

## Minutes

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA)

Board of Directors Meeting

9:30am Tuesday, August 26, 2025 at 1424 Clarke Rd, London  
(Hybrid Meeting)

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Dean Trentowsky, UTRCA Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:37am.

### Members Present:

Peter Cuddy - Online

Skylar Franke

Anna Hopkins

Sandy Levin

Hugh McDermid - Online

Paul Mitchell

Harj Nijjar

Brian Petrie

Mark Schadenberg

Dean Trentowsky – Chair

George Way

Scotty Zehr – Online

Regrets: Jean Coles, Jim Craigmile, Tom Heeman

### Staff Present:

Jenna Allain

Tracy Annett

Amy Bumbacco

Mike Funk – Online

Eric Gaskin - Online

Huda Ghadhban

Joe Gordon

Eleanor Heagy

Mark Helsten

Teresa Hollingsworth

Christine Saracino

Chris Tasker

Brent Verscheure

Michelle Viglianti – Recorder

## 1. Territorial Acknowledgement

The Chair read the territorial acknowledgement.

## 2. Modifications to the Agenda

The Chair noted closed session item 7.1 was being removed from the August agenda. The item will appear on a future agenda.

Mover: Brian Petrie

Seconder: Skylar Franke

THAT the Board of directors be adopted as amended.

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Carried.

### **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: June 24, 2025**

Mover: Mark Schadenberg

Seconder: George Way

THAT that the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Board of Directors approves the Board of Directors' minutes, including any closed session minutes, dated June 24, 2025.

Carried.

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

There was no business arising from the minutes.

#### **5.3. Correspondence**

##### **5.3.1. Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks**

Mover: Sandy Levin

Seconder: Scotty Zehr

THAT the Board of Directors receive the correspondence for information.

Carried.

The Chair read out the following email he received from Nicholas Vink, a rate payer and participant in the Reduced Tillage Cover Crop and Phosphorus programs:

Good afternoon,

I wanted to take a moment to express my appreciation for both the Reduced Tillage Cover Crop and Phosphorus Program, as well as the excellent work by your team at Upper Thames. For me this is the second year I have applied and this program has been running straightforward, efficient, and effective.

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From receiving the application notice, to completing a simple online form, to getting feedback and approval within a week—the entire process was seamless. I wish all government ag programs operated with this level of clarity and efficiency. Beyond the smooth administration, the environmental benefits of the program are also commendable.

Thank you for your efforts in making this such a positive experience.

Nicholas

## **6. Reports – For Consideration**

### **6.1. R.T Orr and Lake Victoria Drawdown**

The Members discussed the cost allocation of the work and the ongoing debris issue.

Staff confirmed a follow-up report with recommendations would be presented to the Board for consideration at a future meeting.

Mover: Harj Nijjar

Seconder: Paul Mitchell

THAT the Board of Directors receive this report for information and direct staff to implement the items identified in the next steps section of this report.

Carried.

### **6.2. 2026 Preliminary Draft Budget**

The General Manager provided an overview presentation of the 2026 Preliminary Draft Budget.

A member requested staff share the UTRCA communication that will be sent to the City of London regarding the fulfillment of their budget request with the Board members.

Members discussed the Province's ability to direct funds from land sales. Staff confirmed getting that direction from the province prior to the completion of the land sale is not an option.

A member noted that the Non-Residential Building Construction Price Index would have a bigger impact on capital projects than the Consumer Price Index.

Members discussed the recent reductions/elimination of work from home arrangements across sections and the current status of the UTRCA work from home policy.

Members discussed the Current Value Assessment (CVA), noting the CVA is still calculated based on the 2016 Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC)

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assessment. Members shared the concerns around the outdated MPAC assessment being raised in the agricultural community during the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) conference and Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) meetings.

Mover: Skylar Franke

Seconder: Brian Petrie

THAT the Board of Directors receive the 2026 Preliminary Draft Budget and direct staff to prepare the 2026 Draft Budget.

Carried.

## **7. Reports – In-Camera**

There were no reports to consider in-camera.

## **8. Reports – For Information**

### **8.1. 2025 Mid-Year Financial Update and Revised Budget**

Mover: George Way

Seconder: Harj Nijjar

THAT the Board of Directors receive the report for information.

Carried.

### **8.2. Strategic Plan Update**

The General Manager provided an overview presentation of the draft Strategic Plan.

A member voiced concerns, feeling there was some clarification needed to make the document more understandable to the general public. It was suggested that the following terms be clarified: watershed health, eco systems and conservation lands. They also felt the document could provide more clarity on the mandatory versus non-mandatory programs.

Mover: Anna Hopkins

Seconder: Skylar Franke

THAT the Board of Directors receive the report for information.

Carried.

### **8.3. Administration and Enforcement – Section 28 Status Report**

Members asked clarification questions regarding the tables in the body of the report.

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Mover: Mark Schadenberg

Seconder: Paul Mitchell

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

### **8.4. Administrative Review Officers (ARO) Discretionary Policy Decisions - Quarterly Report**

Mover: Anna Hopkins

Seconder: Harj Nijjar

THAT the Board of Directors receive the report for information.

Carried.

### **8.5. Hazard Mapping Consultation Update**

It was clarified that this update covers the area along the Thames River within the City of London and does not include the Dingman creek screening area.

Members discussed the distribution of updated information to the homeowners affected by the mapping updates and the impact on insurance rates.

Peter Cuddy left the meeting 11:30am.

Mover: Brian Petrie

Seconder: Scotty Zehr

THAT the Board of Directors receive the report for information.

Carried.

### **8.6. Project Status Update**

A member had questions about the status of the Hydro Plant repairs and requested the project be added back into the project status update table for a future update report.

Mover: Sandy Levin

Seconder: George Way

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

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## **8.7. Thames River Current – August Edition**

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

## **9. Reports – Committees**

### **9.1. Finance and Audit Committee – June 24, 2025 Meeting**

Finance and Audit Committee Chair Sandy Levin shared a concern of the Committee coming out of the June meeting over the potential significant affect parts of the American Big Beautiful Bill would have on UTRCA investments. S.Levin reported that since the June meeting, the parts of the Bill that would affect some UTRCA investments had been pulled.

Mover: Skylar Franke

Seconder: Brian Petrie

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

### **9.2. Hearing Committee**

The next meeting of the Hearing Committee will take place at 12:00pm today.

## **10. Notices of Motion**

There were no notices of motion.

## **11. Chair's Comments**

The Chair thanked Vice-Chair Mark Schadenberg for filling in on short notice as Chair at the June meeting.

The Chair complimented staff on the amount of work accomplished over the summer, including the 2026 preliminary draft budget, draft strategic plan, and progress on the mapping updates while dealing with various emergencies and keeping on top of daily operations.

The Chair noted that two years ago the Board was concerned about a pending deficit, and while the picture is improving and progress is being made, there are still challenges with reserves and capital spending.

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The Chair commended staff for their work and the General Manager for her leadership.

### **12. Member's Comments**

There were no comments from members.

### **13. General Manager's Comments**

The General Manager shared that over 120 people attended the recent Friends and Family Event for the Southern Ontario At Risk Reptiles (SOARR) program. Municipal councillors and Municipal staff will be attending a similar presentation and lab tour tomorrow. The success of the SOARR turtle program also made front page news in London Free Press.

The General Manager attended a virtual General Managers meeting hosted by Conservation Ontario. She noted the focus was on materials to be provided to Federal politicians to promote the work and role of Conservation Authorities and the role they play in delivering some Federal programs.

### **14. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:47am on a motion by Skylar Franke, seconded by Brian Petrie.

Tracy Annett, General Manager  
/mv