

Minutes

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA)

Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, January 28, 2025, 9:30am 1424 Clarke Road, London

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

Members Present:

Jean Coles

Jim Craigmile - Online

Skylar Franke - Online

Tom Heeman - Online

Anna Hopkins - Online

Sandy Levin

Hugh McDermid - Online

Paul Mitchell

Harj Nijjar - Online

Brian Petrie – Chair

Mark Schadenberg - Online

Dean Trentowsky - Online

George Way

Scotty Zehr - Online

Regrets:

Peter Cuddy

Solicitor:

Grant Inglis

Staff Present:

Jenna Allain

Tracy Annett

Emily Chandler

Karlee Flear

Joe Gordon

Eleanor Heagy

Brad Hertner

Teresa Hollingsworth

Tatianna Lozier

Christine Saracino

Chris Tasker

Tara Tchir

Brent Verscheure

Michelle Viglianti – Recorder

Brandon Williamson

1. Territorial Acknowledgement

The Chair read the territorial acknowledgement.

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 presentations.

5. Administrative Business

5.1. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting: December 18, 2024

Mover: Skylar Franke

Seconder: George Way

THAT that the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Board of Directors approve the Board of Directors' minutes dated December 18, 2024.

Carried.

5.2. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

5.3. Correspondence

5.3.1. Ministry of Natural Resources Agricultural Representative

The Chair asked members to share the posting to anyone who may be interested.

Mover: Jean Coles

Seconder: Scotty Zehr

THAT the Board of Directors receive the correspondence for information.

Carried.

6. Reports – For Consideration

6.1. UTRCA Hearing Guidelines Update

Staff will follow up with Board members on whether or not third party appeals to the Ontario Land Tribunal pertaining to Section 28 decisions are permitted, given the recent change in legislation barring third parties appealing Municipal decisions.

Mover: Sandy Levin

Seconder: Anna Hopkins

THAT the Board of Directors updates to the UTRCA Hearing Guidelines as presented.
Carried.

6.2. Housekeeping Amendments to Delegation of Powers and Officer Appointments

Mover: Jim Craigmile

Seconder: Harj Nijjar

Recommendation 1 – Holding Of Hearings

Pursuant to section 28.4 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*, the Board of Directors delegates all of its powers relating to holding of hearings in relation to section 28 regulation permits to the UTRCA Hearing Committee subject to any limitations or requirements that may be prescribed by regulation.

Recommendation 2 – Issuance of Permits

Pursuant to section 28.4 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*, the Board of Directors delegates powers relating to the issuance of section 28 permits that are considered to be in compliance with UTRCA's Board approved policy and procedural manuals, to the following UTRCA staff positions subject to any limitations or requirements that maybe prescribed by regulation:

1. Manager, Environmental Planning and Regulations
2. Regulations Coordinator
3. Planning and Regulations Resource Specialist
4. Land Use Regulation Officer(s)
5. Land Use Regulation Assistant(s)

Recommendation 3 – Appointment of Officers (S.28)

Pursuant to section 30.1 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*, the Board of Directors appoints the following staff as officers for the purposes of ensuring compliance with the regulation enacted under section 28 of the Act and within the Upper Thames River watershed:

1. Joseph (Joe) Gordon
2. Karen Winfield
3. Jessica Schnaithmann
4. Michael Funk
5. Dave Griffin
6. Cari Ramsey
7. Richard Brewer

Carried.

6.3. Notice of Motion – Per Diem Remuneration for Members

The Chair vacated his position and passed the Chair of the meeting over to Vice-Chair Dean Trentowsky.

Brian Petrie introduced his motion and reasoning as outlined in the agenda package.

Other members supported the motion, feeling that the proposed per diem would be fair compensation, taking into consideration not only the time spent at Board meetings, but also the time spent preparing for meetings. They felt that while the proposed increase is large when compared to the current per diem, the impact on the overall budget would be relatively minimal. Members noted that Committee meetings are typically held on the same day as Board meetings for efficiency purposes and those members do not get paid extra.

Some members raised concerns over the potential negative optics of such a large increase and felt that this decision should be left for the incoming Board in 2027. Others were concerned this increase could add up to more than it was intended to be if Committee meetings are held on a different day than a Board meeting.

Members felt that the per diem should be reviewed in a year or two for monitoring purposes. Staff confirmed a report will be presented next month that will propose an amendment to the Administrative By-Laws to include per diems, mileage and honorarium rates so they can be monitored and keep in alignment with Provincial rates.

Mover: Brian Petrie

Seconder: Paul Mitchell

That the UTRCA set the per diem rate of remuneration for board members using the same methodology as the Province of Ontario will be using for the agricultural representative, that it will be appointing to the board. Schedule A, Level 1 of the Agencies and Appointments Directive. Chair and Vice Chair honorariums remain at current levels.

Schedule A: Per Diem Remuneration for Board-Governed Provincial Agencies and Advisory Agencies

Level 1 — basic Remuneration
Members Up to \$150 per day
Vice-Chairs Up to \$175 per day
Chairs Up to \$225 per day

And furthermore that rate take effect at the first meeting following the passing of the 2025 authority budget.

Carried.

Dean Trentowksy vacated the Chair and Brian Petrie resumed the Chair.

7. Reports – In-Camera

Mover: George Way

Seconder: Sandy Levin

THAT the Board of Directors adjourn to Closed Session – In Camera.

Carried.

The Board adjourned to closed session in accordance with Section C.13 of the UTRCA Administrative By-Law to discuss litigation and potential litigation affecting the Authority at 10:14am.

The Committee rose from closed session at 10:21am and passed the following motions.

7.1. Update on Participation in Potential Litigation Affecting the Authority

Mover: Paul Mitchell

Seconder: Jean Coles

THAT the Board of Directors receive closed session report 7.1 for information.

Carried.

7.2. Litigation Affecting the UTRCA – Statements of Claim Summary

Mover: Jim Craigmile

Seconder: George Way

THAT the Board of Directors receive closed session report 7.2 for information.

Carried.

8. Reports – For Information

8.1. Administration and Enforcement – Section 28 Status Report

It was confirmed that the contract for the streamlining initiative has been awarded, work has begun, and there will be recommendations coming to the Board this calendar year.

Mover: Harj Nijjar

Seconder: Skylar Franke

THAT the Board of Directors receive the report for information.

Carried.

8.2. Funding Applications Update

The Board discussed the funding applications update report.

It was suggested that a new column be added to next year's report to show which category the projects fall under (category 1, 2 or 3).

Mover: Skylar Franke

Seconder: Scotty Zehr

THAT the Board of Directors receive the report for information.

Carried.

8.3. Project Status Updates

Mover: Sandy Levin

Seconder: George Way

THAT the Board of Directors receive the report for information.

Carried.

8.4. Draft Budget Review and Municipal Feedback

To address the ongoing concerns from the Mayor of St. Marys regarding City of London pollution control, a member suggested that either Councillor Hopkins or Councillor Franke, as members of the City of London Infrastructure and Corporate Services Committee, meet with Mayor Strathdee to share information on the City's plans and actions around pollution control. It was suggested that Councillor Craigmile help initiate the conversation.

The Chair thanked Councillor Craigmile for attending and participating in the South Huron and Perth South budget presentations with the General Manager.

Mover: Anna Hopkins

Seconder: Dean Trentowsky

THAT the Board of Directors receive the report for information.

Carried.

8.5. Annual Meeting Details – Verbal Report

The Annual General Meeting will be held as an in-person meeting on February 25th. The first part of the meeting will cover regular Board meeting business, including the consideration of the 2025 Budget. The second portion of the meeting will recognize the accomplishments of the Authority in 2025, staff milestones, and watershed residents for their contributions. Lunch will be provided following the meeting.

Mover: Paul Mitchell

Secunder: Harj Nijjar

THAT the Board of Directors receive the verbal report for information.

Carried.

8.6. Thames River Current – January Edition

The Thames River Current was presented for the member's information.

Mover: Jean Coles

Secunder: George Way

THAT the Board of Directors accept the report for information.

Carried.

9. Reports – Committee Updates

9.1. Finance and Audit Committee

There was no report from the Finance and Audit Committee.

9.2. Hearing Committee

There will be a short Hearing Committee meeting following the Board meeting.

10. Elections

Mover: Paul Mitchell

Secunder: Jean Coles

THAT Grant Inglis be nominated as Acting Chair for the purpose of conducting the 2025 elections.

Carried.

Grant Inglis outlined the procedures for electing the Chair and Vice-Chair as specified in the Conservation Authorities Act and the UTRCA Board of Directors' Administrative By-Law.

I. Chair

Grant Inglis called for nominations for the position of Chair of the UTRCA Board of Directors for 2025 three times.

Brian Petrie nominated Dean Trentowsky for the position of Chair.

Mover: Paul Mitchell

Seconder: George Way

THAT the Board of Directors close nominations.

Dean Trentowsky accepted his nomination and was declared to be elected by acclamation to the position of Authority Chair for 2025.

II. Vice-Chair

Grant Inglis called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the UTRCA Board of Directors for 2025 three times.

Paul Mitchell nominated Mark Schadenberg.

Mover: Brian Petrie

Seconder: George Way

THAT the Board of Directors close nominations.

Mark Schadenberg accepted his nomination and was declared to be elected by acclamation to the position of Authority Vice-Chair for 2025.

III. Hearing Committee (two positions)

Grant Inglis noted that the Hearing Committee consists of the Authority Chair, Vice-Chair, past Authority Chair, and two additional Authority members.

Grant Inglis called for nominations for two positions on the 2025 Hearing Committee three times.

Mark Schadenberg nominated Paul Mitchell for a position on the 2025 Hearing Committee.

Brian Petrie nominated Sandy Levin for a position on the 2025 Hearing Committee.

Dean Trentowsky nominated Jim Craigmile for a position on the 2025 Hearing Committee.

Mover: Paul Mitchell

Seconder: Jean Coles

THAT the Board of Directors close nominations.

Sandy Levin and Jim Craigmile accepted their nominations. Paul Mitchell declined his nomination.

Sandy Levin and Jim Craigmile were declared to be elected by acclamation to the Hearing Committee.

IV. Finance and Audit Committee (one to three positions)

Grant Inglis noted that the Finance and Audit Committee consists of the Authority Chair and Vice-Chair, plus one to three additional Authority members.

Grant Inglis called for nominations for one to three positions on the 2025 Finance and Audit Committee three times.

Brian Petrie nominated Paul Mitchell for a position on the 2025 Finance and Audit Committee.

Brian Petrie nominated Sandy Levin for a position on the 2025 Finance and Audit Committee.

Dean Trentowsky nominated Harj Nijjar for a position on the 2025 Finance and Audit Committee.

Sandy Levin nominated Brian Petrie for a position on the 2025 Finance and Audit Committee.

Move: Anna Hopkins

Secunder: Scotty Zehr

THAT the Board of Directors close nominations.

Sandy Levin, Paul Mitchell and Harj Nijjar accepted their nominations. Brian Petrie declined his nomination.

Sandy Levin, Paul Mitchell and Harj Nijjar were declared to be elected by acclamation to the Finance and Audit Committee.

I. Source Protection Striking Committee/Committee Liaison (one position)

Grant Inglis called three times for nominations for the position of Source Protection Striking Committee/Committee Liaison.

Brian Petrie nominated Sandy Levin for the position of Source Protection Striking Committee/Committee Liaison.

Mover: Brian Petrie

Seconder: Paul Mitchell

THAT the Board of Directors close nominations.

Sandy Levin accepted his nomination.

Sandy Levin was declared to be elected by acclamation to the position of Source Protection Striking Committee/Committee Liaison for 2025.

With the conclusion of the 2025 elections, Grant Inglis relinquished the Chair to Dean Trentowsky.

11. Notices of Motion

There were no notices of motion.

12. Chair's Comments

The Chair thanked Brian Petrie for the nomination and the rest of the Board and staff for their endorsement and cooperation in the past year.

The Chair thanked former Chair Brian Petrie for steering the ship through the many challenges over the last two years, both at Board meetings and behind the scenes. He also thanked Paul Mitchell for his service on the Hearing Committee, welcomed Mark Schadenberg as Vice-Chair and Jim Craigmile to the Hearing Committee, and thanked Sandy Levin for his continued presence on the Hearing and Finance and Audit Committee. He felt that communication and cooperation will be the continued key focus going forward and noted challenges facing the Board, including changes in regulations, finances, the general governance of the organization, and cooperation with municipal partners and public at large.

13. Member's Comments

Brian Petrie thanked staff for their work and support during his time as Chair. He noted that the Fee Freeze came up during the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) conference, and the Minister was clear it would not be lifted, although the purpose behind the freeze changed. The Minister stated the freeze was in place to find more efficiencies in Conservation Authorities.

Mark Schadenberg noted that he looked forward to working with the Chair and staff and shared that the City of Woodstock will be receiving 2.6 million dollars in Provincial funding to urbanize Pittock Park road.

Jim Craigmile thanked Paul Mitchell and noted he was looking forward to working with the other members of the Hearing Committee.

Skylar Franke congratulated all those stepping into new positions. She informed the Board of the Middlesex London Farmers breakfast on January 29th. She also noted that the City of London is reviewing London's urban growth boundary and would be happy to discuss with any members the ongoing review.

Paul Mitchell thanked Brian Petrie for his leadership and congratulated Dean Trentowsky on his new role as Chair and all those who volunteered to sit on the Committees, noting the importance of having turnover in leadership positions.

Harj Nijjar thanked the members for his nomination, noting it has been a privilege to serve the last two years. He also thanked the General Manager for attending the Stratford budget meeting.

14. General Manager's Comments

The General Manager congratulated the Board members taking on new roles.

The General Manager reported that Tatianna Lozier is currently filling the role of Acting Manager of the Integrated Watershed Management Unit as Brad Glasman, the former Manager, has retired from the position after more than 40 years of service to the UTRCA. The role is acting as the UTRCA works towards the Strategic Plan and ensures the organizational structure is aligned with delivering the strategic goals moving forward.

15. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:34am on a motion by Brian Petrie, seconded by Skylar Franke.

Tracy Annett, General Manager
Att.