

Minutes

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA)

Board of Directors Meeting

9:30am Tuesday, October 28, 2025 at 1424 Clarke Rd, London
(Hybrid Meeting)

Dean Trentowsky, UTRCA Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:30am.

Members Present:

Jean Coles

Jim Craigmile

Tom Heeman

Sandy Levin

Hugh McDermid

Paul Mitchell

Brian Petrie

Mark Schadenberg

Dean Trentowsky – Chair

George Way

Scotty Zehr - Online

Regrets: Peter Cuddy, Skylar Franke, Anna Hopkins, and Harj Nijjar

Staff Present:

Jenna Allain

Tracy Annett

Emily Chandler

Ben Dafoe

Huda Ghadhban

Eleanor Heagy

Teresa Hollingsworth

Christine Saracino

Damian Schofield

Chris Tasker

Tara Tchir

Brent Verscheure

Michelle Viglianti – Recorder

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 presentation.

5. Administrative Business

5.1. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting: September 23, 2025

Mover: Hugh McDermid

Seconder: George Way

THAT that the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority Board of Directors approves the Board of Directors' minutes, dated September 23, 2025.

Carried.

5.2. Business Arising from the Minutes

There was no business arising from the minutes.

5.3. Correspondence

There was no correspondence to consider.

6. Reports – For Consideration

6.1. 2026 Draft Budget for Circulation

The General Manager presented the 2026 draft budget.

A draft version of the budget overview document and two individual Municipal draft handouts for the City of London and County of Oxford were passed around to the members as examples of the additional communications materials being provided to Municipalities. Those examples will be appended to the minutes.

Members suggested including comparative information from the previous year to the Municipal handout.

A member noted the importance of mentioning the non-residential building construction price index.

Members thanked staff and all those involved in preparing the draft budget and voiced appreciation for the explanations provided in the budget package and communications materials, noting the value of the extra information provided.

Mover: Paul Mitchell

Seconder: George Way

THAT the 2026 Draft Budget report be approved for consultation purposes; and
THAT the 2026 Draft Budget be circulated to participating municipalities and posted on
the UTRCA website.

Carried.

7. Reports – In-Camera

Mover: Mark Schadenberg

Seconder: Tom Heeman

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 matters involving
advice that is subject to lawyer-client privilege and litigation affecting the Authority.

Carried.

The Board adjourned to closed session at 9:55am.

Brian Petrie joined the meeting at 10:04am.

The Board rose from closed session at 11:07am and reported the following progress:

7.1. Advice that is Subject to Lawyer-Client Privilege Related to Litigation – Legal Opinion Update – Verbal

The Board discussed matters regarding a legal opinion.

7.2. Litigation Affecting the Authority – Fanshawe Land Lease Program Update

Mover: Brian Petrie

Seconder: Hugh McDermid

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: Scotty Zehr

Seconder: George Way

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

8.2. Project Status Update

Staff confirmed the cyber security updated has been moved to the January meeting, when the new information manager should be in place and staff should have additional information from Conservation Ontario.

Regarding the Hydro plant, staff noted a complete power shut down of the Watershed Conservation Centre is required to install a part. The installation is scheduled for November 8th. The upcoming hydro plant report will include the work plan for the remainder of the required work.

Members requested a future report outlining any significant position vacancies, reasons for the vacancy, what positions are permanent versus contract and asked that the report include an organizational chart. There was a brief discussion on current vacancies and staff noted operational planning and the strategic plan will result in organizational changes.

Mover: Sandy Levin

Seconder: Hugh McDermid

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information and add an organizational chart and report to the project status update report.

Carried.

8.3. 2026 Rental House Rates

Mover: Tom Heeman

Seconder: Brian Petrie

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

8.4. Administrative Review of Officers (ARO) Discretionary Policy Decisions – Quarterly Report

Mover: Hugh McDermid

Seconder: George Way

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

8.5. Funding Proposals – Update

Members discussed the Canada Water Agency Great Lakes Freshwater Ecosystem Initiative grant, which is a cost share program with people in the agricultural sector, and the Canada Water Agency Great Lakes Freshwater Ecosystem Initiative Innovation Stream, which is from the same funding stream, but is for monitoring, research projects and associated costs.

A member highlighted and recognized the expertise and effort of staff to find, apply, and ultimately be successful in receiving these grants, noting it should not be lost on rate payers the work done to fund these programs that would not be provided if not for these grants.

A member highlighted the two million dollar grant from the Federal Government for Category 1 programs, noted that small pieces of other grants also end up in Category 1, and asked councilors to bring this message back to their councils.

Mover: Paul Mitchell

Seconder: Jim Craigmile

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

8.6. Fanshawe Conservation Area Day-Use Concept Planning

Staff noted that while UTRCA staff have already been engaged, further review and continued discussions will happen before presenting to the public for input and feedback in December, with the goal of finalizing the plan by the end of the first quarter of 2026.

The planning phase will cost approximately twenty thousand dollars, while the size, scope and cost of implementation will be influenced by current and future use needs and could fall between one and two million dollars.

Mover: Mark Schadenberg

Seconder: 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 members' information.

One member highlighted the exciting stewardship funding opportunities for landowners, noting the staff efforts that go into these applications and agreements.

Mover: Paul Mitchell

Seconder: Jean Coles

THAT the Board of Directors receives the report for information.

Carried.

9. Reports – Committees

9.1. Finance and Audit Committee – 09-25 Decisions

Mover: Brian Petrie

Seconder: Mark Schadenberg

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 the Board members and staff for all their hard work so far in this action packed year, noting the work still to be done to round out the year.

12. Member's Comments

Sandy Levin noted his attendance at an event held at the Watson Porter Pavillion and passed along his compliments to the staff involved with the renovation project.

13. General Manager's Comments

The General Manager highlighted several upcoming proposed legislative changes, including Red Tape Reductions, which has ten schedules that include the Clean Water Act and will impact the Source Protection Program, and Bill 60, which will affect green development standards, includes a proposal to standardize Official Plans, and will allow Minister's decisions to be inconsistent with the Provincial Policy Statement.

The General Manager noted the legislators are moving quickly and Conservation Ontario will be coordinating comments on the various proposals and will continue to monitor the Environmental Registry for legislative changes affecting Conservation Authorities.

14. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:49am on a motion by Sandy Levin, seconded by Hugh McDermid.

Tracy Annett, General Manager
/mv