

Minutes

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA)

Board of Directors Meeting

9:30am Tuesday, March 24, 2026 at 1424 Clarke Rd, London
(Hybrid Meeting)

Brian Petrie, UTRCA Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:34am.

Members Present:

Jean Coles

Jim Craigmile

Skylar Franke – Online

Anna Hopkins

Sandy Levin

Hugh McDermid

Paul Mitchell

Harj Nijjar – Online

Brian Petrie – Chair

Mark Schadenberg

Dean Trentowsky

Scotty Zehr - Online

Regrets: Peter Cuddy, George Way, Tom Heeman

Solicitor: Grant Inglis

Staff Present:

Jenna Allain

Tracy Annett

Emily Chandler

Joe Gordon

Eleanor Heagy

Teresa Hollingsworth

Damian Schofield

Graeme Shaw

Chris Tasker

Brent Verscheure

Michelle Viglianti – Recorder

Julie Welker

Brandon Williamson

Kailee Davis

Eric Gaskin

Mike Knox

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: February 24, 2026

Mover: Mark Schadenberg

Seconder: Jim Craigmile

THAT that the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Board of Directors approves the Board of Directors' minutes, dated February 24, 2026.

Carried.

5.2. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

5.3. Correspondence

5.3.1. Minister's Direction on Fee Changes

Mover: Jean Coles

Seconder: Dean Trentowksy

THAT the Board of Directors receives the correspondence for information.

Carried.

6. Reports – For Consideration

6.1. 2026 Board Meeting Schedule Proposed Amendments

Members raised questions around the November 3rd meeting, which is after the municipal elections but before new councils will be sworn in. It was noted the current legislation states that a member's term expires immediately before the first meeting of the Authority after the appointment of their replacement. It is currently unknown when the new Regional Board members will be appointed.

Mover: Anna Hopkins
Seconder: Hugh McDermid

That the Board amends the 2026 Meeting Schedule to add a second meeting in April on April 14th, 2026;
AND that the Board moves the previously scheduled September 22nd, 2026 meeting to October 6th, 2026.
Carried.

7. Reports – In-Camera

There were no reports to consider in camera.

8. Reports – For Information

8.1. Update and Decision on the Provincial Proposal to Consolidate Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities into Regional Conservation Authorities

The General Manager provided a presentation outlining the update and decision on the Provincial proposal to consolidate Ontario's 36 Conservation Authorities into Regional Conservation Authorities.

The General Manager noted that the four General Managers in the new consolidated Western Lake Erie Conservation Region will be meeting tomorrow afternoon to begin discussions on financial software and budgeting process amongst many other items, and to set up teams of staff to begin sharing information and processes.

Members voiced their support for the four General Managers of the region getting together to start discussions and planning. Members were encouraged by the proactive approach taken by the General Managers, feeling that certain areas should be mapped out in advance of the formation of the transition committees.

A member raised concerns regarding the three million dollars from the Province to help with consolidations, feeling it was concerningly low once divided amongst the nine Conservation Regions.

Members raised questions about governance, timing of the appointment of the new Regional Board, and whether the current Board will exist following the election.

Members raised questions around the 2027 budget and whether it will be levied to the lower or upper tier municipalities.

Questions were raised around whether the Agency or Municipalities would be paying for the costs associated with the consolidations.

A member felt that the Watershed Councils should be created at the beginning of the consolidations, not later in the process.

The Chair noted that he will be appearing as a delegation at Municipal Council meetings to share information on the consolidation and to encourage continued communication through this process. The Chair encouraged members to start sharing their Upper Tier staff contacts with UTRCA staff.

The Chair noted he was setting up a meeting between himself and the Chairs from Lower Thames Valley, Essex Region and St. Clair Region Conservation Authorities.

Members discussed the legal impact of consolidation on agreements and contracts.

Members shared concerns over reserve funds from land sales and specified structures and whether those funds would stay in the watershed that funded those reserves.

Mover: Paul Mitchell

Seconder: Dean Trentowsky

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

8.2. Asset Management Update

The General Manager provided an overview of the report.

The members raised concerns that the other Conservation Authorities in the new Region may be using all different software. The General Manager confirmed the topic of software is on the agenda for the upcoming meeting of the four General Managers.

A member voiced their excitement for the upcoming asset management of green infrastructure, noting that the City of London is planning to use the UTRCA green infrastructure asset management plan as a benchmark for their own green infrastructure asset management plan.

Mover: Anna Hopkins

Seconder: Sandy Levin

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

8.3. Health and Safety Annual Summary

Members thanked staff for a very thorough annual report and for taking a proactive approach to health and safety.

Mover: Hugh McDermid

Seconder: Jean Coles

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

8.4. Administration and Enforcement – Section 28 Status Report

Mover: Jim Craigmile

Seconder: Hugh McDermid

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

8.5. Project Status Update

Mover: Mark Schadenberg

Seconder: Dean Trentowsky

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

8.6. Thames River Current – March Edition

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

Mover: Jean Coles

Seconder: Mark Schadenberg

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 was no report from the Hearing Committee.

10. Notices of Motion

There were no notices of motion.

11. Chair's Comments

The Chair noted he has currently booked delegations with 12 out of 20 of the UTRCA upper and lower tier Municipal councils. He noted a meeting between the UTRCA watershed mayors and Minister Flack has been scheduled thanks to City of London Mayor Josh Morgan.

The Chair noted he attended a media event yesterday representing the UTRCA. Labatt announced their new partnership with the UTRCA, including \$10,000 to support the development of a community science program. He noted Peter Cuddy was present, representing the City of London.

12. Member's Comments

Mark Schadenberg noted the Thames River Clean Up in Woodstock is scheduled for April 18th. He encouraged members to check out the Thames River Clean Up website, check for their local clean ups, and noted they are still looking for coordinators for some sites.

Hugh McDermid attended the Farm Show and congratulated staff on the great joint Conservation Authority display.

Dean Trentowsky noted he would be representing the UTRCA at the annual Farmer and Rural Landowner Workshop being held on March 26th at the Crystal Palace in Mitchell, hosted by the Upper Thames, Ausable Bayfield and Maitland Valley Conservation Authorities.

The Chair noted the Oxford County Climate Hazard Assessment was on the Oxford County council agenda for the March 25th meeting.

13. General Manager's Comments

The General Manager highlighted the UTRCA Landowner Workshop being held on March 25th at the Thorndale Lions Community Centre in Thorndale.

The General Manager highlighted the flooding event at the beginning of March, noting that while there was no major flooding, it was still a significant event. She thanked flood control staff and communications staff for their hard work behind the scenes during the flood event.

The General Manager noted UTRCA staff are preparing for a very busy spring season.

14. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:03am on a motion by Hugh McDermid, seconded by Anna Hopkins.

Tracy Annett, General Manager
/mv