

Minutes

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA)

Board of Directors Meeting

9:30am Tuesday, January 27, 2026 at 1424 Clarke Rd, London
(Hybrid Meeting)

Dean Trentowsky, UTRCA Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:32am.

Members Present:

Jean Coles – Online

Jim Craigmile

Peter Cuddy – Online

Skylar Franke – Online

Anna Hopkins – Online

Sandy Levin

Hugh McDermid – Online

Paul Mitchell

Harj Nijjar – Online

Brian Petrie

Mark Schadenberg – Online

Dean Trentowsky – Chair

Scotty Zehr – Online

Regrets: Tom Heeman, George Way

Staff Present:

Jenna Allain

Tracy Annett

Emily Chandler

Karlee Flear

Eric Gaskin - Online

Joe Gordon

Eleanor Heagy

Tatianna Lozier

Christine Saracino

Chris Tasker

Dan Trudgeon

Brent Verscheure

Michelle Viglianti – Recorder

Jennifer Williams

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 16, 2025

Mover: Paul Mitchell

Seconder: Brian Petrie

THAT that the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Board of Directors approves the Board of Directors' minutes, dated December 16, 2025.

Carried.

5.2. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

5.3. Correspondence

There were no items of correspondence.

6. Reports – For Consideration

6.1. Discussion on Formalizing the General Manager's Performance Appraisal Process

Skylar Franke spoke to her motion. Members were supportive of the motion, but raised concerns around the timing. Some members felt the UTRCA should not be engaging a consultant until more information on the proposed amalgamations is received from the Province, especially with the potential impact those changes could have on the position of General Manager.

Mover: Skylar Franke

Seconder: Brian Petrie

THAT the Board engage an external consultant to support the following functions:

- administering a formal 360-degree survey process, including staff, board members, and select external partners;
- administering a self-evaluation of the General Manager;

- compiling, analyzing, anonymizing, and summarizing all results into a clear, actionable report;
- presenting the findings to the board in closed session;

assisting with the creation of a professional development work plan for the General Manager.

Mover: Sandy Levin

Secunder: Brian Petrie

Amendment: Part B And that work not begin until sufficient information is received regarding the future of our CA to warrant the work.

Carried.

THAT the board engage an external consultant to support the following functions:

- administering a formal 360-degree survey process, including staff, board members, and select external partners;
- administering a self-evaluation of the General Manager;
- compiling, analyzing, anonymizing, and summarizing all results into a clear, actionable report;
- presenting the findings to the board in closed session;
- assisting with the creation of a professional development work plan for the General Manager.

Part B AND THAT work not begin until sufficient information is received regarding the future of our CA to warrant the work.

Carried.

6.2. Proposed Implementation Plan for Service Delivery Review Recommendations

The Board discussed current staffing levels in the Planning department.

Members voiced their support for the recommendations despite the unknowns facing all Conservation Authorities. They felt it was a positive sign to the public and industry partners that the feedback they provided to improve the level of customer service is being taken seriously by the UTRCA. Members noted the recommendations align with the main concern of the Province around planning and permitting. Members highlighted items, including new software implementation, that are being delayed because of the unknow impact of the potential consolations.

Mover: Brian Petrie

Seconded: Paul Mitchell

THAT the Board of Directors approves the Proposed 2026 Phase 1 Implementation Plan for the Service Delivery Review Recommendations.

Carried.

6.3. Planning and Permitting Fee Schedules

Mover: Anna Hopkins

Seconded: Mark Schadenberg

THAT the proposed revisions to the Planning and Permitting Fee Schedules be approved by the UTRCA Board of Directors for implementation beginning February 1, 2026.

Carried.

7. Reports – In-Camera

Mover: Brian Petrie

Seconded: Jean Coles

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 security of UTRCA property, pending disposition of land, and litigation affecting the UTRCA.

Carried.

The Board adjourned to closed session at 10:04am.

The Board rose from closed session at 10:47am, resumed the meeting at 10:53am, and reported the following progress:

7.1. Security of UTRCA Property

Mover: Brian Petrie

Seconded: Hugh McDermid

That the Board receive the report for information on our current cybersecurity posture and review of planned priorities for 2026.

Carried.

7.2. Pending Disposition of Land Update

The Chair reported that direction was given to staff regarding a pending disposition of land.

7.3. Litigation Affecting the Authority – Statements of Claim Summary

Mover: Brian Petrie

Seconder: Sandy Levin

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

Carried.

8. Reports – For Information

8.1. Administration and Enforcement – Section 28 Status Report

Mover: Jim Craigmile

Seconder: Scotty Zehr

THAT the Board of Directors receives the section 28 status report for information.

Carried.

8.2. Administrative Review Officers (ARO) Discretionary Policy Decisions Quarterly Report

Mover: Brian Petrie

Seconder: Anna Hopkins

THAT the Board of Directors receive the ARO quarterly report for information.

Carried.

8.3. Project Status Update

Mover: Paul Mitchell

Seconder: Skylar Franke

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

8.4. Response and Communications – Proposed Boundaries for the Regional Consolidation of Ontario’s Conservation Authorities

On January 16th the General Manager provided a presentation on the proposed Provincial changes to a group of watershed Mayors, Wardens and Councillors, organized and hosted by London Mayor Josh Morgan. The Chair shared that the General Manager’s presentation was well received by all who attended the meeting. The Chair noted that the common concerns shared by those in attendance would be communicated to the Province at the discretion of those who attended the meeting. The Chair thanked Mayor Morgan and City of London staff for organizing the meeting.

Members felt that the General Manager's presentation should be shared with Municipal councils and local Members of Provincial Parliament.

Mover: Mark Schadenberg

Seconder: Jean Coles

THAT the Board of Directors receive this report for information.

Carried.

8.5. 2026 Draft Budget Municipal Feedback

The General Manager noted a presentation has been scheduled for Zorra on February 4th. Any additional comments on the draft 2026 Budget will be included in the report accompanying the 2026 Budget recommendations. The report will also highlight the changes between the draft budget approved for circulation and the final budget for consideration.

Mover: Brian Petrie

Seconder: Harj Nijjar

THAT the Board of Directors receives this report for information.

Carried.

8.6. Thames River Current – January Edition

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

Mover: Skylar Franke

Seconder: Scotty Zehr

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.

9.2. Hearing Committee

There will be short meeting of the 2026 Hearing Committee following this meeting.

10. Elections

Mover: Paul Mitchell

Seconder: Peter Cuddy

THAT the Board of Directors appoint Tracy Annett as Acting Chair for the purpose of conducting the 2026 elections.

Carried.

The Acting Chair outlined the procedure for electing the Chair and Vice-Chair, as specified in the Conservation Authorities Act and the UTRCA Board of Directors' Administrative By-Law.

Mover: Brian Petrie

Seconder: Jim Craigmile

THAT the Board of Directors appoint Michelle Viglianti, Eleanor Heagy, and Emily Chandler as scrutineers for the purpose of counting ballots, should an election be required.

Carried.

I. Chair

The Acting Chair called for nominations for the position of Chair of the UTRCA Board of Directors for 2026 three times.

Sand Levin nominated Brian Petrie for the position of Chair.

Mover: Paul Mitchell

Seconder: Jim Craigmile

THAT the Board of Directors close nominations.

Brian Petrie accepted his nomination and was declared to be elected by acclamation to the position of Authority Chair for 2026.

Brian Petrie thanked Dean Trentowsky for the time and effort put in during his term as Chair.

II. Vice-Chair

The Acting Chair called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the UTRCA Board of Directors for 2026 three times.

Brian Petrie nominated Dean Trentowsky for the position of Vice-Chair.

Mover: Jim Craigmile

Seconder: Scotty Zehr

THAT the Board of Directors close nominations for the position of Vice-Chair.

Dean Trentowsky accepted his nomination and was declared to be elected by acclamation to the position of Authority Vice-Chair for 2026.

Dean Trentowsky thanked everyone for their support and cooperation over his term as Chair, noting it was an honour and privilege.

III. Hearing Committee (three positions)

The Acting Chair noted that the Hearing Committee consists of the Authority Chair, Vice-Chair, past Authority Chair, and two additional Authority members. Since there is no Past Chair, three members will be elected.

The Acting Chair called for nominations for positions on the 2026 Hearing Committee three times.

Peter Cuddy and Skylar Franke left the meeting at approximately 11:28am.

Brian Petrie nominated Mark Schadenberg for a position on the 2026 Hearing Committee.

Paul Mitchell nominated Sandy Levin for a position on the 2026 Hearing Committee.

Paul Mitchell nominated Jim Craigmile for a position on the 2026 Hearing Committee.

Mover: Anna Hopkins

Seconder: Harj Nijjar

THAT the Board of Directors close nominations.

Sandy Levin, Jim Craigmile and Mark Schadenberg accepted their nominations and were declared to be elected by acclamation to the 2026 Hearing Committee.

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

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

The Acting Chair called for nominations for positions on the 2026 Finance and Audit Committee three times.

Brian Petrie nominated Paul Mitchell, Sandy Levin, and Harj Nijjar for positions on the 2026 Finance and Audit Committee.

Move: Paul Mitchell

Seconder: Jim Craigmile

THAT the Board of Directors close nominations for finance and audit committee.

Sandy Levin, Paul Mitchell and Harj Nijjar accepted their nominations and were declared to be elected by acclamation to the 2026 Finance and Audit Committee.

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

The Acting Chair called three times for nominations for the position of Source Protection Striking Committee/Committee Liaison.

Paul Mitchell nominated Sandy Levin for the position of Source Protection Striking Committee/Committee Liaison.

Mover: Brian Petrie

Seconder: Anna Hopkins

THAT the Board of Directors close nominations.

Sandy Levin accepted his nomination and was declared to be elected by acclamation to the position of Source Protection Striking Committee/Committee Liaison for 2026.

With the conclusion of the 2026 elections, Tracy Annett relinquished the Chair to Brian Petrie.

11. Notices of Motion

There were no notices of motion.

12. Chair's Comments

Chair Brian Petrie echoed past comments made by past Chair Dean Trentowsky, remarking that the work will continue until someone tells the Authority to stop. He noted that the Authority still has responsibilities and work to do for the betterment of our communities and watershed. The Chair encouraged everyone to keep spreading the word on the impacts of the proposed provincial changes.

The Chair thanked everyone who put their names forward for Committees.

13. Member's Comments

Paul Mitchell and Mark Schadenberg thanked Dean Trentowsky for all the work he did serving as Authority Chair.

Paul Mitchell thanked Brian Petrie for taking on the role of Chair again, noting the word of the day is uncertainty.

Members thanked Mark Schadenberg for his work as Vice-Chair over the last year.

14. General Manager's Comments

The General Manager reminded members that the February meeting will be the Annual General Meeting and it will be an in-person meeting. There will be conservation awards and staff service awards presented, and a lunch will follow the meeting.

15. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:40am on a motion by Dean Trentowsky, seconded by Scotty Zehr.

Tracy Annett, General Manager
/mv