

Minutes

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA)

Board of Directors Meeting

10:00am Tuesday, April 28, 2026 at 1424 Clarke Rd, London
(Hybrid Meeting)

Chair Brian Petrie and Vice-Chair Dean Trentowsky provided regrets for this meeting.
As per the UTRCA Administrative By-Law Section B.3 Absence of Chair and Vice-Chair:

In the event of the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair(s) from any meeting, the members comprising a quorum shall appoint an Acting Chair who, for the purposes of that meeting, has all the powers and shall perform all the duties of the Chair.

Mover: Paul Mitchell

Seconder: Jim Craigmile

THAT the Board of Directors appoints Sandy Levin as Acting Chair for the April 28th Board of Directors meeting.

Carried.

Sandy Levin, Acting UTRCA Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:54am.

Members Present:

Jim Craigmile

Peter Cuddy – Online

Tom Heeman

Anna Hopkins – Online

Sandy Levin – Acting Chair

Hugh McDermid

Paul Mitchell

Harj Nijjar – Online

Mark Schadenberg – Online

George Way

Regrets: Jean Coles, Skylar Franke, Brian Petrie, Dean Trentowsky, Scotty Zehr

Staff Present:

Jenna Allain

Erin Dolmage

Karlee Flear

Teresa Hollingsworth

Tatianna Lozier

Christine Saracino

Chris Tasker

Brent Verscheure

Michelle Viglianti – Recorder

Julie Welker

Brandon Williamson

Karen Winfield

1. Territorial Acknowledgement

The territorial acknowledgement was read at the beginning of the Source Protection Meeting, which preceded this meeting.

2. Modifications to the Agenda

There were no modifications to the agenda.

3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

4. Delegations/Presentations

There were no delegations or presentation.

5. Administrative Business

5.1. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

There were no minutes to approve. Minutes from the two April meetings will be on the agenda for approval at the May meeting.

5.2. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

5.3. Correspondence

5.3.1. London Development Institute

Staff noted that since receiving the letter in March, UTRCA staff have met with the London Development Institute (LDI) and their engineers. Staff have undertaken further revisions to the City of London mapping and modeling and have posted the mapping for the final notification period.

A Board member noted they felt the London Development Institute was overstepping by including the Minister of the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks in the letter.

Mover: Hugh McDermid

Seconder: George Way

THAT the Board of Directors receives the correspondence for information.
Carried.

6. Reports – For Consideration

6.1. Annual Updates to Regulated Area Maps

Members discussed the report.

Mover: Paul Mitchell

Seconder: George Way

THAT the Board of Directors approve the annual review and update of the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority's (UTRCA) Regulated Area maps to incorporate any new information available to regulate natural hazards such as floodplains, steep slopes and wetlands as per Ontario Regulation 41/24.

Carried.

7. Reports – In-Camera

Mover: Hugh McDermid

Seconder: George Way

THAT the Board of Directors adjourn to Closed Session – In Camera, in accordance with Section C.12 of the UTRCA Administrative By-Law to discuss litigation affecting the Authority.

Carried.

The Board adjourned to closed session at approximately 10:05am

The Board rose from closed session at approximately 10:20am and reported the following progress:

7.1 Closed Session – Litigation Affecting the UTRCA – Case Before the Ontario Land Tribunal - verbal

The Board rose and reported they received a verbal update regarding a case before the Ontario Land Tribunal from staff.

8. Reports – For Information

8.1. Bill 97 Proposed Changes to the Conservation Authorities Act

Members suggested that the report be circulated to the UTRCA's member municipalities and the upper tier municipalities.

It was noted that the transition committee will need to be in place by July 23rd.

It was clarified that, to the best of current knowledge, Category 3 agreements between the lower tier Municipalities and the UTRCA will remain in place until the end of the term of the agreement. When the agreements have expired, new agreements will be negotiated between the upper tier Municipalities and the new Regional Conservation Authority.

Members asked about engagement with indigenous partners during the transition period and potential indigenous appointments to the transition committees.

Questions were raised around the potential extension of this Board's term until at least February, whether the member is re-elected to council or not. It was noted that this question has been raised to the Chief Conservation Officer, but no clarification has been provided yet.

Mover: Paul Mitchell

Seconder: Jim Craigmile

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

8.2. Planning and Regulations Policy Document Update

Staff presented the report, noting the updates have taken longer than anticipated to complete due to monthly working group meetings with London Development Institute and the City of London, many meetings with internal technical staff, and hundreds of comments. Further, staff noted the Lower Thames Valley Conservation Authority has requested a copy of the draft policy document. Members voiced their support for sharing the draft with the other Conservation Authorities in our region.

Mover: Harj Nijjar

Seconder: Peter Cuddy

THAT the Board of Directors receives the planning and regulations policy document update report for information.

Carried.

8.3. Hydro Plant Update

Members discussed the financial benefits of power generated by the hydro plant.

A member suggested calculating the return on investment once the plant is back up and running.

Mover: Mark Schadenberg

Secunder: Tom Heeman

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

8.4. Administrative Review Officer (ARO) Discretionary Policy Decisions Quarterly Report

Members thanked staff for the report.

Mover: Tom Heeman

Secunder: Hugh McDermid

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

8.5. First Quarter Update on Implementation of Service Delivery Review Recommendations

Staff introduced the report, noting that while legal matters have been significant draws on staff time, progress was still made in the first quarter.

Members discussed the report.

Mover: George Way

Secunder: Harj Nijjar

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

8.6. First Quarter Financial Update

Members discussed timing and payment schedules of various Municipalities. A member noted that prompt payments would mean higher accumulated interest over the year.

Mover: Hugh McDermid

Seconder: Paul Mitchell

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

8.7. Recent and Upcoming Events

Sandy Levin attended the Wildwood seasonal staff orientation day last week.

Sandy Levin and Jean Coles attended a tree planting event with students from Mother Teresa Secondary School.

It was noted that the Water Festival is coming up and members were encouraged to participate in the partner recognition lunch and family night.

Members thanked staff for the report, noting it makes it easier for members to support the events in their areas.

A member suggested asking the Woodstock Disc Golf Collective to connect with UTRCA staff to provide a demonstration at the Water Festival.

An error in the report was noted by staff. The second paragraph should be replaced with the following:

In January, February and March, the Integrated Watershed Management Unit participated in the Agrisuite Webinar, the ONFarm Forum, the London Farm Show and the Middlesex Soil and Crop Improvement Association Event. The unit hosted the UTRCA Landowners workshop in Thorndale and participated in a joint workshop with MVCA and ABCA in Mitchell this past March. Staff are planning a soil health workshop and other events this summer and fall, including returning to the Outdoor Farmshow in September.

Mover: Tom Heeman

Seconder: Anna Hopkins

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report as amended.

Carried.

8.8. Administration and Enforcement – Section 28 Status Report

Mover: Mark Schadenberg

Seconder: George Way

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

8.9. Project Status Update

Mover: Anna Hopkins

Seconder: Harj Nijjar

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

8.10 Thames River Current – April Edition

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

Mover: Hugh McDermid

Seconder: Peter Cuddy

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

9. Reports – Committees

9.1. Finance and Audit Committee

There was no report from the Finance and Audit Committee.

A Finance and Audit Committee meeting will be held this afternoon. The Auditor will be present and will review the draft audited financial statements for fiscal 2025 with the Committee.

9.2. Hearing Committee – April 20, 2026 Decision

Mover: Peter Cuddy

Seconder: Anna Hopkins

THAT the Board of directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

10. Notices of Motion

There were no notices of motion for the next meeting.

11. Chair's Comments

There were no chair's comments.

12. Member’s Comments

Paul Mitchell shared that on April 22nd the Oxford Stewardship Award was awarded to the Middle Grand Chapter of Freshwater Conservation Canada. The two finalists were Jim and Minnie Koteles and R.M Matheson Farms, both located in Zorra Township. The nominees were featured in the April edition of the Ontario Farmer newspaper and the two Zorra nominees mentioned the work they had done with the UTRCA in their write ups, specifically naming Tatianna Lozier and Brad Hertner. Further, he noted that UTRCA Chair Brian Petrie was also featured in the same edition of Ontario Farmer for his delegation to Perth South council, speaking on the impact of Conservation Authority consolidations on rural municipalities.

Paul Mitchell recognized Chair Brian Petrie for his time and effort in getting information around the Conservation Authority consolidations out to Municipal councils. Further, he recognized the importance of getting the information out to general populations, noting that having two major stories in Ontario Farmer certainly helps get that information out to the rural communities.

Scotty Zehr, who sent his regrets to this meeting, asked that his appreciation for Chair Brian Petrie attending the East Zorra-Tavistock council meeting regarding the Conservation Authority changes be noted.

13. General Manager’s Comments

Jenna Allain, Manager of Environmental Planning and Regulations, passed along comments from General Manager Tracy Annett, who was attending an in-person General Managers meeting held by Conservation Ontario. The Conservation Ontario Annual General meeting was held Monday April 27th and the following people were acclaimed to the Board of Directors:

- Chair – Dave Barton – Toronto Region Conservation Authority
- Vice Chair – Pat Warren – Kawartha Conservation
- Vice Chair – Ed McGugan – Maitland Valley Conservation Authority
- Director – Samantha Lawson – Grand River Conservation Authority
- Director – Brad McNevin – Quinte Conservation
- Director – Rob Baldwin – Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority

14. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:03am on a motion by Tom Heeman, seconded by Jim Craigmile.

Jenna Allain, Acting General Manager
/mv