	4.45	4.45

Municipality	For, Against or Absent	Current Value Assessment (CVA) Apportionment Percentage	Voting Weight	Weight Per Member
Municipality of Middlesex Centre Debbie Heffernan	For	2.4438	3.40	3.40
Municipality of West Perth Dean Trentowsky	For	1.4899	2.07	2.07
Township of Perth East Hugh McDermid	Against	1.4182	1.97	1.97
Town of St. Marys Jim Craigmile	Against	1.4604	2.03	2.03
Township of Perth South Jim Craigmile	Against	1.1629	1.62	1.62
Municipality of South Huron Jim Craigmile	Against	0.2009	0.28	0.28

The motion carries with 94.88% 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 General Manager provided a budget overview presentation.

J.Craigmile shared concerns about low reserve levels, what the asset management plan will say, and that this level of levy increase will continue into the future.

S.Levin noted that the additional staff included in this year’s budget will not continue if no longer needed, and voiced his hope to see that reflected in next year’s budget. He added that the percentage of the UTRCA budget funded by Municipalities is 35%, which, compared to other Conservation Authorities across the province, is relatively low.

M.Schadenberg noted that land sales through the Land Management Strategy may provide an opportunity to replenish reserves. Staff noted where provincial funds were used to acquire lands, the Province may direct where the revenues from sales are used.

Amended 27-03-2024

P.Mitchell shared concerns around the deficit budget, but noted the cautious way the budget has been prepared and, historically, the budgeted deficit has gotten smaller as the year progressed.

D.Trentowsky shared concerns around the high levy increase, but noted a suggestion he made at a previous meeting that staff provide an organizational chart to see how those new positions fit into the organization and that staff do a further analysis once the mandated tasks are completed.

Mover: Skylar Franke

Secunder: Debbie Heffernan

That the Board of Directors approve the budgets for 2024 in two parts:

1. A projected operating deficit of \$929,825 from \$22,933,119 in operating expenses, requiring \$7,391,639 of participating member levy, and requiring \$607,950 in cost apportioning agreements among members, and
2. A projected capital deficit of \$2,482,085 from \$5,462,894 in capital expenditures, requiring \$1,388,059 of participating member levy.

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City of London Anna Hopkins	For	-	-	12.5
City of London Peter Cuddy	Against	-	-	12.5
City of London Skylar Franke	For	-	-	12.5
City of London Sandy Levin	For	-	-	12.5
County of Oxford – Total	-	16.981	24.51	
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County of Oxford George Way	For	-	-	4.902
County of Oxford Mark Schadenberg	For	-	-	4.902
County of Oxford Scotty Zehr	For	-	-	4.902
City of Stratford Harj Nijjar	For	7.2068	10.03	10.03
Township of Lucan-	Absent	0.3507	0.49	0.49

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Biddulph Tom Heeman				
Municipality of Thames Centre Tom Heeman	Absent	3.1974	4.45	4.45
Municipality of Middlesex Centre Debbie Heffernan	For	2.4438	3.40	3.40
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Township of Perth East Hugh McDermid	Against	1.4182	1.97	1.97
Town of St. Marys Jim Craigmile	Against	1.4604	2.03	2.03
Township of Perth South Jim Craigmile	Against	1.1629	1.62	1.62
Municipality of South Huron Jim Craigmile	Against	0.2009	0.28	0.28

The motion carries with 81.85% 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.

6.4. Water and Erosion Control Infrastructure Projects Update

Mover: Anna Hopkins

Seconder: Mark Schadenberg

1. The UTRCA Board of Directors approves the amended 2023 WECl Project list including the new projects
 2. The UTRCA Board of Directors approves the preliminary list of projects for submission to MNRF. It is recognized that there may need to be amendments to the list based on updated information and the request for proposals received from MNRF.
- Carried.

6.5. Fee Freeze Advocacy

It was noted that while this type of advocacy is usually done through Conservation Ontario, not all Conservation Authorities have the same pressures. The Upper Thames Watershed was identified as being one of the high growth Conservation Authorities. After hearing from the Member Municipalities, the Chair and staff felt action on this issue was needed. Members felt this should be shared with Conservation Ontario.

Mover: Paul Mitchell

Seconder: Jim Craigmile

That the Board of Directors request staff to prepare and the Chair to send a letter to the mayors of all the watershed municipalities asking them to support the position that the provincial freeze on planning and development application fees needs to be lifted; AND that this be followed by a letter about the issue to Minister Smith, including the signatures of all the supporting mayors.

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

Members felt this report and the message that the UTRCA is meeting the required timelines should be shared more widely.

Mover: Sandy Levin

Seconder: Harj Nijjar

THAT the Board of Directors receive the report for information.

Carried.

8.2. Section 28 Violations – Annual Summary Report

A guidance document to help with decisions on when to pursue violations will be coming to the Board for approval this year.

Amended 27-03-2024

Mover: Skylar Franke

Seconder: Debbie Heffernan

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

8.3. New Section 28 Regulation

Staff noted a more detailed report will be provided at the March Board meeting.

Mover: Skylar Franke

Seconder: Peter Cuddy

THAT the Board of Directors receive the report for information.

Carried.

8.4. Project Status Updates

Mover: Mark Schadenberg

Seconder: George Way

THAT the Board of Directors receive the report for information.

Carried.

8.5. Thames River Current – February Edition

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

Mover: Scotty Zehr

Seconder: Jim Craigmile

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

The next meeting of the Hearing Committee will be March 26th following the Board meeting.

10. Notices of Motion for March 26, 2024

10.1. Notice of Motion from Hugh McDermid

Hugh McDermid provided the following notice of motion for March 26:

That the position of vice chair be included in the Finance and Audit Committee as a right by being vice chair. I feel this will give the organization continuity in case the chair can not continue on the committee.

The Chair called for a 15 minute break at 10:53am. The meeting reconvened at 11:15am.

11. Welcome to Staff

The Chair welcomed staff and the Board members and senior management introduced themselves.

12. Watershed Management Strategy and Land Management Strategy Update Presentation

Staff provided an overview presentation on the progress of the Watershed Management Strategy and Land Management Strategy.

13. Presentation of the Conservation Awards

13.1. Inspiration Award – Dan Vanlieshout

The Chair presented Dan Vanlieshout with the 2024 Inspiration Award for his commitment to environmental education through the Environmental Leadership Program. Under his leadership, the program has developed into a unique educational experience, providing students with hands-on experiences, practical outdoor skills and local ecological knowledge. His efforts have helped build community partnerships, foster student leadership and challenge students to become environmental stewards with a deep respect for the environment.

13.2. Community Award – City of Woodstock Parks Department

The Chair presented Chris Kern and Reta Horne, representing the Woodstock Parks Department, with the 2024 Community Award for their continued commitment to the conservation and restoration of Woodstock’s natural areas, the support they provide to the UTRCA partnerships, education, and stewardship staff and programs, and for always thinking about creative ways to improve the recreational experience for visitors to Woodstock City Parks.

14. Presentation of Staff Service Awards

The following staff members were presented services awards:

10 Years

Richard Brewer, Land Use Regulations Assistant

15 Years

Imtiaz Shah, Senior Environmental Engineer
Karen Winfield, Planning and Regulations Resource Specialist
Tracey Haycock, Mapping and Data Technician
Mary Ellen Kyte, Conservation Area Clerk

35 Years

Vanni Azzano, Community Education Supervisor, Wildwood
Chris Tasker, Manager, Water and Information Management

40 Years

Brad Glasman, Manager, Integrated Watershed Management
Teresa Hollingsworth, Manager, Community and Corporate Services

The Chair also recognized the service of Sacha Pimisken, Park Operations Technician, Fanshawe Conservation Area, 10 years, and Brad Hertner, Coordinator of Community Partnerships, 20 years, who could not attend the meeting.

15. Chair’s Comments

The Chair provided closing remarks and additional thanks to the General Manager, staff, and fellow Board members.

16. Member's Comments

There were no comments from Board members.

17. General Manager's Comments

The General Manager provided closing remarks and thanked staff for the work they do and the Board members for their work and support.

18. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:44 pm on a motion by Debbie Heffernan.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tracy Annett", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tracy Annett, General Manager
Att.