

Minutes

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA)

Board of Directors Meeting

9:30am Tuesday, October 22, 2024 at 1424 Clarke Rd, London
(Hybrid Meeting)

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

Members Present:

Peter Cuddy – Online

Jim Craigmile

Tom Heeman - Online

Anna Hopkins – Online

Sandy Levin

Skylar Franke – Online

Hugh McDermid

Paul Mitchell

Harj Nijjar – Online

Brian Petrie – Chair

Mark Schadenberg

Dean Trentowsky

Scotty Zehr

George Way

Regrets: None

UTRCA Solicitor: Grant Inglis

Staff Present:

Jenna Allain

Tracy Annett

Amy Bumbacco

Karlee Flear

Eric Gaskin

Joe Gordon

Brad Glasman

Eleanor Heagy

Christie Kent

Tatianna Lozier

Christine Saracino

Damian Schofield

Chris Tasker

Tara Tchir

Chris Van Esbroeck

Brent Verscheure

Michelle Viglianti – Recorder

Brandon Williamson

1. Territorial Acknowledgement

The Chair read the territorial acknowledgement.

2. Modifications to the Agenda

Mover: Sandy Levin

Seconder: Paul Mitchell

Notwithstanding policy, THAT the Board of Directors modify the agenda to include item 7.2 to closed session, in accordance with Section C.12 of the UTRCA Administrative By-Law to discuss advice that is subject to solicitor client privilege in regards to Land Lease Negotiations.

Carried.

3. Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

4. Delegations/Presentations

4.1.Environment and Climate Change Program

Staff presented the two programs and their deliverables for the funding received through the Great Lakes Ecosystem Initiative and noted the program is now being delivered through the Canada Water Agency.

Mover: George Way

Seconder: Scotty Zehr

THAT the Board of Directors receives the presentation for information.

Carried.

5. Administrative Business

5.1.Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting: September 24, 2024

Mover: Hugh McDermid

Seconder: Jim Craigmile

THAT that the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Board of Directors approve the Board of Directors' minutes, dated September 24, 2024.

Carried.

5.2.Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

5.3. Correspondence

5.3.1. Correspondence sent to Minister Smith

5.3.2. Correspondence from Mayor Josh Morgan

Mover: Peter Cuddy

Seconded: Sandy Levin

THAT the Board of Directors receives the correspondence.

Carried.

6. Reports – For Consideration

6.1. Budgetary and Reserves Policy Report

Sandy Levin, Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee, thanked Christine Saracino for her work and leadership on this policy and in the organization.

Staff noted this policy would stabilize the reserves, but growing the reserves would be a separate discussion.

Mover: Sandy Levin

Seconded: Hugh McDermid

THAT the Board of Directors approve the Budgetary and Reserve Policy as presented.

Carried.

6.2. 2025 Draft Budget for Circulation

The Board asked that definitions be provided for the terms used on the bar chart in the budget presentation.

Members provided a number of suggestions for small changes to draft budget package and presentation. Suggestions included clarifying and noting the 20% operating increase is not the overall levy increase, explanations of all the drivers of the levy increase, early notice that the Clean Water program costs could be shifting to Municipalities in 2026, and a rough estimate of the 2026 levy increase.

Members noted the importance of timing and the need to get the draft budget circulated and council presentations booked as soon as possible. There was a suggestion to prioritize the council presentations and visit those who have been historically less supportive first.

The Chair encouraged members to discuss flood and erosion control structure capital responsibilities with their councils, how they are identifying UTRCA owned structures in their asset management plans, and how they are mitigating risk.

Mover: Scotty Zehr

Seconder: Peter Cuddy

THAT the 2025 Draft Budget report be approved for consultation purposes; and
THAT the 2025 Draft Budget be circulated to participating municipalities and posted on the UTRCA website.

Carried.

6.3. UTRCA Administrative Review Policy Under Section 8 of O.Reg. 41/24

There was a suggestion to remove specific staff names from the Policy and use only position titles.

The Board discussed having industry representatives review the policy.

Mover: Sandy Levin

Seconder: Hugh McDermid

THAT the Board of Directors approve the UTRCA Administrative Review Policy as presented; And FURTHER, THAT the General Manager/Secretary Treasurer and the Manager, Environmental Planning and Regulations be delegated as Administrative Review Officers with the Authority's powers for Request for Reviews pursuant to Section 8 of Ontario Regulation 41/24. AND THAT the Board ask staff to communicate to industry representatives the new approach and report back next month on any tweaks that are necessary.

Carried.

6.4. Lands Strategy & Acquisition and Disposition Policy

Board members thanked and congratulated staff for the excellent piece of work given the short timeline.

Anna Hopkins joined the meeting at 10:55am.

Mover: George Way

Seconder: Harj Nijjar

THAT the Lands Strategy be approved and posted on UTRCA's website;
and FURTHER THAT the Acquisition and disposition policy be approved and posted on the UTRCA's website.

Carried.

Skylar Franke joined the meeting at 10:57 am.

7. Reports – In-Camera

Mover: Sandy Levin

Seconder: Scotty Zehr

THAT the Board of Directors adjourn to Closed Session – In Camera, to deal with two items.

Carried.

The meeting moved to closed session in accordance with Section C.12 of the UTRCA Administrative By-Law to discuss a pending acquisition or disposition of land in regard to the UTRCA Land Inventory, and a matter involving an instruction to be applied to negotiations and advice that is subject to solicitor client privilege in regard to land lease negotiations at 10:57am.

Peter Cuddy left the meeting at 11:40am.

The Board rose from closed session at 12:10pm and passed the resolutions listed below.

7.1. Pending Acquisition or Disposition of Land – UTRCA Lands Inventory Report

Mover: Sandy Levin

Seconder: Scotty Zehr

THAT the Board of Directors receives the UTRCA Lands Inventory Report for approval as presented in Closed Session and ask staff to report back in the first quarter of 2025 with a report on options for parcels identified in closed session.

Carried.

7.2. Advice that is Subject to Solicitor Client Privilege – Land Lease Negotiations

Mover: Paul Mitchell

Seconder: Hugh McDermid

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report as presented in closed session.

Carried.

8. Reports – For Information

8.1. Administration and Enforcement – Section 28 Status Report

Mover: Hugh McDermid

Seconder: Jim Craigmile

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

8.2. Project Status Update

Mover: Dean Trentowsky

Seconder: George Way

THAT the Board of Directors receives the project status update report for information.

Carried.

8.3. 2024 Provincial Planning Statement – Summary of Changes Related to Conservation Authorities

Mover: Hugh McDermid

Seconder: Anna Hopkins

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

8.4. 2025 Rental House Rates

Mover: Sandy Levin

Seconder: Hugh McDermid

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

8.5. Hydro Plant Update

The Board discussed the report and the proposed solution. Staff clarified that the fluctuations coming off the grid have always been present because Fanshawe Conservation Area is located at the end of the line, but the fluctuations are made worse when the hydro plant is running. The increased fluctuations when the hydro plant is running are now beyond the tolerance levels of the increasingly sensitive equipment in the Watershed Conservation Centre.

There was a suggestion to do a cost benefit calculation on the hydro plant.

Mover: Dean Trentowsky

Seconded: Sandy Levin
THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.
Carried.

Anna Hopkins and Skylar Franke left the meeting at approximately 12:35pm.

8.6. Strategic Plan Update

Staff will circulate a poll to choose dates for the strategic planning input sessions for Board members.

Mover: Paul Mitchell
Seconded: Scotty Zehr
THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.
Carried.

8.7. Thames River Current – October Edition

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

Mover: George Way
Seconded: Hugh McDermid
THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.
Carried.

9. Reports – Committees

9.1. Finance and Audit Committee

Mover: Paul Mitchell
Seconded: Dean Trentowsky
THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.
Carried.

9.2. Hearing Committee

The Hearing Committee meeting previously scheduled for October 22nd was postponed until November 26, 2024.

10. Notices of Motion

There were no notices of motion for November 26th, 2024.

11. Chair's Comments

The Chair acknowledged the significant progress being made on the Provincial deliverables and the amount of work put in by staff, noting how these documents will provide clarity to future boards.

The Chair and Tracy Annett attended the Latornell Conservation Symposium, which provided a good perspective and insight into what other Conservation Authorities are working on and good networking opportunities.

The Chair participated in Celebrate the Thames in Thamesford with Paul Mitchell. The event was tied into the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

The Chair thanked Vice-Chair Dean Trentowsky for chairing the October meeting in his absence.

12. Member's Comments

There were no comments from members.

13. General Manager's Comments

The General Manager noted the importance of the Provincial deliverables, how they will help new and future staff understand the history and basis of intent of past decisions, and thanked staff for their hard work.

14. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:48 pm on a motion by Sandy Levin.

Tracy Annett, General Manager
/mv